the weekly
Standard

THE BUCKLEY REVIVAL
ANDREW FERGUSON

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CROWDED FIELD OF DREAMS

STEPHEN F. HAYES
on the state
of the Republican race

WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

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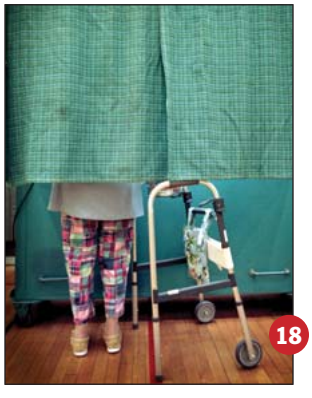

Books & Arts

COVER BY SCOTT BRUNDAGE

The Terrorists' Veto

Well, looks like the terrorists finally have won. The satirical French paper *Charlie Hebdo* announced it would no longer draw pictures of Muhammad, just six months after Islamic terrorists stormed their Paris offices and massacred the staff. They are far from alone in backing down in the face of such threats. After the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, the *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish paper whose Muhammad cartoons caused great turmoil in 2005, refused to publish any of *Charlie Hebdo*'s controversial cartoons.

The *Jyllands-Posten* editor who commissioned that earlier set of cartoons, Flemming Rose, wrote *The Tyranny of Silence* about the paper's ordeal and has spent the intervening years issuing a *cri de coeur* about the need for free speech. When Rose was asked about the refusal to republish any of *Charlie Hebdo*'s work earlier this year, he was candid. "We caved in," he told the BBC. "Violence works. . . . Sometimes the sword is mightier than the pen."

Rose is admirably honest. Even *Charlie Hebdo*'s initial bravery has given way to a blame-spreading mentality that reflects the fact that the paper is now a hostage to violence. "The mistakes you could blame Islam for can be found in other religions," said *Charlie Hebdo* editor Laurent Sourisseau in his remarks announcing they would no longer print Muhammad cartoons. In some general sense this is true, but there is simply no other major world religion that poses the same violent threat to free expression.

And the American media remain as disingenuous as ever. After the *Hebdo* attack, the *New York Times* issued the following statement: "Under *Times* standards, we do not normally publish images or other material deliberately intended to offend religious sensibilities. After careful consideration, *Times* editors decided that describing the [*Charlie Hebdo*] cartoons in question would give readers sufficient information to understand today's story."

But in May, the *Times* blithely ran a story on Chris Ofili's painting *The Holy Virgin Mary*, "which caused a furor when it was shown at the Brooklyn Museum in October 1999. . . . The eight-foot-high depiction of a black Virgin Mary, encrusted with a lump of elephant dung and collaged bottoms from pornographic magazines, outraged religious leaders." The story was illustrated with, yes, a photo of the offensive painting, proving once again that the *Times*'s policy of not offending religious sensibilities is disingenuous. Rather, they have a policy of not offending the religion whose adherents threaten violent retaliation.

The *Times*'s standards editor Philip B. Corbett probably should have stayed his pen rather than remove any doubt that the paper has a blatant double standard. Instead he told the *Washington Examiner* that the *Times*, incredibly, was justified in publishing a photo of *The Holy Virgin Mary* because "there's no indication that the primary intent of the portrait is to offend or blaspheme." And how, given the subjective nature of art criticism, did Corbett ascertain that the painting was not intended to offend? "There doesn't seem to be any comparable level of outrage," he said.

The *Times*'s explanation of its "standards" is equal parts delusion and denial. Following even *Charlie Hebdo*'s surrender to violence, the last thing we should accept is rationalizing cowardice in defense of free expression. In a *New York Review of Books* essay, Timothy Garton Ash observed that Flemming Rose had "strikingly answered an appeal made by the British columnist Nick Cohen in a panel discussion at the *Guardian*: 'If you are frightened, at least have the guts to say that. The most effective form of censorship is one that nobody admits exists.'" ♦

What They Were Thinking

NEWSCOM

Cuba's Fans

Truth be told, The Scrapbook leans toward agnosticism on the question of diplomatic relations with Cuba, which were broken off in 1961 and restored last week, with much fanfare, by the Obama administration. Since 1977, the United States has had an "interests section" in Havana that is larger than some of our embassy complexes around the world, and the Cubans have had an "interests section" inside the Swiss embassy in Washington. With luck, from our perspective, a bigger and better American embassy will mean a bigger and better CIA station in Havana.

Nor will the "normalization" of relations mean very much beyond words—and, perhaps, a partial relaxation of the economic embargo. The *Washington Post* ran a long story on the ceremonial reopening of the Cuban embassy, which featured remarks by the visiting Cuban foreign minister, Bruno Rodriguez, largely composed of a lengthy complaint about the Platt Amendment (1901), which once governed U.S.-Cuban relations and was repealed 81 years ago. If we needed a reminder that the aging Castro regime is still very much in charge on that unhappy island, Señor Rodriguez's bumptious speech provided it.

What intrigued The Scrapbook was the *Post* story by Karen DeYoung. For some reason, it failed to mention that among the Americans in attendance at the ceremony was the famous actor Danny Glover, whose perspective on the subject may be summarized by his view that "one of the main purveyors of violence in this world has been this country"—and by "this country," of course, he does not mean Cuba. More interesting still was the photograph that accompanied the *Post* story, showing a middle-aged woman holding aloft a heart-shaped sign that read "To Cuba With Love." Here is the *Post* caption, in its entirety: "Medea Benjamin of Washington joined those celebrating the raising of the flag at the 16th Street mansion that houses the Cuban Embassy."

As The Scrapbook feels constrained to point out, "Medea Benjamin of Washington"—actually, Susan is her real name—is no ordinary citizen with a casual interest in foreign policy but the ubiquitous, customarily screaming, face of Code Pink, the all-woman, hard-left political organization best known for its affinity for totalitarian regimes, and for shouting down American public figures ranging from Condoleezza Rice to Barack Obama.

It is no surprise that Medea Benjamin would be publicly demonstrating her fealty to the Communist dictatorship in Cuba. What is surprising is that the *Post* should have failed to mention—indeed, seems to have deliberately omitted—the better-known names among the handful of enthusiasts who appeared at the reopened Cuban embassy last week.

Or perhaps not. The last time The Scrapbook saw Karen DeYoung was in 1978, when she was hanging out with Strobe Talbott in the lobby of the Havana Riviera Hotel. Karen DeYoung is now senior national security correspondent for the *Washington Post*, and Strobe Talbott is president of the Brookings Institution. The revolution has come home. ♦

Bikeshare Bias?

Over the weekend, the *New York Times* weighed in on an important issue facing the city of New York. It seems that the fairer sex, despite making up about half the

city's population, constitutes merely a third of the users of the city's bike-share system.

According to the *Times*'s observer on Eighth Avenue, the situation is dire. "Man after man pedaled by, some in suits, others in jeans. From time to time, a woman on a Citi Bike rode by."

While bikeshare programs in Washington, D.C., and Chicago also have more male riders, New York's Citi Bikes is taking a more active approach to persuading women to ride in the city. The blue bikes have already made appearances in the window of Bloomingdale's and in an episode of Comedy Central's slacker millennial show *Broad City*.

If that isn't enough to persuade more women to fork over $9.95 to rent a bike for the day, CitiBikes is hosting rides with women's cycling groups and released a series of ads recalling how bicycles symbolized independence for suffragettes back in the days of bloomers.

The Scrapbook wishes to point out that the reason for low numbers of female riders might be right in front of the *Times*. The women depicted in the photographs accompanying the article are all wearing pants. The pencil skirt, a longstanding staple of the female work wardrobe, is nowhere to be seen. Men can easily ride a bike in a suit, but riding in a skirt takes a bit more skill.

Could it be that New York's fashionistas and career women are dissuaded from using the bikeshare by the difficulty of managing pedals in pumps and a pencil skirt? ♦

Community Policing, de Blasio Style

Speaking of New York, The Scrapbook was walking through Central Park the other day when a police car came cruising down one of the interior roads. As it rolled by, almost as an afterthought, its loudspeakers blared "The sign says don't walk!" and the car leisurely disappeared around the next corner. In a similar situation and even more recently, a cop car approached a group of cyclists, an electronically amplified voice blared "Use the bike path!" and then the car sped off.

We are certain the efficiency of this idea will appeal to some people: the police, invisibly ensconced in their tint-windowed cars—or better yet, safely observing us on camera direct from headquarters—simply shouting at anyone who steps out of line. The Scrapbook, for its part, prefers the officer who walks his beat, ideally with a smile on his face, and with the concept firmly in his mind that he is a servant of the public and not a faceless, technocratic busybody. ♦

Alito Unbound

We've previously touted the Conversations with Bill Kristol videos in this space. But the Foundation for Constitutional Government's latest production is one you truly won't want to miss.

The boss sat down a couple of weeks ago with Justice Samuel Alito for an hour-plus conversation—talking about how the justices arrive at decisions, Alito's dissent in the same-sex marriage ruling, the justice's upbringing in New Jersey, his legal education, and his career, among other fascinating topics.

We can't remember a comparable interview with a sitting Supreme Court justice. Move aside, David Frost, Dick Cavett, Charlie Rose, et al. The encounter can be viewed at conversationswithbillkristol.org/video/samuel-alito. ♦

Help Wanted

The Weekly Standard is hiring an assistant to the literary editor. This is an entry-level clerical/administrative post with editorial duties and the opportunity to assist in the composition of the Books & Arts section. The ideal applicant will be interested in promotion and social media. Knowledge of Adobe InDesign is desirable but not mandatory. Send CV and cover letter to HR@weeklystandard.com. ♦

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Fly by Night

Lately my home life has felt like a camping trip. I have been waking at 3 A.M. or so and staring. *Stirring* at night is one thing—rolling over, drifting into semi-consciousness, having a stray thought or two either to be remembered or not remembered in the morning—but staring is quite another. In the weeks since May, when my father died, those stray thoughts have been vivid enough to seize my attention. Then they bring with them other thoughts, practical and metaphysical. After a few minutes, I'm wide awake.

Reading is the obvious remedy. I grope till I get hold of my Petzl, wrap it around my head, and activate it. Petzl is a French headlamp company. Its basic product, which now sits on my bedside table, is a variant on the gigantic flashbulb-attached-to-a-sweatband that doctors sport to such ridiculous effect, along with clipboards and stethoscopes and knee-length white smocks, in 1930s movies and episodes of *The Three Stooges*. In the 1970s, Petzl miniaturized this contraption down to something walnut-sized and powerful. Emanating from the middle of your forehead, its downward-sloping beam illuminates the ground in front of you like the infield at a night baseball game.

These little headlamps have revolutionized hiking. If you have a Petzl (or better, if you have two, following the woodsman's safety rule "Two is one and one is none"), being on the trail towards dusk is no longer an act of folly. They have also revolutionized biking. You cannot outrun light, of course, but you can outrun your mind's ability to process objects illuminated in front of you. Bikers' and hikers' headlamps must light not just the terrain they are crossing at any given moment but the terrain they will cross in a few seconds' time.

The things are so useful that Petzl now makes a whole range of them. There are even adjustable ones that dial down to the amount of light required to read the footnotes in the Mansfield-Tarcov translation of Machiavelli's *Discourses*. A Petzl is better than those reading lamps that clip onto the book, in every way except one: If you turn to admire the beauty of your wife as she sleeps, the floodlight on her face will cause her to wake thinking it's 1934 in Leningrad and the police are at the door. The other drawback is that, should you wander into the yard at 3 A.M. for a breath of fresh air, any neighbor seeing your bobbing Petzl will suspect a break-in and the police *will* be at your door.

GARY LOCKE

This week there was little chance of that. I was in Massachusetts, worried less about the police than about the bugs. Samuel Eliot Morison wrote somewhere—possibly in his magnificent *Maritime History of Massachusetts*—that Massachusetts had, in every age, produced the country's greatest men. Some might question the assertion, but I buy it. It meets what those of us who grew up in Massachusetts were taught was the most rigorous standard of proof—it was said by someone from Massachusetts. It is beyond question, however, that Massachusetts has, in every age, produced the country's greatest bugs.

What a profusion of insect life the Bay State has! Earwigs, silverfish, king beetles, clover mites, ticks large and small. In the woods in May, the tiny black flies swarm so thick that your throat numbs from breathing them. On the beaches in summer there are squadrons of fluorescent greenheads, which bite like horseflies and attack like kamikazes. Between dusk and dawn the air is ruled by the mighty New England mosquito. These don't bite you so much as transfuse you—if you ever see one flying off after having bit somebody, note how it wobbles and struggles like a pregnant blue heron or an overloaded C-130. Try to clap it dead and the thing will explode in your palms like a blueberry. They are prodigious, the Mosquitoes of Massachusetts. They deserve their own calendar, like, say, The Women of the Big Ten.

The early settlers of Massachusetts brought a helpful aster plant called tansy. It is a natural insecticide, a smelly, yellow-flowering weed that still grows in the woods. There are also effective and great-smelling natural bug sprays that various companies make from castor oil, rosemary, lemongrass, cedar, peppermint, citronella, clove, and geranium. I recommend the one made by the hippie corporation Burt's Bees, even if a more appropriate brand name might be "Arm and Leg."

A lot of locals slick themselves down with Deet-based bug spray. I wouldn't. "Deet" is the shorthand for diethyl-something-or-other. While the Deet lobby claims the product is safe for humans, it is not safe for plastic, polypropylene shirts, and iPhone cases, all of which it melts. Do you want that stuff dripping with your sweat onto the corn-on-the-cob you're eating at a clambake? It would keep me up at night.

Christopher Caldwell

the weekly Standard

Fait Non-Accompli

The Iran deal turns out to be so no good, so very bad, so awfully ugly, that there is a chance—an outside chance—that a congressional process accepted by the administration because it seemed to virtually guarantee the deal's survival might actually kill it instead.

The administration is pulling out all the stops. The left is mobilizing. Pressure is being applied. But what's striking is how many congressional Democrats are balking. Serious Democrats look at the deal—at its failure to stop Iran's nuclear program, at the weak verification provisions, at the precipitous and massive sanctions relief—and can't quite believe the horror the administration is asking them to approve.

The public can't quite believe it either. The Pew poll this week had those Americans who knew something about the deal—a strikingly high 79 percent of the public—disapproving 48 to 38 percent. When has this happened before? A president signs a deal that purports to limit arms and reduce the risks of war, he makes his case to the American people against scattered voices of criticism and dissent—and he doesn't even start out ahead. A *Washington Post* poll that framed the deal in a way more favorable to the administration had only 56 percent approval. Most analysts experienced in these kinds of fights expected the deal to start out way ahead in public opinion, and then perhaps face some erosion as the debate proceeded. Instead, opponents are at least even at the start. And, by the way, the critics are so far handily winning the debate on the merits.

Still, is it really possible that over a dozen Senate Democrats and almost 50 House Democrats will defect from the president and vote both to disapprove and then to override his veto? Yes. It's possible, if not yet likely. And the possibility will grow if opponents energetically press their case. They will need to explain, among other things, that the sanctions regime isn't doomed if the deal is defeated. It is true that some damage will have been done by the United Nations action. But a Congress that insists on retaining U.S. sanctions will leave the next president—whether a Democrat or a Republican—with a chance to marshal the international community to continue the pressure on Iran and perhaps to negotiate a better deal.

Meanwhile, what about that U.N. vote? Congress owes it to the American people to disapprove the deal because it is bad and dangerous, but also precisely to establish the principle that the American people are the masters of American foreign policy, not the United Nations.

The question, then, is pretty simple: Will some significant part of the Democratic party rise to the occasion? One of the five Democratic presidential candidates, former Virginia senator Jim Webb, seems likely to oppose the deal. He was and remains a bitter critic of the Iraq war, and he opposed it as it was being debated—unlike Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and Joe Biden. He also has a long record of acting to engage outlaw regimes, from Vietnam to Burma. He's not against diplomacy, and he's certainly not for war. But he's very doubtful of this deal. How many of his fellow Democrats will join him in taking a serious look at the merits?

We hope many will. William Fulbright and Eugene McCarthy broke with a Democratic president over Vietnam. Scoop Jackson and Daniel Patrick Moynihan broke with a Democratic president on the strategic arms agreement with the Soviet Union. From left and right, there is a history of some Democrats in Congress doing the right thing, and of being favorably regarded by history for having done so.

And while Winston Churchill is more of a hero to Republicans than to Democrats, there is bipartisan admiration for his lonely fight against appeasement in the late 1930s. That fight, we should remember, was against a government of his own party. So it is congressional Democrats, at this crucial moment, who have a chance to be Churchillian.

We urge them, sincerely, to rise above party loyalty, to rise above their distaste for people like us who are among the opponents of the deal, and to act for America. And we urge critics of the deal on our side of the aisle not to give up ahead of time on the hope of success.

One more consideration for Democrats who, understandably, are concerned with their party's future as well as the country's: If this deal goes into effect, it won't wear well. If Hillary Clinton is the Democratic nominee, she and her party will be held responsible for every advance Iran makes in nuclear and missile technology, for every Iranian-backed terror attack and Iranian-backed proxy wreaking havoc in the Middle East with the new infusion of cash the deal has provided, for every instance of Iranian bellicosity, rhetorical and otherwise, that this deal will have encouraged.

If this deal is defeated by a bipartisan vote, on the other hand, it will be a rebuke to President Obama, but it would give the Democratic candidate a clean slate on which to sketch her own Iran policy going forward. Her party will still be the less interventionist party. But it will have Churchillian elements in it. It will be stronger than it would otherwise be.

A significant number of congressional Democrats rising in opposition to President Obama is actually not in the interest of the Republican party or the Republican nominee. But it would be in the interest of the country.

—William Kristol

Making Stuff Up

When the secretary of state says, as John Kerry did last week in his Senate testimony, that the Obama White House is "guaranteeing" Iran won't have the bomb, you can be sure that—well, you can be pretty confident that he doesn't mean it. And that someday soon he'll pretend he never said it.

When the administration started its negotiations, the Iranians were going to have to dismantle their entire nuclear weapons program, said Obama, centrifuges and all. Instead, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) grants the program international legitimacy. Even the president acknowledges that when the deal expires, Iran will have a clear path to a bomb. So what can Kerry possibly mean when he guarantees they won't?

Until very recently, skeptics of the nuclear deal focused on the clerical regime's propensity for lying and cheating. As critics of the JCPOA pointed out, there is very little in the inspection and verification provisions to ensure that Tehran will abide by it. The agreement puts the world in the position of having to trust the say-so of a ruling clique that advances its goals through stealth and terror. Who in their right mind would trust the Islamic Republic?

As it turns out, an equally pressing problem is on the other side—our side. The White House is making a habit of deceiving the American people—and lawmakers—about the agreement it's struck with Iran.

Rather than abide by the Corker-Cardin bill that requires congressional approval of the JCPOA, the administration took it to the U.N., where the Security Council approved it unanimously. Just as the White House intended, the U.N. vote has created a situation where the representatives of the American people are at odds with the rest of the world.

Later in the week, another White House subterfuge came to light. Sen. Tom Cotton and Rep. Mike Pompeo went to Vienna, where International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officials explained that the U.N. organization had struck two secret side deals, presumably brokered by the administration. One concerns Parchin, a military base believed to be part of the regime's nuclear weapons program, and the other deals with the possible military dimensions of the program. The administration knows the details but has yet to share them with Congress.

"Parchin and PMDs are not tertiary issues," Pompeo told us. "These are at the center of negotiations. And when the administration couldn't reach an agreement, Kerry punted it to the IAEA." Maybe the side agreements are fine, says Pompeo. "When we see them we may find out they're great, well written, and important. But we don't have them and the administration is committed to provide every element to Congress. I'd never expect any member to vote on provisions that we won't get to see."

The Obama team is doing an end run around Congress and lying to the people who elected it. Kerry took to the Sunday talk shows last week claiming that the administration had never promised anytime/anywhere inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities. On *Fox News Sunday*, Kerry said: "I never, in four years, had a discussion about anywhere, anytime." Anytime/anywhere, Kerry said on *Face the Nation*, "is a term that honestly I never heard in the four years that we were negotiating. It was not on the table."

To the contrary, as recently as April, deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes promised that the Western negotiators were going to secure anytime/anywhere inspections. Energy secretary Ernest Moniz, who sat next to Kerry throughout the Iran talks, also said, "we expect to have anywhere, anytime access" to Iranian facilities. Kerry's lieutenant, Wendy Sherman, was at least forthright when she said that anytime/anywhere was rhetorical overreach. The administration didn't really mean it. Kerry preposterously maintains they didn't even say it.

Last week the secretary of state's nose grew longer and longer nearly every time he opened his mouth. According to the terms of the deal, said Kerry, Iran is not allowed to fund and arm terrorist allies like Hezbollah. Nope, said the Iranians, correctly, there's nothing like that in the deal. Indeed, the deal lifts the U.N. arms embargo. Accordingly, Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Araqchi said Iran told the Western negotiators that "we will supply arms to anyone and anywhere necessary and will import weapons from anywhere we want, and we have clarified this during the negotiations."

Perhaps oddest of all, Kerry kept lying about whether sanctions had been lifted on Quds Force commander Qassem Suleimani. Kerry denied it when the terms of the deal were first made public. Administration spokespersons set the record straight, explaining that, yes, U.N. nuclear-related sanctions would no longer apply to Suleimani in eight years' time. And yet in a press conference with Saudi foreign minister Adel Jubeir two days after the correction had been made, Kerry still insisted Suleimani was not coming off the sanctions list.

The administration must believe it's okay to make stuff up, that the American public doesn't really care and would rather be tweeting about *Sharknado*. But if it's such a good deal, why does it need to be kept out of the sunlight?

The administration's stealth, subterfuge, and lies have revealed one very big truth: It knows the deal won't withstand the scrutiny of the American people and their representatives.

—Lee Smith

A Buckley Revival

He's not like those other conservatives.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

William F. Buckley and Gore Vidal during ABC's convention coverage, August 1968

ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES / GETTY

"It's as if he never existed," a friend of a certain age (same as mine) said to me not long ago. He was referring to William F. Buckley Jr. When he died in 2008, at age 82, Buckley was eulogized as the most consequential American journalist of the second half of the last century: editor for 35 years of *National Review*, founding father of the conservative movement, bosom pal of Ronald Reagan, author of many bestselling books, and host of *Firing Line*, the longest-running single-host public affairs show in television history.

From the 1950s through the '90s, he seemed to be everywhere all the time. Now, my friend complained, Buckley rarely comes up in public discussion, and it's not clear that younger journalists, tweeting and Snapchatting and texting and Instagramming all the livelong day, have more than a vague notion of who he was.

I wanted to reply, "Sic transit journalism, pal," but I would have been as wrong as my friend was. Not all hacks vanish with their work when the production line shuts down, and Buckley is one of the rare ones who, to judge by recent stirrings, is still bankable.

Earlier last month W.W. Norton published *Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship that Shaped the Sixties*, by a historian named Kevin M. Schultz, whose emphatic theme is seen in the subtitle. And July 31 will bring the New York and Los Angeles premiere of *Best of Enemies*, a documentary about a series of televised debates Buckley had with the novelist-gadfly Gore Vidal during the momentous political conventions of 1968.

The thesis of the filmmakers, Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon, is that Buckley's appearances with Vidal that summer "changed TV forever." If you believe that you'll believe anything—even that Buckley and Norman Mailer shaped the sixties with their difficult friendship. But authors and moviemakers can't move units any longer without wild overstatement. And it's interesting to ponder why Buckley among all his contemporaries should be chosen for the grandiose claims that Schultz, Neville, and Gordon make on his behalf.

There was lots of news in 1968—a year of race riots and political assassinations, occurring against the backdrop of a bloody war. As the party conventions approached, it was assumed the news divisions of the three networks would continue their quadrennial custom of gavel-to-gavel coverage, bumping from the afternoon and evening hours all the regularly scheduled and highly profitable soap operas and sitcoms. Whether this quaint custom was undertaken from a sense of civic obligation or just because the network's executives and journalists liked to attend jolly political events is a question that has never been answered.

In any case, ABC, always the ratings loser in news and other programming, saw an opening. It announced before the conventions began that it would condense its coverage to one and a half hours a night—grossly irresponsible by the high-minded standards of the day and, by the standards of ours, unimaginably Homeric. But it made good money sense. While other nets would be boring viewers with roll call votes and platform planks, normal Americans could seek refuge at ABC, thrilling to the adventures of *Peyton Place* and *The Flying Nun*. And when ABC's nightly convention coverage did appear, at the very end of prime time, the network would offer analysis by Buckley and Vidal. ABC's ratings soared.

The pleasures of *Best of Enemies* consist in watching the recovered video of these encounters. They are so entertaining, and handled so deftly by Neville and Gordon, that they can almost bear the ponderous weight of the movie's thesis—the one about changing TV forever. "The seeds [were] planted for our present media landscape," Gordon has written, "when the spectacle trumps the content of [the] argument."

It's arguable, but unprovable, that ABC's success in whittling down its

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coverage to the bare minimum, and replacing a comprehensive report on the convention's progress with left-versus-right gasbaggery, sent a signal that other networks couldn't ignore. Nowadays, nearly 50 years later, any network news division would be lucky to get even an hour of primetime during a national convention. But the disintegration of TV political journalism—from jowly old Walter Cronkite to sputtering Sean Hannity—has been an inevitable consequence of technology and economics. Even if ABC avoided the gasbaggery in 1968, we would still bear the burden of MSNBC and Fox today.

But what gasbaggery it was! Personally, William Buckley was a man of bottomless kindness and generosity; personally, Gore Vidal was a skunk. The ABC camera well captures the skunk. It fails to grasp the Buckley known by friends and colleagues. Partly this is by Buckley's own design—as a performer in debate he could be curt and wounding. The two had a bitter rivalry in print, as ABC executives well knew, though rivalry is probably too mild a word. They loathed each other. The "analysis" they were hired to provide quickly became a oneupmanship of insults and ad hominem argument. It didn't take Vidal long to call Buckley the "Marie Antoinette of the right" and for Buckley to refer to Vidal, the author of the ambisexual novel *Myra Breckinridge*, as a "pornographer." Then things got personal.

The pressure rose till the gasket blew in an infamous exchange on the third night of the second (Democratic) convention. When Buckley defended the police in their violent encounters with demonstrators outside the convention hall, Vidal called him a "crypto-Nazi." Buckley responded by citing his own service against the Nazis in World War II, calling Vidal a "queer"—this used to be an insult—and volunteering to "punch you in your goddamn face," after which, Buckley went on, "you'll stay plastered."

For the rest of his life Buckley admitted to being ashamed of the moment—not merely for the lapse in manners but for allowing so crude a provocation to produce exactly the effect Vidal intended. But the two weeks of convention analysis, with a narrative arc of intensifying on-air hostility between two compelling characters and a tidy climax to round it off, was an excellent career move for them both. They dined out on it for decades—though never, of course, with each other. Their mutual contempt provided a Punch-and-Judy foreshadowing of what soon became known as the culture wars.

As *Best of Enemies* shows, Vidal grew even more brittle and obsessive as the years passed; he framed a quartet of photos from the ABC broadcasts and hung them in his bathroom, probably for reasons too horrible to contemplate. Buckley turned the episode into a kind of running joke for the pleasure of his audience. One clip from the seventies shows an overearnest Jeff Greenfield offering high-minded reasons why Buckley should appear again with Vidal. "I would definitely have Gore Vidal and Bill Buckley on my television show," Greenfield says, "precisely because it holds out the possibility of . . . "

"Violence?" Buckley asks mildly.

In the movie there is a crosscurrent to the grand thesis, just as there is in Schultz's book about Buckley and Mailer shaping the sixties—indeed, as there is in most discussions when Buckley is mentioned today. Even as the filmmakers blame him and Vidal for having initiated the decline in televised public discourse—spectacle trumping substance—he is also held up as a paragon of high intellectual standards and political integrity, especially in contrast to his supposed heirs in the conservative movement of 2015. Buckley: witty, erudite, ironic, tolerant, large-spirited. Today's conservatives: none of those things. With his vast charm and talents, he makes a handy cudgel. A book reviewer offered an excellent example in the *New York Times* a few years ago.

"Buckley's pragmatism, tolerant spirit, and intellectual sophistication," he wrote, "are notably absent from the conservative movement today."

As often happens to some of us of a certain age, the thought coursed through my brain as I read this: If only Buckley were alive! He'd punch this guy in the goddamn face. ♦

Meanwhile, at The Hague

Of ways to go after Israel, there is no end.

BY JEREMY RABKIN

Across the Middle East, there is concern about the nuclear deal with Iran. By releasing frozen assets and removing economic sanctions, the deal seems to facilitate renewed aggression. Won't that encourage more violence from Iranian terror proxies, like Hezbollah and Hamas? The international community is preparing its response.

While the world's attention is focused on the Western settlement with Iran, the International Criminal Court in The Hague announced a decision on July 16 that plants its own marker in the Middle East. The ruling by the Pre-Trial Chamber instructed the ICC prosecutor to reconsider her decision not to prosecute Israelis for the violence associated with Israel's May 2010 seizure of the *Mavi Marmara*, when that ship sought to challenge Israel's naval blockade of Gaza.

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The case was "referred" to the ICC prosecutor in 2013—but not by "Palestine," where the ship was bound, not even by Turkey, where the so-called Humanitarian Aid Flotilla for Gaza was organized and where many of the affected "passengers" held citizenship. Instead, the dispute was referred by the Union of Comoros, which happened to be where the ship was registered. This island state in the Indian Ocean, with less than a million people, offers a flag of convenience to much international shipping and apparently lends its flag to legal actions, too.

The case was remarkable and disturbing for many reasons. The prosecutor (currently Fatou Bensouda of Gambia) had decided that, even if Israeli actions were unlawful, they did not amount to such "grave breaches" of international standards as to warrant international prosecution. The court rejected the prosecutor's reasoning and demanded a reconsideration of the decision not to prosecute.

The ICC statute does make provision for such appeals of decisions by the prosecutor. But if there has been a previous case where such an appeal was upheld, it was not noted by the court's opinion. As the dissenting judge on the three-judge panel explained, the wording of the ICC statute seems to vest considerable discretion in the prosecutor, as is logical: Judgments about the "gravity" of an offense necessarily hinge on elements of context and circumstance not easily captured by abstract formulas. As the dissent also noted, past cases brought by the prosecutor had involved hundreds or thousands of deaths, while this episode involved 10 fatalities.

The second remarkable thing was the way the court's majority dealt with the context of the episode—which was to ignore it. The dissent cited an array of authorities on blockade law, as well as a report for the secretary general of the United Nations prepared by the former prime minister of New Zealand. On these grounds, Judge Peter Kovacs concluded that "Israeli forces had a right to capture the vessel in protection of their blockade," and in the circumstances "the IDF acted out of necessity." He also noted that passengers on the *Mavi Marmara* "attempted to impede the [Israeli] soldiers with use of their fists, knives, chains, wooden clubs, iron rods, and slingshots with metal and glass projectiles" and initially "attacked" and "captured" three of the soldiers in the boarding party. The dissent cited for this finding the report of the Israeli judicial inquiry, which found that the force exercised by the IDF was not excessive in the circumstances.

Above, a member of the Israeli boarding party is attacked by Mavi Marmara *passengers; below, some of the weapons used in attacks on Israeli soldiers.*

The majority opinion found none of this background worthy of comment or even acknowledgment. It did not so much as mention the fact that Israel had conducted its own investigation. Yet the ICC statute indicates that the ICC has jurisdiction only where crimes have not been adequately investigated and appropriately punished by national authorities.

The most remarkable aspect of the opinion, however, was the court's own analysis of "gravity." The court argued that the prosecutor was wrong to minimize the "gravity" of the episode. It was "simplistic" for the prosecutor to claim that "the identified crimes" had "insufficient gravity" given "the international concern caused by the events at issue which . . . resulted in several fact-finding missions, including by the U.N. Human Rights Council." In effect, the court argued that if Israel is denounced by the U.N. Human Rights Council, the ICC prosecutor should see herself as its designated enforcement arm.

It's possible that the ruling simply reflects the idiosyncratic motivations of individual judges. The presiding judge, Joyce Aluoch of Kenya, may have been irked at the prosecutor for having previously pursued an overreaching case against Kenyan leaders—or for having subsequently abandoned it. Judge Cuno Tarfusser, from Italy, may have had ill feelings toward countries that use force at sea, when Italy is expending so much effort to intercept refugees at sea without violence. Judge Kovacs may have dissented because, as a Hungarian, he is distrustful of international interventions in general.

But it's not possible to believe that ICC judges don't exchange concerns with colleagues about the significance of their impending rulings. This case came to the Pre-Trial Chamber while the prosecutor was already investigating potential crimes connected with the IDF's attacks on Gaza last summer. The ruling says to the prosecutor: Don't dare abandon that case or you'll have to answer to the judges.

This ruling is therefore a worrisome portent. It seems to say, give no benefit of the doubt to the actions of a democratic state, which operates under the rule of law. It seems to say, give no weight to the urgency of defending against rocket attacks and terror tunnels. It seems to say, don't worry about seeming to side with angry mobs whipped up by Islamist demagogues—it's the prosecutor's job to give satisfaction to those mobs.

Maybe the prosecutor will resist these messages. Maybe later panels of judges will view things differently. But

so far, this ruling confirms the long-standing prediction that the ICC would follow the path of most other U.N. organs in cases concerning Israel. At U.N. forums, one-sided denunciations of Israel are regarded as basic professional courtesy.

The government of Israel has been quietly lobbying European governments for the last few months, urging them to threaten the ICC with withdrawal of their support if it hurls itself against Israel. Good luck with that.

In July 2014, just after the latest round of fighting in Gaza had ended, the U.N. Human Rights Council commissioned an inquiry into possible Israeli war crimes. The council's resolution on this subject was so one-sided that it did not even mention the terror attacks or the barrage of rockets from Gaza. The United States voted against the resolution, while the European states on the council merely abstained. The ensuing report, delivered in June 2015, predictably concluded that Israeli war measures should be investigated as war crimes. The report's reasoning was severely criticized by British and American military commanders and by experts on the law of armed conflict.

Still, the Human Rights Council voted to endorse the report on July 3. The United States voted against the resolution. All the European states on the council—France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—voted in favor. The resolution urged Israel to cooperate with the International Criminal Court to help resolve the allegations raised by the report.

Blaming Israel has become an engrained habit with European governments. Two weeks after the vote in the Human Rights Council, the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council voted on a resolution denouncing Israel for depriving Palestinians of their economic and social rights. The text was sponsored by Syria—that is, the Assad government, which has displayed some deficiencies of its own on human rights. The United States and Australia were the only member states to vote against the resolution, which passed overwhelmingly. All EU states voted with the majority.

There are many plausible explanations for this pattern. Surely one of the central ones is long-practiced facility with self-deluding rhetoric. In 2013, the then foreign minister of the Netherlands, socialist Frans Timmermans, gave a speech in Tel Aviv explaining that Europeans are more critical of Israel because they regard it as a European country, so they believe Israel should be held to European standards. As a comment on Israeli war measures from a Dutch official, it was astonishingly tone deaf. The Dutch military is best known for abandoning some 8,000 Bosnian civilians to Serb murder squads in 1995. An international tribunal subsequently described the massacre as "genocidal." Might there be good reasons why the IDF is less passive than European armies when called on to defend people from terrorist forces with genocidal ambitions?

But if the Israelis were exasperated, Timmermans apparently displayed eloquence appropriate for European audiences. He was subsequently appointed vice-president of the European Commission. In that capacity, he delivered an emotional speech last January expressing dismay about terror attacks on Jewish sites in France and Belgium—without ever acknowledging any connection between those attacks and the official denunciations of Israel by European governments.

German leaders speak more earnestly about their concerns for Israel's security. Vice-chancellor and economics minister Sigmar Gabriel recently admonished Iran that it could not expect improved trade relations with Germany unless it recognized Israel. The Iranian officials dismissed his

remarks out of hand—understandably. Gabriel offered this advice in Tehran, which he was the first Western leader to visit after the nuclear deal was concluded. He took with him a whole contingent of German business representatives, eager to negotiate new deals of their own.

Soothing words are given a lot of weight in countries where foreign policy consists almost entirely of words. So the European Union offered its own follow-up to its endorsement of the Iran deal. On July 20, its council of foreign ministers announced that the EU condemns Israeli settlements and other abuses by Israel, demands that products of Israeli "settlements" be labeled as such for European consumers—and urges "an increased common international effort" to achieve "a just and lasting peace" between Israel and Palestine. Will that stop ISIS rampages in Iraq? Will it settle the endless civil war in Syria or the new one in Yemen? The ministers offered no advice on those issues. Perhaps they couldn't agree on those harder challenges. They could readily agree on well-practiced rhetoric about Israel and Palestine.

That is another part of the pattern. Europeans now have a strong herd instinct when it comes to international affairs. The United States, and in recent years Canada and Australia, have repeatedly proved their willingness to resist the consensus at the U.N. European governments almost always vote together. In America, we are having an intense debate about whether our Congress should endorse the Iran deal. No European parliament has engaged in any debate on the deal, nor do concessions to Iran seem to have provoked much debate among European commentators. European leaders hailed it as a "step toward peace." And the international consensus favors it. That's enough.

The international consensus also favors a vigorous role for the International Criminal Court. At least, that's what U.N. resolutions indicate. That's what European governments and EU representatives say. Anyway, the trajectory of the ICC doesn't affect Europeans, since their own forces are not engaged in combat operations.

But what if they decide down the road there should be a military response to further aggressions—in Ukraine or the Middle East or the Mediterranean . . . or in response to a massive civil insurrection mobilized by angry Islamists in a European city? It might be awkward to pursue military operations under the skeptical scrutiny of the ICC, incited, perhaps, by hostile resolutions at the U.N. It might be hard to recruit American involvement in a military mission that has to operate with the ICC as legal chaperone. But for now, Europe seems content to regard the ICC as Israel's problem.

We may hope that the Obama administration will try to defend Israel from further demonization in international forums. Since the United States has never joined the ICC, it has little leverage there. All the EU member states have subscribed to the ICC but don't seem inclined to urge restraint on the court. That is very sad but not at all surprising.

The whole point of the ICC was to hand off moral challenges like mass murder and monstrous brutality to a free-standing international institution—to someone else. European governments were the driving force in establishing the ICC and cajoling African clients and others to participate. Europe still likes to hand off challenges to others. ♦

Iran Is Working with al Qaeda

So why are we working with Iran?

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

On July 21, the Pentagon announced that Muhsin al-Fadhli, an al Qaeda operative who had been wanted for more than a decade, was killed in an airstrike in Syria earlier in the month. Fadhli has been dead at least once before. In September 2014, the United States launched airstrikes against his so-called Khorasan Group (a cadre of al Qaeda veterans plotting attacks against the West), and some officials told the press that Fadhli had perished. That wasn't true. Still, Defense Department officials are confident they got their man on July 8. The DoD doesn't usually issue formal press releases for this sort of thing unless there is significant intelligence backing up its claims. The department wasn't fully forthcoming, however. Its short biography of Fadhli was missing a key word: Iran.

Before relocating to Syria, Fadhli led al Qaeda's network in Iran. The Treasury Department revealed this fact in a terrorist designation issued October 18, 2012. Fadhli, Treasury reported, "began working with al Qaeda's Iran-based facilitation network in 2009 and was later arrested by the Iranians." But he was "released by the Iranians in 2011 and went on to assume the leadership of the facilitation network."

"In addition to providing funding for al Qaeda activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan," Treasury said, Fadhli's network was "working to move fighters and money through Turkey to support al Qaeda-affiliated elements in Syria." Fadhli leveraged "his extensive network of Kuwaiti jihadist donors to send money to Syria via Turkey."

Iran didn't simply turn a blind eye to Fadhli's activities. The Treasury Department explained that a deal

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requires al Qaeda's men to report to the regime. "Under the terms of the agreement between al Qaeda and Iran, al Qaeda must refrain from conducting any operations within Iranian territory and recruiting operatives inside Iran while keeping Iranian authorities informed of their activities." Al Qaeda benefits from this relationship. "In return" for accepting Iran's terms, Treasury continued, "the Government of Iran gave the Iran-based al Qaeda network freedom of operation and uninhibited ability to travel for extremists and their families." Iranian authorities enforce these terms, which were negotiated "with the knowledge" of Osama bin Laden's right-hand man, by detaining al Qaeda members who do not comply.

There has been surprisingly little discussion of this during the debate over President Obama's nuclear accord with Iran, even though al Qaeda's presence on Iranian soil greatly complicates Obama's vision of a post-deal world.

It is no secret that the president believes the deal with Iran could open the door to a better relationship between the regime and its "Great Satan," America. "Iran may change," Obama told the *New York Times*'s Tom Friedman in an interview published in April, though he tried to tone down his optimism by "emphasizing that the nuclear deal that we've put together is not based on the idea that somehow the regime changes." Still, Obama said Iran could be "an extremely successful regional power" and a "responsible international player," as long as "it did not engage in aggressive rhetoric against its neighbors," "didn't express anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiment," and "maintained a military that was sufficient to protect itself, but was not engaging in a whole bunch of proxy wars around the region." Of course, a "responsible" Iran wouldn't support al Qaeda either.

President Obama and his advisers like to pretend that critics of their Iran deal are warmongers who don't want a diplomatic resolution or have otherwise been compromised by "lobbying." But opponents of the deal are rightly concerned about Iran's clear record of illicit nuclear activities and its decades of anti-Americanism (including killing U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan), antisemitism, and revolutionary fervor, which the regime zealously exports throughout the region. (Iran has actually *increased* its support for proxy wars during Obama's tenure in office.)

Iran's agreement with al Qaeda—exposed by Obama's own administration, not critics of the Iran deal—puts these concerns into stark relief. It is the administration, after all, that declared Muhsin al-Fadhli a threat to Americans who needed to be killed.

'Foreign Minister Zarif, is your government still harboring al Qaeda operatives?' 'Why, no, Mr. Secretary.' 'Good to hear—so we can leave that out of our agreement.'

Since 2011, Obama's Treasury and State Departments have repeatedly said that Iran works with al Qaeda. On July 28, 2011, Treasury unmasked "Iran's secret deal with al-Qaeda," saying it allows al Qaeda "to funnel funds and operatives through [Iranian] territory" and is "another aspect of Iran's unmatched support for terrorism." Yasin al-Suri, the head of the Iran-based network at the time, and several of his al Qaeda colleagues were designated terrorists. On December 22, 2011, the State Department offered a $10 million reward for information leading to Suri's capture—one of the richest rewards offered for any terrorist. "Iranian authorities maintain a relationship with al-Suri and have permitted him to operate within Iran's borders since 2005," State said.

On February 16, 2012, the Treasury Department designated Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) for its support of al Qaeda and Al Qaeda in Iraq. According to Treasury, the "MOIS has facilitated the movement of al Qaeda operatives in Iran and provided them with documents, identification cards, and passports." In addition, it "provided money and weapons to al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) . . . and negotiated prisoner releases of AQI operatives." (AQI evolved into the Islamic State, the al Qaeda offshoot that controls significant territory in Iraq and Syria.)

As the Obama administration continued to shed light on al Qaeda's operations inside Iran, Suri was sidelined. The Iranians placed him under some form of arrest in late 2011. At this point, as Treasury explained in the aforementioned October 18, 2012, designation, Fadhli took over.

Suri wasn't in Iranian custody for long, however. In January 2014, State and Treasury Department officials interviewed by Al Jazeera warned that Suri was back on the street and "more active than ever." Curiously, according to these officials, Iran allowed Suri to funnel cash and fighters to the Nusra Front, an official branch of al Qaeda that is engaged in a vicious fight against Iran's proxies in Syria; it is not clear why. On February 6, 2014, Treasury officially confirmed that Suri had "resumed leadership of al Qaeda's Iran-based network after being temporarily detained there in late 2011." Treasury also designated one of Suri's subordinates inside Iran.

Then, on August 22, 2014, the Treasury Department designated yet another al Qaeda leader who had operated in Iran, a Saudi known as Sanafi al-Nasr. Treasury said that Nasr served as the "chief of al Qaeda's Iran-based extremist and financial facilitation network" in early 2013. (This was just after Fadhli left for Syria and before Suri resumed his leadership position.) Like Fadhli, Nasr relocated to Syria, where he became a senior member of

the Nusra Front. He is also part of the Khorasan Group.

It is likely that Iran had the power to stop terrorists such as Fadhli from leaving Iranian soil. He had been imprisoned in Iran before and could have been again. The regime chose not to, for whatever reason.

Obama's State Department has repeatedly pointed to this collusion in its annual Country Reports on Terrorism. Previous editions, such as the one published last year, referred to al Qaeda's network inside Iran as a "core facilitation pipeline" that enables al Qaeda "to move funds and fighters to South Asia and also to Syria." However, State's most recent report, published earlier this year, says that Iran "previously allowed" al Qaeda to maintain this network. The implication is that Iran's deal with al Qaeda is a thing of the past, although the department did not explicitly state this.

Has Iran changed its policy with respect to al Qaeda? There is no clear indication it has, despite the fact the two are at loggerheads in countries such as Syria and Yemen. Iran's ally, the Assad regime, certainly wants al Qaeda terrorists like Fadhli taken out. And CNN reported last year that Syrian forces had captured Fadhli's bodyguard, who supposedly offered up intelligence on his boss's anti-Western plotting. But U.S. intelligence officials contacted by The Weekly Standard in recent months say they think the Iranians continue to allow al Qaeda jihadists to operate inside their country. If the Obama administration has evidence the situation has changed, they should present it.

In the meantime, congressmen and senators worried that the influx of cash Iran will receive under the nuclear deal will make it easier for the regime to sponsor terrorism should be asking some pointed questions. Do Iran and al Qaeda still have a deal in place? Is Yasin al-Suri still facilitating al Qaeda's operations from inside Iran, as the administration itself warned just last year? Why should we trust the Iranian regime to abide by the terms of the nuclear deal if it is working with al Qaeda terrorists who threaten us? ♦

Partisan in Chief

Obama's besetting sin.

BY FRED BARNES

The original sin of President Obama, politically speaking, was pushing his health care plan through Congress with Democratic votes alone. For rejecting even a veneer of bipartisanship, he and Democrats have paid an enormous price.

Five years after its passage, Obamacare is still controversial, viewed unfavorably by a majority or a plurality of Americans, depending on the poll. It has had a devastating political impact on Democrats across the country and was responsible, more than any other issue, for the Republican takeover of both houses of Congress. Now Obamacare is highly vulnerable to repeal if the next president is a Republican and the party keeps control of Congress.

Obama signs his albatross into law with nary a Republican in sight, March 23, 2010.

Obama should have known better. He violated a decades-long rule of thumb in Washington that an initiative significantly affecting tens of millions of Americans should have popular support and a bipartisan majority before being approved by Congress. Since Obamacare had neither, it has stirred protests and disunity, anger at Washington, and political polarization.

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Obamacare was "the biggest mistake of his political career," says Jeff Anderson, the executive director of the 2017 Project. "It showed his political naïveté." It was especially damaging to Obama, Anderson says, "from his perspective of trying to transform the United States of America."

The raw partisanship of Obamacare's passage was a preview of Obama's presidency. Rather than woo Republicans, Obama attacks them, questioning their motives and values. He makes no effort to compromise. He spurns bipartisanship. After Republicans won the House in 2010, he began to turn away from Congress and govern through executive orders.

On issues as sweeping as entitlements, the reason for bipartisanship is simple. It avoids discord and allows an initiative to sink roots and become a routine part of American life. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the interstate highway system, civil rights laws, federal aid to education—all were approved with large bipartisan majorities.

The original Social Security Act of 1935 had majority support from Republicans in the House (81 yes, 15 no) and Senate (16 yes, 5 no). Medicare and Medicaid were passed in 1965 with nearly all Democrats and half the Republicans voting for them. There have been efforts to reform these entitlements, but they've never been threatened with repeal. But almost from the moment Obamacare became law, Republicans have been demanding its repeal.

It didn't have to be this way. But when the health care legislation was being drafted, Republican senators who wanted to have a role in shaping the bill

were shut out. A small role might have satisfied them and won their votes. A few concessions surely would have. But none was offered. "Imagine FDR doing something like that," Anderson says. "Or LBJ. No way."

The story was only slightly different with Dodd-Frank, the massive measure to regulate financial markets and Wall Street, passed in 2010. In the Senate Finance Committee, then controlled by Democrats, Republican senator Bob Corker of Tennessee worked on the bill with then-chairman Max Baucus until Democratic leaders called a halt. The bill that passed was a Democratic document. Only three Republicans voted for it.

Dodd-Frank is unlikely to be repealed. But should Obama be succeeded by a GOP president, Republicans would pick it apart, particularly by eliminating the designation of financial institutions as "too big to fail" and thus eligible for a bailout, and by aiding small community banks crushed by Dodd-Frank's mandates.

What's surprising is that Obama failed to understand he could use Republicans to his advantage. In the early weeks of his presidency, he and Democrats stiffed Republicans in drafting the stimulus. Had they accepted tax cuts proposed by Republicans, the stimulus would no doubt have given a bigger jolt to the economy. And the package would have been bipartisan.

In negotiating with Iran, Obama could have argued for a better nuclear deal by invoking his ornery Republican opponents in Congress. They will attack the deal furiously and make it impossible for the American public to swallow, he could have told the Iranians—unless you offer concessions. Instead, it was Obama who offered concessions, Republicans are tearing the deal apart, and the public is wary.

The Iran pact is an executive agreement and like an executive order in one important respect: It can be revoked by the stroke of the next president's pen. Indeed, GOP presidential candidate Scott Walker has vowed to kill the Iran deal on his first day in office.

In his second term, Obama has been so averse to working with Republicans and Congress that he's issued executive orders when he didn't need to. He short-circuited the effort in Congress to legalize young people brought into this country by parents who entered illegally. Obama claimed the country couldn't wait for Congress to act. So he issued an executive order, followed by another legalizing up to five million adult illegal immigrants.

But it's Obamacare that is the president's unending nightmare. Had he allowed Republican participation and produced a bipartisan bill, the political drag wouldn't exist. If fixes were needed, he could ask Congress to make them. Even today, Obama insists he would entertain changes. But he's failed to start negotiations. And when Republicans announce a proposed fix, he simply says no.

Obamacare dominated the midterm elections in 2010 and 2014. Democrats have lost 69 seats in the House and 13 in the Senate on Obama's watch. Anderson says, "2016 will ultimately be the third Obamacare election." If he's right, Obama's refusal to compromise—that is, seek bipartisanship on his own behalf—will deserve the blame. ♦

They Really, Really Don't Like Him

Our unpopular president.

BY JAY COST

Barack Obama is not popular. This plain and simple fact may surprise those who read only legacy journalists, who often elide this inconvenient truth. A recent Associated Press write-up is illustrative:

> Even as the public remains closely divided about his presidency, Barack Obama is holding on to his support from the so-called "Obama coalition" of minorities, liberals and young Americans, an Associated Press-GfK poll shows, creating an incentive for the next Democratic presidential nominee to stick with him and his policies.

Obama's job approval in this poll was a paltry 43 percent, with 55 percent disapproval. This is hardly a public "closely divided," but it is typical of the media's approach. They prefer to gloss over his bad numbers, point out the weakness of the GOP, or emphasize how popular he is among Democrats.

But ignoring a fact does not make it any less true. Obama is unpopular, and he has been unpopular for a while. The most straightforward definition of a popular president is one who garners at least 50 percent approval in public opinion polls. The last time Obama hit that mark in the *Real Clear Politics* average of national polls was April 2013. Excepting brief boosts corresponding to his reelection and the killing of Osama bin Laden, he has consistently been under 50 percent in the *RCP* average since December 2009. This makes him one of the least popular presidents in postwar history.

Gallup has kept regular track of presidential approval since the Truman administration. It reports that the most popular postwar presidents were Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton; their job approval ratings were 50 percent

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or better for at least two-thirds of their tenures. The least popular presidents were Harry Truman, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter; theirs were below 50 percent for at least two-thirds of their tenures. Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and George W. Bush fall somewhere in between.

To date, Obama has been unpopular for more than two-thirds of his tenure. If he stays under 50 percent for the remainder of his term, he will have been unpopular for longer than any postwar leader.

Obama's numbers have been remarkably stable, typically hovering between 42 and 45 percent approval, outside those honeymoon periods. This distinguishes him from Truman, Ford, and Carter, whose numbers sunk much lower (as did George W. Bush's and Nixon's). The difference is that Obama has retained strong support from Democrats, while other presidents lost substantial intraparty support. With Obama at the helm, the Democratic party is as united as it has been since the mid-1930s. Will Rogers' famous quip—"I am not a member of any organized political party. I am a Democrat."—is no longer apt. Democratic disunity was evident as late as 2000, when Ralph Nader poached a decisive share of the progressive vote from Al Gore, but it is no more.

Democratic loyalists (which includes voters who identify as independent but reliably vote Democrat) are a solid 5 to 8 points short of an outright majority, however, contradicting boasts from party operatives that demographics give them a lock on the White House. Most public opinion polls sample adults, who tend to be more Democratic than actual voters, yet still consistently show the president falling quite short of 50 percent. If Obama were indeed the herald of an enduring Democratic majority, we should see this first and foremost in the *RCP* average. But in fact, we find the opposite: The president, while holding his base together, has nevertheless alienated the critical mass of independent voters who determine elections.

Historically speaking, changes in presidential job approval track fairly closely with three factors: a war going badly, scandal, and recession. When any of these occurs, presidential approval falls. When several happen at once—as with Truman, Nixon, and George W. Bush—presidential approval can fall very low indeed. Yet Obama's tenure has not seen such problems, at least not to the extent past presidents have. Sure, the rise of ISIS is terrible, the IRS targeting conservative groups is highly objectionable, and the economy remains mired in weakness. But none compares to Vietnam in 1967, Watergate in 1974, or the economy in 2008.

An American greets his president.

While those three problems are not as salient today as they have been in the past, they still matter. We don't have a war right now, but we have foreign troubles. We don't have a scandal that implicates Obama, but we have had malfeasance and incompetence from government agencies. We don't have a recession, but this is still the worst recovery of the postwar era. The cumulative effect on the public mood is evident. According to *Real Clear Politics*, 61 percent of Americans believe that the country is on the wrong track. Apart from a brief surge of optimism early in Obama's tenure, this appraisal has more or less remained the same.

The country likewise does not believe Obama's policy prescriptions are sensible. Obamacare has been unpopular, of course, since before it became law. And in mid-2010, a Pew poll found that 62 percent of Americans thought the stimulus did not create jobs; even a majority of Democrats held this view. More generally, the exit polls from the 2012 election—which Democrats claim marked a defining shift in the body politic—found a country skeptical of Obama's brand of big government. A majority of respondents agreed, "Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals," and slight pluralities preferred Mitt Romney on the economy and the deficit. According to the exit polls, Obama carried the day because of his personal appeal. During his second term, House Republicans—who were empowered precisely to stop the president—have mostly forced him to temper his leftist ambitions. Yet Obama's marks on foreign affairs have suffered, with the country regularly disapproving of his handling of ISIS and Iran.

So although there is no acute crisis, Americans do not think the nation is in good shape, and because most people are skeptical of Obama's domestic and foreign policies, they have soured on him. His approval ratings are not the lowest presidents have seen, but he has fallen under 50 percent more consistently than any of his predecessors.

Though Hillary Clinton is increasingly dominating the political spotlight, the president's standing will affect the 2016 contest. Clinton is scurrying leftward to keep Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley from winning the progressive vote, but in so doing she risks alienating the middle of the country, which has tired of activist government. And it is quite likely that, as his former secretary of state, Clinton will be seen as Obama's successor, thus bearing the burden of his unpopularity.

All this gives the GOP the best opportunity to retake the presidency since 1980. The country is unhappy with the state of the union. If voters believe that conservatives offer a change for the better, Obama's persistent unpopularity should vault the Republican nominee into the White House. ♦

Be Prepared

Going door-to-door for 2016—already.

BY MICHAEL WARREN

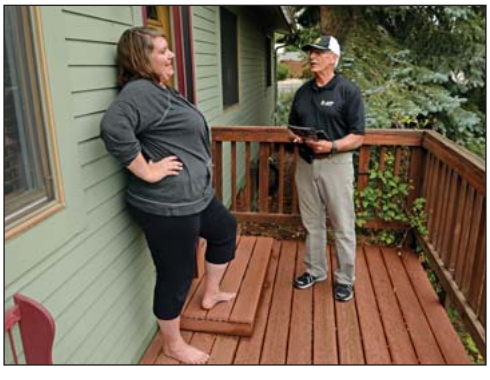
Denver

"Nobody's home," says Michael Fields, the 28-year-old state director of the Colorado chapter of Americans for Prosperity. On this sunny Saturday morning in mid-July, we're walking through a residential neighborhood in Greenwood Village, a wealthy suburb in Arapahoe County. It's the perfect day for a hike near the mountains or a dip in the pool, which may explain why Fields is greeted with silence at nearly every door he knocks on.

Undeterred, he and two other AFP activists navigate the streets with Google Maps, hoping to find one person willing to take the brief survey queued on their iPads. Every unanswered door receives a hanging flyer and input into an iPad: "Not home." On the rare occasion a voter does emerge to talk, the activists can only get about two questions off: Do you support Obamacare? And do you support the state's taxpayer bill of rights provision that requires voter approval for every state and local tax hike? The answers are punched into the system, too. Then it's back to the map to find the next house.

Meanwhile, at a nearby field office, other volunteers are calling potential survey-takers on the phone, with about the same success rates as those out in the streets. It's common to have someone hang up before the volunteer can even say her name. Elderly folks on the other end think the callers are trying to sell them something. One volunteer ends the last of several short calls in a row with an apology and a promise to take the caller off AFP's list. None of it's glamorous, but all this political grunt work in the middle of 2015, AFP officials say, is preparing the super-PAC and its 35 state chapters for their biggest battle yet: 2016.

Americans for Prosperity is the flagship political organization of libertarian billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch. AFP spent $122 million in 2012, more than in its eight previous years of existence combined, and $77 million in the 2014 midterm elections, a lot of it on TV advertising. The *New York Times* reported in January that the Koch brothers told their large network of fellow donors they plan to raise and spend nearly $900 million on political advocacy during the 2016 election cycle. While AFP won't disclose their 2016 budget, it's likely to be a sizable chunk of that $900 million.



AFP's Rudy Zitti, right, speaks with Erica Corbett as he goes door-to-door in Loveland, Colorado, September 10, 2014.

R.J. SANGOSTI / THE DENVER POST / GETTY

After being outgunned by President Obama's Organizing for America (OFA) and other left-wing political action committees in the run-up to the 2012 election, conservative groups struggled to figure out how to reform their campaign operations for 2014 and beyond. Some, like the Chamber of Commerce, focused on backing higher-quality Senate candidates and played a role in GOP primaries. The Republican National Committee conducted a lengthy "autopsy" of the 2012 loss that concluded the party needed to rebrand itself, revamp its messaging, and restructure its data operation. For AFP, which rose to prominence as a sort of institutional manifestation of the Tea Party movement, success in 2016 means investing heavily in building permanent grassroots operations in battleground states. Which, officials say, is exactly what they've been doing.

In swing states like Colorado, there's already evidence of investment. AFP has five field offices, three in the Denver area and one each in Colorado Springs and Fort Collins. Every activist, down to the brand-new volunteer, is armed with a cheap flip-phone and an iPad loaded with the Koch-funded voter database platform i360. (Activists can also make phone calls from their own homes, on their own devices.) Volunteers can expect free food and beverages between canvassing trips, as well as AFP-branded hats, T-shirts, and other swag. But AFP is also beefing up personnel. In addition to Fields, the state director, Colorado's chapter has more than 20 full-time staff members, including a deputy state director and 7 field directors in different regions of the state, along with several part-time staffers and an ever-growing pool of volunteers.

What are all these people doing, more than a year before the 2016 election? Lots of phone calls and door-to-door canvassing to target a curated list of "persuadables"—not hardcore Republicans or Democrats but people who might vote and might be willing to support policies and candidates in line with the group's small-government, pro-free-market philosophy. This year, at least, AFP's activism focuses on local issues, particularly education. In Jefferson County, the second-largest school district in the state, recall petitions for three conservative school-board members are gathering steam.

Michael Warren is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

AFP activists there are working to educate voters about the benefits of school-choice reforms passed by the board, and its door-to-door canvassers and phone bankers ask specific survey questions about those reforms.

The goal is to bolster AFP's voter lists with as much information as possible—how a particular voter feels about Obamacare and school choice, if he views himself as conservative or liberal, even what time of day he is most likely to be home. That won't just help AFP learn who to target for get-out-the-vote efforts in, say, the potential school-board recall elections in Jefferson County this November. They'll know who to get out and how on Election Day 2016. "This is what OFA was doing between 2008 and 2012," says Dustin Zvonek, AFP's western regional director.

Will emulating OFA pay off? AFP prides itself on its commitment not to a party or a candidate but to ideas, chiefly the free-market philosophy espoused by the Kochs. But OFA's strengths were its alignment with an inspirational leader (President Barack Obama) and a clear policy agenda (the Obama administration's). Similarly, organizations such as the Sierra Club and the National Rifle Association have identifiable single-issue causes with small but passionate bases of support.

By contrast, AFP campaigns on everything from energy policy to taxes to health care. Their broad-based list of issues makes them less like an interest group and more like a major political party—but without the benefits a party enjoys, like universal familiarity and the ability to coordinate with candidates. In the eyes of AFP leadership, though, it means the freedom to push the issues they and their donors care about, unencumbered by negative perceptions of the Republican party. That allows the group to make a difference on the margins with independent voters, where swing-state politics are decided.

"I think a lot of the donors are starting to see the benefit" of this off-year build-up, says Michael Fields. "I feel good about it." ♦

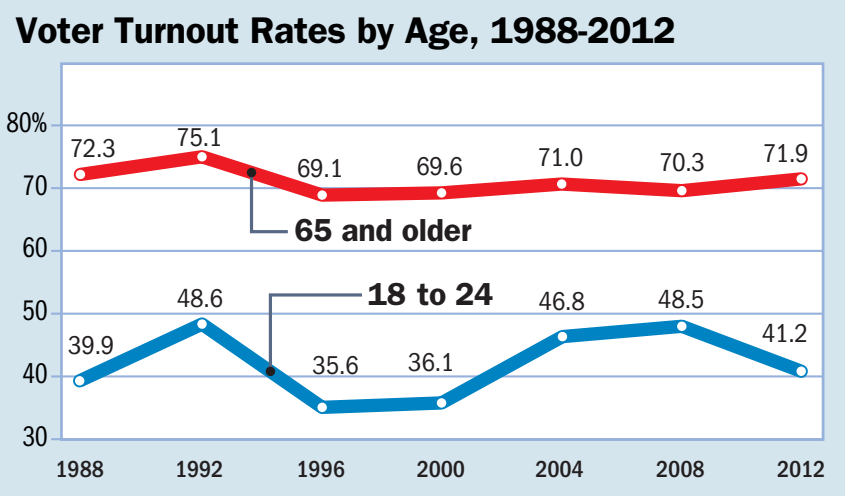
Remember Who Shows Up to Vote

Seniors, not millennials, hold the key to the 2016 elections. BY TOM EDMONDS

As the 2016 elections begin to dominate the news, a recurring message has seeped into the narrative being spoon-fed to the American public: *Millennials will be the key demographic and the single most important voting group*. Really?

If this sounds strangely familiar, it is. In 2008, we were told that youth would "rock the vote." What's the difference between the youth vote and millennials? The "youth vote" typically refers to those 18-24 years of age, while millennials are recognized as those born from 1981 to 2000. But whatever age parameters you put on this demographic, they have one thing in common: Few of them bother to vote. According to the Census Bureau, the turnout rate for youth, which was already low, declined from 2008 to 2012. Of those 18-24-year-olds who were eligible to vote in the last presidential election, only 41 percent showed up. Compare that with the 72 percent of seniors, 65 and older, who voted in 2012, and it becomes even clearer. In 2014, though admittedly a midterm election, only 21.3 percent of millennials cast a ballot. They constituted only 13 percent of the total electorate. There are many statistics on millennials and the youth vote, and they all point to the same conclusion: Voting is not a priority for them. Their most common excuses are "too busy" or "scheduling conflict."

Over the years, we have seen many other demographic labels offered to simplify the complexities of voter



Note: Data for those aged 25 to 64 not shown.

SOURCE: For 1988-2008, Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the Current Population Survey November Supplements. For 2012, U.S. Census Bureau.

Tom Edmonds is a Republican media consultant and past president of both the American Association of Political Consultants and the International Association of Political Consultants.

turnout. Remember these oldies but goodies?

In 1994, when the Republicans won control of both the Senate and House by historic proportions, we were told by the media it was simply "angry white males." Did anyone wonder if there really were 40 million angry white males?

In 1996, the "gender gap" was given credit for Bill Clinton's reelection. Indeed, 54 percent of all women voted for Clinton. In 2008, Barack Obama did even better with 56 percent of the female vote.

But "it's easy to be fooled by demographics if you look at them in just one dimension," observes Whit Ayres, Republican pollster and author of *2016 and Beyond: How Republicans Can Elect a President in the New America.* "Historically, 60 percent of the African-American vote is female. Since African Americans vote overwhelmingly Democrat, that's a major reason why there is this perception of a gender gap," writes Ayres. Although it does not garner much press, there is another political gender gap. Every Republican presidential candidate since 1980 has received a majority of the male vote.

In 2012, the focus shifted to Hispanics as *the* vital voting bloc. But as Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor of the Pew Research Center observe, "Hispanics continue to punch below their weight." In the last presidential election, Latino turnout was just 48 percent—far below that of whites (64.1 percent) and blacks (66.2 percent). And one can make the case that it's not likely to get larger. Hispanics are 17 percent of the U.S. population; 24 percent are under the age of 18. When they become eligible to vote, they will likely mirror other youth, i.e., most won't vote.

Following the 2014 election, the *New York Times*'s Nate Cohn wrote that the GOP doesn't need the Hispanic vote to win the White House. "In 2016, Hispanics will represent just 12 percent of eligible voters, and between 9-10 percent of actual voters. That's a lot, but it is not large enough to grant or deny Republicans the presidency."

So, if elections are determined by those who *do* show up to vote, and if the past is predictive of future behavior, then pundits should be talking about the senior vote. Yes, seniors.

According to census data, the 65-plus age group is the fastest growing demographic in America. This demographic increased by 7.1 percent from 2010 to 2012 and now totals more than 43 million Americans. Put another way, seniors' share of the electorate rose 6 percent between 2012 and 2014 while the youth voters' share fell 6 percent in that same time period.

Voter turnout dropped from 40.9 percent to 36.6 percent in the 2014 midterm elections compared with the 2010 midterms, with just 12 states recording a higher turnout. Correlation may not equal causation, but those 12 states had only one thing in common: They all had significant increases in their senior population.

Seniors have been the most consistent voting demographic election after election. And as the baby-boom generation continues to age, this trend will likely extend for decades to come in even greater numbers. They may not be tech-savvy or trendsetters, but seniors are a political powerhouse.

"Seniors vote because they're vested. The political system is important to their being. They're not going to vote for Democrats, but they are going to vote. You can take that to the bank," says nationally recognized Democratic pollster John Zogby.

So will 2016 be "The Year of Seniors," followed by more of the same in 2020 and 2024? We'll see. But if you want to know what the most dependable voting bloc in America is thinking, my advice is not to cancel your newspaper subscription just yet. ♦

Back from Bankruptcy

Detroit emerges full of promise, though recovery will take years. BY DAVID DEVOSS

Detroit

For close to a century the Forest Arms apartments was one of the most prestigious addresses on Detroit's Near Westside. But by the start of this decade, the city's declining population, municipal mismanagement, and foundering economy had left the building reminiscent of postwar Berlin.

The city ordered the structure demolished, but 48-year-old local contractor Scott Lowell objected and eventually won the right to renovate the decimated 1905 Edwardian. He turned it into 70 eco-friendly apartments, many with stunning views of the city.

As a young correspondent for Time *magazine, David DeVoss lived in Detroit for two years reporting on the auto industry.*

The Forest Arms is the third blighted building Lowell has transformed, and like the previous two it will be fully occupied the day it opens.

"I regard myself as a steward of this city, and buildings like this are worth preserving," Lowell says as he walks up a once-majestic staircase in the process of being repaired. "Young people without the baggage of the past are moving to Detroit, and they want to live in historic buildings close to where they work."

In the 8 months since Detroit emerged from a 16-month Chapter 9 bankruptcy, the mood of the city has shifted from stoic despair to guarded optimism. Weekly openings of new restaurants, galleries, and designer shops are creating a buzz that's impossible to deny. The streetlights are back

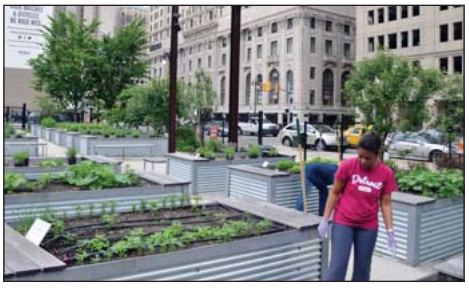
on along Woodward Avenue, where track is being laid for a light-rail commuter train 90 percent financed by private investors. Ambulances and police cars now respond when summoned. Midtown Detroit recently acquired the sine qua non of gentility: a Whole Foods market.

Many factors contribute to the upbeat mood, but perhaps the biggest is the revival of the auto industry. Over 17 million vehicles will roll out of dealer showrooms this year, no doubt increasing the $7 billion in collective net profits the Big Three earned in 2014. This month the United Auto Workers and General Motors began negotiating a new contract that, after four years of belt tightening, likely will result in new hires and higher wages.

Despite impressive progress, Detroit still has plenty of problems. Downtown may have a 98 percent occupancy rate, but residential neighborhoods look as if they've been winnowed by a thousand tornadoes. There are so many vacant lots that the houses still standing almost seem like homesteads. Derelict but habitable houses can be bought for as little as $600, but there are few buyers among the 680,000 people (down from 1.85 million in 1960) who call the city home. Bargain hunters often are deterred by blight. Of Detroit's 380,000 homes, some 114,000 have been razed, with an additional 80,000 scheduled for demolition. Detroit's Blight Removal Task Force noted in a 2014 report, "Blight sucks the soul out of anyone who gets near it, let alone those who are unfortunate enough to live with it all around them."

Detroit hit its nadir under Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who resigned in 2008 after pleading guilty to legal, sexual, and administrative malfeasance that included perjury, obstruction of justice, and the diverting of $10 million of city money to hide an extramarital affair with his chief of staff. Despite using a city credit card to buy $210,000 worth of restaurant meals, wine, and spa massages during his first term, Kilpatrick managed to remain in office more than six years by exploiting the prejudices separating suburban whites from inner-city African Americans. Ordered to repay the city $1 million, Kilpatrick was sent back to jail for attempting to hide assets from the court. In 2013 he was sentenced to an additional 28 years after being found guilty of mail fraud, extortion, and racketeering.

Heavily Democratic Detroit owes its resurgence in part to Republican governor Rick Snyder, who in March 2013 declared a financial emergency, appointed an experienced manager to take control of the city, and told him to file for bankruptcy so Detroit could get out from under liabilities in excess of $18 billion.



Above, a downtown vegetable garden on a former demolition site; below, Scott Lowell in front of the 1905 Forest Arms. To view more photos with this story, visit weeklystandard.com.

DAVID DEVOSS

One immediate problem was a $290 million debt to Bank of America, Merrill Lynch, and UBS resulting from risky investments made by Kilpatrick. Instead of investing in extra police, fire protection, and road repairs, the city was using 5 percent of its shrinking budget to service the debt. The banks initially agreed to accept $230 million, then dropped their demand to $165 million after intense negotiations. But when the federal mediator presented the compromise to bankruptcy judge Steven Rhodes, he rejected the deal, saying the price was too high for a debt that was likely illegal. Chastised by Rhodes, Detroit's negotiators returned to their creditors and threatened to sue, at which point the banks agreed to settle for $85 million.

Unfunded pension liabilities constituted the most troubling hurdle, since the only municipal assets large enough to secure them consisted of paintings valued at $816 million at the city-owned Detroit Institute of Art (DIA). Detroit's art was saved thanks to a "grand bargain" in which foundation pledges of $366 million were matched by $350 million from the state of Michigan and $100 million from private DIA benefactors.

To make any deal work, however, pensioners had to accept cuts and promise not to sue. In the end, non-uniformed former employees did just that, agreeing to accept a 4.5 percent cut and forgo future cost-of-living adjustments. Police and firemen retained full pensions but gave up half of future cost-of-living increases.

"Bankruptcy allowed the city to eliminate liabilities, clear its balance sheet, and achieve a different narrative," says Eugene Driker, a Detroit attorney who served on the federal mediation team. "It was a near-death experience from which the city emerged with a well-founded optimism that didn't exist before."

After decades of mismanagement, Detroit finally has competent leadership in the person of Mike Duggan. A white politician elected mayor by a city that's 82 percent black, Duggan saw his popularity soar when, after taking office in January 2014, he promised to double the number of ambulances, create an affordable car insurance program, reopen 220 parks, and crack down on thieves stealing metal from abandoned homes and streetlights. His most notable accomplishments, however, are replacing more than 35,000 broken streetlights and hastening the removal of blighted homes from 200 a year to 200 a week.

One of Duggan's biggest supporters is billionaire Dan Gilbert. "If a white country elects a black president, why

can't a black city have a white mayor?" asks Gilbert. "It's a great thing for America. Now we have a Democratic mayor who actually talks to the Republican governor. They work together to solve problems."

Politicians working together may have enabled the city to escape bankruptcy, but it is the private business community that is bringing Detroit back to life. Detroit native Gilbert, who is the founder and chairman of Quicken Loans and Rock Ventures and majority owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers and some 110 other companies, started the movement back to the city in 2010 when he moved 1,500 employees downtown from offices in five suburbs. Within six weeks he realized the city was where he and his young employees wanted to be.

"You could feel the energy," he remembers. "Detroit had a real urban core where young people wanted to work and live. A revived Detroit meant that graduates from Wayne State, MSU, and Michigan wouldn't have to relocate to Chicago or New York to find a good job. They could come here and be part of history."

Gilbert certainly has made staying closer to home more attractive. This year 20,000 students applied for 1,800 internships at Quicken.

It did not escape Gilbert that most of downtown could be purchased at fire-sale prices. Architectural gems by designers like Albert Kahn, Minoru Yamasaki, and Daniel Burnham, coauthor of the city-shaping Chicago Plan of 1909 and architect of New York's Flatiron Building, were available for as little as $8 per square foot. Today, Gilbert owns 75 buildings, most of them filled with 12,500 Rock Ventures employees and 130 corporate tenants to whom he leases space through his real estate arm, Bedrock Real Estate Services.

Downtown Detroit looks like an enormous construction site. Stately old buildings are gutted and rehabbed beside trenches being cut for fiber optic cable that will bring high-speed Internet to the entire Central Business District. Sofas and coffee tables sit outside office towers so millennials can eat lunch in the sun. Were it not for the jackhammers, Detroit would feel like a campus during pledge week. The kegger vibe continues after work when hundreds of young professionals head to Campus Martius, a downtown park where they flirt and network before going home on streets with surveillance cameras monitored 24/7 in the Quicken control center.

"Great things are happening here," beams Bruce Schwartz, the self-styled Detroit ambassador for Quicken Loans. "What these young people are doing will be written about in history books."

The most significant factor shaping the city's future is the revival of manufacturing in the form of companies like Shinola, a storied brand once famous for shoe polish that today makes bicycles, leather goods, and wristwatches priced from $450 to $600, at the entry point of luxury. Located behind the old GM headquarters, Shinola's factory employs 300 Detroiters, half of whom assemble the only watch made in America. "We believe in the beauty of industry, the glory of manufacturing," the company says on its website. "We know there's not just history in Detroit, there is a future. It's why we are here. . . . Creating a community that will thrive through excellence of craft and pride of work. Where we will reclaim the making of things that are made well. And define American luxury through American quality."

Shinola is the creation of Tom Kartsotis, the cofounder of Fossil. Knowing he could not compete with China on price, he decided to compete on quality. His bet paid off. When Shinola's first 2,500 watches hit the market in 2013 they sold out in eight days. This year the company expects to sell between 150,000 and 180,000 watches through its eight retail outlets and stores like Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom.

"Shinola's goal is to reestablish the Made in Detroit brand," says Bridget Russo, the company's chief of marketing. "We take enormous pride in the fact that our products look great and are made here."

A number of factors limit Detroit's speedy recovery. Though Michigan's out-migration has been reversed, Detroit continues to lose population. Thirty-eight percent of its residents live below the poverty line and are plagued by murders that occur in numbers close to the level in New York, a city 12 times larger.

Equally problematic is what to do with all the vacant land after blighted structures are carted away. Detroit covers 139 square miles, an area large enough to accommodate Boston, Miami, and San Francisco combined. Some state economists believe the land should stay fallow, be used for urban farms, campgrounds, or carbon-reducing forests, or be turned into rainwater catchment basins. Dan Gilbert disagrees. "I'm not a big believer in downsizing," he says. "If you are downsizing you are dying."

Gilbert believes cleared residential lots have tremendous value because sewers and utilities already are in place. He advocates bundling vacant property into greenfield neighborhoods that can be given away free to developers willing to build a $5 million police substation and a $20 million public school on part of the land they receive. "This development model worked in Brooklyn and can succeed here," he says. "I see no reason why Detroit can't have a population of one million in the near future."

Already there are signs that suburban attitudes about Detroit are changing. "People are driving down from places like Bloomfield Hills to have bridal showers and rehearsal dinners here," says Carolyn Howard, owner of the Traffic Jam restaurant close to the historic buildings being renovated by Scott Lowell. Adds Howard, "The suburbs want to be part of the new Detroit experience."

Two centuries ago, Detroit was leveled by the great fire of 1805. The seal of the city that arose from the ash depicts two women: one standing before a heap of cinders, the other astride a skyline of tall buildings. Both are bracketed by the words *Speramus Meliora. Resurget Cineribus.* We hope for better things. It will rise from the ashes. Citizens of Detroit are hoping that the determination of the past can be the dream of the future. ♦

Crowded Field of Dreams

The state of the Republican race

By Stephen F. Hayes

Des Moines

Some 20 minutes after an appearance at the Family Leadership Summit in Ames, Iowa, that would dominate the news in the coming days, Donald Trump walked into the industrial-looking basement area designated for press conferences, surrounded by tough-looking men in slick business suits, ostensibly there to provide security but whose real role, one suspects, was to make the man they were following feel important. A wooden podium faced nearly a dozen television cameras and twice as many journalists, all arrayed in a semicircle about 10 feet away.

On stage, Trump had spoken about religion generally—"I love church" and "I love religious people." And he'd shared his personal faith—"I take the little wine and the little crackers." But if Trump believes in God, he appears to worship himself, and if there is no afterlife in a faith tradition that values publicity more than anything else, Trump doesn't seem to mind. As he looked out at the reporters ready to capture his every word, and the cameras that would broadcast them to the world, Trump couldn't hide the satisfaction that crept across his face.

This is heaven.

Trump, as the world would soon learn, had just mocked Senator John McCain for being a prisoner of war in Vietnam. Responding to McCain's comment that Trump's campaign had "fired up the crazies," Trump first said McCain was "not a war hero" before amending that observation with another. "He's a war hero because he was captured." And then: "I like people who weren't captured." Many audience members gasped in disbelief. A chorus of murmurs—what did he say?—gave way to a smattering of boos. Trump seemed taken aback by the reaction for just a moment. Pressed by moderator Frank Luntz, Trump allowed that "perhaps he's a war hero," but resumed his attack by snickering that McCain "was last in his class" at the U.S. Naval Academy.

It was immediately obvious that this would be a problem for Trump. A typical politician would be terrified of facing a gaggle of reporters after such oral feculence. A normal human might feel some contrition for suggesting that a man shot down flying combat missions could have avoided captivity, or belittling a man who was tortured after refusing to divulge information about his mission, or mocking a prisoner of war who turned down the early release offered because of his father's prominence.

Not Trump.

He spent the better part of his press conference shrugging off any suggestion that he'd done anything wrong. Asked if he'd apologize to McCain, Trump said: "No." Asked why he'd say he likes people who weren't captured, Trump sniffed: "I like the people that don't get captured and I respect the people that do get captured." Asked if he'd ever read an account of McCain's captivity, Trump sneered: "It's irrelevant."

In the days that followed, Trump's defenders, including the man himself, would point to a "fact check" written by reporter Sharyl Attkisson as exculpatory. Trump had conceded that McCain was a war hero, they argued, so suggestions to the contrary were unfair, and a *Washington Post* story that reported Trump had claimed McCain was not a war hero was deemed "inaccurate." It was a conclusion that required ignoring one obvious fact: The entire point of Trump's commentary was to mock McCain. He conceded that McCain was a war hero only to mock the senator for having been captured. It was such a silly defense that Trump didn't even try to use it as he parried questions from reporters after his appearance in Ames.

The whole episode played out like a scene from a far-fetched satire of American politics—a pompous windbag with thought-provoking hair and a proclivity for childish put-downs mocks a decorated war hero for . . . having been

SCOTT BRUNDAGE

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

captured. And he does so in the pursuit of votes for the highest office in the land.

Most of the other Republicans denounced Trump, and the story dominated coverage of the race for much of the week. Ben Carson, asked whether McCain was a war hero, said, "it depends on your definition of a war hero." Ted Cruz, who is no doubt hoping to inherit the Trump voters when they abandon the real estate magnate, has been friendliest to Trump. At first, he refused to criticize Trump, citing an unwillingness to get drawn into Republican infighting stoked by the media—an odd claim for a senator who has made his name by disparaging other Republicans, often with justification.

For these reasons and one other, it's hard to blame the media for paying attention to Trump. He sits atop national polls of the Republican primary electorate taken by *USA Today*, Fox News, and ABC News with the *Washington Post*. In that last poll, which had a small sample, Trump led his closest rival, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, by 11 points, 24-13 percent.

This won't last. At some point, Trump will collapse under the weight of his own ignorance and boorishness. But that's not likely to happen anytime soon. Many Republican primary voters are so frustrated with politics and politicians that they're willing to abide, and maybe even abet, the rolling carnival that Trump represents. If our politics is a joke, they reason, why not back a clown?

Meanwhile, the Republican race continues. The other candidates are sharpening their messages, plotting strategy, and preparing for the coming debates. The day before Trump's attack on McCain, Florida senator Marco Rubio spent the day in western Iowa battling the flu and trying to win voters. The day after Trump, Scott Walker checked off four more Iowa counties in his attempt to visit all 99 before the caucuses next winter. John Kasich, the popular Ohio governor and former member of the House of Representatives, announced his candidacy in Columbus. Jeb Bush delivered a detailed speech in Tallahassee proposing an overhaul of lobbying rules. Bobby Jindal's sharp answers in his question-and-answer session with Luntz provided him with his best moment so far. Mike Huckabee offered a forceful denunciation of Planned Parenthood's role in selling body parts of aborted infants. Carly Fiorina challenged Hillary Clinton to address the issue. Ben Carson denounced the lavish conditions in American prisons. Rick Santorum acquitted himself well answering questions on the Center Seat segment of *Special Report with Bret Baier*. Rand Paul released a video showing him taking a chainsaw to the U.S. tax code. Rick Perry positioned himself as Trump's main antagonist, while Cruz continued to defend him. Lindsey Graham destroyed his cell phone after Trump read out his number at a campaign appearance. And George Pataki . . . we're not sure what George Pataki is doing.

At the center of each candidacy lies a fundamental question, the answer to which will determine whether the candidate becomes the Republican nominee. Some of those questions are philosophical, some of them political. With all 16 candidates formally in the race as of last week, and with the first debate just two weeks away, here is a look at the field and those questions.

For nearly half of the candidates, the fundamental question is the simplest one in politics: *Am I viable?*

This is the question now facing Jindal, Santorum, Fiorina, Graham, and even Perry. The top 10 candidates will be invited to the Fox News debate in Cleveland on August 6. At press time, none of these candidates would qualify on the basis of the *Real Clear Politics* average of national polls. If you're not in the debates, you have no shot.

Mike Huckabee and Ben Carson will both make the debates, but they face the same question. Huckabee is a good communicator, but he appeals largely to social conservatives, and his only hope is a strong showing in Iowa, where he's currently running sixth. Carson has a strong grassroots following, and his early-state supporters seem more committed to their candidate than are the early backers of other candidates. His challenge is to expand his appeal beyond that core group.

Kasich: *Will primary voters rally to a candidate arguing that the good Lord wants him to expand government?*

Kasich, the governor of Ohio, entered the race with a 45-minute extemporaneous speech that served as a strong reminder of the importance of speechwriters. More than once, Kasich seemed to end up in a rhetorical cul de sac, pausing momentarily to wonder how he'd gotten there before abruptly heading out in a new direction.

There is an authenticity about Kasich that could well be appealing, particularly in a state like New Hampshire, where voters are often open to quirky Republicans. And if government experience were the most important qualification for the presidency, Kasich, with 18 years in the House of Representatives before his two terms as Ohio governor, would be the Republican nominee.

But Kasich, who portrays himself as a budget hawk, chose to expand Medicaid under Obamacare, arguing that anyone who decided otherwise would be disappointing God. "When you die and get to the meeting with St. Peter, he's probably not going to ask you much about what you did about keeping government small," Kasich told an Ohio lawmaker skeptical of his expansion. "But he is going to ask you what you did for the poor. You better have a good answer."

It's an argument without a limiting principle that could be used to justify any expansion of government. And

Kasich's Medicaid expansion is already over budget—some $1.4 billion over budget in just 18 months.

Christie: *Will voters, and donors, give him a second look?*

Four years ago, with Mitt Romney the odds-on favorite in the Republican primary, a group of six influential Iowa Republicans flew to New Jersey to implore Chris Christie to consider a presidential run. He declined. Christie is running this time, and none of those six men is supporting him. In the *RCP* average of polls, Christie registers a paltry 2.8 percent.

There are several explanations for this. Being governor of New Jersey means extra attention in the media capital of the world, particularly from the broadcast networks. That's an advantage, but also a liability, as Christie discovered during the "Bridgegate" scandal in 2013. The story received widespread coverage on television and in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, newspapers with national readership. The governor of Oregon, forced to resign amid scandal, didn't receive a fraction of the coverage that Christie has on the bridge.

Beyond that, conservatives have grown increasingly skeptical of Christie for reasons both substantive and symbolic. Christie, like Kasich, opted to expand Medicaid in New Jersey, a deal with the devil that will inevitably mean vastly more state-level spending when the federal support for the expansion ends. Christie once proclaimed that failure to reform Medicaid and other entitlements put America "on the path to ruin." And in 2012, he said: "Obamacare on Medicaid to the states was extortion." But facing reelection in a blue state in 2013, Christie agreed to the expansion, and he now defends it as necessary. That would be a problem for anyone, but it presents a particular challenge for Christie, who is running as a "telling-it-like-it-is" candidate who will deliver the hard truths on entitlements.

But for many conservatives, it was Christie's embrace of Obama in the days before the 2012 presidential election that left them skeptical. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, as Christie sought federal help for his battered state, he toured the coast with Obama and offered praise for the president. It was a brief moment of little actual consequence, but for many conservative voters, it is an enduring memory.

Cruz: *Can the mad-as-hell conservative base be converted to mad-as-hell supporters of Ted Cruz?*

Cruz has money and arguably the clearest, most consistent message in the entire field: He's had it with Washington, he's had it with the Democrats who have expanded government, and he's especially had it with the Republicans who have enabled them. The good news for Cruz is that large parts of the American electorate agree with him; the bad news is that they're not yet prepared to make him their spokesman. Cruz, at 5.4 percent in the *RCP* average, correctly understands that Trump is occupying space that he's fought for several years to own. And he correctly understands that Trump is only renting that real estate, so he's been very friendly to Trump in the hopes of staking a claim to it when Trump is evicted.

But there's a risk to this approach. If Cruz is seen as too close to him, Trump's inevitable collapse, spectacular as it is likely to be, could damage Cruz, too.

Paul: *Is the novelty wearing off?*

For years, Rand Paul has attracted attention by being a different kind of Republican. He challenged the hawks who dominate the party and campaigned in places Republicans have ignored for too long. *Time* magazine dubbed him the "most interesting man in American politics."

Are Republicans losing interest? Paul is at 5.6 percent in the *RCP* polling average, and his second-quarter fundraising totals were well below what many observers had expected.

Paul has inexplicably focused on issues where his libertarianism is out of step with the Republican base (national security and civil liberties) and spent less time on those where his party is naturally more libertarian (taxes, regulation, health care). Last week, Paul released a video in which he destroys the U.S. tax code in a variety of ways—chainsaw, bonfire, woodchipper. Perhaps the video is an attempt at a course correction, but it feels like desperation.

His anti-interventionism played better as a theory than it has in real life, with Barack Obama as its chief practitioner accumulating failures around the globe. So Paul has sounded less dovish in recent days, reversing his onetime embrace of Obama's Iran deal and even suggesting last week that military force might be required if the mullahs move toward nuclear weapons. The irony is that, as Paul has tailored his idiosyncratic views to appeal to a more conventional conservative electorate, he has begun to look more and more like the traditional politicians he deplores.

Bush: *Is Jeb Bush the strong conservative reformer he was as governor of Florida or the more cautious and moderate Republican he has been over the past few years?* During a brief press availability at St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, on April 17, a reporter asked Jeb Bush whether he was comfortable with the growing perception of him as a "moderate" Republican. "No, look, I have a conservative record," Bush replied, adding, in case there were any doubt, that he considers himself an "I'm-not-kidding conservative." The coda: "Perhaps moderate in tone is misinterpreted to moderate in terms of core beliefs."

And yet Bush has been vocal about his concern that the Republican party has become too conservative in recent years. He worried that Ronald Reagan wouldn't have a place in the modern GOP. He famously said Republicans must be willing to "lose the primary to win the general," a declaration that he wouldn't allow himself to be pulled to the right in order to win the nomination. It was a lesson he learned

from the 2012 Republican primary. He later described his feelings this way: "I used to be a conservative, and I watch these debates and I'm wondering, I don't think I've changed but it's a little troubling sometimes when people are appealing to people's fears and emotion rather than trying to get them to look over the horizon for a broader perspective. And that's kind of where we are." Beyond that, Bush backs comprehensive immigration reform—he says illegal immigration is often an "act of love"—and he remains an unwavering supporter of Common Core, the education standards loathed by many conservatives.

But the fact that many primary voters see him through the prism of Common Core and immigration could allow him to surprise in the debate. Conservatives who assume that Bush is moderate across the board might well be more open to supporting him when they learn he is not.

The other big question, of course, is his name. Even if voters warm to Bush over the course of the fall campaign, will they be willing to embrace the dynasty and throw out what will likely be at the heart of the Republican case against Hillary Clinton if she's the Democratic nominee—that she's a relic of a bygone era, a professional politician by marriage, with stale ideas and who doesn't understand the lives of everyday Americans?

Rubio: *Will voters see him as the Republican Obama?*

Five years ago, when Rubio was running for Senate, many of those who saw him on the trail compared him to Barack Obama. At the time, it was the highest compliment they could imagine. But six years into the Obama administration, and in the context of a Republican primary, it's not a compliment but a critique.

The similarities are obvious. Rubio, like Obama, is a great communicator, would come to the presidency with relatively limited experience, and would take office as a young man by historical standards. Rubio skeptics say: We've done this with Obama, and look how that turned out. But that assessment assumes that the problem with Obama was his lack of experience or relative youth. It wasn't. As Rubio is fond of pointing out, Obama is a failed president because "his ideas don't work."

Rubio's team pushes back hard on suggestions he's like Obama, pointing to his experience as speaker of the Florida house and contrasting it with Obama's unremarkable tenure as a state senator in Illinois. And they point out that Rubio will have had two more years of experience on national security, with seats on the Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees, than Obama did when he took office.

But the smartest move for Rubio might be to embrace the comparison, rather than reject it. If Rubio can convince people that he would do as much to limit government as Obama has done to expand it, he will have a winning argument.

Walker: *Will voters view Walker as a battle-tested, reform-driven governor with a string of electoral and policy victories, or will the changes he's made, in tone and sometimes in substance, erode the reputation he built during his tenure in Wisconsin?*

Walker ran for governor in 2010 on a pledge to create 250,000 jobs and balance the budget. He didn't accomplish the former but did, after a nasty and exhausting fight, implement reforms that allowed him to achieve the latter. So the $3.6 billion deficit that Walker inherited was eliminated. He has cut taxes, reformed state welfare programs, and won election three times in a purple state.

But since floating his name as a potential candidate last winter, Walker has equivocated on several issues. Walker had been for comprehensive immigration reform, but now opposes such reform as "amnesty" and is open to greater restrictions even on legal immigration to protect American workers. He once opposed renewable fuel subsidies but now prefers a gradual phaseout. In his 2014 reelection campaign, he ran an ad in which he declared that he was pro-life but said the "final decision" is between "a woman and her doctor."

Asked in a recent interview about these changes in position, or at least in tone, Walker told The Weekly Standard: "It's totally overblown. The only position I've changed on is my position on immigration, which was a pretty limited position as a governor to begin with. There are a lot of people covering this race who don't get how people have to talk in a state that's as swing a state as we are. And talking in a way that doesn't alienate people doesn't equate to flipping positions. It means articulating it in a way that maybe isn't the same red meat that they've heard from conservatives in Washington."

But enthusiasm for Walker's grit—demonstrated in his fight against public-sector unions and Democratic special interests during a failed recall attempt—remains. And many Republicans are in the mood for a fighter—or, as Walker prefers, a "fighter who can win" on "common-sense conservative reforms."

But these days, GOP primary voters are behaving as if they would settle for a fighter who has no chance of winning, no common sense, and isn't a conservative. Which brings us back to Donald Trump.

Trump is without question a fighter. He seems to spend much of his day fighting with his Republican rivals, mainstream journalists, high-profile pollsters—anyone, really, who has said anything negative about him.

But before his recent conversion, the views he expressed over the years would make him a mainstream Democrat. This is the great irony of the current moment in American political life: The man leading the primary of a party whose recent success owes largely to a shift rightward has never really been a Republican.

Trump described himself as "very liberal on health care" and was an advocate of a single-payer health insurance system, a view that puts him to the left of Barack Obama. He long considered himself "very pro-choice" and was in favor of drug legalization. Trump once called Mitt Romney's self-deportation proposal "crazy" and "maniacal." Trump said Obama's $787 billion stimulus was "what we need" and added, "It looks like we have somebody that knows what he is doing finally in office."

As those comments suggest, Trump didn't think George W. Bush did a very good job in office. But he didn't stop there. Trump said Bush was "evil."

Trump's financial support for Democrats over the years has been well documented, with checks to Chuck Schumer, Harry Reid, Hillary Clinton, and others. That's no surprise, since he said in 2004, "I identify more as a Democrat." He praised Nancy Pelosi as "the best" when she became speaker of the House in 2007. That same year, he said of a prospective Hillary Clinton in the White House: "I think Hillary would do a good job."

To put it mildly, Trump is an uncomfortable fit in the Republican party. And that's why he is unlikely to be there at the end of this process.

That doesn't mean he won't run for president. Trump's political activism has its roots in the Reform party movement of the late 1990s. He flirted with a presidential bid in 1999 on the Reform party ticket. He has in recent days repeatedly declared his openness to running as an independent candidate in 2016. Last week, he told the *Hill* that "so many people want" him to run as an independent if he doesn't win the GOP nod and acknowledged that revenge could play a role if he loses. "Absolutely, if they're not fair, that could be a factor."

If he does run, all of the strategizing, planning, and campaigning that those mentioned above are currently engaged in could well be for nothing. With an evenly divided electorate and an angry conservative base, if Trump runs as a third-party, right-wing populist he could well siphon off enough votes to make Hillary Clinton the next president.

On the other hand, perhaps Trump won't run. And, given her current troubles, with polls showing more Americans disapproving than approving of her, Hillary seems increasingly not a terribly formidable candidate. She seems eminently beatable. But which Republican can win the nomination and defeat her? ♦

The Next Greece?

Unsustainable public debt closer to home

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Is America, or Illinois, or Chicago the next Greece? The answers are "Yes, if . . . ," "No, but . . . ," and "Perhaps." Greece joined what was then the European Economic Community even though it had no business applying for admission, and the existing members had no business allowing it entry, as the community's finance ministers concluded, only to be overruled by France and Germany, whose leaders were hoping to construct an institution that would make another continental conflagration impossible: Full speed ahead, economics be damned. Greeks did not speak any of the languages common in the larger EEC countries, or English, the language of international commerce. Their country's stage of economic development was described delicately by the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its official narrative as "diverging from the average 'community' development level," meaning the country was more developing than developed, and that law-abiding, German-style taxpayers were thin on the ground. Politics was, er, primitive, with Communist and fascist elements unreconstructed.

Greek union members protest pension cuts and layoffs, November 27, 2014.

Once admitted to "Europe," and then to euroland, the Greeks proceeded to party, with the help of creditors who seemed to believe that lending to Greece was the same as lending to Germany and charged low interest rates reflecting that misapprehension. The Greeks reacted as they had when receiving the first post-independence loan in 1824. John Dizard, writing in the *Financial Times*, notes that J. Emerson Tennent, Count Pecchio, and W. H. Humphreys wrote in their book *A Picture of Greece in 1825*, published in London in 1826, "The majority of [them] do not rightly comprehend the meaning of a 'loan,' but very simply conclude that it is some European method of making a present." Presents need not be repaid, so instead of putting them to use developing the country, Greeks past and present spent them. Greeks have had enough loans lavished on them by lenders to support early retirement, generous payments for not working, construction of a rules-ridden corrupt economy, with no need to collect those annoying taxes other countries struggle with.

In short, Greece partied. And creditors, in ignorance of or ignoring John Taylor's admonition, "Don't lend to a country with an unsustainable public debt," continued on a course that would eventually force them, in essence, to pick up the bills. So lenders continued to lend. Until they wouldn't. More precisely, until they took a pause to impress on the Greeks that they are broke—as in, you have no money and your ATMs are almost running on empty—and that when I lend thee not, Chaos is come. The pause also gave German chancellor Angela Merkel time to concoct terms for a third bailout so severe that her critics at home, who for some reason resent working until age 65 while Greeks retire at 50, became merely sulky, rather than mutinous. As this is written, the Europeans are prepared to do the can-kicking for which they have become famous, and fork over another 86 billion euros ($96 billion) in return for renewed promises to reform and privatize sections of the Greek economy. Presumably, the Greeks will throw themselves into the reform process and create an economy sufficiently robust to permit them to repay the 86 billion euros in new debt taken on by a country unable, even if it were willing and thought it right and proper, to repay the debts it has already incurred.

On to America, and to the recently often-asked question, "Could America become the next Greece?" Romina

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Boccia, research manager at the Heritage Foundation, concludes—with some quite sensible caveats—that indeed we could: "Greece and other struggling European countries offer Americans a window to the future." Unlike President Obama, who finds the view from that window to the future quite agreeable—an America more like Europe—most observers would prefer not to become Grecian when it comes to fiscal matters.

Fortunately, to become the next Greece we would have to take several steps, including continuing the expansion of the entitlement state, as Democrats would have us do; refusing to fund the inevitable cost of our aging demographic and a larger defense establishment, as the watch-our-lips, no-new-taxes Republicans would have us do; and refusing to make the obvious reforms and investments that would transform an economy that will likely be growing at around 3 percent by year-end into one that can grow at 4-5 percent. That sort of fiscal vandalism would require a significant increase in our reliance on borrowing—fly now, pay later.

Illinois union members and public employees protest pension cuts and facilities closures, October 26, 2011.

AP / SETH PERLMAN

But even that series of policy errors would not convert America into Greece. For we possess a weapon the Greeks surrendered long before they reluctantly went to war on their deficit—sovereignty, our own currency. Faced with a large trade deficit, a nation with its own currency can allow it to depreciate, making its exports cheaper and imports more expensive. Greece does not have that luxury, so it must continue to compete with Germany when its currency, the euro, is woefully overvalued and Germany's, that self-same euro, is as woefully undervalued. And faced with a huge debt burden that even the International Monetary Fund now admits can never be repaid, Greece cannot print money in order to pay its creditors with devalued drachmas, as we can with devalued dollars.

There is still another question concerning forecasts that we are headed for the fiscal rocks. We are not certain the Congressional Budget Office and other prognosticators that are painting what Boccia rightly characterizes as a "dismal U.S. fiscal outlook" have got it right. The massive periodic revisions in their forecasts do not inspire confidence in their current appraisal of where we are headed. In mid-July, the White House budget office revised its February forecast of the deficit down by 22 percent—quite a change in five months. It wouldn't take much of a drop in revenues or an increase in expenses to produce an equal or greater upward revision in the deficit forecast.

For now, the credit rating agencies are satisfied with the U.S. fiscal condition. Moody's considers our Aaa rating "stable," a key buzzword for investors, who look to the future, citing in our favor the size and diversity of our economy and the status of the dollar and Treasury bond market as "global benchmarks." Fitch, which had put a negative outlook on U.S. debt in November 2011, concurs, in part because of our "unparalleled financing flexibility as the issuer of the world's pre-eminent reserve currency." Standard & Poor's, which cut America's rating one notch from Aaa to AA+ in August 2011, a few months after a government shutdown was avoided at the usual last minute, retained the latter rating and labeled it "stable" because of our "diversified and resilient" economy and our role as the issuer of the world's reserve currency. In a separate report, the agency notes that the average time between losing and regaining an Aaa rating is 13 years, almost enough time for the policies of the next two-term president to return us to the exalted ranks of the Aaa rated, at present a nine-member club. No hint of America becoming Greece in any of those. But lest I lose my right to be counted a dismal scientist, let me point out that this is the same bunch that assured us of the Aaa safety of a bundle of mortgages headed for foreclosure, on a theory that parallels the one that contends that two drunks are safe so long as they can hold each other up. As a consequence, in February, S&P paid $1.5 billion to the feds and several state governments to resolve a collection of lawsuits over its ratings on mortgage securities that soured in the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis. And Fitch does worry about the risk of a "deterioration in the coherence and credibility of economic policy making," although further deterioration is difficult to imagine.

Only one thing is certain: Barring some catastrophe that cripples our diverse and resilient economy, and displaces the dollar as the world's reserve currency, whatever debtors' doom might await us is far enough off to permit us to devise and implement policies that would make honest borrowers of us, repaying debt and in dollars' worth approximately what they were when lenders handed them over. Alas, that day of reckoning is also far enough off to encourage our policymakers to adopt the ostrich position,

secure in the knowledge that the exposed rear end will not be theirs, but their successors'.

Unfortunately, America's relatively sound fiscal condition—our long-term outlook is a bit more worrying—is not reflected in the condition of our states and cities, some of which find themselves in a situation more like Greece, with Illinois, New Jersey, and Chicago being good examples. No sense talking about Puerto Rico in any detail: Bankruptcy in some form is inevitable. It has a debt pile almost equal to that of New York state even though it has only one-fifth of the Empire State's population and 7 percent of its GDP, and Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla has run up the white flag. "The debt is not payable. . . . This is not politics, this is math." Puerto Rico has no currency to inflate, but at least its people can and do flee to America, leaving the island's debts for others to worry about.

Like Greece, America's states and cities do not have their own currencies, and so cannot inflate their way out of their problems. Like Greece, many state and city governments are confronted by trade unions that can and do impose long-term pension obligations that have not been funded. No surprise there, since taking on long-term obligations is the stuff of which political careers are made—voters don't realize what has happened until it is too late, and meanwhile the politicians loading burdens onto future generations receive campaign funds from grateful union leaders. Worse still, the Illinois courts have ruled that cutting pensions might well be unconstitutional.

Illinois and Chicago politicians have had an easy solution to their pension problem: Don't fund them. The present value of the assets in Chicago's fund comes to only 34 percent of the value of its obligation; for Illinois that figure is 39 percent. New Jersey is in somewhat better shape: The present value of the assets it has accumulated comes to 65 percent of the value it will have to pay out. Still, the shortfall was enough to prompt Moody's to downgrade New Jersey's credit in April, citing the state's weak fiscal position and history of inadequate pension contributions. (The gap between the asset and liability values is very interest-rate sensitive—for technical reasons I leave to the really interested reader to explore.)

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No, not quite Greece, because among other things the growth potential of these U.S states and cities far exceeds that of Greece. Americans pay their taxes for the most part, and corruption in Illinois has not reached Olympian heights, although four of the last seven governors have gone to prison. But there are worrying similarities, which if left uncorrected can make it difficult for the state and its largest city to meet entitlement and debt-repayment obligations. Pension obligations that can't be met. No sovereign currency. Trade unions determined to fight to the last lawyer to prevent any reduction in pension obligations. Taxpayers unwilling to have their private-sector paychecks further raided to support the lifestyles of public-sector workers who work less hard, can't be fired, and retire earlier.

Wisconsin's Scott Walker has converted his solution to the problem of out-of-control public-sector benefits into a presidential bid and a lead in Iowa polls; no sign yet that politicians in his neighboring state are prepared for such a fight. And with Republicans in control of both chambers on Capitol Hill, the chance that the heavily Democratic states of Illinois and New Jersey or President Obama's home town of Chicago will be bailed out by the federal government, which has already said "no" to Puerto Rico, seems remote.

One of two outcomes seems possible. A moderate version of the Greek deal, calling on some give-backs by the unions and existing creditors in return for higher taxes on wealthier residents, who might find the charms of Chicago's Miracle Mile sufficiently attractive to prevent them from fleeing to a lower-tax jurisdiction merely because of a modest tax hike. Or as Duke professor Mitu Gulati and Cleary Gottlieb attorney Lee Buchheit have suggested in the case of Greece, existing creditors might be persuaded that they can minimize the damage to their portfolios by granting new lenders a senior position over existing bond holders, giving these potential lenders additional safety and a greater incentive to make fresh funds available. Then Illinois, Chicago, New Jersey, and similarly situated states and cities can merrily increase their debt burdens, achieving the sort of can-kicking "relief" so popular with current officeholders in Europe. ♦

Sian Phillips, Kyle MacLachlan in 'Dune' (1984)

Dune's Half-Century

A cult classic stands the test of time. BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

In 1956, Doubleday published *The Dragon in the Sea*, the first novel by a California newspaperman named Frank Herbert. Even now, the book seems a little hard to pin down. It was, for the most part, a Cold War thriller about the race to harvest offshore oil—except crammed inside the thriller was a near-future science-fiction tale of fantastic technology. And crammed inside the science fiction was a psychological study of naval officers crammed inside submarines.

The Dragon in the Sea received some nice reviews. Anthony Boucher praised it in *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and the *New York Times* compared it to seagoing works by C.S. Forester and Herman Wouk. But readers found the novel confusing, and it didn't sell particularly well, leaving the 36-year-old Herbert uncertain where to turn next. So he accepted a commission to write something called "They Stopped the Moving Sands."

Dune
by Frank Herbert
Folio Society, 576 pp., $125

However much that sounds like a 1950s sci-fi title, the commission was actually for a nonfiction magazine article about Oregon's sand dunes and the Department of Agriculture's attempt to halt their drift by planting them with poverty grasses. The dunes were amazing, Herbert explained in a 1957 letter to his agent: In their undulations, they could "swallow whole cities, lakes, rivers, highways." He was piling up notes for the article at a furious pace. So many notes, in fact, that he never finished "They Stopped the Moving Sands."

Instead, he emerged five years later with a 500-page story called *Dune*,

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serialized in 1963 by *Analog* magazine and published in 1965 as a book by Chilton—best known for its car-repair manuals—after more than 20 other publishers had refused it.

What's left to say now about *Dune*, exactly 50 years later? It was a monstrous doorstopper of a book, in the days when sci-fi novels were often short enough that Ace could publish two of them, upside-down to each other, in a single thin volume. With *Dune*, Frank Herbert (1920-1986) made the breakthrough in science fiction that J.R.R. Tolkien had achieved in fantasy—both of them showing all subsequent writers in their fields how to build what we might call Massively Coherent Universes: with clashes of culture, technology, history, language, politics, and religion all worked out in the story's background.

At the same time, *Dune* is an occasionally sloppy book and oddly paced. It sprawls when it might be compact and shrinks when it might be discursive. How could an author extend his plot maneuvering through hundreds of pages—and then be satisfied with an ending so rushed that even the death of the hero's infant child in the final apocalyptic battle is only a side note?

Meanwhile, the prose is sometimes weak, striving for the memorable epigrams it can't always form. The psychology of the minor characters is ignored at some points and deeply observed at others, which makes those characters flicker in a peculiar way between the two-dimensional walk-ons of myth and the three-dimensional figures of novelistic realism. And the third-person narrator keeps his distance from them by *printing what they're thinking in italics, just so we understand that this is, like, you know, mental speech*.

In fact, the book contains so much italics—with the many poems, song lyrics, and extended quotations from fictional sources printed the same way—that the reader wants to bang it against the nightstand once or twice a chapter. Add up all the problems, and you can see why those publishers rejected Herbert's manuscript. It had a thousand chances to fail and only one chance of succeeding—which it grasped by being so relentlessly, impossibly, irresistibly interesting.

Dune won both the Hugo Award and Nebula Award for the year's best science fiction, produced multiple attempts at film versions, spawned five sequels from Herbert (plus another dozen by his son), and became perhaps the most-purchased science fiction book of all time, selling at least 12 million copies.

As far as plot goes, the story is, at its root, a straightforward, old-fashioned tale of a hero. A young man suffers the loss of his rightful inheritance and is forced to hide among a backward people—who, he discovers, are actually brilliant warriors. So he convinces them that he had been chosen by destiny to lead them, a messiah come to claim them. He forms his new people into an army, and together, they reclaim his lost inheritance.

At the same time, Herbert drops hints throughout the novel that he's morally suspicious of his own root plot—"No more terrible disaster could befall your people than for them to fall into the hands of a Hero," as one visitor warns the backward folk—and the sequels to *Dune* would develop those hints into a full renunciation of messianic heroes.

But it's hard to renounce heroes unless you have one to start with, and *Dune* remains more popular than its sequels in part because Herbert accepts the mythopoetic conventions of his heroic tale.

Paul Atreides is the hero's name—or Muad'Dib, as he comes to be called. As the story opens, Paul's father, Duke Leto Atreides, has been granted control of the desert planet Arrakis, sole source of a psychotropic spice called melange, used by both interplanetary pilots (to obtain the glimpses of possible futures they need to navigate space) and a powerful group of religious women (for their empire-preserving soothsaying). The spice makes the planet a treasure trove for the duke, but he suspects his move to Arrakis will prove dangerous.

As, indeed, it does. The emperor, who has uneasy control over a vast span of space, fears the growing power of the duke, and so he arranges the gift of the spice planet as a trap, working with Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, personal and political opponent of the Atreides family, to attack them before they can fully settle on their new planet.

The attack seems successful, killing the duke and giving the Harkonnens control of the planet's spice. But the young Paul and his mother, Lady Jessica, escape into the harsh desert, where they fall in with a nomadic people called the Fremen, profoundly mystical and utterly brutal, with a culture completely adapted to their water poverty and their oppression by the planet's imperial rulers. Renamed Muad'Dib, Paul is the pebble that causes an avalanche: The millions of Fremen hidden in the desert rise up to defeat the Harkonnens and the emperor—and more. Paul may take his place as the new ruler of known space, but even he cannot control the Fremen, who begin, by the novel's end, to spread their religious jihad-by-the-sword across the universe.

As a story, *Dune* is not at all bad, but its real fascinations come from the Massively Coherent Universe behind the story. Herbert's first move of genius was to invent "personal shields," force fields that render guns and lasers—the whole panoply of distance weapons—ineffective, thereby creating a swashbuckling setting of knives, swords, and the direct physical contact of martial arts.

His second move of genius was to place his story 21,000 years in the future, long after human technology had made the innovations necessary for the science-fiction elements of the book. In part, that feeds the sense of a stagnant empire and a stagnant human race that needs the Fremen's universe-shattering jihad. In greater part, though, it allows the author to dismiss the gee-whiz physics of space travel and space weapons. The science in *Dune* focuses not on physics but on cultural anthropology and, especially, planetary ecology.

Here's where those USDA-approved poverty grasses on Oregon's sand dunes come in. Giant worms are responsible for both the lack of free-flowing water

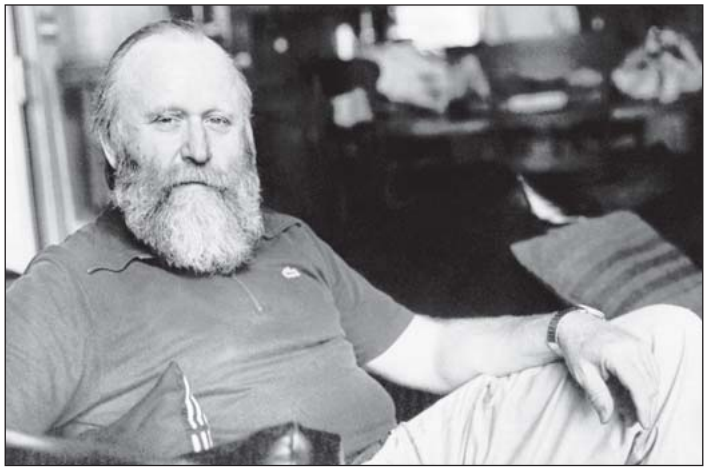
on the planet of Arrakis and for the production of the melange spice. And the Fremen have a vision of reclaiming the water trapped in the cycles of the spice desert, reducing the worms' range, and transforming the rest of the planet to a green paradise. On a schedule they imagine will take hundreds of years to complete, they plant grasses and creosote bushes to lock down the dunes, set out dew collectors to claim every possible drop, and herd the worms away from their plantings.

When *Dune* first appeared, the ecological notion of a planet as a whole, living, breathing thing still felt fresh and powerful—the planet as seen from outer space. In *The Human Condition* (1958), Hannah Arendt worried about the changes in human perspectives wrought by the existence of orbital spacecraft, while the 1968 *Whole Earth Catalog* signaled the hippies' happy embrace of the vision of a planetary ecosystem. But of course, it was the hippies who won, and *Dune* became one of those strange books that "spoke to a generation," in the language of the day: There was a dog-eared copy of the novel in the back of every Volkswagen microbus, alongside Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Whether that was the author's intention—whether *any* of those authors was really pitching what the tie-dyed crowd of the era made of him—remains beside the point. Still, it's worth remarking that Frank Herbert doesn't quite fit the modern environmentalism he's often credited with having helped to found. The Fremen in *Dune*, given their vision by a visiting imperial ecologist, don't want to preserve the planet or erase the human footprint on it: They want to run roughshod over the whole thing, terraforming their desert world to within an inch of its life.

The science of genetics, too, plays a major role in *Dune*, with the Bene Gesserit, the league of women soothsayers and witches, nearing completion of their millennia-long project to breed a messiah—an effort that Paul (through his Bene Gesserit mother, Jessica) short-circuits by becoming that messiah a generation too early.

What caught the zeitgeist of the 1960s was not so much the genetics as the religious mysticism that runs through the book. Sweeping tales of cultural anthropology, the rise and fall of empires, had been a staple of science fiction since Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series of the early 1950s. Where those stories typically equated religion with superstition, however, Herbert made religion the inescapable instrument of cultural change—from the Butlerian Jihad that (centuries before *Dune* begins) had swept away the intelligent computers that threatened humanity to the mystical feeling, shared by almost every important character in the novel, that the moribund culture of the current empire has endangered the future of the human race.



Frank Herbert (1978)

Herbert cleverly uses a Persian-sounding vocabulary for the people and things of the imperial court and an Arabic-sounding vocabulary for the people and things of the planet Arrakis, signaling the parallels of Muhammad's Muslim rising from the desert to topple a superior but decadent power. (How the Greek-sounding names of the House of Atreides are supposed to fit into that narrative is a problem the author never quite fixes.) But the religion in the book isn't exactly Islam: It's some mix of Old Testament text, Islamic sensibility, and Zen enlightenment that makes absolutely no religious sense—unless one reduces religion entirely to its mystical elements.

No wonder the hippies loved *Dune*. It shows a universe of powerful, ancient, and rule-bound institutions having reached a kind of equilibrium with one another, including the space pilots' monopolistic guild, the Bene Gesserit witches, the emperor's Sardaukar troops, the Suk medical school, and the planet-ruling houses. In the 1960s, it seemed a metaphor for the American institutions of the 1950s that the counterculture wanted to overturn with a new mystical power.

For all that, Frank Herbert presents a deeply grim view of the human prospect. The bulk of people are mere animals, living brute and meaningless lives. Their ostensible betters are mostly monsters, preying on the universe. And the genuinely human path between those inhuman alternatives is narrow, difficult, and unlikely. Even Paul Muad'Dib, with his messianic spice-driven visions of possible futures, has difficulty seeing how to save humankind from its stagnation without destroying it in the unleashing of his jihad.

For all its flaws and oddities, this much certainly remains true 50 years on: *Dune* is a big book. Big in text, of course, with 576 pages in this new deluxe anniversary edition, which includes an introduction by Michael Dirda. But big in imagination, too. Big in its universe-building and big in its sweep. Big in its sales and big in its impact. To read *Dune*, even now, is to be drawn into a world of big characters, big ambitions, big thoughts, and big consequences. What more could you want from a science-fiction novel?

From *any* novel, for that matter? ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS

B&A

Loose Change

Measuring history by the money supply.

BY JAY WEISER

Coined is like Malcolm Gladwell for investment bankers, with intriguing anecdotes to close the quick sale while obscuring the larger picture. Money matters: Over the last half-century, the world economy has swung from high inflation to financial crisis to zero interest rates. But Kabir Sehgal, an investment banker, offers "a multidimensional and interdisciplinary portrait of currency through the ages" without much ability to tie it together.

Sehgal recounts the historic views of money as something with intrinsic worth (precious metals) and as a store of value (paper money). "Alas," he says, "money can clearly be both—as long as it remains a symbol of value." Why the sadness for a debate that's over? Even the ultra-hard-money James Grant argues for paper backed by redeemable gold reserves as a rule for constraining the money supply, rather than suggesting that we transact all business in coins. Sehgal's evidence suggests that all civilizations have needed a stable basis of short-term value—and have adjusted the money supply to prevailing economic conditions.

"The arc of monetary history," Sehgal says, paraphrasing Theodore Parker/Martin Luther King Jr., "bends toward soft money." In his bouffant Whig theory of history, the quantity of money has expanded at the expense of its value. It fails to account for the concurrent growth of economic activity, population, and real incomes. A Sumerian sila of barley (an early monetary unit) isn't worth what it used to be worth, representing a much smaller portion of today's gross domestic product. But a Sumerian swimming in silas 5,000 years ago still couldn't buy a smartphone.

Jay Weiser is associate professor of law at Baruch College.

Coined
The Rich Life of Money and How Its History Has Shaped Us
by Kabir Sehgal
Grand Central Publishing, 336 pp., $28

Stone currency of Yap

Lacking a framework for how societies have managed their monetary bases, Sehgal launches factoids. The incorporation of mitochondria into cells, a biological example of cooperation, says little about human economic exchange. Because behavioral economics is currently cooler than a selfie stick, Sehgal asks, "If economists better understand the mind, could they make more accurate forecasts?" No. While behavioral economics shows how individual decisions depart from the "rational actor" model, it is nowhere near aggregating those individual decisions into macroeconomic predictions.

Regrettably, Sehgal fails to report experiments in which rats, offered a lever that releases cocaine, press for more and more stimulis until they die, even though this model would explain the Federal Reserve's approach to interest rate cuts. The book seems primarily to address circulating currency, but money is much broader. Sehgal extolls the technological marvel of bitcoin, which claims to be a virtual currency created through computer algorithms, but he fails to analyze it against earlier virtual currencies, such as the ancient Mesopotamian debt accounts he discusses early on. He ignores the virtual money that fueled Europe's economic expansion in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance: bills of exchange issued by private merchant banks such as the Medici and used for long-distance trade.

Currency has historically been only a small fraction of units of exchange—today around 7 percent of the American money supply. Checking accounts, repos, and money market funds—to name just three virtual, privately created units of exchange that economists regard as money—are discussed nowhere here. The focus on legal tender buries a paradox: Even hard money is always in flux.

In Sehgal's account, when precious metal coins originated in the 7th-century-B.C. kingdom of Lydia (in present-day Turkey), they established a fixed unit of exchange. But once the coins were assigned a set value, there was an incentive to mine more gold and silver, increasing the money supply—a pattern seen repeatedly over the millennia. The later legend of King Midas (ruler of the adjacent kingdom of Phrygia), who nearly starved because his touch turned everything to gold, could be an allegory about excessive minting leading to gold's loss of value and hyperinflation. Nearer to our own time (but also left unmentioned), Spain's 16th-century discovery of the Potosí silver mountain in today's Bolivia fueled an inflation that ultimately wrecked the Spanish economy.

Even if the monetary base stays constant, the real economy does not. Sehgal moralizes about ancient

YUSUKE KAWASAKI

Rome's debasement of the coinage, which kept denominations constant while gradually reducing the silver content down to a surface wash by the third century A.D. But by the latter stages of the economic expansion, which ran from the early classical period through the peak of the Roman Empire, the gold and silver monetary base was too small. Debasement was just one tool for creating fiat money: Elites also created fiat money with bronze coins for smaller local transactions and, based on evidence in literary sources, by issuing drafts to settle long-distance high-value transactions.

Of course, elites also have an incentive to manipulate the monetary system to cover up fiscal strains. As the Roman Empire declined, debasement-fueled inflation helped fund a bigger military than Rome could afford. Before the 20th century, people accepted fiat money on the promise that they could redeem it for precious metal. The precious metal base was only a fraction of the money supply, so when wars increased inflation or government default risk, people would trigger bank runs by seeking to exchange their fiat money for precious metal.

Central banks, beginning with the 17th-century Bank of Amsterdam, often had to limit convertibility from paper to precious metal. Yet Sehgal reports, in apparent surprise, that the value of American currency crashed during the American Revolution after the Continental Congress penalized redemptions with a 45 percent tax (effectively a 45 percent devaluation). In the post-Civil War deflation, he finds it similarly surprising that, once the federal government bulked up precious metal reserves, there was little demand to convert greenbacks to gold. But why convert if you're confident in the reserve?

The real modern change is not an arc bending toward soft money but an acknowledgment that economies run on fiat money and that the monetary base can be changed. Early in the New Deal, Franklin D. Roosevelt manipulated the gold price of dollars, one day raising the price by 21 cents "on a whim," according to Sehgal. That was no whim: The eminent economist Irving Fisher claimed that the economy could be reflated by randomly moving the price of gold, so FDR dutifully chose a number each morning before getting out of bed. (He never believed this would work and ultimately abandoned the experiment.)

As *Coined* approaches the present, the focus on softness resembles a television commercial. When a Spanish online retailer resorted to barter during the 2010 euro crisis, Sehgal argues that it was because "people lose faith in a soft currency"—the first time anyone outside a padded cell in the Bundesbank has claimed the euro was too soft. Although a fiat currency, the euro has actually been far too hard (that is to say, overvalued) for depression-plagued southern European economies. As Greece currently demonstrates, in a crisis, people don't lose faith in hard-money euros: They *demand* them, draining liquidity and collapsing the banking system.

Readers seeking an accessible history of this subject have an alternative. Niall Ferguson's *The Ascent of Money* (2008), issued in connection with his PBS series of the same name, also takes the whole of human history as its subject—although he omits the mitochondria. Ferguson coherently explores the tension between money as a stable store of value, the creation of fiat money, and the impact of rent-seeking elites. People spending their own coin (bit- or otherwise) should look there. ♦

B&A

Myth Makers

The long reach of a famous circle of Oxford scholars.

BY MICHAEL NELSON

BOGSAT: according to urbandictionary.com, a "Bunch Of Guys Sitting Around Talking" in "regularly scheduled daily/weekly worthless meetings."

The Inklings: according to religion scholars Philip and Carol Zaleski, "a small circle of intellectuals" who "from the end of the Great Depression through World War II and into the 1950s . . . gathered on a weekly basis in and around Oxford University to drink, smoke, quip, cavil."

Were the Inklings a BOGSAT? Yes. Were their meetings worthless? Hardly. The Inklings took their name, wrote J.R.R. Tolkien, as a "pun . . . suggesting people with vague or half-formed intimations and ideas plus those who dabble in ink." Tolkien was at the heart of the group, along with his fellow Oxford don C.S. Lewis, in whose large, shabby rooms at Magdalen College the Inklings met on Thursday evenings.

Tolkien was a philologist with the soul of a myth creator. His day job included lecturing, sometimes to an audience of one, on his great but generally unshared academic passions: Middle English, Anglo Saxon, and Old Icelandic. (His favorite book as an undergraduate was *A Finnish Grammar*.) In stolen hours, Tolkien labored

The Fellowship
The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams
by Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 656 pp., $35

Michael Nelson, Fulmer professor of political science at Rhodes College, is the author of Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government, *which won the American Political Science Association's Richard E. Neustadt Award for best book on the presidency and executive politics published in 2014.*

to produce what eventually became *The Hobbit* (1937) and the three-volume *The Lord of the Rings* (1954), arguably the greatest and certainly the most popular novels of fantasy of all time. Vocation and avocation were as one for Tolkien. He believed that myth was the fruit of a people's history, geography, and, especially, language, all of which he felt he had to create from scratch before venturing into the writing of his Hobbit cycle. That's why it took so long and rings so true.

The Inklings' main activity, according to the Zaleskis, was "to read aloud their works in progress, and endure or enjoy with as much grace as they could muster the sometimes blistering critiques that followed." Tolkien, reticent by nature, became gun-shy when fellow Inkling H.V.D. Dyson greeted an installment of the trilogy with a caustic, "Oh God, not another fucking elf!"—and then bullied Tolkien into never reading from it in his presence again. It was Lewis, Tolkien said, who gave him the courage to persevere. "Only by his support and friendship did I ever struggle to the end of the labor," he wrote. And what support: "The steady upward slope of grandeur and terror," Lewis told Tolkien, "is almost unequalled in the whole range of narrative art." Tolkien repaid the favor when Lewis was criticized as an escapist for writing three science-fiction novels. The only people who rightly condemn escape, Tolkien said, are jailers.

Unlike Tolkien, who was a devout Roman Catholic, Lewis spent his first 30 years as an atheist, often to the point of belligerency. But like Tolkien, he was enchanted by mythology. As such, Lewis later recorded, he led a double life: "to care for almost nothing but the gods and heroes . . . and to believe in nothing but atoms and evolution." Lewis's conversion to Christianity is an oft-told tale, but one with Tolkien at its heart.

Myths are stories that convey deep truth, Tolkien told his friend. What made matchless the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was that it lay at the intersection of myth and history. The Zaleskis summarize Tolkien's argument thus: "Here God tells—indeed, enacts—a tale with all the beauty and wonder and symbolic power of myth, and yet a tale that is actually true." Lewis was persuaded, and, true to his temperament, he became as fierce an advocate of Christianity as he had been an enemy.

Who is the more enduringly important of the two? Tolkien wrote the greatest work, as evidenced by Germaine Greer's backhanded compliment: "It has been my nightmare," she snarled, "that Tolkien would turn out to be the most influential writer of the 20th century. The bad dream has materialized." Lewis's claims are broader. A half-century after his death, does any other writer turn up on so many shelves of good bookstores and libraries?

J.R.R. Tolkien (1955)

HAYWOOD MAGEE / GETTY IMAGES

In the literary criticism section, one is likely to find, at a minimum, *The Allegory of Love* (1936) and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954), two books that, according to Norman Cantor's *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991), "rocked the transatlantic Anglophone world of medieval studies." In literature, we find *Till We Have Faces* (1956), a superb novel that reimagines the Cupid and Psyche myth. The religion shelves will be chock full, of course: Books like *Mere Christianity* (1952) and *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) continue to sell well. But then so will the science fiction shelves, with Lewis's trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, 1938; *Perelandra*, 1943; and *That Hideous Strength*, 1945), and the children's section, with his seven-volume *Chronicles of Narnia*, the most famous of which is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950).

And don't stop there: Look in poetry for one of several collections of his verse, in biography for his spiritual autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (1955), and in the section on death and dying for *A Grief Observed* (1961), the powerful memoir of Lewis's tormented reaction to the death of his wife that provided the basis for the movie and play *Shadowlands*.

In *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the science fiction novels, as in *The Lord of the Rings*, Christian themes are implicit, not overt. Lewis's Narnia, like Tolkien's Middle Earth, is largely devoid of temples and gods. But Lewis's Aslan, the terrible but gentle lion who dies to save one of his young protagonists and then rises to save all Narnia, is a Christ more thrilling to children than the stained-glass version they usually encounter in church. Tolkien described the Hobbit novels as "fundamentally religious and Catholic" because of their themes, which the Zaleskis rightly identify as "pity and mercy, faith and trust, humility, self-sacrifice, the powers of the weak . . . and grace when all seems lost."

The Zaleskis have written a fine book, fair-minded and appreciative without succumbing to the adoration bordering on hagiography that accompanies so many works about C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. (They dismiss Lewis's much-celebrated *Screwtape*, for example, as "a one-joke affair" that, "if it were half as long, and half as clever, might have been twice as good.") But their decision to add fellow Inklings Charles Williams and Owen Barfield to their title and then cram in a bunch of material about (for example) Barfield's obsession with anthroposophy greatly overstates the importance of those writers. Six hundred and fifty-seven pages is a long slog for even the most interesting of BOGSATs. ♦

B&A

Entails of Woe

The soap-operatic succession saga of the Sackvilles.

BY SYDNEY LEACH

Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent

When Vita Sackville-West, daughter of the third Lord Sackville, recalled her childhood at the family's ancestral home, Knole, she described "a person called Henry who from time to time came to the entrance and demanded to see Grandpapa, but was not allowed to." So recounts Robert Sackville-West, author of *The Disinherited* and also the current, and seventh, Baron Sackville. Henry, in fact, was Vita's uncle on her mother's side. Her rather detached and vague reference to "a person called Henry" suggests the tragic divergence of the two sides of a family, one virtually unknown to the other.

Here, Robert Sackville-West elegantly unravels the story of Vita's mother Victoria (who has been written about by Vita herself) and Victoria's four siblings, Max, Amalia, Flora, and Henry. The children were the result of a nearly 20-year liaison between Lionel Sackville-West—eventually the second Lord Sackville—and a Spanish dancer named Pepita de Oliva. Pepita was already married when she and Lionel met and began their union in 1852 in Paris, where Lionel was visiting, on leave from his first diplomatic assignment in Stuttgart.

The Disinherited
A Story of Family, Love and Betrayal
by Robert Sackville-West
Bloomsbury, 328 pp., $28

As the illegitimate offspring of a titled British family, the five children were uniquely vulnerable and marginalized by both the law and social convention. British property inheritance runs through the legitimate male line only, thus none of them could ever have any claim to Knole. Socially, they were cruelly shunned in childhood by neighboring families in southern France, where they lived until Pepita's death in 1871. In adulthood, they were reduced to itinerant lives of tenuous marriages and meager livelihoods patched together from ill-considered jobs and small allowances doled out, from time to time, by their father or eldest sister, Victoria.

Victoria was strong-willed, cool, and opportunistic—born to catapult herself from the shadow and shame of illegitimacy to position and material security. This she did through a combination of fortuitous events and her own charm. In 1889, her father inherited the Knole estate, becoming the second Lord Sackville. Victoria, once the "unwanted little foreigner, hustled away at a stranger's approach" (in the words of her daughter Vita), came to live at Knole and, as her father's eldest daughter and caretaker, became the mistress of a home with 365 rooms and 52 staircases. Her future was further assured when she married her first cousin, also Lionel, who was in the direct line of succession for Knole because Victoria's father had no legitimate male heirs.

Robert Sackville-West is descended from the legitimate side of the family and currently lives at Knole with his wife and children. In his previous book, *Inheritance* (2010), he wrote of Knole and its 400-year history, including the generations of Sackville-Wests who have inhabited it.

In the introduction to *The Disinherited* he notes:

> For hundreds of years, Knole has pulled generations of Sackvilles in and then pushed them away. . . . This power was felt particularly by those members of the family who never had a hope of inheriting—the daughters, the younger sons, the widows.

He tells the story of "the doubly disinherited," the illegitimate members of an ancient family who could claim neither name nor title nor property. Through their father, Victoria and her siblings were affiliated with privilege, but, in effect, they belonged nowhere and enjoyed none of the protections such privilege would normally have

Sydney Leach is a lawyer who writes from Virginia.

afforded them. With empathy and voluminous documentation, including many personal letters from the siblings, Robert Sackville-West gives them a voice and a presence that, in their lifetimes, their illegitimacy and their own family had denied them.

Henry, the youngest, was perhaps the most aggrieved by his disinheritance and launched a protracted series of painfully public court battles to establish his legitimacy. With little money, and goaded on by those who thought they might profit from his claim, he pursued his hopeless, stumbling quest for recognition as the legitimate heir to Knole for much of his adult life. He would lose the legal fight and eventually commit suicide, crushed by both the loss and the death of his wife.

In recounting Victoria's reaction to her brother Henry's death, Sackville-West remarks:

> Any "peace within" must have involved the suppression of all memories of her brother; of the childish letters he had written her, describing how much he had cried when she left for her convent in Paris; of the shopping trips on which she took him to outfit him for a new life in South Africa; of the shared gratitude he admitted to her once that he felt towards their father.

Finally, Henry's forlorn and insistent attempts to gain entrance to Knole, and to see his father, are something of a metaphor for him and his siblings and their lifelong, fruitless efforts to obtain not just material inheritance but also the more elusive benefits of legitimacy: identity, belonging, and the confidence—even, perhaps, the mere hope—that they would never be turned away.

Although *The Disinherited* has the ingredients of a PBS miniseries—move over, *Downton Abbey*—its author is not gratuitously exposing his family's history for the curious reader. Rather, he offers a sobering reminder that the rigid rules and conventions, such as the English laws of succession and inheritance, designed to guard a family's legacy can also undermine the more vulnerable members of that family. ♦

B&A

Mighty Brow

The unheralded emblem of power and authority.

BY THOMAS VINCIGUERRA

While watching *Pollock* for maybe the sixth time, I found myself intrigued anew by Ed Harris as the titular splatter king. Once again, I wondered what it was about his performance that kept me tuned in. It could have been the conviction with which he conveyed his alter ego's determination to express himself as an artist. It could have been the balletic grace with which he dripped and dropped his paint. Then it hit me: It was his brow.

Look at the film again. Observe how Harris pours (and pores over) his work. As he ventures forth onto the canvas, splashing his oils in anarchic order, it's not his stirring stick that is the center of the action. Rather, it is his high dome, clenched in intensity, focusing precisely on where the paint should go and guiding it accordingly. It is the advance guard of his creation. It's even better than Jackson Pollock's anatomical original. And it epitomizes a largely unappreciated statement of personal maleness.

Welcome to Brow. In this world, the frontal lobe asserts authority. The forward portion of one's noggin exudes totemic dominance. This is a skull that takes no prisoners. Brow is literally a masculine state of mind.

Let's get a couple of things straight: Brow is not bald. Bald can be beautiful; bald can be natural; it can even be, as Telly Savalas and Yul Brynner famously proved (yes, I'm dating myself here), sensual. But it is just not Alpha. Nor can Brow be achieved simply through the shaved look. I have a few good friends who have scraped their uppermost reaches entirely and keep themselves waxed accordingly. They look great. But somehow, they are just not exuding Brow. For Brow is more than an absence of hair. Brow is a projection of character, of force. It does not merely exist as an aspect of visage. It leans in—with a vengeance. Brow is the most obvious extension of cranial capacity. It emanates will and strength. And it must ultimately come from within.

This is a rare combination of commodities. Unsurprisingly, not everyone can achieve it. Indeed, we have beheld only intermittent glimpses of true Brow.

Henry Luce had Brow. As Wolcott Gibbs wrote, the *Time* magnate possessed "brows too beetling for a baby." With his empire-building journalistic ruthlessness, Luce had not only eyebrows but Brow itself. Indeed, when Luce was thinking of hatching a magazine aimed at intellectuals, its working title was—yes—*Brow*. Pablo Picasso had Brow, too. Neither his corpus nor his topmost story was overwhelming. But look at that forehead: Behold a great artist and great Brow, the only kind that could have given us *Guernica*.

The brooding Dostoyevsky had superb Brow. So did the imperious Tolstoy. As did Leonardo da Vinci, from whom issued everything from the Vitruvian Man to flying machines. Galileo helped reorient our entire conception of the cosmos. He simply could not have done so without Brow.

These examples, alas, are the exceptions. Superior achievement, no matter how many of your follicles are depopulated, does not necessarily translate into superior Brow. Montaigne, for example, pretty much created the modern essay. Now, that is a

Thomas Vinciguerra is the author of the forthcoming Cast of Characters: Wolcott Gibbs, E.B. White, James Thurber, and the Golden Age of The New Yorker.

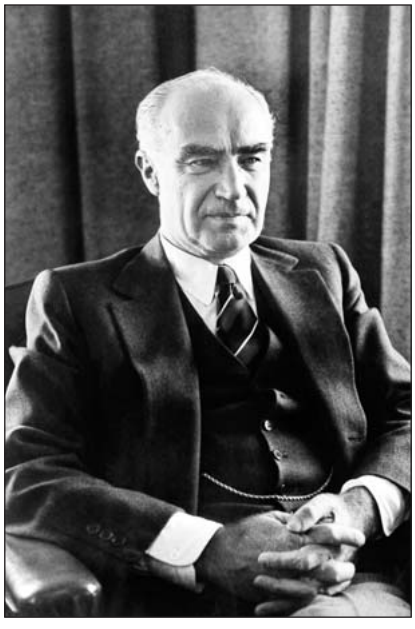
formidable literary legacy. But in his portraits and his prose alike, he is quiet and contemplative—and therefore not exactly Brow material. The same goes for Shakespeare: No matter how colossal his command of drama or how sure his poetry of the mother tongue, the Bard was simply not a Browmeister. Even Edmund Wilson, for all of his authoritative, aggressive criticism and cueball appearance, never achieved Brow. How could he, when his nickname was Bunny?

Given its power, Brow can be (and often is) political. Its actual manifestation, however, is a ticklish business. In keeping with his nonaligned status, Jawaharlal Nehru maintained perfect Brow equilibrium, evincing deep reflection while defiantly proclaiming India as a major world player. Lenin's Brow was murderous, but it took a Brow such as his to wrench Russia into the 20th century. Nikita Khrushchev was a Brow contender, but he had more brawn than Brow. (No wonder he was gently retired to his dacha.) As for the appalling Mussolini, he thrust forth Brow when thundering from his Rome balcony. Unfortunately, Il Duce's arrogant, jutting chin tended to upstage the rest of his head.

When it comes to Brows in high office, incidentally, this country has fared pretty badly. Adlai Stevenson was perhaps the most (ahem) highbrow public servant of his time, but his professorial persona got him castigated as an "egghead." In a bitter irony, he lost the presidency twice to Dwight D. Eisenhower—who, for all of his undeniable leadership, may not have quite risen to Brow status himself. Let's not even discuss John Quincy Adams or Martin Van Buren.

Not surprisingly, the best Brows are found in film, television, and other visual media. Sure, Richard Widmark won acclaim as a giggling psychotic in *Kiss of Death*, but in general he was best at Brow. Check out his cerebral righteousness in *Judgment at Nuremberg*. (In *The Bedford Incident*, by contrast, his Brow was straitjacketed by his captain's hat; naturally, his ship was vaporized.) Observe George C. Scott flush with fury as he chews out the shell-shocked soldier in *Patton*. His is a boiling blood blister of a Brow. In his later years, Orson Welles's Charles Foster Kane rose to the Brow pinnacle. How else could he have muzzled his nagging second wife in their beachside tent, singlehandedly torn her bedroom apart, and amassed a Lucean empire in the bargain?

On big and small screens alike, Brow can be benevolent. Before he inspires Kal-El on his enlightened journey from the Fortress of Solitude in the 1978 *Superman*, Marlon Brando



Henry Luce (1956)

as the all-wise Jor-El reveals his inmost goodness and wisdom by dissolving into almost pure Brow. He then transforms into an austere, crystalline Browish facemask. More often, though, Brow in film and TV is the stuff of evil: Just one year after his turn as Jor-El, Brando achieved ignominious Brow as Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*. His massive corpus weighed mightily in terrorizing Martin Sheen. But it was his Brow—which, after all, was the ultimate expression of his heart of darkness—that really did the trick. He didn't even need the camouflage paint.

Consider, too, that archetypal James Bond villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld, as portrayed by Donald Pleasence in *You Only Live Twice*. He was bent on getting the Yanks and the Russians to annihilate each other, and with a wicked facial scar, he looked (as one critic wrote) like "an egg that had cracked on the boil." When he purred menacingly ("I shall look forward personally to exterminating you, Mr. Bond") while stroking his white kitty, that was his Brow talking. The aforementioned Telly Savalas didn't register quite as strongly as Blofeld in the next 007 outing, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. But fixated on bacteriological warfare, determined to wipe out whole strains of cereals and livestock forever throughout entire continents, he still had a Brow that summoned malevolent magnetism.

Science fiction affords gripping Brow. In the *Outer Limits* episode "The Sixth Finger," David McCallum is evolved far into mankind's future. Along with pointed ears and the added digit of the title, he develops a massively bulbous, utterly otherworldly Brow that endows him with a huge capacity for harm. In "The Cage," the first pilot of the original *Star Trek*, the aliens of Talos IV were so all-commanding that they could conjure entire illusions out of their collective Brows—the better to enslave pathetic Earthlings. And speaking of pathetic Earthlings, Ming the Merciless was Brow incarnate.

All this brings to mind the role of Brow in comics. It is no coincidence that the first enemy of Captain Marvel was Doctor Sivana. In his initial outing, emboldened by Brow, Sivana determined to drive all radio stations from the airwaves. It's only appropriate that The Brow of Dick Tracy fame, complete with hideous wrinkles, was nothing less than a Nazi spy. Only appropriate, too, that he was impaled on an American flagpole.

Whither Brow? Hard to say. Much will depend on visual cues, trends, fashion, and other ephemera. One cannot even rule out the role of topical ointments. It may be that, as we develop as a species, and our brains grow commensurately convoluted, Brow will increase accordingly, for good and for ill.

But this much is certain: Brow can go wherever our thoughts take us; and if it doesn't, we can always browbeat ourselves. ◆

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B&A

Auteur, Auteur

Amy Schumer benefits from Judd Apatow's formula.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

With *Trainwreck*, the comedy impresario Judd Apatow has once again made a movie about an irresponsible adult-child who is compelled to grow up by the end of the film. This was the plotline of both *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up*, the two box-office sensations that made Apatow's career, and it resurfaces here. Yet in the place of *Virgin*'s Steve Carell and *Knocked Up*'s Seth Rogen, the adult-child in *Trainwreck* is Amy Schumer, the remarkable comedienne whose shtick is based on coming on stronger and dirtier and more libidinous than her male counterparts.

Schumer is credited with the screenplay for *Trainwreck*, and it's full of great one-liners and raunchy mini-sketches that only she could have dreamed up. But in the end, Apatow serves as the 21st-century pop-culture equivalent of Huck Finn's Aunt Sally to Schumer's persona: He adopts her and "sivilizes" her. Huck Finn insisted he was going to "light out for the Territory" rather than be tamed; Schumer is clearly only too happy to be sanitized for box-office success.

Schumer plays the title character, an up-and-coming magazine writer who spends her nights drinking and drugging and sleeping around. She is assigned to write a profile of a young surgeon who performs miraculous operations on pro athletes, and the two fall in love. Then her fear of intimacy and her commitment issues kick in, and they break up. She must straighten herself out to be worthy of him.

It shouldn't work, because (a) the nasty men's magazine she works for doesn't make any sense; (b) the hilarious Bill Hader, who plays the doctor, is given nothing funny to do and must spend the entire film essentially being Darrin Stephens from *Bewitched*; and (c) her life crisis is solved pretty much by throwing away liquor bottles and a bong. But it does work, because it turns out that Amy Schumer is very, very good at playing Amy Schumer, or what is probably the worst possible version of Amy Schumer that even she can imagine.

Trainwreck
Directed by Judd Apatow

Amy Schumer, Bill Hader

"You're not nice," a man tells her early in the movie, and she really isn't. She's mean to kids, she's thoughtless when it comes to her loving and sweet sister, and she's pretty unscrupulous about her work. And yet she's so clever and smart and funny that you can't help rooting for her, which is really all the movie needs to get to you.

The other reason the movie works has to do with Apatow's special quality as a filmmaker. His movies are often longer and looser than most comic Hollywood fare, because time and again he pulls focus away from the lead actors and the nominal plotline to zoom in on funny secondary performers who are given a surprising chance to shine.

In *Trainwreck*, the shocking standouts are the usually humorless Tilda Swinton, playing Amy's vicious Sloane Ranger boss; Vanessa Bayer as Amy's wannabe partner in promiscuous crime; the wrestling personality John Cena as Amy's dimwitted but well-meaning pseudo-boyfriend at the movie's beginning; and, most startling and delightful, LeBron James as himself, playing the classic role of the love object's best friend and confidant.

The list of comedy talent Apatow has nurtured and helped to blossom by giving them time onscreen is nothing short of staggering. It includes not only Carell and Rogen and Schumer, but also Paul Rudd, Jonah Hill, James Franco, Lena Dunham, Elizabeth Banks, Michael Cera, Emma Stone, Jason Segel, Jane Lynch, Mindy Kaling, Aubrey Plaza, Alison Brie, Russell Brand, Leslie Mann (Apatow's wife), and more still.

This is true even in the movies that he has produced but not directed: *The Five-Year Engagement* (2012) gave Chris Pratt his first real breakout part as (yes) a man-child who refuses to grow up until he is knocked sideways by a lovely woman. Pratt stole the picture and showed he could dominate the screen with an intense rendition of a love ballad (in Spanish!) that was completely unnecessary in terms of advancing the story but was utterly hilarious.

Schumer might have the chops to be the second coming of Bette Midler. Or this might be all she can do. It will be interesting to see. Meanwhile, the box-office success of *Trainwreck* suggests that Apatow (whose last picture, the autobiographical *This Is 40*, was his only serious directorial misfire) may be the canniest American movie-maker of the 21st century. ♦

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C-SPAN TRANSCRIPTS
July 28, 2015: Donald Trump Remarks in Scaggsville, Maryland (cont'd)

more militaristic than Hitler and Stalin combined! *(applause)*

Now, the media are all upset that I gave away Lindsey Graham's phone number. And you're wondering, who the heck is Lindsey Graham, right? He's a senator from South Carolina who thinks he has a shot at becoming president. But he doesn't. He's a loser. I'm a billionaire, which makes me a winner. So anyways, I give out the loser's number and you know what? He's sorry he ever called me a jackass. The guy had to change his number, so I ask you this: Who's the winner here? *(applause)*

And now I got to thinking, this is a pretty good deal for me. And, you know, I make billion-dollar deals for a living. That was the point of my bestselling book, *The Art of the Deal.* If you haven't read it, you're a loser. Anyways, I started thinking about who else has been annoying me lately. Well, there's the president of the United States. And his number is 202-456-1414. If the switchboard operator won't connect you, just tell her you're an illegal immigrant from a Muslim country in need of Obamacare. *(laughter)*

And Hillary Clinton, her number is 646-854-1432. It's not her cell, but call anyway, and let her office know you are tired of the lies she's been telling this country for the last 20 years, from Whitewater to Benghazi to the emails. For goodness sake, she had a private server in her own home. Me? I got plenty of private servers, but I still refer to them as my maids and butlers! *(laughter)*

Wait, I got more numbers here in my pocket. Let's see, there's the Domino's Pizza guy who's always late. His number is 212-222-2000. Some girl named Jenny, her number is 867-5309. I have a number for my dry cleaner who did a lousy job. And Fleur de Lis: "Whatever you desire"—not sure about that one. And for some reason, I have the number for Caitlyn