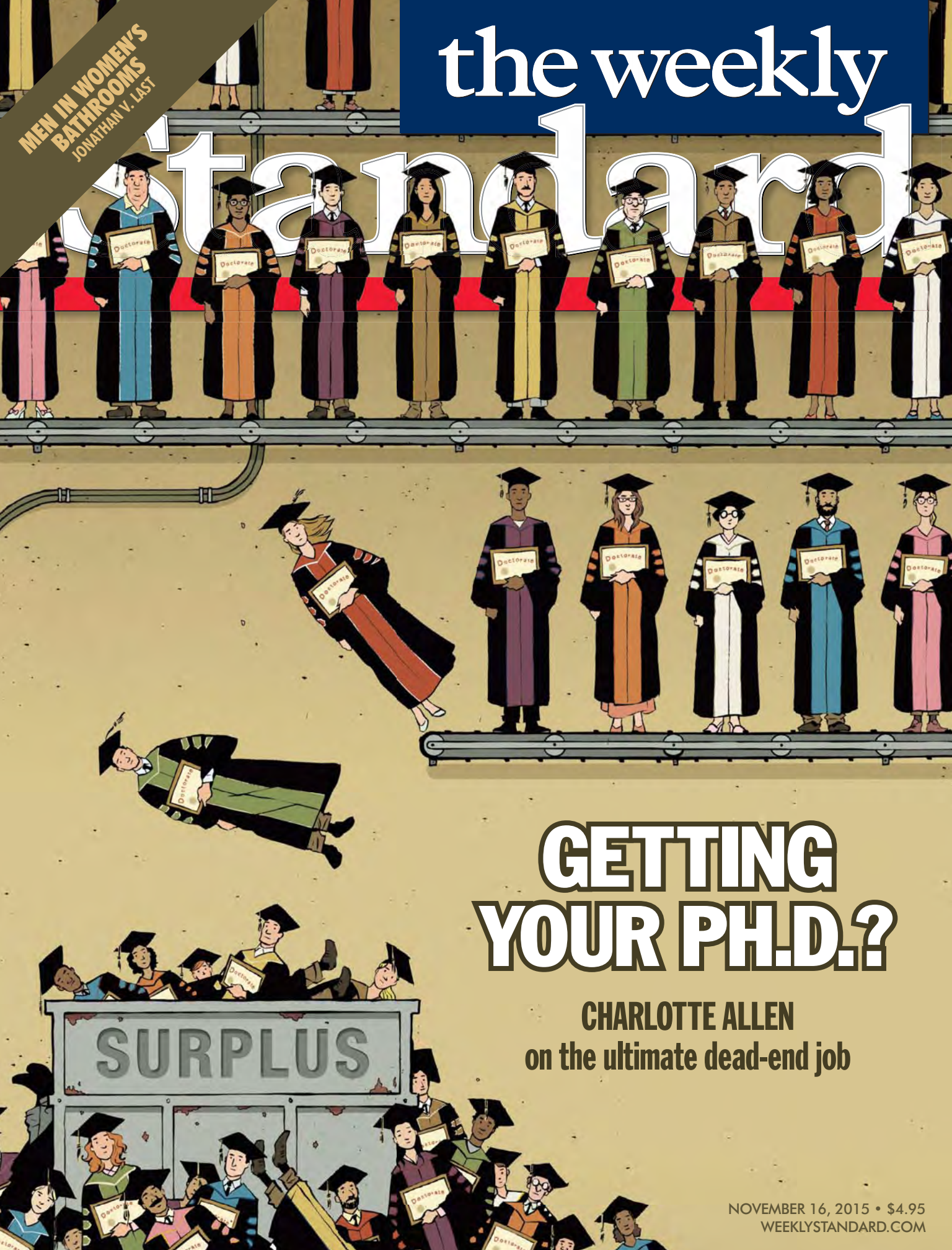
the weekly standard

MEN IN WOMEN'S BATHROOMS
JONATHAN V. LAST



GETTING YOUR PH.D.?

CHARLOTTE ALLEN
on the ultimate dead-end job

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Contents

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COVER BY JORI BOLTON

The Krugman Effect

There used to be a theory in the newspaper business, to which The Scrapbook wholeheartedly subscribes, that when two publications merged—say an afternoon daily with a weekday tabloid—the new hybrid publication would veer toward the lowest common denominator. That is to say, the new paper would more closely resemble the tabloid than its "prestige" partner.

Of course, few newspapers are merging these days, much less worrying about prestige. But The Scrapbook believes that this unwritten rule of journalism takes other forms as well. Consider, for example, the editorial and op-ed pages of the *New York Times*.

It is hardly worth mentioning that the *Times*'s editorial pages are liberal—all newspaper editorial pages have distinct political points of view—and that its stable of op-ed columnists and random contributors is heavily weighted toward the left. This has been true of the *New York Times* since the late 1960s, at least; and in The Scrapbook's view, the *Times* is entitled to its opinions. But while the editorial pages crept decisively over time toward the left-wing fever swamps, they maintained certain rhetorical standards—of decorum and civility, even good humor, not to mention stentorian prose—which readers associate with the *New York Times*.

Until recently, that is. And The Scrapbook knows why. We call it the Krugman Effect. Readers who recall the *Times* of yesteryear must shake their heads in wonderment when perusing the op-ed columns of Gail Collins or Timothy Egan or Maureen Dowd or Charles M. Blow. But while their essays are more likely to provoke merriment in conservative ranks, the Princeton economist Paul Krugman inspires a kind of horror.

Like many left-wing ideologues, Krugman finds it impossible to believe that, say, congressional Republicans or conservative scholars say what they think in good faith, or on principle. In his view, they must know better—that is to say, they must agree with Paul Krugman—and to say otherwise is self-evidently corrupt or cynical. There is no other explanation for Krugman's habitually cranky tone, barely suppressed hysteria, and incessant dismissal of conservatives as "liars" or "frauds" or "phonies" or whatever schoolyard epithet comes to his mind.

The problem, from The Scrapbook's perspective, is that the coarseness of Krugman's tone and the adolescent character of his invective are no longer confined to Paul Krugman. It has crept across the columns of newsprint to the *Times* editorial page, which has lately adopted the prose style and declamatory habits of a student newspaper. A recent editorial about Wisconsin governor Scott Walker—"Only weeks after giving up on his lackluster presidential campaign in the face of national indifference"—ended with "relief that Mr. Walker won't be able to impose his warped ideas . . . on the rest of the country." Republicans don't say things; they "rage" or "spew" or "froth" or "scream." The GOP is not the majority party in the House of Representatives but a "gang" that includes the new speaker, Paul Ryan, the "supposed congressional budget expert" whose rise extinguishes all hope for "rational government."

As The Scrapbook says, the *Times* is entitled to its opinions, as we are to ours. But chroniclers of the age should take note: It's a benchmark in the backward march of civilization when the Gray Lady of American journalism begins to sound like her delinquent niece. ♦

What They Were Thinking

Lindsey Graham, during the CNBC Republican presidential debate in Boulder, Colorado

ANDREW BURTON / GETTY

Some Media Matters

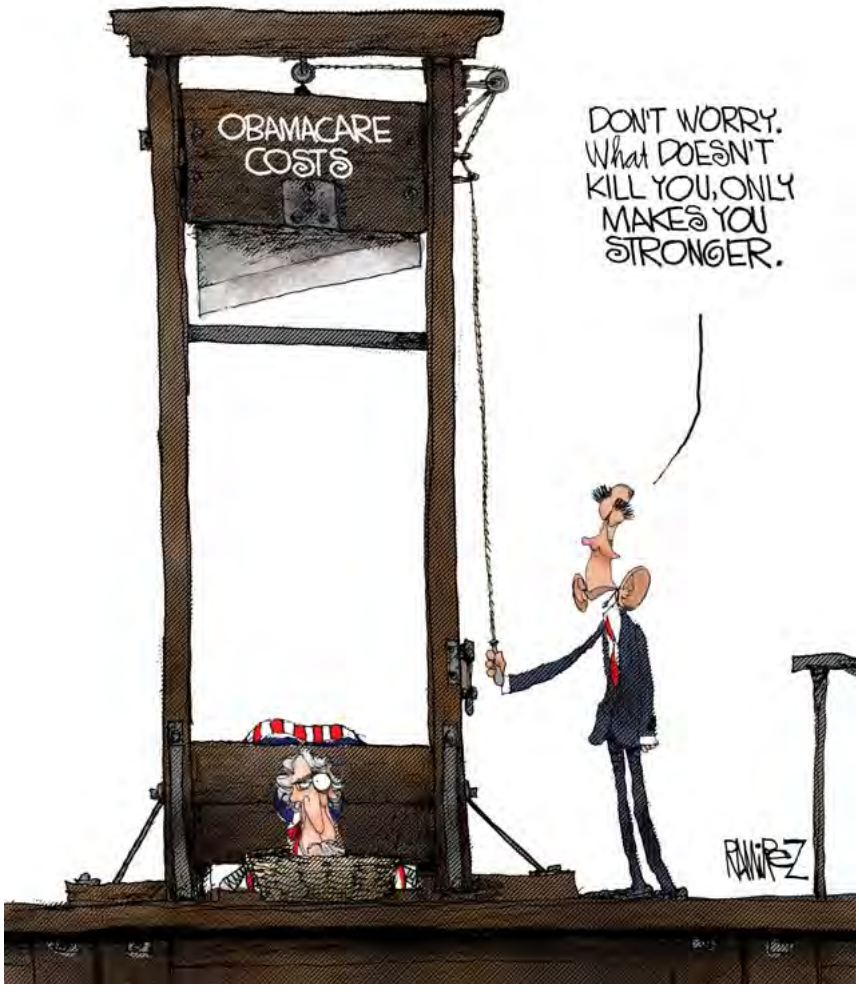
The fallout from CNBC's Republican debate continues, and it's confounding the journalistic establishment. At first, it was easy for the media to acknowledge the obvious. Even *ThinkProgress*, the house organ for the liberal think tank Center for American Progress, published an article calling the debate a "trainwreck." But as

soon as the Republican National Committee announced it was canceling a forthcoming NBC-hosted GOP debate in response to the CNBC moderators' bias, unprofessionalism, and generally insulting demeanor, the media began circling the wagons.

They started lashing out at the GOP candidates, who were quite justifiably demanding better debates. Their rejoinders are underwhelming. Julia Ioffe of the *New York Times Magazine* feebly jabbed, "For candidates who so love shouting about freedom, they're weirdly uncomfortable with the freedom of the press to ask them questions." *Daily Beast* reporter Olivia Nuzzi tweeted, "Imagine what any candidate whining about the debates would do to freedom of speech if they were elected president." More pathetic, though, than these failed gotchas is that Obama was emboldened by his friends in the media to take a swipe of his own. "Let me tell you, if you can't handle those [debate moderators], then I don't think the Chinese and the Russians are going to be too worried about you," the president said.

We would note, first, that Obama's own history of whining about the media—in spite of their assistance to him at almost every turn—is too long and varied to recount here. And honestly, given the spectacular and ongoing failures of his foreign policy, is anyone looking to Obama as an authority on how to stand up to Russia and China?

As for the free speech concerns—that journalists would go there beggars belief. Hillary Clinton, as it happens, is running on a platform of overturning and/or correcting the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision. That decision, which liberalized campaign finance laws, hinged on whether showing a film criticizing, yes, Hillary Clinton would constitute a campaign finance violation. That's right, under her preferred legal regime, the government would be able to penalize you for showing a political film. Yet, Hillary Clinton's own role in the *Citizens United* case is almost never mentioned, and the media are incapable of conceiving of strict campaign finance proposals as anything more pernicious than a milquetoast good government initiative.



Meanwhile, GOP candidates continue to face absurd interrogations from a biased and hostile media. Earlier this week, Marco Rubio went on ABC's *Good Morning America* and fielded a flurry of questions about his personal finances. This kind of query might be thought of as standard for candidates, except for the fact that Rubio's interrogator has his own personal finance issues. Namely, why George Stephanopoulos gave $75,000 to the personal foundation of the Democratic frontrunner, whose husband used to employ him, and why in spite of all this, the media seem to think such conflicts aren't enough to disqualify him from reporting on presidential politics.

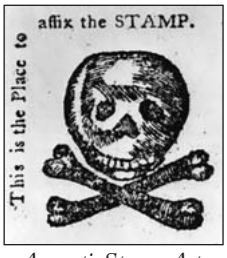
Also, we know Hillary Clinton is too busy dancing the Nae Nae on daytime talk shows to bother with tough interviews, but isn't it time the media gave Rubio's (relatively modest) finances a rest and asked her some questions about the incredibly dodgy speaking deals with various human rights violators that allowed her and her husband to rapidly amass a nine-figure fortune?

However, the media would rather keep making Rubio answer questions about a small-potatoes mortgage and otherwise hyperventilate about massive network news operations being subjected to legitimate criticism.

We're well past the point of arguing whether media bias is real. Given the ready availability of Internet streaming and other new media formats, the media establishment should ask themselves how much longer the GOP is going to entertain dealing with them, period. ♦

A Stamp Too Far

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the French and Indian War had just ended, and Britain's Parliament was determined to find some way to maintain a standing army, to avoid putting 1,500 socially well-connected officers out of work. Their solution was to keep the Army in North America stationed as a buffer between the colonists and American Indians. Even though, said the colonists, no such buffer was needed.



An anti-Stamp Act cartoon

The Army, of course, had to be paid for, and Parliament decided that the newly buffered colonists should do the paying. First came a sugar tax, which triggered a debate about the rights of Englishmen living in America: The fundamental law of Britain frowned on subjects being taxed without their consent, which was given by sending representatives to Parliament. A cry of "No Taxation Without Representation" was heard, which grew much louder a year later when word reached the colonies that a much more onerous stamp tax—a tax on all printed documents—would soon be enacted.

American colonists sent petitioners to London to seek redress of their grievances. They were ignored. The chancellor of the exchequer, Charles Townshend, addressed the effrontery of the Americans on the floor of the House of Commons: "Will these Americans, children planted by our care, nourished up by our indulgence, till they are grown to a degree of strength and opulence, and protected by our arms, will they grudge to contribute their mite?"

Isaac Barre, a Huguenot Irishman who had served with distinction during the French and Indian War, rose to the Americans' defense:

"They planted by *your* care? No! Your oppressions planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny to a then uncultivated and inhospitable country, where they exposed themselves to almost all the hardships to which human nature is liable; and among others, to the cruelties of a savage foe, the most subtle, and I will take upon me to say, the most formidable of any people upon the face of the earth. . . .

"They nourished by *your* indulgence? They grew by your neglect of them. As soon as you began to care about them, that care was exercised in sending persons to rule them, in one department and another, who were perhaps the deputies of deputies to some member of this House, sent to spy out their liberties, to misrepresent their actions and to prey upon them; men whose behavior on many occasions has caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them. . . .

"They protected by *your* arms? They have nobly taken up arms in your defense, have exerted a valor, amidst their constant and laborious industry, for the defense of a country whose frontier while drenched in blood, while its interior parts yielded all its little savings to your emoluments. . . .

"The people, I believe, are as truly loyal as any subjects the king has; but a people jealous of their liberties and who will vindicate them if ever they should be violated."

Barre's warnings were ignored. The House of Commons passed the Stamp Act 205 to 49; it was implemented in America 250 years ago this week. Resistance to it was rapidly organized by a new, freedom-minded group which took its name from Barre's speech: the Sons of Liberty.

The Scrapbook wishes a happy 250th birthday to the start of the American Revolution. ♦

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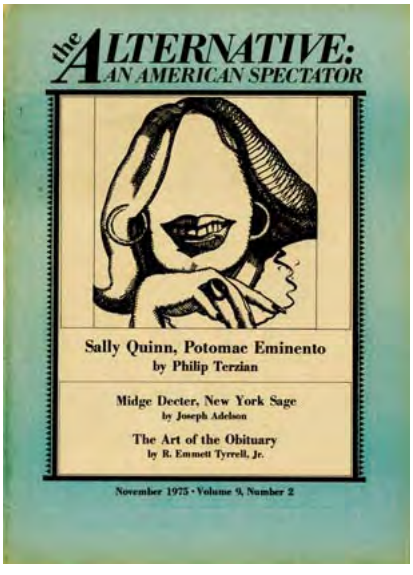
How I Got Here From There

Rummaging around the other evening in a box of magazines and newspaper clippings with my byline, I stumbled upon the November 1975 issue of a journal called the *Alternative: An American Spectator*. Mindful, as always, of capricious mortality, I have lately been subtracting from the volume of paper my family will inherit, and was briefly discouraged by the several large containers of printed matter in my basement. In the course of tossing out duplicates, however, I noticed that I had saved a half-dozen copies of that issue.

With some reason. The *Alternative* changed its name to the *American Spectator* two years later and is still publishing. But that issue represented an early milestone for me. I had grown up in a decidedly left-wing household, had once drafted speeches for the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and as a journalist had worked for what is now called the mainstream media (Reuters, *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, etc.). Indeed, in 1975, I was writing about books and television for *Commonweal* and was on the staff of the *New Republic*. But that essay in the *Alternative*—the cover story, in fact (see illustration)—was my debut on the opposing side of opinion journalism.

Not to worry: This is not an account of my pilgrimage from left to right, which was a protracted affair and, as is often the case in these matters, a complicated story. But I do remember a furtive sense, at the time, of homecoming—or, perhaps more accurately, of taking a stand on principle. My estrangement from the faith of my fathers—and mother, who was a Democratic lawyer-politician—had a very long gestation, and I hesitated to cross the floor. But from adolescence onward, I had grown uncomfortable on the left, and was surprised and disconcerted by the ease with which I slipped, by stages over the next few years, into apostasy.

In fact, I can very nearly pinpoint the moment. In 1978 I was invited to an *American Spectator* reception at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington in honor of the conservative journalist John Chamberlain (1903-1995). I was no particular admirer of Chamberlain; but I knew of his work at the old *New York Herald Tribune*, owned a copy of



Farewell to Reform (1932), his critique of progressivism, and was interested in seeing a historic personage. This was not the first *Spectator* gathering I had ever joined, and of course it was a lively affair, presided over by the *Alternative*'s ebullient founder-editor R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. But the only conversation I remember from that evening was with a tall, bespectacled Southerner, then living in Greensboro, North Carolina, whose name I recognized from his *Spectator* writings—Terry Eastland—and with whom I seemed to have friends in common, including my future wife. At any rate, he remembered my first *Alternative* piece—a youthful excoriation of a *Washington Post* feature writer named Sally Quinn, later Mrs. Benjamin Bradlee—and laughed politely at my jokes.

Nearly forty years later, it is amusing to put this encounter in perspective. The same Terry Eastland is now an executive editor of The Weekly Standard, whose offices are a two-minute walk from the Mayflower ballroom; and examining the 1975 *Alternative* masthead, I find one William Kristol is listed as a senior editor.

As for myself, during the next three decades, I remained firmly planted in the aforementioned mainstream media. I hung on at the *New Republic* but continued to contribute to the *Spectator* and other like-minded magazines. In due course I found a certain success—awkward but rewarding—as resident conservative at various newspapers. This was, in its way, an enviable sinecure: Especially during the Reagan years, institutions like the *Los Angeles Times* found it expedient to employ a single writer or editor who dissented from the orthodox editorial-page faith. I wrote a syndicated column, as well, and, positioned as I was on the political center-right, was both critic and beneficiary of affirmative action.

Still, toiling in the vineyards of American journalism, such contrarian status could be lonely. My newsroom colleagues at the *Lexington Herald* once petitioned the editor to have me rebuked; on the pavement alongside the *Providence Journal* I was guillotined in effigy—although not by colleagues, I hasten to add. There was a famous meeting of "senior writers" at the *Los Angeles Times* where one well-known reporter, overcome by the horror of my biweekly op-ed columns, burst into tears of shame and reproof. I fought rear-guard actions on Pulitzer juries and led a party of one in the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

All of which led, more than ten years ago, to one final swerve down life's wayward path, and the welcoming ranks of the journal you are reading. It took me a while, from that evening at the Mayflower, but the timing was right.

Philip Terzian

the weekly Standard

Ben Carson, Reconsidered

Generally speaking, The Weekly Standard is from the Edith Piaf school of second thoughts. We don't have many. And when we do, we keep quiet about them. As the great chanteuse put it: *Non, je ne regrette rien.*

But on rare occasions we admit we may—just may—have a few regrets. Here's one: We're now inclined to think we overstated matters when we began an editorial six weeks ago by asking rhetorically, "How big a problem is it that the two leading Republican candidates for president aren't actually qualified to be president?"

NEWSCOM

We hasten to assert that we in no way regret offering this judgment about Donald Trump. We wrote that Trump is "a self-regarding blowhard who's not much of a conservative to boot, who is not now and will never be qualified to be president." We stand by that verdict.

But we also worried that Carson is "not yet prepared to be president," and we averred, "he'd have to show an awful lot of growth to be ready a year from now." What's more, for Carson to win the general election, "voters would have to conclude that he is so extraordinary a figure that for the first time in American history, they would send a man to the White House who had neither held elective office nor served as a general officer or cabinet officer."

We're less certain now than we were in September that voters couldn't come to such a conclusion. We're less certain we couldn't.

Consider Ben Carson's campaign, which suggests organizational and communications skills that would be welcome in the Oval Office. Consider his positions on the issues of the day, which, while not as well-developed as they will have to become, seem basically consistent with a reformist, constitutionalist, American-exceptionalist governing conservatism.

And consider his response to the reasonable objection that one would prefer someone with governing experience. His recent Facebook post answering this objection deserves to be quoted at length:

* * *

I would like to deal with one question tonight in some detail. The issue is experience. Several people ask what they should tell their friends when people say "I like Carson but he has no political experience."

You are absolutely right—I have no political experience. The current Members of Congress have a combined 8,700 years of political experience. Are we sure political experience is what we need? . . . No one in Philadelphia, during that summer our nation was born, dreamed that service was a career with a pension. America was the land of the Citizen Statesmen. They were merchants, lawyers, farmers—and yes, even doctors. They were willing to stand for freedom. Today, the political class stands in the way, not for the people. They demand pensions and perks. This is not what our Founders envisioned for America. I spent my life treating very ill children. Over 15,000 times I gave my all to prolong their lives. I was blessed to do it. But when it came time for me to retire, I simply could not sit back any longer. These children became my family. What our government is doing to them is outrageous. I am prepared to risk all that I have to try and make a difference in their future. . . .

My experience is very different than what we have come to expect. I grew up poor. I know what it is like to be homeless and hungry. I know the pain of poverty. I also know that education and a mother's love can be the path out of dire poverty. I know what it is like to see water fountains you are not allowed to drink out of because of your skin color. I also know that once you peel back the skin, the brain is the same no matter what your skin color or continent you live on. I know that victimhood is a trap. I know that it is our Christian responsibility to offer those less fortunate a hand up. I know my faith is strong and my ego is small. . . .

I do not have political experience, I have a life journey. A journey that not only made it possible for me to relate to so many different people, but also one where time and time again I was told I would fail, only to succeed. My candidacy is different, that I grant you. I have neither Donald Trump's money or Jeb Bush's political network. However, I wouldn't trade a single child I treated for all of Trump's money. While I admire the Bush family's dedication to service, I too served—nights, weekends, holidays, birthdays and anniversaries with severely injured patients were my public service.

I didn't go to embassy cocktail parties or beg lobbyists for money. I spent night after night in a quiet, sterile room trying to save the life of a small child. That was my life's service. This is my life's experience. What I have is a lifetime of caring, integrity and honesty. I have experienced the American Dream. Nowhere in the world, other than America, could a man whose ancestors were slaves rise to become a leading brain surgeon and one day seek the Office of President.

The very fact that I am running is testament to the greatness of America. If all you want is political experience then I cannot be your candidate.

* * *

Granted, it's just a Facebook post. But it does suggest

qualities of mind and soul that have been sorely missing in recent American public life.

This doesn't mean Ben Carson should be the Republican nominee or the next president. Most of us at The Weekly Standard, if we had to vote tomorrow, would probably check the box next to the name of someone other than Carson, someone more conventionally qualified for the job.

But there is something heartening about the fact that so many Republican primary voters have rallied to Carson—so many in fact that he's now the Republican frontrunner. James Webb, another impressive American, found no support and little sympathy in the Democratic party. That Republicans respect Carson, wish him well, and even would like to support him is a sign of the general health of the GOP.

So while Carson probably won't and likely shouldn't be the nominee, the Republican party is better for his candidacy. And if the unthinkable happens and Donald Trump wins the Republican nomination, we may take off a few days next year to gather ballot access signatures for the 2016 independent ticket of Carson-Webb, or Webb-Carson.

—William Kristol

Why Bathrooms Matter

Last week was one of those quiet Election Days where, on the surface, nothing much happened. But the "nothing much" might actually be something. We may have seen voters begin to pump the brakes on runaway liberalism.

In Ohio, an initiative to legalize marijuana was on the ballot; it lost by 30 points. In San Francisco, the sheriff who defended his town's "sanctuary city" policy was tossed out. In Kentucky, a businessman who hugged Kim Davis (the county clerk who wouldn't issue marriage licenses to gay couples) and ran on social issues won by 9 points. But the two most interesting results had to do with the left's "transgender" agenda.

Nestled just outside the Washington beltway, Fairfax County, Virginia, is one of the nation's largest, and by performance measures, best, school districts. Earlier this year the school board caused a great deal of consternation among parents when it voluntarily adopted a sweeping nondiscrimination policy that made "gender identity" a protected category—meaning that, in all regards, students would be treated as whatever gender they claimed. Despite the protests of hundreds of parents, the board voted 10 to 1 to enshrine the new liberal dogma on transgenderism.

But that's not where it stopped. When parents asked what, in practice, the new transgender policies would entail for access to bathrooms, sports teams, locker rooms, and so forth, the board bluntly refused to release the text of the new policies. Faced with a FOIA request from the conservative legal group Judicial Watch, the school board filed a lawsuit in order to stall the release of the policy until after the election.

The local Republican party put up three candidates to challenge the incumbent at-large board members, but the campaigns avoided focusing on the transgender policy. The result was that only one of the Republicans was elected.

Contrast Fairfax County with the city of Houston. There, the city's aggressively progressive mayor backed an expansive Human Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) that would have created a class of "transgender rights" (along with much else). But in Houston, conservatives were willing to oppose the HERO proposal on specific, literal grounds: "No men in women's bathrooms."

That was the slogan of the campaign to overturn HERO. And despite the wailing and caterwauling of social justice warriors across the country, despite claims of business leaders that Houston would suffer an economic backlash if HERO wasn't approved, despite polling that promised the measure would survive comfortably, the transgender law was crushed, 61 percent to 39 percent.

There is a lesson in this, especially for Republicans. The left is in the process of overreaching on an issue that the average voter cares about, deeply. People might be able to rationalize supporting same-sex marriage by telling themselves that, even if it's not their thing, it makes no difference to them what gay couples do. But if you're a woman using the locker room at the gym, it might matter quite a lot if a man who says he's a woman on the inside is using the shower next to you.

And no matter how progressive and fair-minded you are, if you're a parent, you probably don't want boys who say they're girls competing against girls in field hockey or basketball or some contact sport where weight and muscle-mass exist independent of deep, personal feelings about identity. Come to think of it, you probably don't want your daughter being forced to share a shower or a locker room with a boy, either.

The day before the election last week, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story about a school district in Palatine, Illinois, that has tried valiantly to accommodate the transgender agenda. Township High School District 211 has agreed to refer to a male student as a female at all times. It allowed the student to join girls' sports teams. It allowed the student to use the girls' locker room. The only concession the school requested was that the student shower and change behind a curtain.

The student filed a complaint under Title IX, the federal law prohibiting sex-discrimination in schools. And the Obama Department of Education took the student's side, stating, "All students deserve the opportunity to participate equally in school programs and activities—this is a basic civil right. Unfortunately, Township High School District 211 is not following the law because the district continues to deny a female student the right to use the girls' locker room." The school has been given 30 days to comply.

So it is now a "basic civil right" for any boy to be granted equal access to girls' locker rooms. And if any of the girls, or their parents, are made uncomfortable by this new right? Tough, says the Department of Education.

We have reached a bizarre moment in our politics, where the "progressive" left resists having conservative speakers on a college campus because they make students feel "unsafe," but insists that boys who identify as girls be allowed to shower with girls in the public schools, and misgivings must be educated away, or litigated into submission.

We have also reached a moment where, whatever the majority of its voters may think, the Democratic party may be unable, as a practical political matter, to do anything but trumpet "transgender rights." Have you seen Hillary Clinton's denunciation of overreach by the Obama Education Department? We didn't think so.

Republican candidates ought to grab this issue with both hands. They should tell voters what the federal government is doing with regard to transgenderism in the public schools. They should promise to stop and reverse it. And they should dare Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders to join them in proclaiming: "No men in women's bathrooms."

—Jonathan V. Last

Keep the Box

As gaffes go, it was an especially amusing one for a woman who has thus far been caught with 671 instances of classified information appearing in her personal email. "Earlier today I announced that as president I will take steps to 'ban the box,' so former presidents won't have to declare their criminal history at the very start of the hiring process," Hillary Clinton told an NAACP chapter on October 30.

We assume she meant to say "former convicts." "Ban the box" is the name given by activists to their campaign to prevent employers from asking about prospective employees' criminal histories. (Many job applications have a box to check if you've ever been convicted of a felony.) On November 2, President Obama announced he was backing the campaign and taking executive action to prevent prospective federal employees from being asked on job applications about their criminal histories. Activists are pressuring the president to expand this move to include federal contractors.

Obama himself seems aware of the pitfalls, even if he's foolhardy enough to dismiss them. "It is relevant to find out whether somebody has a criminal record. We're not suggesting ignore it," Obama said. "What we are suggesting is that when it comes to the application, give folks a chance to get through the door. Give them a chance to get in there so they can make their case."

One problem with extending the benefit of the doubt to felons is that the federal workforce is already rife with criminal activity that never gets punished. For instance, an inspector general report was released in March on sexual misconduct among Justice Department employees. The people entrusted to enforce federal crimes, perhaps unsurprisingly, often get away with them. (For more on the alarming extent of malfeasance among federal employees, see the editorial, "A Good Start," in our November 9 issue.)

Further, the amount of fraud that already exists in the federal government and among federal contractors is startling. Medicare fraud amounts to approximately $60 billion a year, which is more than 10 percent of the program's annual spending. The potential for fraudulently bleeding taxpayers is enormous, and the government has thus far been both unsuccessful and uninterested in doing anything about it. Not taking a hard line on keeping criminals out of the federal workforce and preventing them from being hired by federal contractors is tantamount to the president's rounding up the foxes and telling them the henhouse is open for business.

Having stated the obvious, it's important to acknowledge some of the sentiment behind the ban the box campaign is well-intentioned, if misplaced. The metastasizing of federal criminal law is such that even conservative Republicans in Congress are pushing for criminal justice reform. According to a Princeton study, around 20 million people, or about 1 out of every 15 Americans, have felony convictions. A significant number of felons are nonviolent and guilty of crimes that may not make them much of a risk to employers.

Accordingly, some companies—notably Target, Walmart, and even the dastardly Koch Industries—have already announced that they are banning the box. As private companies, they have the right to assume that risk, not to mention that it's getting hard to fill large, low-skill labor forces if you write off everyone with a criminal history. On the other hand, there are obviously positions where one would want to know about the criminal histories of potential employees. Why not ask them on their job applications?

It's also worth noting the alternatives to banning the box might prove worse. Chris Rey, a Democratic Senate candidate in North Carolina, recently put out a press release lauding Obama's move and touting that he banned the box as a municipal ordinance when he was a small-town mayor.

"Instead, Rey urges the use of background checks, which are a powerful tool employers can utilize when considering applicants for employment, revealing much more

than past incarceration and providing a truer view of the applicant as a whole," notes Rey's press release. So rather than screening for felonies, Rey is encouraging employers to do expensive and invasive digging into every applicant, which could reveal credit histories, legal actions, and other things that may not be germane to your employer.

While it behooves us to continue having a national conversation about criminal justice reform and how best to assist former criminals in becoming productive citizens, this should not entail throwing common sense out the window. Imposing some obligation to be upfront and honest about past mistakes is not unwarranted—and demanding honesty about past mistakes is especially important for federal employees and other guardians of the public trust.

—Mark Hemingway

Repeal: Now More Than Ever

We are just a year from November 8, 2016, and the election that will largely determine the fate of Obamacare, and the news isn't good for President Obama's centerpiece legislation. Premiums continue to rise, doctor and hospital networks continue to shrink, Americans continue to balk at buying government-mandated insurance, the legislation continues to be historically unpopular, and Republicans are getting close to uniting behind a conservative alternative that can lead to full repeal.

The administration now projects that the average premium for the second-lowest-cost, "silver" Obamacare plan in each area—that's the plan used to calculate taxpayer-funded subsidies to insurance companies—will rise 7.5 percent from 2015 to 2016. That's more than the real (inflation-adjusted) median American household income has risen in the past quarter of a century—in fact, it's more than 10 times as much. According to the Census Bureau, the real median household income was $53,306 in 1989 and $53,657 in 2014, an increase of just 0.7 percent. Try keeping up with Obamacare's inflationary premiums on such paltry increases in income.

Just because you pay your premiums, moreover, doesn't mean you'll get to keep your doctor. The *Wall Street Journal* reports,

> Many insurers are tweaking their health-care-provider networks. Health Care Service Corp., which owns Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in five states, lost money on its 2014 exchange business. For next year, it will stop offering preferred-provider-organization plans on the exchange in Texas, while in the Illinois marketplace it will no longer sell the PPO that featured the biggest selection of hospitals and doctors.
>
> The insurer is developing plans like one it will sell in the Chicago area next year, with a network that, for most care, includes just one large health system.

So health care options are shrinking to a "single provider." If conservatives don't repeal and replace Obamacare, "single payer" will be next. That's because the administration can't get people to buy Obamacare-compliant insurance, despite a dual-track effort at bribery and coercion. The carrot of subsidies and the stick of decreeing—for the first time in U.S. history—that private citizens must purchase a product or service of the federal government's choosing, under penalty of law, haven't been enough to get people to buy expensive insurance with narrow doctor networks.

Americans' refusal on this count has been remarkable. Right after the Supreme Court's high-profile Obamacare case was decided in the summer of 2012, the Congressional Budget Office projected that 23 million Americans would have Obamacare exchange coverage by 2016. The administration now says its *goal* is less than half that. A few weeks ago, a press release declared, "U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell announced today that she expects 10 million individuals to be enrolled in coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplaces and paying their premiums—so-called effectuated coverage—at the close of 2016." HHS's release added, "'We believe 10 million is a strong and realistic goal,' Burwell said."

Even if the administration hits its far less ambitious goal, a clear majority of the newly insured will continue to be people simply dumped into Medicaid at taxpayer expense. So far, the CBO says, about 60 percent of Obamacare's newly insured are on Medicaid.

Obamacare continues to be the most unpopular cornerstone legislation in memory. Since Obama began his second term, *Real Clear Politics* has listed 197 polls on Obamacare; 194 of them have found it to be unpopular. Just this past week, Republican Matt Bevin, a Tea Party favorite who campaigned against Obamacare, was elected governor of Kentucky, an office the Democrats have held for all but 4 of the past 44 years. Bevin, who polls claimed was a few points behind as of Election Day, won by 9 points against an opponent who touted the alleged benefits of Obamacare's Medicaid expansion in the state. The *New York Times* reports, "Mr. Obama's health care law was an especially contentious issue in the race."

To achieve repeal, all that's been missing is a new House (check), a new Senate (check), a new president (pending), and a conservative alternative that would repeal Obamacare and fix what the federal government had broken even before Obamacare was passed (gaining momentum).

Obamacare is on the ropes. It's time to knock it out. And it's time for GOP presidential candidates, who have been strangely silent on this matter, to start talking about how they would land the decisive blow.

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

Sasse Finally Speaks

An unusually promising senator's unusual debut. BY FRED BARNES

After Senator Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) delivered his maiden speech on the Senate floor last week, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent a text of his address to every Republican senator. This was unusual. McConnell rarely does anything quite like this.

It was all the more surprising since Sasse is a freshman who declared during his Senate campaign in 2014 that McConnell was one of the problems with Washington. To say the clash with McConnell was overblown is putting it mildly. In any case, friends of Sasse advised him to stifle negative references to McConnell. And Sasse did just that.

Though he was the unofficial Tea Party candidate in the Nebraska race, Sasse now appears to have landed on the good side of the distinction McConnell draws between senators eager to make a point and those who prefer to make a difference.

Sasse belongs on the make-a-difference side. He is not another Ted Cruz, a point maker, and he indicated as much in his speech. For one thing, he revived a long-forgotten Senate tradition by waiting a year from his election before uttering a single word on the Senate floor. Silence is not a Cruz trait.

And Sasse said this: "To the grandstanders who use this institution as a platform for outside pursuits, few believe the country's needs are as important to you as your ambitions." It was seen as a shot at Cruz, McConnell's least favorite GOP senator.

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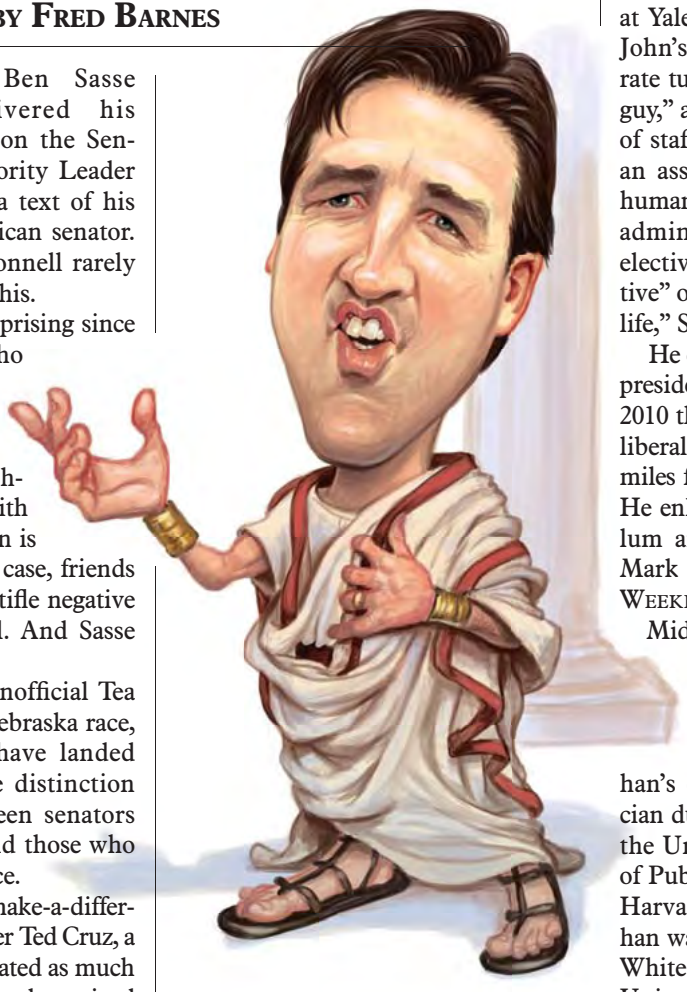

DAVE CLEGG

McConnell had another reason for liking Sasse's riveting, richly detailed address. It was in some ways a higher-octane version of a speech McConnell gave last year. Sasse said the Senate has lost its way and "allowed the short-termism of sound bite culture to invade this chamber." McConnell said the Senate "can be better than it has been . . . and must be if we are to remain great as a nation."

One phrase stands out, since both used it. McConnell said Senate committees should be relied on more. "That's the best way to end the permanent shirts against skins contest the Senate's become," he said. Sasse agreed there's a problem. Senate rules have been exploited as "shirts and skins exercises," he said.

Despite all this, Sasse is unlikely to become a McConnell lieutenant. His background is not that of a follower. He got a B.A. at Harvard and a Ph.D. at Yale (in history) and studied at St. John's and Oxford. He was a corporate turnaround specialist, a "strategy guy," as he calls it. He worked as chief of staff to a House member and was an assistant secretary of health and human services in the George W. Bush administration. Senator is his first elective office. It's "the least productive" of all the things "I've done in my life," Sasse told me.

He certainly was more productive as president of Midland University from 2010 through 2014. Midland is a small liberal arts college in Nebraska a few miles from his hometown of Fremont. He enlivened its campus and curriculum and doubled its enrollment, as Mark Hemingway chronicled in THE WEEKLY STANDARD in 2013. He left Midland for the Senate.

Sasse's model senator is Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.). The two never met, but Sasse taught about Moynihan's career as a scholar and politician during a stint in the classroom at the University of Texas's LBJ School of Public Affairs in 2005 and 2006. A Harvard professor by trade, Moynihan was a policy adviser in the Nixon White House, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, a senator from New York from 1977 to 2001, and a prolific author. He died in 2003.

"I sit quite intentionally at Daniel Patrick Moynihan's desk," Sasse said in his speech. He "cast a huge shadow around here for a quarter-century. . . . He read social science prolifically, and sought constantly to bring data to bear on the debates in this chamber. Like any genuinely curious person, he asked lots of questions—so you couldn't automatically know what policy he would ultimately advocate just because he asked hard questions of everyone.

He had the capacity to surprise us."

Moynihan was an old-fashioned liberal, but one can imagine a conservative playing a similar role. Sasse is uniquely capable of playing it. And he intends to. With last week's speech, he's already provided a surprise.

Few rookie senators have the knowledge and moxie to uncork a withering critique of the Senate. Sasse does. He spent months figuring out what he wanted to say. He consulted more than half the senators, plus some former senators. When I interviewed him at Ben's Chili Bowl at National Airport four days before his speech, he said he might be judged too "idealistic." Presumptuousness wasn't a worry of his.

His theme was a Senate that pays too much attention to small issues-of-the-day. "No one in this body thinks the Senate is laser-focused on the most pressing issues facing the nation," he said. And "because we're not doing the job we were sent here to do," the people "despise us all."

Sasse said the Constitution created the Senate to take up big issues, providing "six-year terms; representation of states, not census counts; nearly limitless debate to protect dissenters; no formal rules for political parties." These "shield lawmakers from obsession with short-term popularity to enable us to focus on the biggest long-term challenges our people face," he said.

His subtext was disappointment. Sasse had come to the Senate and was disappointed in what he found. "This is a place that would be difficult today to describe as 'the greatest deliberative body in the world'—something that has often been true historically." When was it true? During the Depression, the civil rights era, and the Cold War, Sasse told me.

Ex-senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), formerly the second-ranking Republican to McConnell, was one of those Sasse sought out for advice on the Senate. Sasse impressed him. "There's no question he will be one of the intellectual leaders in the Senate," Kyl says. And he "will quickly become a leader" on any issue he chooses. That sounds about right to me. ♦

ROBYN BECK / GETTY

Tough Questions

CNBC's missed opportunity.

BY LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

CNBC defends its performance at the last Republican debate by saying that candidates should be able to answer tough questions. Indeed they should. So, using the format of the CNBC questions to Republicans, here are some tough questions to ask Democrats at the next debate:

"Senator Sanders, you have said over and over that big money runs our politics. In the Republican party, the big money went to Jeb Bush, and he has gone nowhere, so Republican primary voters don't seem to follow big money. In your party, you have competed very effectively with Secretary Clinton, even though you rely on small donations and the big money is with her. So isn't your big money line just a false narrative designed to justify an otherwise content-free campaign?"

Harwood, Quick, and Quintanilla sharpen their claws pre-debate, October 28, 2015.

"Secretary Clinton, it has now been established that just after the attack on the American compound in Benghazi, you were telling the American people one thing—that the cause was a spontaneous riot motivated by a video—and your own daughter and the prime minister of Egypt another, that you knew it was a terrorist attack. How do you justify lying to the American people and the families of the victims of the Benghazi attack?"

"Senator Sanders, you heard Secretary Clinton's answers. She is leading in the polls. Do you think she is morally fit to be president of the United States and lead this country?"

"Secretary Clinton, three of the five largest political donors in the last few cycles were labor unions that forcibly collected money from their members and contributed it to candidates without their members' knowledge or consent. Do you think that is fair?"

"Senator Sanders, same question: Why do you think it acceptable for union bosses to give tens of millions of dollars of their members' money to candidates, some of it to you, while you complain about big-money influence?"

"Secretary Clinton, so far in this campaign you have failed to come up with a comprehensive plan for restructuring the American economy, a detailed budget proposal to prevent the country's debt from ballooning, or a detailed tax reform proposal. Why is that? Do your numbers just not add up?"

"Senator Sanders, even President Obama's former budget director wrote a paper saying that big increases in the top tax rate coupled with giving that money to the bottom fifth of the population will do little to make the income distribution more equal. Why do you keep insisting the exact opposite on the campaign trail? Have you actually looked at the facts?"

The list could go on for a long

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time; the Democratic candidates provide a target-rich environment for what CNBC considers "tough questions." Of course, these questions will never be asked of Democrats—and, frankly, they shouldn't be; they are snarky and rude. But with the names changed, they are the equivalent of the questions asked of the Republicans, and not just by CNBC. The contrast between the questions asked of Republicans and of Democrats was equally sharp when the questions came from CNN. Everyone knows the media treat Democrats differently from Republicans on everything from administration scandals to ethical lapses. The CNBC disaster was noteworthy only because it was over-the-top and so many people were watching.

Equally bad, the debate was a missed opportunity. Aside from John Harwood, who covers politics, the moderators are business and finance journalists who normally talk all day about the economy and markets. This was a chance to see if the candidates actually understood economics. Why not ask, "Ever since 2000 the economy has slowed dramatically, from roughly 4 percent growth to just 2 percent growth. Why do you think that is?" Or, "Inequality has risen under both Democratic and Republican presidents. Why do you think that is? Have both parties failed the middle class?" Or just a simple, "Do you think the Federal Reserve is doing a good job?" Those are actually tough questions; they demand thoughtful responses and could be asked at both parties' debates without changing a word.

These are the types of questions I actually expected. I've been on CNBC plenty of times and have always found Becky Quick and Carl Quintanilla proper and straightforward, as are the topics they raise when delving into policy. Sure, Quick and Quintanilla lean Democratic, but they have always been professional in my experience. And the panel's token conservative, Rick Santelli, has always been eloquent on these same topics.

Harwood is another matter. He was President Obama's favorite interviewer, receiving several exclusive interviews on CNBC, including one where the president famously swatted a fly that had landed on his arm. Obama knew that Harwood was part of his Greek chorus. My guess is that the Washington-based Harwood convinced Quick and Quintanilla that this was how it was supposed to be done, and they followed his lead.

It is not surprising that neither CNBC nor Harwood has given the slightest indication of feeling that they did anything wrong. CNBC's ultimate overlord, Brian Roberts, is a partisan Democrat. He and Harwood think this is how Republicans should be treated because they are simply wrong—they just don't fit the mainstream media narrative about America and are a threat to that vision of what is right.

To them, the audience for the debate was not Republican primary voters, who, in the minds of

the elite, are ignorant and bigoted and exemplify all that is wrong with America and therefore deserve to be ignored. The purpose of the debate was to damage the Republican brand in advance of the general election. This contempt for the actual viewers of the debate is what has stoked real anger among ordinary people, because they have now personally felt what the media really think of them.

My advice for Becky and Carl, who I sincerely believe are decent people, is to reflect on the purpose of the candidate-selection process in our democracy, then to approach their role in it in a constructive spirit. Solid performance is what creates the credibility on which their profession and American politics depends. ♦

Not a Conspiracy

We really do know a lot about Osama bin Laden's death.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

In May, the *London Review of Books* published a 10,000-word exposé by veteran investigative journalist Seymour Hersh on the killing of Osama bin Laden. It was widely read online, receiving "more than two million page-views," according to an editor's note inserted at the bottom. While Hersh's account was popular in the Internet's fever swamps, however, it was given little credence by the mainstream press. The *New Yorker*, where Hersh has published much of his work, passed on the story. Indeed, the thinly sourced piece seems implausible on its face. The few anonymous sources cited—most of the piece is based on the testimony of a single "retired senior intelligence official"—posit a vast conspiracy by the Obama administration to cover up the true story of how al Qaeda's founder was located and killed. Such an extraordinary claim demands extraordinary evidence, which Hersh failed to deliver.

Then, in mid-October, Hersh received a much-needed endorsement of sorts from the *New York Times Magazine*. Writing under the headline "What Do We Really Know About Osama bin Laden's Death?" Jonathan Mahler did not argue that Hersh was necessarily right. But he considered Hersh's story just as plausible as those sourced mainly to Obama administration officials. As Mahler explained to Hersh, he "wasn't going to offer a definitive judgment on what happened," but instead "saw this as more of a media story, a case study in how constructed narratives become accepted truth." Mahler's piece, at more than 7,000 words, was enough to give Hersh's story a veneer of mainstream acceptability.

The compound in Abbottabad where bin Laden was killed

Yet Mahler missed a fatal flaw in Hersh's account. Neither Mahler nor Hersh examined the dozens of publicly available files recovered from Osama bin Laden's compound. If Mahler had looked at some of these files, which can be found online with ease, he would have discovered that Hersh's chief source is not credible.

The retired official Hersh cites makes the following claims: Osama bin Laden was being held "hostage" by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency for years prior to the Abbottabad raid. The ISI used bin Laden as "leverage" over al Qaeda and the Taliban before trading him to the United States for cash. The idea that bin Laden was still in charge of al Qaeda's operations at the time of his death is a "great hoax," because very little terror plotting could be linked to al Qaeda since 2006. And "nothing has come" of the U.S. government's analysis of bin Laden's files.

The documents recovered in the Abbottabad raid show that each of these claims is demonstrably false.

The first set of documents was released in May 2012 via West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. A second set came to light in February of this year as a result of a terror trial in Brooklyn. In May, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released more files on a webpage titled "Bin Ladin's Bookshelf."

These three releases constitute a small subset of the total haul recovered in bin Laden's lair—several dozen out of more than a million documents and files. As THE WEEKLY STANDARD has reported on more than one occasion, that is the real story. Even so, the documents publicly available contradict Hersh's piece in crucial ways.

For example, Hersh writes that "bin Laden had been a prisoner of the ISI at the Abbottabad compound since 2006." This is flat wrong. The Abbottabad files show that al Qaeda's founder was hardly a "prisoner." In his final months, bin Laden even worried that Pakistani intelligence operatives were tracking some of his family members and key subordinates.

A more explosive revelation concerning al Qaeda's dealings with the Pakistani state is in a memo written by bin Laden's chief lieutenant, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, in July 2010. Al Qaeda was deeply enmeshed in the jihadist insurgency then raging in northern Pakistan. Some Pakistani officials,

NEWSCOM

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including those in the ISI, wanted to negotiate a truce. After discussing the matter with Ayman al Zawahiri, then bin Laden's second-in-command and now al Qaeda's chief, Rahman and his comrades came up with a plan for the talks. Al Qaeda was willing to make a deal with the Pakistani government, if the military and intelligence services stopped fighting al Qaeda and its allies.

"Our decision was this: We are prepared to leave you [the Pakistanis] be. Our battle is primarily against the Americans. You became part of the battle when you sided with the Americans," Rahman wrote to bin Laden, outlining the position al Qaeda would take. "If you were to leave us and our affairs alone, we would leave you alone. If not, we are men, and you will be surprised by what you see; God is with us."

Seymour Hersh

Rahman informed bin Laden, who approved the talks, that al Qaeda had let news "slip" of "big, earth shaking operations in Pakistan" that had been "halted" by the jihadists' leaders. "But if Pakistan does any harm to the mujahidin in Waziristan, the operations will go forward, including enormous operations ready in the heart of the country," Rahman wrote.

Rahman named two Pakistani officials who responded to the threat. One is Shah Baz Sharif, the head of the regional Punjab government and the brother of Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's current prime minister. The second is "Shuja' Shah," who appears to be Ahmad Shuja Pasha, then head of the ISI. "We received a messenger from them bringing us a letter from the Intelligence leaders including Shuja' Shah, and others," Rahman wrote. "They said they wanted to talk to us, to al Qaeda. We gave them the same message, nothing more."

It is not possible to piece together the full story of al Qaeda's negotiations with the Pakistani government in 2010 from the available files. The many documents that remain classified may shed additional light. But the information we can glean is stunning. The memo from Rahman shows that high-level Pakistani officials were at least willing to talk about cutting a deal with al Qaeda.

Rahman's memo, released as part of the Brooklyn terror trial in February, completely contradicts Seymour Hersh's key source. The retired official claims to have an insider's knowledge of meetings between ISI head Pasha and CIA director Leon Panetta in the spring of 2011. During those meetings, Pasha supposedly explained why the ISI had been holding bin Laden prisoner since 2006. According to the retired official, the "ISI was using bin Laden as leverage against Taliban and al Qaeda activities inside Afghanistan and Pakistan." If the Taliban and al Qaeda "ran operations that clashed with the interests of the ISI," the ISI "would turn bin Laden over to" the Americans.

This is a fantasy. Hersh's source appears to be ignorant of the jihadists' actual operations inside Pakistan. They were waging an insurgency in the years leading up to the Abbottabad raid. And the ISI knew who to negotiate with in an attempt to make them stop: Osama bin Laden. He was not the ISI's "hostage."

Hersh recounts a briefing by an Obama administration official shortly after the Abbottabad raid. The official said the bin Laden files were a "treasure trove . . . the single largest collection of senior terrorist materials ever." He described bin Laden as "an active leader in al Qaeda, providing strategic, operational, and tactical instructions to the group." Hersh makes no attempt to analyze these documents, which he could have easily downloaded. He has others characterize what is and isn't in the files, and those descriptions are wholly inaccurate.

Relying on his primary source, the retired official, Hersh argues the post-raid claims about the al Qaeda master's importance were "fabrications," because "there wasn't much activity for bin Laden to exercise command and control over." The ex-spook "said that the CIA's internal reporting shows that since bin Laden moved to Abbottabad in 2006 only a handful of terrorist attacks could be linked to the remnants of bin Laden's al Qaeda."

Here, Hersh's source demonstrates more ignorance. Bin Laden oversaw not only al Qaeda's ongoing terrorist operations targeting the West, but also its guerrilla armies fighting across multiple continents.

Al Qaeda was involved in far more than a "handful" of plots after 2006. Consider the following. In September 2007, European officials broke up two terror plots traced back to al Qaeda and affiliated groups in northern Pakistan. In late 2008, an American named Bryant Neal Vinas was captured in Pakistan and confessed to authorities that he had provided al Qaeda detailed information on the Long Island Railroad. In October 2009, David Headley, another American citizen, was arrested and subsequently convicted of helping plan the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were principally carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba, a group closely allied with al Qaeda. Headley's surveillance reports from Mumbai were reportedly found in bin Laden's possession. Al Qaeda also tasked Headley with plotting an attack on *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that published cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. In 2009, an al Qaeda cell trained in northern Pakistan plotted to blow up New York City subways. In 2010, on Osama bin Laden's orders, al Qaeda plotted Mumbai-style attacks in Europe. In 2009 and 2010, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which answered to bin Laden, placed a would-be suicide bomber on a Detroit-bound passenger plane and attempted to deliver packages filled with explosives into the United States via a cargo jet. Each of these plots was thwarted, through vigilance or luck.

Al Qaeda was far more active than Hersh's source lets on. As first reported by the *Washington Post*, the initial six-week triage of the documents "produced more than 400 intelligence reports," prompting "public warnings of al Qaeda plots against trains and other targets" and triggering "a small

number of operations overseas, including arrests of suspects who are named or described in e-mails that bin Laden received." Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified before Congress in April 2013 concerning those intelligence reports, saying they included "immediate threats" and "threat plotting."

The declassified Abbottabad files also give us a sense of bin Laden's day-to-day duties. In the last year and a half of his life, Osama bin Laden: made sure operatives responsible for al Qaeda's "external work" (operations against the West) answered up the chain-of-command to him; ordered al Qaeda's branches in Africa to designate recruits capable of taking part in these "external" plots; received a status report on al Qaeda's "very strong military activity" across eight of Afghanistan's provinces; with his commanders deliberated Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's war strategy for fighting the Yemeni government; advised Shabaab's leader in Somalia to hide his organization's al Qaeda role; had one of his subordinates research the applicable *sharia* laws for Shabaab's governance efforts; reviewed the résumés of candidates being groomed for leadership positions within his organization; received a portion of the $5 million ransom al Qaeda got in exchange for an Afghan official held hostage; ordered the relocation of al Qaeda members and leaders out of northern Pakistan into Afghanistan and other areas; critiqued the propaganda put out by AQAP and set forth media policies; oversaw the relocation of key operatives into Libya; and reviewed the policies and instructions sent to al Qaeda groups around the world.

These are just some of the revelations contained in the bin Laden files. Again, only a small fraction of the entire cache has been made available to the public.

Hersh's source claims the White House "created" the "treasure trove story," because it needed to show that bin Laden "was still operationally important" to justify killing him. The slaying of bin Laden was, in this retired official's assessment, "premeditated murder." But only in the bizarre moral universe of Hersh's storyteller does the killing of bin Laden, the man who oversaw the 9/11 attacks and other atrocities, need justification.

Hersh's "retired official disputed the authenticity" of some of the bin Laden documents. Of course: If they're genuine, Hersh doesn't have a story. But the idea they were forged is absurd. Imitating bin Laden's writing in Arabic—a language in which the U.S. government struggles to field translators—on topics that require detailed knowledge of granular points is impossible, especially on a mass scale.

"It's not that the truth about bin Laden's death is unknowable; it's that we don't know it," Mahler writes in his generous review of Hersh's conspiracy theory. Mahler is right that the media's job is to question the government's version of events. It is likely that there is much more to learn about bin Laden's stay in Abbottabad. Pakistan is a complicated country, filled with internal divisions and contradictions. It is possible, if not likely, that parts of the ISI were in cahoots with bin Laden. And the ISI certainly knew how to get in touch with al Qaeda's founder.

But more than four years after bin Laden was killed by Navy SEALs, we know this: No one should be fooled into thinking that Hersh and his single source know the "truth." ♦

ISMAEL ROLDAN

An Iraqi Abroad

Ahmad Chalabi, 1944-2015.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, my friend Ahmad Chalabi would often carry fat tomes about America's occupations of Germany and Japan. An Iraqi exile after 1958 who lived mainly in London and Georgetown and maintained an off-and-on, love-hate relationship with Western intelligence agencies, he was blessed with a voracious, curious, and sensitive mind. He had a prodigious memory, too, and was well-schooled beyond mathematics, in which he held a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. But knowledge ultimately failed Chalabi. He didn't see the most important lesson of the post-World War II era: It's essential to keep the Americans around.

Ahmad Chalabi

Chalabi certainly deserves the lion's share of the blame for his egregious, anti-American mistakes. They sprang mostly from his Iraqi patriotism and a too-exuberant personal and family pride. However humbling, he needed to adjust to the realities of American power. Furthermore, he wasn't easy for most American officials to digest. The Central Intelligence Agency in particular does poorly with foreigners (especially Arabs) who don't feel beholden and are very bright. Even before the hideous Baath party seized power in Iraq in 1968 and a decade later ushered in the barbarism of Saddam Hussein, Iraqis weren't known as the politest of peoples. Chalabi had more than a little brusqueness, amplified by a skyscraper IQ and an acute impatience with lesser mortals. His mordant wit too often gave way to scorn.

One of the oddest myths about this expatriate is that he greatly influenced

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the debate in Washington about going to war in 2003. The myth only grew as the war became unpopular. In fact, in the messy aftermath of the invasion, American officials became so infuriated with Chalabi, then an obstreperous member of the Governing Council of Iraq, that they went after him in May 2004. American soldiers raided and trashed his compound in Baghdad; it's a wonder they hadn't done it earlier.

By 2005, it was blindingly obvious that America's military—the light-footprint brass who dominated the upper ranks of the Pentagon, along with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz—had grossly misjudged how to quell a revanchist Sunni insurgency that was radicalizing a traumatized Shiite community. At home, this animated the penchant for conspiracy that afflicts the American left, especially when it is trying to forget that it, too, mostly embraced the war against the Butcher of Baghdad.

Many in Washington and liberal intellectual circles in New York spewed forth calumnies. Hitherto civilized adults went a little bonkers about neoconservative cabals—and in the background a duplicitous Chalabi—supposedly running American foreign policy. I will never forget being off-air on the *Charlie Rose* show, listening to Jimmy Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski suggest that the Israelis would have been the only ones capable of misleading both the Americans and the British into an addle-headed campaign to down Saddam. This antisemitic fantasy at least spared Chalabi, who, truth be told, was usually clamoring for attention in Washington. Senator Hillary Clinton, who'd watched her husband try to deal with the Iraqi dictator for eight years as president, surely didn't give a moment's thought to any idea or piece of intelligence that Chalabi proffered when she voted to support the war in 2003. What was true for Hillary was equally true for almost everyone else.

Chalabi returned to Iraq in 2003, right behind the U.S. troops, and found his destiny along the Tigris. The scorecard isn't a pretty one. He was enamored of the idea that America's presence in his country was a catalytic agent for the Sunni insurgency, which Chalabi preferred to see as a Baathist-run insurrection. Power needed to be transferred quickly and comprehensively to Iraqis—unelected Iraqis, including himself—who would rally Iraq's Kurds, Turkomans, and Arab Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians to construct a new nation. Chalabi was hardly alone in believing that the Iraqis could raise themselves by their own bootstraps. At least at first, most Iraqis thought the same. This was music to the ears of the dominant voices in America's military and to Rumsfeld, who wanted to leave Iraq even before arriving. Wolfowitz, too, his view freighted with moralism, believed in rapid Iraqi self-determination. By late 2003, it had become apparent that Iraqi society was broken and volcanic.

Chalabi may have been a failure at strategy, but he was often a tactical genius. Anyone who watched him up close in Baghdad, at dinners and late-night gatherings with mostly Iraqis present, had to be impressed by his ability to adapt to dangerous, chaotic situations that downed lesser men or sent his kind—Westernized, affluent Iraqis—scuttling back into exile. Chalabi became indispensable to other Iraqis who really didn't like him. He operated on a higher plane, with a knowledge of the world that most Iraqis couldn't comprehend. They'd become defensive, fearful, small-minded, and dumb under Saddam's Orwellian tyranny.

So far as I could tell, Chalabi wasn't a believing Shiite Muslim. We had long talks about philosophy that strongly suggested his relationship with the Almighty was distant. Yet his learning, curiosity, and attention to detail gave him a certain religious verisimilitude, perhaps even sincerity, that allowed him to interact respectfully with faithful Iraqis. He got along with clerics, no easy feat for a man raised in privileged—spoiled—circumstances in the West and the Westernized preserves in the Middle East where God is rarely on the agenda.

He was openly fascinated by and respectful of Iranians, who often stir tense, conflicted sentiments among Shiite Arab Iraqis. Chalabi was bemused that many Americans thought he had become, or always was, an Iranian agent. He certainly flaunted his Iranian contacts, of which, like any upper-class Iraqi Shiite of mixed Iranian-Arab ancestry, he had many. This raised red flags for Washington, at a time when the clerical regime was aggressively killing American soldiers through Iraqi proxies trained and armed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. But Chalabi knew that the Iranians would always be there; the Americans, as was evident from day one, were leaving. Chalabi indulged from time to time in vengefully turning the knife in his American tormentors.

Years ago Chalabi and I were at his home in Baghdad in his study listening to music. He had an impressive collection and an even more impressive high-fidelity system. Looking around the room, rich with the accumulation of a Western life, I asked him whether he could thrive in Iraq, even with the obligatory outings to London, Paris, and Vienna. The old Westernized elite of the Middle East, the worldly polyglots who grew up in the fading shadow of the Ottoman and Qajar empires, were all gone. In the wake of disastrous military tyrannies, the region had gone fundamentalist, and once-great Arab cities had fallen apart. Chalabi had almost no one to play with in his native land. Yet he looked at me and simply stated: "This is my home. I'm going to die here."

Great men have great faults. In the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries—the worst of times for an Iraqi—Chalabi was a complex historic figure. Often knocked down, he willed himself forward, sometimes causing considerable collateral damage. I once asked him whether there was a mathematical equation that expressed who he was. Chalabi laughed, but didn't answer. I am convinced he had one, some grand unifying spinoff of quantum mechanics: that everything would come together, and at the center of the universe he would be the last man standing. ♦

Handicapping Iowa

Don't look now, the caucuses are less than three months away. **BY MICHAEL WARREN**

GARY LOCKE

Sioux City, Iowa

Ben Carson has a simple theory of why he's risen to the top of the polls in Iowa. "I've probably been there more times than anywhere else," said the retired neurosurgeon just before the October 28 debate in Boulder, Colorado.

It helps, too, that Carson's campaign has been running radio ads on Iowa stations for several weeks. He's also got plenty of goodwill from the evangelical base in the state as a prominent Christian author and speaker—several of the stops on his recent non-campaign book tour happened to be in Iowa. With Carson, at nearly 26 percent support, overtaking Donald Trump in the *Real Clear Politics* average of polls for Iowa, Republicans now talk about the real possibility he could win the caucuses here on February 1.

But would it even matter? Success in Iowa has been a mixed bag for Republicans hoping to make it to the White House. Of the last seven competitive presidential primaries, the winner in Iowa has gone on to win the nomination just three times: Gerald Ford in 1976, Bob Dole in 1996, and George W. Bush in 2000. In 2008, John McCain came in fourth in Iowa; Mitt Romney effectively tied but technically lost Iowa in 2012.

This year, nearly all the campaigns competing for Iowa talk less about winning the Hawkeye State and more about placing in the top three or four. Viewed this way, the caucuses are a sorting mechanism, determining which candidates have the mettle (or the obstinacy) to stay in the race for the long haul. One erstwhile leader in Iowa polling, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, has already dropped out of the race. Others, like Ohio governor John Kasich, seem to have all but written off the state to focus on New Hampshire.

For Carson, winning in Iowa is probably the only way to keep his campaign alive. But what about the rest of the campaigns with good shots at showing or placing in Iowa? With fewer than three months to go before the caucuses, there's reason to think the race in Iowa is still wide open and unformed.

Donald Trump: Trump led in Iowa from early August till Carson passed him in late October, but stalling poll numbers here, which mirror his numbers nationally, suggest his appeal among the socially conservative set who go to the caucuses was mostly based on name ID.

Still, Iowa Republicans in the know say Trump is serious about organizing and will be a force come February 1. His state director, Chuck Laudner, is a veteran of Iowa campaigns who helped deliver victory to Rick Santorum in 2012 and once worked for the influential congressman Steve King. Laudner's hire, says one Iowa politico, suggests Trump is taking microtargeting of possible caucusgoers seriously. If success comes down to turning your supporters out on a frigid Monday evening, Trump could do well.

Trump may be topping out around 22 percent support, but Santorum won with 25 percent last time, so that's not a bad number to hit, as long as his floor's not much lower. But the location of Trump's floor is one of the great unanswered questions.

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Ted Cruz: The Texas senator and emerging conservative favorite in the field has all the right pieces in place for an outright victory in Iowa. Cruz has around eight staff members in the state and he's begun to lock up endorsements from lawmakers. Staff and endorsements are important, says one source close to the campaign, but the big focus is on organizing activists—from county GOP figures and homeschoolers to evangelical pastors and even some libertarian activists who supported Ron Paul in 2012.

An important element of Cruz's organizing strategy is Vicki Crawford, a homeschool activist with a large network in Iowa. Crawford's support for Cruz is a good omen, since she backed the 2008 caucus victor, Mike Huckabee. Another element is the pastors, and Cruz is about two-thirds of the way toward his goal of having 99 influential ministers (one for each of Iowa's counties) supporting his campaign. Lock up both the homeschool and evangelical networks, and you've got a significant segment of the Republican bloc in your corner.

But while still at 12 percent support in Iowa, Cruz is keeping expectations low, with one source telling me they'd be "happy" with second place. To get there, though, Cruz will need Carson to fall, and that means Cruz may have to go negative on the soft-spoken doctor. So far, Cruz has played nice with his fellow candidates, aiming fire at the GOP establishment in Washington.

But as the Iowa campaign heats up, expect to see the campaign or a super-PAC friendly to Cruz highlight Carson's blurry position on abortion and life issues. Chief among the targets may be Carson's decision to appear in a 1992 TV ad that encouraged Maryland voters to support a pro-life referendum. The Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon later appeared at a press conference for the referendum's opponents denouncing the ad. The Cruz campaign won't say if it will argue that Carson's pro-life credentials don't stand up, only that his positions are "concerning."

Marco Rubio: Commensurate with his rise in national polls, Rubio is seeing encouraging numbers in Iowa, tied with Cruz at around 12 percent. Judging by a recent meet-and-greet in Sioux City, it's easy to see how Rubio's natural political talent could serve him well here.

There aren't too many deviations in Iowa from his standard stump speech, with the references to his Cuban immigrant parents, the coming entitlement spending crisis he says he can fix, and the need to revive America's standing in the world. "The decline of America is a choice, not an inevitability," he says. Rubio uncorks a few winning lines for this Iowa crowd. "If you want to turn this country around, strengthen families," Rubio says.

That gets big applause from the gathered, including families with kids. One man shouts out "amen" as Rubio keeps rolling. "I don't care how many laws you pass, I don't care how many government programs they create. None of that is going to matter if we don't have strong families in this country." He's cut off by a woman near the front. "And God," she reminds him.

Rubio stops midsentence, just for a moment, turning toward the woman in acknowledgment. "Family's founded in our faith, because faith reinforces family," he says, as if he expected her interruption all along. The performance looks effortless.

The mantra of the Rubio campaign team is that its best asset is its candidate. In Iowa, the candidate is just about the only asset. Compared with other campaigns, Rubio's organizational footprint is light. He has just a handful of full-time paid staff members (the campaign won't say how many), and around 12 local-level organizers and volunteers. National campaign manager Terry Sullivan says he's confident that their strategy of digital organization is more efficient and reaches caucusgoers where they get their information: online.

But there may be pitfalls to that strategy. At his event in Sioux City, several college-aged students gather onstage patiently in order to get a group photo with Rubio. Afterward, they're effusive in their praise for the candidate they call "our generation's Kennedy." The problem is these students are all enrolled at the University of South Dakota, 45 minutes up Interstate 29 and over the border. Only one of them is eligible to caucus in Iowa next year.

Jeb Bush: The bad national polling numbers, ineffective hits on his opponents, and poorly received debate performances are all troubling for the once-mighty Bush campaign. To make matters worse, the media had a field day with a data point from a recently leaked campaign memo, which set a goal of 18 percent support for Bush in the Iowa caucuses, a hair under 24,000 votes. But, the memo noted, the campaign had only been able to identify 1,281 committed Bush supporters. Yikes.

Things aren't as bad as the media's interpretation of the memo, says Tim Albrecht, an Iowa consultant working for Bush. The important factor isn't how many committed caucusgoers the campaigns have in the fall, but how well a campaign is processing voter data to know who to target in the weeks and days before February 1. Albrecht says the Bush campaign has 10 staffers on the ground, many of whom are doing just that kind of important data work. The project for Bush is to win the 16 counties Romney did in 2012, and to do so means doing a better job organizing there than Rubio and New Jersey governor Chris Christie.

The bulk of Bush's financial resources have been put toward investing in this critical work, not building up national poll numbers. "Jeb will consistently out-organize his poll numbers," Albrecht says. The campaign better hope so, since his *RCP* average is currently 7 percent.

Chris Christie: Several candidates in single digits remain ahead of Christie in Iowa—Carly Fiorina, Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Rand Paul, and John Kasich—and the New Jersey

governor's relegation to the "undercard" Fox Business debate puts the future of his candidacy in question. But if he can survive, Christie may have the most potential for growth in Iowa, and even a fourth-place finish there would do a lot for him.

There are a couple of reasons to think Christie could do decently in Iowa if Bush continues to drop and Rubio hits a snag. For one, Christie, former chair of the Republican Governors Association, is very close with Iowa's governor-for-life, Terry Branstad. At a GOP rally in Orange City in late October, Christie reminded the crowd that he came out early and often to the Hawkeye State for Branstad's 2010 bid for governor. Branstad isn't likely to endorse a candidate before the caucuses, but it's never a bad idea to remind Republicans of your closeness with the longest-serving (Republican) Iowa governor.

More important for the caucuses, Christie has the support of several members of the Branstad political operation. Not only are all three members of his Iowa staff veterans of Branstad's 2014 reelection campaign, but Christie can name nearly 30 members of his "leadership team" with direct ties to Branstad's organization, including the governor's daughter-in-law and his former chief of staff.

A second reason is Christie's skill as a campaigner. Christie has deservedly earned a reputation as a moderate northeastern governor, and while he's never shied away from being pro-life, he sometimes brings it up, as he did in a recent New Hampshire appearance that's gone viral online, as a way to talk about showing compassion for those suffering from drug addiction. But among the socially conservative crowd in Orange City, Iowa, he calls himself an "unabashed" pro-life candidate, emphasizing that Planned Parenthood has not received funding from New Jersey taxpayers since he took office in 2009.

It's a good line, though not one that will rocket Christie to the top of the polls in Iowa. But in a crowded field where support is fluid, all it takes is a small spark to catch fire. ♦

CHRISTIAN MURDOCK / THE GAZETTE / AP

Our Heroes, Ourselves

A revealing evolution in our highest military honor. BY TOD LINDBERG

At a White House ceremony on November 12, President Obama will award the Medal of Honor to retired Army captain Florent Groberg. When the president fastens the medal's light-blue ribbon behind Groberg's neck, Obama will be doing more than honoring a single American hero. He will be reaffirming what has become a national commitment to honor a distinctive kind of heroism. Groberg, like other recent recipients of the nation's highest military honor, risked his life to save the lives of others.

Florent Groberg, February 14, 2013

Groberg, who was born in France in 1983 and is a naturalized American citizen, grew up in Bethesda and is a graduate of the University of Maryland. He joined the Army, he has said, because he felt he owed something to his adopted country. On his second tour in Afghanistan in 2012, Groberg was in charge of a detail that provided security for the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 4th Infantry Division.

On August 8 of that year, about a month after his promotion to captain, Groberg was leading a security team for a group of senior U.S. and Afghan officers en route to a meeting with local officials in Asadabad, the capital of Kunar Province. As the party advanced on foot, two motorcyclists rode by, and Afghan soldiers flagged them down—a diversion. Groberg then saw a man in local dress walking backwards toward them. He suspected an attack. Groberg called out to the man, who turned to face the party and began to advance on it.

Groberg and his radio operator, Sgt. Andrew J. Mahoney, charged the man, who was one of a pair of suicide bombers targeting the group. Groberg felt the vest under his clothing and drove the man to the ground. The vest had been rigged with a dead-man's switch and exploded, causing the premature detonation of the other suicide bomber's similarly rigged vest as well. Groberg and the sergeant were thrown 15 feet by the blast, which ripped apart Groberg's leg. Although four people died in the attack, Groberg's selfless charge to halt the suicide bomber saved the lives of the others in the group.

The Medal of Honor has been awarded much less frequently in recent decades than in previous periods of war and conflict. The Vietnam war produced 259 citations for conduct from 1964 through 1973. Since

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the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu of *Black Hawk Down* fame, which produced two posthumous citations, the 15 wartime years of Iraq and Afghanistan have produced only 16 citations—12 of them for Afghanistan. As Groberg's citation certainly will, they describe harrowing conditions and extraordinary wartime courage.

With perhaps one exception, these citations all conclude with descriptions of how the action of the honoree saved the lives of his comrades in arms: "saving the life of his fellow Marine"; "preventing the enemy from capturing the position and saving the lives of his fellow Soldiers"; "[recovered] a fellow American soldier from the enemy"; "evacuated two dozen Afghan soldiers, many of whom were wounded"; "prevented the enemy from overrunning the Observation Post and capturing fallen American soldiers." Even the citation that doesn't explicitly refer to life-saving describes Navy SEAL lieutenant Michael P. Murphy exposing himself to lethal fire for the purpose of calling in aid for his surviving team members. The description is that of a sacrificial act.

This life-saving component is hardly unique to the recent awards. Citations from both world wars as well as from other conflicts include frightful instances in which a soldier dives on a grenade to absorb the blast, saving the lives of those around him. But many of the citations from previous conflicts recount feats of extraordinary battlefield prowess with no mention of life-saving action.

Take the citation for Samuel Woodfill, known as the most highly decorated soldier of World War I: "A few minutes later this officer for the third time demonstrated conspicuous daring by charging another machine-gun position, killing 5 men in one machinegun pit with his rifle. He then drew his revolver and started to jump into the pit, when 2 other gunners only a few yards away turned their gun on him. Failing to kill them with his revolver, he grabbed a pick lying nearby and killed both of them."

For my book *The Heroic Heart*, I tried to quantify the life-saving element of the Medal of Honor over the years. My research team reviewed all the citations since the creation of the award during the Civil War, classifying them on a 1-5 scale based on the degree of prominence the citation assigned to life-saving action. The Woodfill citation would be classified as 1. Most of the Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan citations would warrant a 4, some a 5.

The prominence of life-saving in citations has been steadily increasing, from about a 2.3 average in World War II to just over 2.8 for Korea and 3.5 for the Vietnam era. Citations for Iraq and Afghanistan are in the range of 4.0. The increased emphasis on life-saving heroics is more than just a matter of impression.

Woodfill 'drew his revolver and started to jump into the pit, when 2 other gunners only a few yards away turned their gun on him. Failing to kill them with his revolver, he grabbed a pick lying nearby and killed both of them.'

Samuel Woodfill

The U.S. military has not formally changed the requirements for its highest decoration, and if any additional internal guidance is in place, I am unaware of it. More likely, I think, is that the Medal of Honor has kept pace with the society out of which it arises. In our time, the heroic archetype is no Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great, hellbent on conquering and ruling the world. Rather, it's the 9/11 firefighter—someone willing to rush into a burning building to save the lives of strangers. In a society badly divided on many questions, the heroism of those firefighters and other first responders who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way is a matter of near unanimity.

The U.S. military is a distinctive institution in many ways, starting with its responsibility to fight our enemies. But it is still part of American society. That the military has come to confer its highest honor on the same kind of conduct the public values most highly should perhaps come as no surprise.

One must ask, though: Is this a skewed priority? Is it a mistake to close the door to the highest honor on such derring-do as Samuel Woodfill's? Perhaps the superior status the military itself now assigns to life-saving indicates a new squeamishness about the reality of the enterprise, which entails killing the enemy.

The U.S. military remains very good at its job, an indication there is no big problem here. If we look a little more deeply into the matter, however, a richer picture emerges. Why soldiers fight is a question that has long vexed armies eager to improve their performance on the battlefield. One answer that stands out in the scholarly literature goes by the term "small-unit cohesion"—a fancy way of saying that soldiers fight because they believe the soldiers around them depend on them. They are part of a group; they are not alone. Interestingly, this is an answer firefighters commonly give to explain their willingness to put themselves at risk in burning buildings.

That the Medal of Honor now goes mainly for life-saving is perhaps the ultimate reinforcement of a message the military emphasizes up and down the ranks: You're not alone. Your comrades have your back. No one gets left behind. You are not a pawn to be sacrificed in a game of chess; you are part of the society on whose behalf you have chosen to fight. War is dangerous; death is a possibility; but your life is worth heroic efforts to save.

Groberg has talked movingly in a video about his experience on August 8, 2012. He called it "the worst day of my life" because of the four individuals who died in the attack. This life-saving hero humbly regrets his inability to save more lives. Our nation rightly honors him. ♦

Medicare and Medical Futility

Who decides to discontinue treatment?

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

ASSISTED SUICIDE

The media are cooing over the news that Medicare will reimburse doctors $86 for half-hour consultations about the kind of treatment patients would—or would not—want should they become incapacitated. Such coverage was slated to be part of Obamacare, but was dropped after it became controversial when Sarah Palin warned against "death panels."

Now, six years later, Medicare's coverage of these important conversations (and private insurers are sure to follow) has brought nary a peep of protest. Nor should it. Making treatment desires known in advance—and appointing a trusted surrogate to carry out your wishes if you become incompetent—is only wise.

End-of-life care conversations became controversial because Palin and others feared that patients would be pressured to refuse expensive treatment and would be given little opportunity to choose care. With the continuing emphasis on medical cost cutting—and the possibility of future health care rationing in the air—it was and is a reasonable concern. But today's advance directive forms make it easy to opt for care. To assuage fears of pressure, moreover, the regulation makes it clear that the discussions are to be voluntary, at the discretion of the patient, offered but not required as part of Medicare's annual "wellness exam" benefit.

Politicians and the medical establishment are pleased with the regulation and the lack of popular resistance to it. The *New York Times* quoted congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) as saying the regulation marked "a turning point in end-of-life care." The story went on to say, again quoting Blumenauer, that "the challenge is to ensure that the wishes of patients and family members are 'understood, respected, and enforced.'"

That is indeed the rub. But let's be more specific. The threat is not that doctors will force the sick to receive unwanted care, as some fear. The right to refuse treatment is well established—even when it allows an otherwise postponable death. And that right is reinforced by doctors' and medical institutions' economic interest in reducing the provision of expensive care.

That financial reality, however, explains why the true threat to patient autonomy comes from the potential refusal to provide very ill and aged patients the life-extending treatment that they want—even when their desire has been expressed in a written advance directive. If the doctor believes that wanted treatment is "nonbeneficial" or "futile," hospital committees are being given the authority to refuse care—even (perhaps especially) when the intervention has been keeping the patient alive.

Texas law, for instance, permits doctors who disagree with a patient's choice of life-extending treatment to take the matter to a hospital bioethics committee for adjudication behind closed doors. If the committee deems the treatment inappropriate, the family has 10 days to find another hospital willing to provide the care. If the family fails, which is often the case, treatment can be stopped legally—even when doing so overrides the explicit terms of an advance directive.

The push is on to increase the number of jurisdictions that allow doctors and others to overrule patient and family treatment choices. The journal *Health Care Ethics* published an article in 2012 entitled "Enhancing Communication and Coordination of Care: A Third Generational Approach to Medical Futility" urging that in disputes over interventions deemed futile by the hospital, a "time-limited trial" of continuing care be offered. After that, if "the treatment is still considered unreasonable or inappropriate, it could be withdrawn provided there is wide agreement among the attending/primary treating physician, other caregivers, hospital president, ethics committee, and so on." Notice that the wishes of the patient and family are not mentioned.

LISA BENSON

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Here, it is important to stress a few points:

■ Medical futility is a value judgment, not a strictly medical determination. These cases don't involve care that can't or doesn't work, but care that can or does. The determination that care is futile is a judgment about whether the life in question is worth living—and worth paying to sustain.

■ Futile care decisions may be distorted by prejudice against disabled patients, the elderly, and other minorities. Disability rights activists commonly complain that disabled people are pressured to refuse life-sustaining or life-saving treatment that would be unremarkable if provided to an able-bodied patient.

■ Collective decision-making such as proposed above empowers strangers to make crucial decisions about a person's care. It gives greater weight to institutional and professional values than to those of the patient and family. This is likely to be especially true if the decision for continued treatment is seen by clinicians and bioethicists as religiously based.

If all of this sounds suspiciously like the enablement of institutional death panels, that would be right. It is not end-of-life consultations paid for by Medicare that are cause for concern, but hospital-enforced medical futility protocols that already present a danger to vulnerable patients. ♦

Bayou Voodoo

Zombie helps Louisiana Democrats find new life.

BY QUIN HILLYER

A year ago, the Louisiana Democratic party seemed as dead as its allegedly habitual voters from New Orleans cemeteries. Yet with a governor's race quickening to its November 21 conclusion, Republican senator David Vitter is proving the Democrats' greatest necromancer.

Vitter, buffeted by multiple controversies, is trailing in polls by 11 to 20 points his Democratic opponent, John Bel Edwards, the minority leader in the Louisiana house and a West Point graduate who uses his military background to feign a conservatism his record belies.

Vitter once was expected to win easily. That was before he ran a harshly negative primary campaign that appeared to inspire exactly nobody, and before a final week of the primary so nightmarish for Vitter that the only thing missing was Elm Street's Freddy Krueger.

Some background is in order: Until a decade ago, Louisiana was a swing state. For the Democrats, Bill Clinton won its presidential electors in 1992 and 1996; Mary Landrieu won Senate races in 1996, 2002, and 2008; and Kathleen Blanco was elected governor in 2003.

But the Bayou State has voted for four straight Republican presidential tickets, gave two huge victories to GOP governor Bobby Jindal, and provided Republicans a clean sweep of statewide offices. Last fall, three-term Senate incumbent Landrieu was defenestrated by challenger Bill Cassidy by 12 points.

Vitter—a ruthless political mastermind—played major roles fundraising and strategizing for the broad-front Republican ascendance. Meanwhile, he built a conservative, reformist record on public policy during a quarter-century in various offices.

Even Vitter's well-publicized inclusion on an apparent client list of the so-called D.C. Madam (he admitted "a very serious sin" in 2007), combined with a wallflower personality in large gatherings and a legendarily explosive temper at slight provocation, could not stop him from winning reelection to the Senate with an overwhelming 19-point margin in 2010. Just a year ago, Vitter led Edwards by 18 points in a head-to-head poll for governor.

Louisiana, though, features a "jungle primary" in which all candidates share the same ballot and the top two finishers, regardless of party, face a runoff if neither receives over 50 percent of the vote. Edwards—scion of a political family full of county officeholders but no relation to former governor and scofflaw Edwin Edwards—was the only major Democrat in the race. But two other significant Republicans ran. Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne and Public Service Commissioner Scott Angelle both boasted good-government records and far more approachable personalities than Vitter. Neither, however, enjoyed Vitter's high name-identification, fundraising ability, or reputation for slaying supposedly powerful "interests" in Louisiana's pockmarked political culture.

For most of 2015, the race remained unusually sleepy, with Vitter making relatively few public appearances while the others struggled to raise cash and gain attention. But all three other candidates sniped at the oft-absent senator in every public forum, as Vitter's campaign and supporting PACs trashed the two other Republicans in hardball ads while leaving Edwards alone. Vitter's tactics succeeded in keeping Dardenne and Angelle from catching fire, but certainly didn't add any "warm fuzzies" to his own reputation.

By midsummer, Edwards caught Vitter atop the four-way polling, and by late summer in hypothetical head-to-head match-ups too.

Enter Vitter's eight days from Hades. One week before the October 24 primary, a blog oddly named *American Zombie* posted an interview with a former New Orleans prostitute who claimed to have "serviced" Vitter several times during a period preceding the D.C. Madam scandal. Saying she had passed a lie-detector

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test administered by a respected authority, Wendy Ellis alleged, on camera, that the pro-life senator had fathered her child 15 years ago, told her to abort it, and cut off all contact with her after she refused. (She said she put the child up for adoption.)

Ellis provided not an iota of proof; Vitter's camp denied the whole tale. Later news reports showcased various apparent contradictions between her *American Zombie* interview and earlier stories she had told, including statements to a judge in an unrelated case in Arkansas.

Still, the story roiled Louisiana politics during the final week of the primary—and erupted again, two days before balloting, when (a) a stripper friend of Ellis told *American Zombie* that Ellis had indeed been pregnant with Vitter's child; and (b) the well-respected *Gambit*, a New Orleans weekly, reported that a popular French Quarter barber, whose shop faced the alleged brothel, said that Vitter procured several haircuts there during the time period at issue while "waiting for the girl across the street."

That same preelection morning, Jefferson Parish sheriff Newell Normand arrested a man for videotaping Normand's "private" conversation at a coffee shop with an attorney prominently supporting Edwards, a noted local private eye, and a Republican state representative. It turned out the videographer was himself an investigator working for a Dallas group hired by the Vitter campaign to do opposition research. Very strange.

Finally, later that day, Vitter was a passenger in a fender-bender, his car driven by a woman simultaneously serving as a top fundraiser both for the Vitter campaign and a Vitter-supporting PAC. The minor wreck served as an obvious metaphor.

In the next day's election, an embarrassingly low-turnout affair, Vitter sweated the results for hours before pulling away from Angelle, 23 percent to 19.3 percent, for the second runoff spot. Edwards won 40 percent to lay claim as the clear frontrunner (and has since garnered the endorsement of Republican Jay Dardenne).

Edwards—seen as friendly and unthreatening if not tremendously charismatic, and boasting of running a race without airing a single negative ad—can probably hold his lead if the race revolves around likability. Vitter, instead, must make it a battle not of personality or character, but of governing philosophy and fastidious official behavior. (Think of Alexander Hamilton, willing to admit adultery in order to clear his name of misconduct with official finances.)

"You don't have to have a beer with the governor, and it doesn't affect your life one bit if he's a nice guy," wrote Scott McKay, proprietor of the conservative Louisiana blog the *Hayride* and regular contributor to the *American Spectator*. "What does affect your life is the kind of governance he offers. Vitter offers aggressive conservative reform virtually across the board, built on a foundation of . . . relative friendship to business, pro-growth policies, educational choice and reined-in government growth."

Populist-oriented reforms are Vitter's calling card. As a state legislator, he almost singlehandedly shamed colleagues into adopting term limits. In the U.S. House and Senate, he has refused to accept the taxpayer-funded pension program, opposed automatic cost-of-living adjustments for Congress, and led the fight against exempting congressional staff from Obamacare.

And his voting record is solidly conservative: lifetime American Conservative Union rating of 92; Competitive Enterprise Institute and National Right to Life, 100 each.

Edwards, despite his campaign persona and frequent mention of his background in the 82nd Airborne, is no such conservative. His lifetime rating from the Louisiana Family Forum is a mediocre 55, from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry an abysmal 39, and from the National Federation of Independent Business an even worse 33.

Edwards is particularly close to teachers' unions and has strewn roadblocks in front of various forms of school choice. He also bashed Jindal's brilliant private leasing of the state's unique "charity hospital" system.

And while his remarkably responsive and friendly campaign staff provides substantive answers on Edwards's positions on a range of issues, his website contained nothing remotely approaching a "platform"—much less the highly detailed, reformist document readily available online from Vitter.

Twice provided the same teed-up question—"I'm writing for a conservative publication; what are the best reasons why right-leaning people should vote for you?"—Edwards repeated the same, nonideological answer: "I am a leader and a uniter, and David Vitter excels only at destruction and division. [Vitter's approach] doesn't work well in the governor's office. It doesn't fix roads or improve health care."

Later in the interview, after finally citing his 100 percent rating from the NRA and his pro-life consistency "informed by my Catholic, Christian faith," he volunteered this, unbidden: "That same Catholic, Christian faith tells me that accepting [Obamacare's] Medicaid expansion is the right thing to do, so the same tax dollars that we pay to other states will come back to us."

Vitter clearly will paint Edwards as a liberal. Vitter began the runoff with a brutal, Willie Horton-type ad. Edwards, he said, is joining Barack Obama in a sentencing-reform plan to release "5,500 dangerous thugs . . . back into our neighborhoods."

"This year there are only three big races in the country," Vitter told me, referencing gubernatorial races in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi. "A lot of tea leaves will be read based on these outcomes, especially my matchup as a clear, strong conservative against a clear, pro-Obama liberal. If the liberal wins the upset in a red state, that result is going to be spun significantly by the media, for the Democrats, in the context of the presidential campaign."

All things considered, Vitter's supporters might well adapt a famous slogan from an earlier Louisiana gubernatorial race. "Vote for the john: it's important." ♦

So You're Getting a Ph.D.

Welcome to the worst job market in America

By Charlotte Allen

Every few years in the Northeast, biologist John Cooley gets famous—because he's the man who discovered the mating secrets of one of the insect world's weirdest and most-publicized species: *Magicicada septendecim*, the 17-year cicada. True to their name, and unlike the bottle-green "annual" cicadas that emerge in backyards every summer, the black-and-orange 17-years spend more than a decade and a half underground as larvae, and then all emerge as adults at the same time, usually in May. Their enormous broods numbering in the tens of millions carpet nearly every outdoor surface, terrifying the faint of heart with their tank-like bodies and bulging, traffic-light-red eyes. The males, vibrating their tymbals—ridged membranes in their abdomens—set up a piercing fire-siren din designed to attract female attention. A few weeks later, reproduction finished and eggs laid, the entire brood dies, its collective offspring not to be seen for another 17 years. Not all of those "periodical" broods emerge during the same year, so it's likely that somewhere or other in the Eastern United States either *Magicicada septendecim* or its 13-year-cycle cousin, *Magicicada tredecim*, will be experiencing its brief, frantic, en masse adulthood during the late spring.

With no office, adjunct professor Anne Winkler-Morey waits in a lobby to meet a student at Metro State University in Minneapolis, March 5, 2014.

NEWSCOM

In the 1990s, Cooley, a graduate student in the University of Michigan's highly ranked biology department after graduating *summa cum laude* from Yale, discovered, along with another grad student, David Marshall, that periodical cicadas have the most complicated courtship ritual of any insect known to man. It's a three-step process in which the male serenades the lady of his choice, and if she likes it, she makes a tiny come-hither flick of her wing. But that doesn't end the process. The male has to repeat his serenade and receive a second welcoming wing-flick ("yes means yes" seems to be the rule in *Magicicada* amour) before he can proceed. He then switches to a different, more insistent sound before climbing aboard his beloved for copulation. Cooley wrote up his observations in his doctoral dissertation and received his Ph.D. from Michigan in 1999.

When a 17-year brood exploded into adult life and massive public attention along the Eastern seaboard in 2013, Cooley, who lives in central Connecticut, became the go-to guy for the media, giving interviews to NPR, NBC, Fox News, the *Washington Post*, and *Scientific American*, among other outlets. Meanwhile, he had published all but one chapter of his dissertation, plus more than 20 articles, all in top scholarly journals, held teaching positions at a variety of institutions including Yale, and garnered impressive research grants. His magicicada.org website is a compendium of all things periodical-cicada designed for scholars and amateur entomologists alike.

But there is one thing that Cooley, for all his accomplishments, never managed to attain: a tenure-track—that is a full-time, benefits-paying—teaching job at a college or university, with its promise of lifetime employment barring serious misconduct. Instead, he has subsisted over the years on postdoctoral research fellowships and "visiting"—that is, temporary—professorial gigs. At age 47, he is a more or less permanent fixture in the department of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Connecticut's main Storrs campus, but only as "adjunct faculty," which

Charlotte Allen, a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard, *last wrote on fraternities.*

means teaching jobs for a few thousand dollars per class, no benefits of any kind, and certainly no job security. "I share an office, and right now I have no lab," Cooley said in a telephone interview. "All my lab equipment is now in a storage unit." In 2013, Cooley, a cicada celebrity but with little hope of a sustainable academic future, enrolled in UConn's business school, and he now has an M.B.A. degree. He cobbles together a living and supports his three children via adjunct teaching, marketing consulting for businesses, and a wife who works full-time. He doesn't fault UConn or anyone else for his fate: "The number of tenure-track jobs is shrinking, and there have been some rough patches on the road for a number of cohorts coming out of graduate school."

Much has been written lately about the plight of the adjunct professor, nearly all of it grim. For the past 40 years institutions of higher learning have been relentlessly replacing professors on the tenure track—the ones with decently paying (if not often richly compensated) jobs and fringe benefits—with "contingent" faculty, typically part-timers, who cost a whole lot less. Not only is the average adjunct paid a mere $2,700 per three-credit course, according to the American Association of University Professors (although STEM-field and some social-science adjuncts can make around $7,000 on some campuses, and some fortunate souls who adjunct at the Ivies can earn nearly twice that), but adjuncts typically qualify for neither sick leave nor paid vacations. They certainly don't qualify for time off to do scholarly research, because they haven't been hired to do research, even though their credentials may be as stellar as Cooley's.

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As human just-in-time inventory, most adjuncts are hired (or fired) on an as-needed (or as-not-needed) basis, and they usually don't even require office space, because a typical adjunct's job doesn't come with an office. Cooley, with his shared office, is one of the lucky few. Many adjuncts are obliged to use their cars as their campus home base, with the trunk serving as filing cabinet. And they need those cars. Most colleges refuse to let their adjunct faculty shoulder more than two courses per semester so as not to trigger the Obamacare "employer mandate" that they be provided with health insurance. So most adjuncts who wish to earn even a barista-level income of, say, $25,000 a year from teaching have to shuttle among multiple campuses, enduring, thanks to the commuting, workdays that can stretch to 13 hours or more. Compare that with the $69,000 on average that brand-new assistant professors at the very bottom of the tenure ladder earn.

And this isn't even getting into the humiliations: On most campuses adjunct professors can't vote in the faculty senate, and they may not have full library privileges. They may not be allowed access to departmental support services and on some campuses don't even get invited to the Christmas party. Their departmental colleagues on the tenure line may express sympathy for adjuncts' second-class status, but given human nature and its penchant for pecking orders, it's more likely that they secretly regard adjuncts as academic losers who couldn't cut it in the full-time job market.

Adjunct horror stories abound. In 2013, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* published an op-ed, "The Death of an Adjunct," telling the Willy Loman-esque tale of penniless 83-year-old Margaret Mary Vojtko, who had taught French for 25 years as an adjunct professor at Duquesne University, never qualifying for health benefits and never earning more than $3,500 per three-credit course. During Vojtko's last few years on the French faculty, as she was battling cancer and racking up medical bills, Duquesne cut back her teaching load to a single class per semester, meaning that she was earning less than $10,000 a year, not enough to pay her electricity bill, so during the winter she would prepare her classes at night in a fast-food restaurant and sleep during the day in her office. The spring before she died Duquesne had let her go entirely. She collapsed on her front lawn from a massive heart attack the following August as she was fighting to get her job back.

Vojtko's was perhaps the most pitiable of all adjuncting narratives, but it's not entirely unrepresentative. The Internet abounds with stories of adjuncts going on food stamps to buy groceries, sleeping in their cars and on friends' couches because they can't afford to pay rent, and claiming that once the time they spend preparing for class and grading is figured in, they're lucky to be clearing minimum wage.

Adjuncting wasn't designed to be this way. Until relatively recently adjunct professors were typically ultra-educated people who didn't need the paltry pay because they had other sources of income: retired professors on pensions who wanted to teach a class or two to keep their hand in, high-earning professionals who might teach "clinical" classes in which they shared their real-world experiences with students, and married

women with family responsibilities who chose not to teach full-time. The adjuncts of yore essentially taught for love, or to pay for a nice vacation with their spouses.

As late as 1970, more than two-thirds of faculty positions at U.S. colleges and universities were tenure-line, but now the percentages are reversed, with 1 million out of the estimated 1.5 million Americans teaching college these days classified as "contingent" faculty, the overwhelming majority of them working part-time. Parents who have shelled out or borrowed the more than $60,000 per year that it can now cost to attend an elite private college may be shocked to learn that their young Jayden or Sophia isn't actually being taught by the Nobel Prize-winners advertised on the faculty but by shabbily attired nomads with ancient clattering cars who are wondering how to get the phone bill paid. Some adjuncts have successfully unionized. In 2013 adjuncts at the University of Oregon won the right to a boost in base pay, regular raises, health insurance, and the ability to qualify for multiyear contracts. That still didn't erase—and perhaps set in stone—their second-class faculty status, and they still would earn tens of thousands of dollars less than the greenest assistant professor.

'Contingent' professors at Albuquerque's Central New Mexico Community College stage a protest during National Adjunct Walkout Day, February 25, 2015.

Explanations for this two-tier phenomenon abound. Marc Bousquet, now an associate professor of film and media at Emory University, contended, in his 2008 book, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*, that the problem was the "corporatization" of the university. Bousquet argued that formerly high-minded academia figured out that it was actually a business. Like the rest of American businesses during the 1980s and 1990s, Bousquet argued, universities adopted outsourcing as their most profitable economic model, transforming their historic teaching mission into a form of low-wage, gig-economy service employment in which the majority of the instructors, like Uber drivers, are responsible for their own overhead.

An alternative and less class-warfare-driven theory came from Benjamin Ginsberg, a political science professor at Johns Hopkins University. In his 2011 book, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters*, Ginsberg targeted administrative bloat as the culprit for the massive shrinkage in tenure-line faculty from the 1970s onward, even as college tuition costs were rising exponentially. He pointed out, for example, that between 1998 and 2008, America's colleges increased their spending on administration by 36 percent while boosting their spending on instruction by only 22 percent. In an adaptation of his book for the *Washington Monthly* Ginsberg wrote: "As a result, universities are now filled with armies of functionaries—vice presidents, associate vice presidents, assistant vice presidents, provosts, associate provosts, vice provosts, assistant provosts, deans, deanlets, and deanlings, all of whom command staffers and assistants—who, more and more, direct the operations of every school."

To conservative critics of academia, the shrinkage of tenure-line faculty may seem to be a good thing: fewer "tenured radicals" shoving their Marxist-derived ideologies down the throats of hapless undergraduates. After all, some 63 percent of college professors define themselves as either "liberal" or "far left," compared with only 12 percent who place themselves on the right, according to a 2012 survey by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute. Nonetheless, Roger E. Meiners, an economics and law professor at the University of Texas-Arlington, has argued that tenure actually makes sense. In a 2010 article for the conservative John William Pope Center for Higher Education's website, Meiners argued that colleges may drastically contract their tenure lines in order to exploit the Ph.D. overabundance, but they're unlikely to get rid of them altogether. Departments need a core of stable faculty, not only to produce the scholarly research on which the university's prestige rests, but to design classes and programs. Furthermore, Meiners pointed out, alumni are more likely to feel warmly toward Dear Old Alma Mater, and to open their wallets accordingly, if they know that "good old Professor Chips is still around" setting off those amusing desktop explosions in his Chem 101 classroom that they remember so well from freshman year.

All of this means that every fall there is a desperate scramble among the young and the highly credentialed to garner one of the ever-diminishing entry-level tenure-track slots that still exist. A May 2014 report from the Modern Language Association (MLA), representing scholars in English and foreign languages, asserted that every year

NEWSCOM

about 1,000 brand-new Ph.D.s in those fields emerge to chase about 600 new job openings. The report didn't consider that those newbies are also competing with the 400 leftovers who had failed to obtain jobs during the previous year—plus all the leftovers still in the job market from the years before that. The humanities, where undergraduate majors are in steep decline, are famously overloaded with unusable doctorates, but as John Cooley learned to his chagrin, new STEM Ph.D.s fare only slightly better. *Atlantic* senior associate editor Jordan Weissman observed in 2013 "a pattern reaching back to 2001" of "fewer jobs, more unemployment, and more post-doc work." Postdocs in the sciences essentially consist of low-paid lab scut work. "Once it was just a one or two-year rite of passage where budding scientists honed their research skills," Weissman wrote. "Now, it can stretch on for half a decade."

How to land one of those elusive tenure-line positions has become a science in itself. In 2010, Karen Kelsky, who had held two tenured professorships in anthropology at public research universities before leaving academia for personal reasons in 2009, launched a consulting business for job-seeking Ph.D.s that quickly grew from a blog to a column in the academic trade paper the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to a brand-new book, *The Professor Is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D. Into a Job*. Kelsky's book, hardnosed, blunt, exceedingly readable, and informed by her anthropologist's eye for human social hierarchies, is a step-by-step guide to the culture of job-hunting (writing a cover letter, navigating an interview) that could be usefully read by anyone looking for employment. It is also a frightening revelation of exactly how hazardous that hunt is going to be in today's academic marketplace. "You must choose, consciously, an approach that minimizes risk and maximizes return on your investment of time and money in the Ph.D. enterprise," she writes. "And you must declare independence from any advisor who peddles false hope."

Kelsky tells grad students to tailor their lives and their résumés (*curricula vitae* or "CVs" in academic-speak) not just from their first day in graduate school but before they even enroll, picking a program that will impress future faculty search committees and tapping into every conceivable source of funding so as to avoid the crippling student debt that can drive those who fail to catch the brass ring to consider suicide. Do some teaching because it will look good on your CV, but not too much, because search committees don't really care all that much about teaching, no matter what they say. Attend academic conferences, but only the *right* conferences—the big national ones where you can schmooze with the stars in your field and observe them in action. Learn the fine art of grant-proposal writing. Learn the even more important art of getting one or more papers published in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal *before* you defend your dissertation. The days when "publish or perish" applied only to professors already on the tenure track are long gone—which is one reason why it now takes almost 10 years on average to complete a doctorate, compared with the 5 to 6 years that was the norm only a generation ago.

Kelsky tells job candidates lucky enough to win an on-campus interview exactly how to present themselves: Lose the Valley Girl uptalk, nurse a single glass of wine, not a drop more, at the dinner afterwards—and "[b]e sure and order the neatest item on the menu" so you won't accidentally spill food down your front. In a chapter titled "What Not to Wear" to said interview, Kelsky scoffs at the ivory-tower dwellers who think it's superficial to care about how you look: "People are judged on their appearance all the time." She walks readers whose student wardrobes consist of blue jeans and backpacks through the items of appropriate professional attire that each sex must buy (down to the shoes and socks), and explains how to pack them into a suitcase. There's even dress-for-success advice if you happen to be an "old school butch dyke": a well-tailored "men's suit" coupled with a good men's haircut. (Kelsky describes herself in her book as a "femme dyke.")

In a Skype interview peppered with the word "delusional" to describe the grad students and their elbow-patched faculty advisers who imagine that the special snowflakes in their seminars will easily beat the hiring odds, Kelsky maintained that even the most elite graduate programs can't guarantee that their Ph.D.s will ever find full-time work. "The elite programs have better placement rates, but they also have some of the worst-prepared job candidates," she said. "It's part of the problem. The Ivy League has been very slow to adjust to the new economics of higher education. They're working under an outdated delusion. Their Ph.D.s are the least prepared for the job market. They routinely struggle, and they do not get the tenure-track jobs. The big state schools like Michigan are much better. They now have workshops on cover letters and how to write a CV. Five years ago they didn't."

As Kelsky—but almost nobody who is actually still inside academia—points out, there's an elephant in this clamorous room of underemployed scholars. It's the fact that from a supply-and-demand standpoint, graduate schools are simply turning out way too many Ph.D.s for the academic market to bear, depressing their wages accordingly. It's a similar crisis to the glut of new attorneys that law schools were churning out in recent years even as law jobs paying enough to cover sky-high law school debt were disappearing. The law market seems to have corrected itself, with law school enrollments steadily plunging since 2011. That collapse hasn't happened with graduate schools.

Indeed, throughout the 2000s and beyond, new enrollments in master's and doctoral programs of every kind continued to climb, even in the arts and humanities, where the job pickings are slimmest. In the fall of 2012, for example, new arts-and-humanities enrollments shot up by nearly 8 percent, according to a report from the Council of Graduate Schools. "It's an ethical problem," Kelsky said. "The Ph.D. degree in the majority of cases leads directly to unemployment. Five- or six-figure debt *and* unemployment."

A professor I contacted sent me this email: "It's a hypocritical system in which we talk about how much we 'love' students while they are undergraduates, only to exploit them as graduate students and then adjuncts." The professor refused to let me use the email for attribution: "One can't even talk about these questions from inside the system without risking serious pushback."

That certainly seems to be the case. In 2003 and 2009, William Pannapacker, an English professor at Hope College in Michigan, using the pen name Thomas H. Benton, published articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* urging high-GPA undergraduates to resist any siren calls from their professors to apply to graduate school ("Just Don't Go" was the partial title of one of the articles). Pannapacker was excoriated in print by his fellow professors; the phrase "pulling up the ladder" was tossed around.

Similarly, in 2010, Monica J. Harris, then a psychology professor at the University of Kentucky, announced in the online academic trade paper *Inside Higher Ed* that she believed the hiring outlook in her field to be so grim (a "Malthusian melt-down," she called it) that she planned to stop admitting new Ph.D. students into her lab. She, too, received unpleasant blowback (although not from her own colleagues), finally taking early retirement in 2012. "The incentives are still in place to admit a lot of graduate students," Harris said in a phone interview. "You need them for getting grants and staying competitive. Graduate students collect data, they do the bulk of data analysis, and they do a whole lot of the writing. A faculty member will maybe have 15 to 20 projects going at once, so you need to have students working on them."

It's certainly true that professors love having graduate students around. They're generally bright and motivated, they tend to do the assigned reading unlike many undergrads, and they typically don't show up for class with hangovers. Graduate classes tend to be small, easy-to-grade seminars rather than huge lectures with hundreds of bluebooks. Grad students form an eager slave-labor force for research and teaching assistance, and their very presence on campus assures faculty and administrators that their institution is a serious scholarly enterprise, not a cow college in the middle of nowhere.

Perhaps for this reason the MLA, in its 2014 report, declined to recommend the one glaringly obvious solution to the Ph.D. hiring crisis: cutting back graduate-student enrollments. The report instead recommended streamlining the Ph.D. process: shorter dissertations, less time and expense spent completing the doctorate. Central to the report was the idea that doctoral programs in the humanities shouldn't be viewed solely as trade schools for future professors but as an immersion in the life of the mind that could be useful training for careers outside of academia.

"People who go through graduate programs in statistics and chemistry regularly go to work in industry and for the government," said Russell Berman, a German professor at Stanford who chaired the committee that prepared the report. "Only in the humanities do we look down on people who go into other careers. This is an elitist attitude. Even if students don't go into teaching, the skills are transferable. You know how to run a meeting, for example. You have skills in independent research and writing and making an evidence-based argument. We should honor people's individual choices as to whether to enroll in a Ph.D. program."

Berman certainly sounds reasonable, as long as grad students are fully informed of their Vegas-level academic-hiring odds (as, to its credit, the MLA report itself urges). Berman pointed to Overstock founder and CEO Patrick Byrne, who has a Ph.D. in philosophy from Stanford, as an example of making good in the "alt-ac" world, as it's called. Byrne's is certainly a success story, but in fact, as the *Economist* pointed out in a 2010 article, Ph.D.s in all but a few fields such as medicine and finance don't earn enough more than holders of two-year master's degrees to make all that extra time in grad school worth their while. "Over all subjects, a Ph.D. commands only a 3 percent premium over a master's degree," the *Economist* noted.

In the end, though, the best course for Ph.D.s facing underemployment—as most do—is probably a version of William Pannapacker's "Just Don't Go": Take the supply-and-demand problem into your own hands, and just say no to adjuncting and its Dickensian miseries. This past April Jason Brennan, a philosophy professor at Georgetown and a self-described libertarian, incurred the Internet wrath of the famously left-leaning adjunct-advocacy community by proclaiming that "it's hard to feel sorry for [adjuncts]." There's no reason for them "to wallow in adjunct poverty," Brennan wrote, pointing out that they could "quit any time and get a perfectly good job at GEICO."

In a phone interview, Brennan said, "So many people consistently make bad decisions. The system isn't going to deliver more tenure-track jobs. A small number of people will, and the rest get kicked out for good. Most people won't get what they want. There just isn't that much money." ♦

Climate Politics

What happens in Paris won't stay in Paris

By Irwin M. Stelzer

At the end of this month representatives of some 200 nations will gather in Paris for the opening of a United Nations-sponsored conclave to prevent the cataclysm that President Barack Obama, backed by the moral authority of Pope Francis, believes will befall the world if we do not slow the pace of climate change. There will be no treaty to enshrine the deal, for the very good reason that such a treaty would not receive the consent of the U.S. Senate. Some who would oppose it do not believe the globe is warming; some fear the effect of measures to phase out fossil fuels on an already-slow-growing economy; some do not want to endorse a massive intrusion by the government into still another key sector of the economy, the energy industries; still others are determined to deny Obama a victory that in his mind will require history to treat him kindly—adding to his "legacy," as his supporters would have it.

Most important to many members of Congress is a desire to put the world on notice that any agreement reached in Paris will be, to borrow from George Gershwin, "a sometime thing," to be abrogated by an incoming Republican president on day one of his tenure. But such a move by a new president is highly unlikely and, more important, undesirable. It is one thing to promise to wipe the slate clean when campaigning for the nomination or for the office. It is quite another to sit in the Oval Office and announce to 200 countries that they cannot take the word of an American president, especially when it was that president who was the driving force in getting them to sign on to the Paris accord. The next president of the United States will have as one of his or her major tasks restoring the credibility of a country that has made a practice of abandoning its allies. Surely, voiding an agreement with our world partners is not a new president's sensible first step on the road to renewed U.S. credibility.

There are economic as well as political reasons that any Paris deal, or at least its consequences, cannot simply be willed out of existence. Energy investments have long lives, many 40 years or more. Businessmen, even while cheering the victory of a successor who will have no truck with the Obama version of global warming, know that in four or eight short years he or she will be replaced, perhaps by a greener president—or that more evidence might have established that there is indeed a carbon-caused trend toward a warmer climate. So even if the EPA's so-called Clean Power Plan does not survive the court challenge being mounted by a variety of business interests and more than two dozen states, it already has changed how many companies do business. Even those executives who doubt that their activities are causing floods, droughts, earthquakes, melting ice, and other unpleasantness are deeming it prudent to put in place compliant measures, rather than continue to invest in capital equipment that has a reasonable probability of becoming valueless before it is fully depreciated. No less a person than Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, has warned of such a possibility, and urged investors and insurers to take it into account. Some companies are doing just that by pricing carbon into capital allocation decisions, even as they continue to voice doubts about the evidence that we are headed towards hotter days. These executives are convinced that the anti-global-warming train has left the station. As they see it, they are faced with a Hobson's choice: hop aboard or explain to shareholders why they are risking waving goodbye to billions in assets, as some in the utility and coal industries are finding themselves forced to do.

So there is a sense in which the state and corporate litigants—even those who profess confidence that the courts will find that the EPA has exceeded its authority under the Clean Air Act—for all practical purposes have lost their fight. Many states are accepting the EPA's offer to develop compliance plans suitable to their particular circumstances—subject of course to EPA approval—with some likely to incorporate market-based cap and trade systems or taxes on carbon emissions in their plans. "The initial read is that a market-based approach is more workable," says John McManus, vice president of American Electric Power, a utility serving 11 states. As for the corporate sector, 81 companies with a combined market capitalization of $5 trillion have pledged to reduce their carbon footprints by signing on to the "American Business Act on Climate Pledge" sponsored by the White House, some out of conviction, others out of fear of the consequences of snubbing the president.

But unless and until some market-based attack on

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carbon-dioxide emissions is formalized, the American contribution to the Paris deal will rely on an elaborate and costly regulatory mechanism. That is not entirely Obama's fault. He initially proposed a more market-based plan, known as cap and trade, that would have allowed polluters to trade permits so that the least costly compliance methods would be adopted. His conservative opponents shot it down—and have continued to oppose an even more efficient system, urged on them by economists of all political persuasions: taxing or pricing carbon so that consumers and investors, rather than regulators, can decide which use of fossil fuels to reduce or eliminate.

As Obama and those who worry about the effect of the use of fossil fuels on our climate survey the horizon in advance of taking off for Paris, they cannot miss one worrying cloud on the horizon. The developing nations are arguing that we are in the mess in which we find ourselves because of the industrial activities of richer nations, and that any costs they are asked to bear to stem the rise in temperatures should be compensated by income transfers from richer to poorer. This is old wine in new bottles: Even before the problem of global warming was discovered, or invented if you deem that more accurate, the developing nations were demanding just such income transfers.

For this crowd, a deal's a deal—even if it's a bad one.

But supporters of the wealth transfer have a new arrow in their quiver. They contend that the fight against poverty is in essence the fight against global warming. Pope Francis, who has replaced Karl Marx as the world's most famous opponent of the distributional and ecological consequences of market capitalism, has made just such a case in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. Cardinals, patriarchs, and bishops from five continents, key leaders of the pope's divisions, inspired by that encyclical, gathered recently in Vatican City to appeal to the negotiators to craft a "fair, legally binding and truly transformational climate agreement . . . linking climate change to social injustice and the social exclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable of our citizens." They also called for "an end to the fossil fuel era." Satisfied with their work, they boarded planes and returned home. And Nicholas (Lord) Stern, a longtime and influential proponent of action to prevent climate change, writes, "A low-carbon transition in the coming decades . . . must be linked with . . . the challenge of world poverty." At this writing, the intended beneficiaries of the income transfers, set to reach $100 billion annually by 2020, are not satisfied with the quality of the guarantees of payment: They want specifics on how the money will be raised before they sign on the dotted line. A worry for Obama, but not a crushing concern. Neither this nor any other problem will be allowed to stand in the way of an agreement: The income-transfer guarantees will be strengthened or the problem papered over.

The president and his Paris colleagues will not be able to claim complete victory. Not that they want to do that anyway: To say that we came to Paris, we met, we talked, we haggled, and we solved the problem of climate change would be to sheathe the regulatory sword, no longer needed to slay opponents, offensively dubbed climate change "deniers," a word until recently reserved for those who deny that the Holocaust occurred. It is not the habit of politicians and regulators to declare victory and themselves no longer relevant. In the case of the Paris meeting, they have a good excuse to declare the conference a mere first step in the fight to prevent further warming. The goal of the meeting was to limit increases in global temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius. Judging from the plans filed by China, the EU, and the United States, along with about 150 other countries that together account for 86 percent of emissions, the combined effect of all the plans will fall short of that goal—in part because China, which has misreported its coal usage since 2000 and is emitting a billion more tons of CO_2 than it has reported, Japan and Russia have offered a mere fraction of the reductions promised by the United States and the EU.

At a recent meeting in Berlin, U.N. officials assessed all the plans then available and concluded that "fully implemented, . . . the INDCs [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions] have the capability of limiting the forecast temperature rise to around 2.7 degrees Celsius by 2100, by no means enough." This provides the climate-change activists with a basis for arguing that peace with "deniers" is not to be had in Paris. As the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics, chaired by Lord Stern, puts it, the Paris deal should "encourage countries to upscale their ambition every few years" as new technologies become available, an ominous warning that the ambitions of the green interventionists are not limited to whatever the outcome of the Paris get-together might be.

It would be churlish to deny that the president and his international colleagues have succeeded in much of what

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they set out to do—put in place a system, imperfect and yet to be proved capable of implementation—that accepts that climate change is a threat to the Earth's survival, and that the nations of the world can be persuaded to participate in a program to reduce that threat. That is no small achievement, and the president is entitled to claim the Paris deal will be as much a part of his legacy as the free trade agreements he has negotiated and the deal with Iran that will purportedly delay the day when that theocracy will be found to have obtained nuclear weapons.

Here is the sting in the tail, or several stings, for that matter. The plans contain no penalties for nonperformance. They are in essence promises by the signatories to take certain steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While government delegates to the Paris meeting are congratulating themselves on their cool accomplishments, their colleagues at home and the energy markets are creating a reality that will eventually make it more difficult than they now imagine to achieve their goals. The promises made may very well not turn out to be promises kept when they come into contact with the harsher political, technological, and economic realities that await their return home.

The first such reality is the stalled growth of many industrial economies and the disastrous condition of developing countries as they cope with capital flight to the safe haven of the dollar, the debilitating effect of corruption, and the collapse of commodity prices in the face of a fall-off of demand from China and a strengthening dollar. Combined with the increase in inequality being experienced in many countries, slow growth is an invitation to social discontent, often resulting in the one thing politicians fear most—being turfed out of office. No matter what unenforceable promises are made, if implementation of the plans threatens to reduce already feeble growth rates, or noticeably and significantly drive up the cost of energy for many families, those promises will not be kept. And there won't be very much the complying signatories can do about it, with the possible exception of imposing tariffs on imported goods manufactured in emissions-producing plants, which would involve a round of litigation with the World Trade Organization.

Slow growth has another consequence not favorable to compliance: fiscal stringency. A shortfall in tax revenues needed to fund welfare states and military budgets inevitably causes treasury officials to hunt for cash. New taxes are politically unpopular, and the international mobility of the rich, and of major corporations, makes them a less promising source of added revenue than they once were. So nations short of cash have taken to reducing subsidies, often inefficiently deployed, to the renewable sources of energy that Obama and friends are counting on to replace fossil fuels. Renewable sources—wind and sun especially—already suffer from the disadvantage of their intermittent availability and from storage costs (batteries) that are currently some three-to-five times higher than levels that would make them economic. The issue with existing batteries is "they are expensive, unreliable, and bad in every way," says Elon Musk, who will sell you a battery-powered Tesla SUV for $135,000, or a sporty sedan for around $80,000, less if you net out the subsidy federal and some state governments pay to those who buy these vehicles.

In Britain, budget caps have superseded promises of subsidies intended to fund decarbonization. In Spain, long a leader in producing and exporting solar-based energy, budget shortfalls and threats to the viability of the grid still needed for reliability by solar-panel-roofed-consumers led not only to the end of subsidies but to the introduction of a "sun tax" on solar-generated electricity. Germany, which on one day last summer got almost 80 percent of its energy from renewables—the sun shone on the solar panels in its south, and storms turned the wind machines in its north—is finding that it is more expensive to phase out its nuclear plants than originally thought, driving businesses to expand overseas and forcing utilities to use more emission-heavy dirty coal. In America, regulators who thought it a good idea to force electric utilities to pay consumers for any excess solar power their rooftop panels generated at the same rates those consumers paid the utilities at night or when the sun doesn't shine ("net metering" in the jargon of the trade) now realize that such consumers are contributing nothing to the cost of the grid on which they remain dependent for reliable supplies. Customers subsidizing the solar users have become increasingly restive as middle-class incomes stagnate, but rent, food, and other things they must have—electricity among them—become more expensive.

Most important, although the costs of solar panels and wind machines are falling, so is the cost of natural gas, the fossil fuel of choice of electric utilities. It has plunged from a peak of almost $12 per thousand cubic feet in 2005 to a bit more than $3 today. The American Council on Renewable Energy notes that the growth in investment in renewables is likely to come to a screeching halt in 2017: When the full impact of the end of subsidies is felt, that investment will plunge by 73 percent, according to a study by Bloomberg New Energy Finance. And if solar subsidies expire at the end of next year as now scheduled, solar photovoltaic installations are forecast to drop 46 percent. The *Economist* sums it up: "How far renewable energy can develop without further subsidy is one of the world's hottest questions. It will surely need to become a lot more economic if the world is to stop using fossil fuels by 2100." And more environmentally friendly. Massive solar installations gobble huge quantities

of land and fry unsuspecting birds, incinerating one every two minutes in the case of the $2.2 billion (backed by $1.6 billion in government loan guarantees) BrightSource solar plant in California's Mojave Desert, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

My guess is that when the unenforceable political promises made in Paris collide with slow growth, the high cost of renewables, the difficulty of persuading voters with stagnant incomes to pay now for difficult-or-impossible-to-measure benefits in the far distant future, and the low cost of natural gas and oil, it is the political promises that will be reexamined.

But that does not mean the Paris conference is doomed to failure. It has already accomplished some of its goals. It has established a process for coordinated international action to reduce carbon emissions. It has forced countries to at least describe a plan to contribute to reducing their emissions. It has helped those who want to make the case for still further action to do just that. These successes, and polls showing that the vast majority of voters favor reducing emissions and a revenue-neutral tax to accomplish that objective, should persuade conservatives that, whatever their pique at a president who derides them as "deniers" of a "settled science" and says they threaten national security—climate change being a greater danger than ISIS—they cannot simply stand in front of the environmental express train and yell "Stop!" Moreover, conservatives can now see the cost of opposing prudential market-based solutions—creation of a costly and inefficient regulatory regime that vastly expands the reach into, and the power of government over, perhaps the most important sector of our economy. Pressures on Paris promises will create an opportunity to reconsider how those promises are to be redeemed.

Time to take a deep breath, as Republicans did when supporting the use of markets to clean our air at minimal cost—to internalize externalities, as economists of all persuasions would have us do—and ask, "If there is even a slim chance that the globe is warming, and given the facts that a carbon tax makes it possible to stimulate growth by lowering marginal tax rates on businesses and workers, and that a $16 per ton tax, according to Jerry Taylor of the Niskanen Center, would add only about 16 cents per gallon to the plunging price of gasoline, which could be offset in whole or part by reducing payroll taxes, should we use the tax reform that may be in our future to replace the long arm of the EPA with an approximation of Adam Smith's invisible hand?" That's a long and loaded question, I know. But it does need answering. ♦

'She-Goat' (1950)

Picasso's Avocation

The figures that altered the course of art history. BY JAMES GARDNER

In recent years, the Museum of Modern Art has seemed to have a target splattered across its ever-expanding façade—and not the artsy sort of target depicted by Jasper Johns. From all corners of the art world, critics have shown up with their BB guns, which they mistook for bazookas, and aimed them squarely against the museum's immaculate Miesian curtain wall. MoMA, they complain, has become old. It has become male and pale, the repository of dead things. It is the precinct of money and established power, crushing smaller buildings that get in the way of its remorseless expansion (the now-pulverized American Folk Art Museum, formerly its neighbor to the west, being a prime example).

It has become, in short, the Pentagon of the art world. All of which is true, of course, but also entirely irrelevant. If MoMA has become the locus of power and money, that is only because it is nothing more or less than the physical embodiment of the exalted, even idolatrous, status that art, and especially modern and contemporary art, now enjoys.

But occasionally MoMA pulls off an exhibition of such definitive excellence that suddenly everyone shuts up and marvels at what only it could bring to pass. Such is the case with this new exhibition devoted to Pablo Picasso's sculptures. It is quite clear that no other museum in the world has the clout, the curatorial acumen, or the depth of its own collections to come anywhere close to this achievement. Nearly 150 of the choicest and most representative works from six decades are now gathered in

Picasso Sculpture
Museum of Modern Art
Through February 7, 2016

James Gardner is the author of Buenos Aires: The Biography of a City (forthcoming).

IMAGES COURTESY OF MOMA

one space, to occupy the entire fourth floor of the museum.

Picasso always created to please himself. He made sculptures as he made paintings, either for the sheer pleasure of it or out of a sense of inner compulsion, a need to peek just beyond the present into the next stage of art history. But in this compulsion, painting was always the serious business of his life, and sculpture, though important, was a distant second. It is estimated that, over the course of his long career, Picasso completed more than 3,000 paintings, compared with 700 sculptures. And while 700 works of sculpture, or anything else, are a Promethean achievement, they remain far less familiar to the public, and Picasso rarely chose to exhibit them in his lifetime.

Picasso was scarcely 20 when he molded the first work on view at MoMA, a vaguely symbolist *Seated Woman* from 1902. Only three years later, the bronze head of his *Jester* has clear links to the forms and themes of his Rose Period, while a carved wooden *Head* of 1908 shows that the young man has been looking at late Gauguin. This sculpture represents the last time when we have any sense that Picasso is not yet his own man, that he is a follower or fellow traveler rather than a trailblazer and revolutionary.

With the cubistic bronze *Head of A Woman* (1909) Picasso altered the course of art history. But that was only the first of several sculptural revolutions that he would unleash upon Western art. In his *Still-life with Guitar* from late 1913, constructed of paperboard, thread, and twine, he introduced voids into sculpture, perhaps the first time that they became part of the very materiality of sculpture.

With the exception of scaffolding sheds and the iron lattices of the Eiffel Tower, no one had ever seen anything quite like Picasso's *Project for a Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire*, which is not in the present exhibition, although three contemporary and very similar works are. Picasso was never a friend of abstraction, and so, in these works, he refused to release that final fraying hold on observable reality: His *Figure* (1928) could represent anything from a centaur to a deconstructed unicycle, but its ball-like head at the summit and the 12 digits arrayed across four paw-like configurations suggest something very nearly human. And yet, only two years later, an entirely different, more organic and primitive mood returns to his work in *Standing Woman* (1930), a surrealist totem pole and stick figure that markedly pre-sages, by several years, the iconic works of Alberto Giacometti.

'Bull' (1958), 'Woman in the Garden' (1929-30)

It is true that, in some of his later sculptures, more than in his paintings, one occasionally senses the presence of the huckster who has conjured viewers into believing that anything he touched was a work of imperishable genius. This is true of *Woman in the Garden* of 1930, or his plaster *Head of a Woman* from two years later. Indeed, some of the works, like his *Head of a Dog* (1943), made of torn and burnt tissue paper, feel like the paltriest of off-scourings.

In fairness to the artist, he created such works for his own private satisfaction, and if the world took note, if the world fawned over them, that was neither his intention nor his concern.

The importance of Picasso's sculptures will be self-evident to most visitors to MoMA. But if they seem a little dimmer now than in years past, if they sometimes look almost derivative, that is paradoxically because they were so influential in their day that a thousand illustrious careers were based on them. Everyone from Russian Constructivists like Antoine Pevsner and Surrealists like Giacometti to Abstract sculptors like David Smith and neo-Dadaists like Robert Rauschenberg would have been unthinkable, as we know them today, without the example of Picasso's sculptures.

At several times in this exhibition, he seems to be single-handedly dragging Western art forward to its next appointed destination. Picasso's sculpture was so protean and so fertile in ideas that, as Hilton Kramer remarked on the occasion of MoMA's previous show of his sculptures, half a century ago in 1965, "Picasso would have to be considered one of the great artists of the century even if he had never painted a single picture." ♦

B&A

Learning from History

How do we know what we think we know?

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

Jeremy Black's previous book, *Other Pasts, Different Presents, Alternative Futures*, is a sparkling defense of the legitimacy and utility of counterfactual history—of what ifs—and the best single work on its subject available. He turns here to a not unrelated, and equally weighty and vexing, issue: the uses and misuses of historical knowledge outside, as well as within, academic circles. No one reading this work, and surely no professional historians, will come away from it untroubled by its implications. But, alas, no one will find it as easy going as Black's earlier work on counterfactuals.

A historian at the University of Exeter, Black is one among an increasing number of scholars who have recently ventured into an emerging field of inquiry: the very nature of historical knowledge. The subject spans everything from the way young children's minds react to historical information to the problematics of historical knowledge—its logic, epistemological bases, and claims to facticity—to the possibility of historical objectivity, the last subject mired in postmodernist debates about "texts," "reading," "the author," and the like.

Not that the subject of historical knowledge is new, for the questions it raises can be traced back to Herodotus and Thucydides. But this particular season of speculation among historians has sown serious doubts, even among the most dedicated academic specialists, about the conventionally understood foundations and common claims of their endeavors. Jeremy Black does nothing here to allay their doubts. His principal concern is with the location of authority to determine the accuracy and legitimacy of any historical assertion. Professional historians—accustomed to debating, sometimes bitterly, among themselves—accept competing interpretations of the past as givens of their intellectual world. And on the whole, they tolerate their different positions as leading eventually to consensus, if not unanimous agreement. Members of the public, political figures, and especially state regimes have no such toleration for ambiguity and uncertainty. As Black is at pains to show with examples seemingly without limit, few nonhistorians have ever yielded in their efforts to position their communities and themselves within what they claim to be an accurate picture of the present and past so as to legitimate their own ideologies, politics, and rule.

Clio's Battles
Historiography in Practice
by Jeremy Black
Indiana, 342 pp., $85

As for empirical accuracy and intellectual weight: Let those be damned!

To make this argument—one that's irrefutable—Black starts with what historians have traditionally taken to be historiography: the study of the written history of history. In this large body of work, historians seek to locate knowledge of the past within accumulating interpretations of that past: within earlier and ever-changing versions of times gone by, versions that emerge from the distinctive cultures, ideologies, tribes, and temperaments of the historians who write history. Accordingly, for instance, historians of the American Civil War study what has earlier been written about it, position themselves within that literature, and offer contributions that may move understanding of the war ahead. Historiography has thus been perceived to be the formal study of formal historical thought and writing, whether produced by academic historians like Black or belletristic writers of history like Edward Gibbon and Thomas Babington Macaulay and David McCullough.

Black thinks this conventional approach to historiography too limiting. In a deft move to loosen the definition and contents of historiography from their customarily formalistic confines, Black vastly broadens them to include much more than historians have previously allowed in. This is the "historiography in practice" of his subtitle: the myths, folk tales, ancestral lore, origin stories, clan legends, regime claims, eschatological assumptions, and the like that litter the oral and written record of the past. He also boldly incorporates the kind of history put forth beyond written media—through television, the theater, and art, as well as in social media.

It is difficult to tell whether Black approves of or, as someone who looks reality in the face, rues having to broaden historiography to include the unruly world beyond the control of intellectuals—whether he happily tosses aside centuries of definitional modesty, or feels forced by the way the world works to do so. He's clearly no fan of history used as the justification of grievances, as "validation for the present," or as "the ammunition of politics." But if I read him correctly, he feels it necessary to succumb to facts long overlooked by historians and to conclude on the grounds of the overwhelming evidence he produces that historians don't control the interpretation of the past, and rarely have done so.

What are we to make of such a conclusion? Academic historians learn soon enough in their careers that their findings and arguments are likely to be challenged, perhaps even dismissed, by other academics. The battle over interpretation is a given of historical inquiry, just as it has been since Thucydides took out after Herodotus at the dawn

James M. Banner Jr. is the author, most recently, of Being a Historian.

'And When Did You Last See Your Father?' by William Frederick Yeames (1878)

PRINT COLLECTOR / GETTY

of written history in the West. From interpretive contests, most historians agree, emerges a gradual, asymptotic approach to consensus, if not to universal agreement. But if others refuse to accept their evidence and findings, or even credit the grounds of their disagreements, why do they bother to try to understand the past? What's the use of history? Black doesn't try to work his way out of the difficulty.

But as far as he goes, readers are likely to be convinced by what he does write. And he doesn't confine his numbing evidence to Western history. He produces strong evidence of the sameness of insouciant, weakly grounded claims and tales about the past everywhere on earth. That's another of Black's distinctive moves: Reaching beyond the West, the usual province of Western students of historical thought, to China, Korea, the Islamic world, even to Oceania, for evidence to make his case, he locates the unfettered exploitation of historical claims among every people in every age.

No one will be surprised at history's unfettered use and misuse, especially by those trying to establish new nation-states or defend older ones. Nothing reveals more about what every serious historian will recognize as the misapplication of historical knowledge than its invocation by those trying to establish or defend national and territorial claims. Kievan Rus, Scotland, the Spratly Islands, Kosovo—need we invoke additional names to clinch Black's case about history's invocation as "the solace of continuity and the sore of grievance"? There can be little confidence that historians can prevail against the obtuseness, ignorance, and willfulness of those who use history to promote their own purposes.

Unfortunately, unlike Black's earlier book on counterfactuals, this one displays more authority than art. Declarative sentences march through the text like troops on parade. Variants of the verb "to be" and the flat locutions "there is" and "there are" take active life out of most paragraphs. And as if the author wouldn't devote labor to fluent transitions, each chapter is lazily broken up into short sections, some no more than a page-and-a-half long, each with a tag like "China" and "Britain." Most sections end with the deflating subhead "Conclusions," implying that Black himself had given up on making his themes and convictions clear throughout. Author and publisher have ill-served their subject by haste.

Unfortunately as well, Black steers frustratingly clear of the implications of his book. For what does it signify, for historians and others, that the heavy work put into getting the past straight appears (in his telling) to be so inconsequential? Given their weakness in the face of history's misuse by the ignorant and ideological, coupled with recent assaults on the possibility of "objective" history, should historians close up shop and retreat to occupations with fewer obstacles in their path? These issues have always needed addressing, and never more so than with the publication of this depressing book.

Evidence of historians' powerlessness to control use of the very knowledge in which they are expert—an absence of control that no one would tolerate among physicians or physicists—may be explained by the differences between humanistic and scientific knowledge, by the former's availability to everyone in vernacular language and its relationship to political reality. But acknowledging as much doesn't provide an intellectual and moral grounding for the responsible use of historical knowledge, or for the defense of that knowledge against countervailing forces. It's a pity that Jeremy Black hasn't had a go at providing one. ♦

B&A

Within Earshot

The versatility of the poet's voice.

BY DAVID YEZZI

Where do poems exist, in the voice or on the page? Surely the answer is "both," though the page might be best likened to a musical score. It greatly guides our understanding of the piece, but the full life of the thing is in the playing. W.H. Auden (following Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch) famously thought of a poem as "memorable speech," something to be uttered. A good poem produces a physical response in the listener, akin to a body swaying to music. Even reading a poem on the page, one hears an inner voice speaking. In this sense, there is no such thing as silent reading, nor is it possible to speed-read a poem.

Of course, poems—like plays—are not verbatim transcriptions; rather, they are artful versions of speech, enlivened by rhetorical figures and ingenious rhythms. By turns colloquial and elevated, they operate in the interplay of talk and song. Robert Frost valued "sentence sounds" and the "sound of sense," out of which he crafted his signature lyrics and narratives. The same attention to how people talk finds witty and idiosyncratic expression here in Daniel Brown's latest collection of poems.

Math's a matter that some make / More of than the norm, begins one poem, entitled "A Math Grad," about a college roommate who comes to understand his suicide attempt in terms of "a funny class of functions": *One / Whose characteristic graph starts out / With the usual smooth take-off, / Somewhere along the line goes / Into a beauty of a loop— / De-loop for whatever reason, then / Picks its rising right up / Where it left off, and never does / Anything like that again*.

What More?
by Daniel Brown
Orchises, 64 pp., $14.95

The ending comes as a relief, but the strangeness lingers—the anomaly of the friend's one-off act heightened by the looping syntax. The roommate speaks "sane-seemingly enough," we are told, and in fact, in his metaphor-making, he sounds like a poet. Brown then lands his extended comparison as precisely as a Hornet landing on the *Nimitz*.

Other poems in the collection refer directly or indirectly to poetry itself—a bad sign in lesser hands. Poems about poetry can be like iPhone photos of iPhones, self-reflexive in a way only an insider could love. Brown's strategy for composing poems has a wider resonance in "Judo": *I.E., the kind of verse / That doesn't try to force / People to their knees / (Seeing as it sees / To people's being thrown / By forces of their own)*.

This thumbnail *ars poetica* understands something essential about what to leave out and what the reader himself brings to the work of art. The comedian of Brown's "Standup" behaves like a poet manqué: *Sensing to the second when / a line that's primed should come, / He looses it*. Brown's own timing is impeccable, his rhymes (verse/force, thrown/own) and repetitions (seeing/sees) loosed precisely in jaunty trimeters.

If only poets were as gifted in their art as Arnold Palmer was making an impossible golf shot, as in "Arnie": *And what he could see he / Could hit. And what he could hit he / Could move. And what he could move he / Could sink*. Anaphora lifts these simple sentences into song, and Brown, who has written extensively on Bach, knows music inside out. It's striking, then, when "Reversion" rejects *a Brahms quintet I'd only known / Forever* in favor of *some sounding of a voice: the news, an interview, / A ballgame, a call-in // Show*.

Brown admits in the collection's title poem to *His having been conveyed repeatedly / By music to the cumulus of heaven*. But sometimes, he seems to say, only words will do.

Of a piece with Brown's appreciation of the fine arts of poetry and music is another, less lofty, brand of aesthetic appreciation: girl watching. Caught off guard by its animal persistence, Brown is sheepishly resigned to his hormonal hardwiring, as in "Men": *Haven't they the least resistance? / Let a looker amble by / And watch the heads turn helplessly*. He suggests that, similarly confronted, Newton, if he had never seen an apple fall, could have learned plenty about invisible forces. In "Farewell" the poet says goodbye to his freewheeling bachelor days gratefully but with a pang:

> *Now that I had a lover*
> *That life of mine was over.*
> *My next would be with her*
> *And doubtless happier—*
> *Though fondness, truth to tell,*
> *Inflected my farewell*
> *To the solitude that I*
> *Had been companioned by.*

Brown's ability to discover the often-surprising counterfeelings associated with a situation expands our emotional range, clarifying feeling in a way that allows the reader to experience it fully for the first time. Brown, it turns out, will miss his longtime companion, Solitude, and we are disarmed by the aptness of Brown's realization. Poems that hit home the hardest both unsettle expectations and confirm half-known truths in this way.

The final poem combines Brown's pet subjects: poetry, music, and the fairer sex. In "Certain Choices," he lists the graces that have befallen him based on his choices of a companion (his lover), a musical instrument (the cello), and his avocation (writing poems). The benefits are *With reference to my lover, / Going it*

David Yezzi, whose most recent book of poems is Birds of the Air, *is writing a biography of Anthony Hecht.*

together. / To the instrument I play, / Bowing throatily. / To the making of a poem, / Seeing something home.

This elegiac note of seeing something to its conclusion answers the question posed by the book's title. Brown, now in his sixties, foresees the diminishment of creative and procreative power in poems such as "Libido" and "Descent," yet in terms of their mastery and delight, the poems in *What More?* show no sign of either. They are playfully, affectingly alive. What more could a reader want? ♦

B&A

The Central Fronts

A world war seen from the German-speaking side.

BY ANTHONY PALETTA

Ring of Steel
Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I
by Alexander Watson
Basic Books, 832 pp., $40

When it comes to anniversaries, the publishing industry usually resembles distant relatives, readiest with gifts that are redundant or farcical. Look no further than 2013's bandolier of useless insights into the Kennedy assassination. The recent centenary of another assassination, at Sarajevo, while serving up plenty of similar dross, has happily filled some very welcome gaps in English-language scholarship on that conflict, especially memorably in the form of this volume, relating the ill-told tale of the most consequential Central Powers.

There is no lack of monographs on the Third Reich in World War II; similar scholarship on the Central Powers in the Great War is preciously rare. The introduction of *Ring of Steel* states that it is the "first modern history to narrate the Great War from the perspectives of the two major Central Powers"—which isn't exactly true, but there's only a single predecessor with any claim to the title: Holger Herwig's *The First World War: Germany and Austria Hungary 1914-1918* (1997). Herwig's excellent work takes a more military focus; Watson's aim is a broader overview of the engagement of German and Austrian societies with the war, a look at the means by which internal political, material, and emotional support were mustered for the conflict.

The diplomatic prelude to World War I is possibly the only aspect of the war in which the Central Powers have been adequately represented previously; subsequent histories tend to mire in Western trenches and the rarely ventured East. If the simple conjoined account of Austrian hauteur and Prussian militarism faded long ago as the motivational account of our Great War foes, there's not a tremendous amount that's replaced it. Watson's study fills this void.

Germany was no belligerent monoculture. The largest association in Germany, excepting a veterans' organization, was the moderately pacifistic Social Democratic party, which mustered a respectable bloc of the Reichstag. Their skepticism of war was only overcome as foes, particularly the Russians, mobilized; and they were encouraged by state nods to their sensibilities, with an amnesty for political crimes announced on the eve of the vote for war credits. (There were some abstentions but no votes against.) Disengaging from international trade had real effects on internal harmony: Nearly six million Siemens light bulb orders were lost; urban unemployment skyrocketed.

Austria-Hungary was a different story. This multiethnic patchwork was an implausible mosaic in an age of increasingly rigid ethnic geometry. Practical efforts to resolve ethnic conflict had led to the dual monarchy, which mainly institutionalized Hungarian ethnocracy in its portion of the empire and empowered the Hungarians to starve the whole of suitable war preparations. The empire had nonetheless made liberal efforts, mainly in its Austrian portion, to manage its varied population. The Austrian Army, for one, boasted 142 monolingual regiments, 162 bilingual regiments, 24 trilingual regiments, and several with four official languages! Jews constituted about 5 percent of the populace but 17 percent of the officer corps. The marvel isn't that mobilization came off well, but that it was accomplished at all. Absentee rates from conscription varied radically by region: few in Austria, somewhat more among the Czechs, more than 25 percent in Galicia and the South Slavic regions. Loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy remained intact. Roman Catholicism, the faith of the majority of the empire's subjects, proved a strong bond.

> First there was the official patriotic mobilization, comprising the call up of the army and the appeal to the population as loyal imperial subjects. In tandem, however, there was a semi-official national mobilization, varying in strength in different regions, and which at this stage supported the state's own efforts.

These measures proved an especially potent incentive to mobilization in those border regions that faced some immediate existential threat. Populations along the Russian frontier had reason to fear conquest; Slovenians and Croats rallied easily against the Serbs. Groups that had no such fears, such as the Czechs, or ethnic sympathies that rested elsewhere, such as Romanians in Hungary, were a different story. And yet, amidst this stew, dissent, whether imagined or real, was typically crushed.

Both states lumbered to battle and, like virtually every combatant in the war, soon reeled from the murderous collision of modern weaponry and aged tactics. Germany was at least materially well equipped for the conflict; Austria-Hungary was terribly prepared on almost every level, suffering rapid

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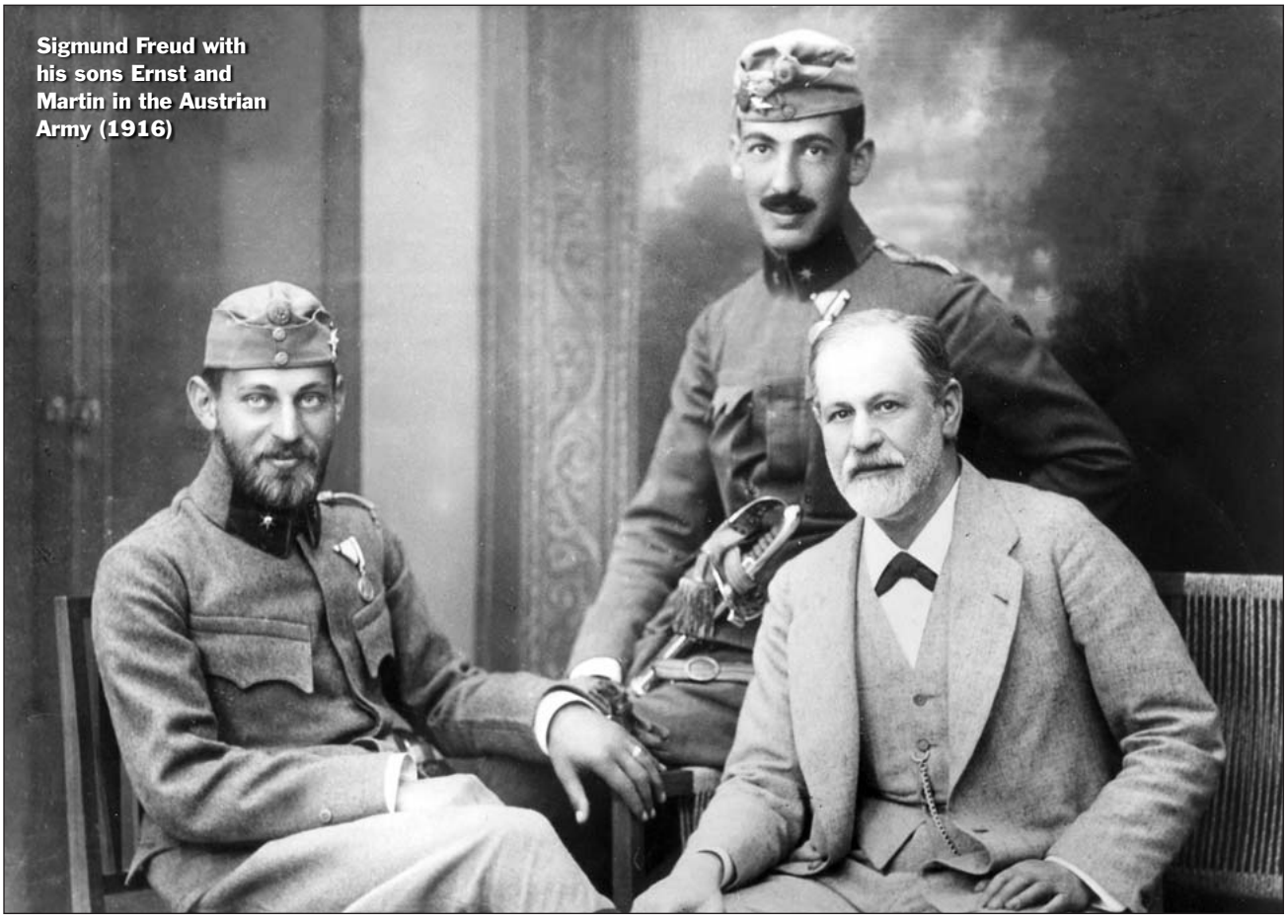

Sigmund Freud with his sons Ernst and Martin in the Austrian Army (1916)

GETTY IMAGES

setbacks in Serbia and Galicia. Russian advances sent Galicians and East Prussians fleeing westward. Austria-Hungary, which was agriculturally self-sustaining before the war, lost its best agricultural lands in Galicia, which were never restored to more than 35 percent of their productivity by the end of the conflict. Austrian rationing was ineptly implemented, Hungary limited exports to Austria, and widespread suspicion that regions were hoarding stoked internal resentments.

Germany, considerably more reliant on imports at the start of the war, found the vise of a British blockade—which not only limited exports to neutrals but strong-armed the neutrals' sale of surpluses—tightening to Britain. Ersatz products sprang up, colorfully titled—"Hindenburg cigars," "Piłsudski chocolates"—and repulsively constituted: quark dumplings, turnip mash, even flour made out of gypsum.

The situation of the Central Powers was gradually stabilized, mainly as a result of strenuous German efforts to prop up their wobbly partners with infusions of soldiers, weaponry, and direction. But privation, mass casualties, and the certainty of more of the same fueled a gradual radicalization of war aims. Austria's desired prize was obviously the subjugation of Serbia; Germany had no clear initial territorial aims. As the war unfolded, and the competence of generals Erich von Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg vaulted them to effective rule of Germany, war aims became progressively dramatic, including expansion into occupied Russian territory. Watson's descriptions of these occupied territories—where efforts to win the sympathies of Poles and Ukrainians were largely squandered through harsh administration, internecine squabbling, and sham proposals for puppet ethnic states—is a notable strength of this account.

Our knowledge of the final missteps of the Central Powers—unrestricted U-boat warfare, the 1918 Western offensive—makes encountering a more detailed narrative no less interesting. Watson speculates that, despite tremendous material shortcomings, the Central Powers might have enjoyed a position of relative bargaining strength in 1917 with the departure of Russia and Romania from the war—if not, of course, for the entry of the United States into the conflict, which inexorably tipped the balance of resources against the Central Powers.

The faulty final gasps of the Central Powers were sold to an increasingly exhausted public as efforts to bring the war to a quick conclusion. Food riots had broken out in both states; radical left agitation spiked in Germany. The German Social Democrats pressed for a negotiated peace; patience for additional war levies disappeared. Ethnic agitation reached a peak across Austria-Hungary with high desertion rates, and separatist sentiment tore the empire's fragile fabric apart. ♦

B&A

Speak the Speech

Benedict Cumberbatch joins the list of celebrated Hamlets.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

London

There is something about Hamlet. Macbeth is more dastardly, Antony a better lover, and Iago more cunning, but the great Dane remains the benchmark for both fulltime boardtreaders and famous screen actors alike. There have been celebrity Hamlets, like Richard Burton's turn in the tights on Broadway in 1964 and Jude Law's missable effort of 2009. There have been surprising Hamlets, like Daniel Day Lewis's collapse in 1989, after seeing his own father's ghost; or Mel Gibson's cinematic Hamlet of 1990, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, in which the star of *Lethal Weapon* triumphed despite the absence of Danny Glover as Horatio. And one day, if we are lucky, there may be Russell Crowe's Hamlet.

Benedict Cumberbatch's *Hamlet*, which played this season at London's Barbican, was the fastest-selling event in British theater history. In October it was broadcast in movie theaters across the United States. Cumberbatch, Oscar-nominated for playing Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*, and supporting Johnny Depp in the new Whitey Bulger biopic *Black Mass*, is a sex symbol. To his fans, the self-proclaimed "Cumberbitches," his sexiness symbolizes the hope that a man can be handsome, witty, and muscular, like a young Mel Gibson, but nice too. For Cumberbatch is a proper English gent, not like that naughty Hugh Grant. A young lady could take Cumberbatch home for tea in full confidence that, before she led him upstairs to show him her First Folio, he would conduct himself impeccably before her parents.

Even when Cumberbatch plays a sexually obsessed, suicidal murderer, his essential pleasantness pokes out. During rehearsals, residents in the Barbican's apartment towers complained about the howling fans camped at the stage door. Cumberbatch himself manifested amongst them and politely asked them to desist. When the run began, the players were bombarded with camera and smartphone flashes. After a few nights, Cumberbatch slipped out of Hamlet's character, expressed the mildest of frustration—more on behalf of his fellow actors, of course—and asked everyone to be reasonable. Which, after repeated prompting from the staff of the Barbican, a couple of whom lurked by the wings of the stage like nightclub bouncers, was the case at the show I saw.

At that moment, *Hamlet* was the hottest ticket in town, and not all the heat came from the lights. A pheromonal mist wafted over the stalls as packs of ravening Cumberbitches eyed the stage with the "lean and hungry look" of Bacchantes preparing to dismember an offering to Dionysus. Not surprisingly, their object of desire hit the stage running. Cumberbatch's Hamlet, like his Sherlock Holmes, is all "antic disposition." His mind burns, and he speaks "trippingly on the tongue." He suits "the action to the word," too: His body jerks and jumps with all the "shocks that flesh is heir to." For his first soliloquy—"O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt"—he bounds onto the table at his mother and father-uncle's wedding feast, like Errol Flynn at the court of King John.

The next soliloquy is the big one. Cumberbatch started the run by opening the show with "To be or not to be." After complaints from critics, the speech was restored to Act Two. Cumberbatch approached his dilemma with Holmes's scalpel, slicing each clause and examining it forensically. The raw question was anatomized: to live or die?

Freud called Hamlet a procrastinator, but there was little sense here of delay. The frantic rhythm was slowed for the soliloquies, not stopped, and the tempo accelerated after each caesura. Hamlet hurtled through a series of ever-deepening recognitions—his father's murder, his uncle's guilt, his mother's complicity—until his responses were subsumed by irresistible fate. To act rightly, by avenging his father's murder, is to act wrongly, by killing his uncle and widowing his mother for a second time. To act wrongly, by insulting his mother and Ophelia, is to act rightly by refusing to accept the criminal farce of his uncle's court. Freud and the rest of us have the luxury of accepting "ordinary unhappiness," but royal families are not ordinary.

Nor is Hamlet's capacity for reflection. He is, he realizes, "the king of infinite space," an intellectual and physical acrobat, tumbling towards disaster. Cumberbatch's soliloquies articulated each step of this terrible dance in slow motion; "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I" seethed with the anger of self-harm. Only "I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth" fell flat, dwarfed by Richard E. Grant's harrowed delivery in *Withnail and I* (1987). But Cumberbatch rallied with the ambiguous "No, nor women neither" conclusion, which drew sighs from members of the audience, willing to test just how much libido Hamlet had lost. To his credit, Cumberbatch was prepared to act unpleasant: always the test of a star's integrity. His Oedipal aggression was plausibly obnoxious. He derided Sian Brooke's mumbling Ophelia pitilessly, and delivered the "country matters" joke with a contemptuous yet crowd-pleasing thrust of the hips.

When Hamlet coaches his players for the dumb show that will "catch the conscience of a king," he praises them

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as "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time." Our taste in Shakespeare is a chronicle of our times. In the classically minded late 1600s, Shakespeare fell from fashion: too disorderly, too passionate. The Romantics revived Shakespeare as the wild man of blank verse, tumbling through the infinite space of the natural world—and we, being very late Romantics, see Hamlet that way, too. Stephen Greenblatt interprets both Shakespeare and the tragedies by way of Schopenhauer and Wagner.

Es Devlin's sets had something of the modern Götterdämmerung too. The first half took place in a Ruritanian country house with an interwar, post-Habsburg atmosphere: Hamlet pined by a portable gramophone, and Ophelia used an old camera. The deep turquoise interior, with its glinting swords, sweeping staircase, and glittering chandelier, was lit from the side, giving the long and ominous shadows of a winter sunset. The second half was darkness and devastation. The actors clamber over mounds of charred debris, as though the house had been shelled and burnt. Both of these sets will film well, and so will director Lyndsey Turner's cast.

Shakespeare left few stage instructions, but *Hamlet* is usually played with a short second half. This cannot always compensate for the fragmented nature of Act IV. Hamlet is absent: sent to England by Claudius and, bizarrely, kidnapped by pirates. But Karl Johnson excelled as the gravedigger, and, as Cumberbatch clutched Yorick's skull, the audience's interest returned to life. The final fight scene was superbly physical: Elegant fencing led to scrabbling in the dirt. As Hamlet drove his sword towards Laertes, the duelists and the courtiers shifted into balletic slow motion, spiraling around the still point of the turning world, the poisoned tip of the rapier. Cumberbatch had the good manners not to overstay his death: "The rest is silence" is, like Hamlet's life, short and bitter. The curtain call was taken in a tight, sweaty T-shirt. If Cumberbatch gave an encore, it would be played on the abdominal washboard.

In a recent piece for the *Wall Street Journal*, John McWhorter praised efforts to "update" Shakespeare into modern English for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Admittedly, some of Shakespeare's language is lost to us; but why assume that the groundlings of Elizabethan London understood every word? Nor is the difference as great as we think. To take one of McWhorter's examples, when Polonius advises Laertes to "character" his advice, he means that Laertes should write it down. Today, we tweet in "140 characters or less." The difference between Shakespeare and us is that between a verb and a noun.

Earlier ages flattered themselves by rewriting Shakespeare to their taste. We rightly derided the ludicrous classical rewrites and the prurient bowdlerized versions as brief and futile chronicles of one time's vanity. Our times' taste is for brief, immediate clarity, with as little abstract as possible. Elsewhere, McWhorter has promoted the populist fiction that all languages communicate the same content. This, as anyone who can speak a second language knows, is false: The Latin Mass, the Hebrew liturgy, the works of Shakespeare, and those bookends to Shakespeare's English, Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) and the *Authorized Bible* (1611), all have minds of their own. The limits of my language, Wittgenstein said, are the limits of my world. To experience a different language is to learn something new about being human.

Shakespeare lives as long as we can be bothered to listen—and as long as good actors are prepared to risk their reputations by doing difficult work. Like Hamlet, Benedict Cumberbatch did not take the easy way out. Nor did Cumberbatch allow his world to be limited by his fame. The ticket sales and global transmission of Cumberbatch's *Hamlet* prove that Shakespeare still speaks to us. Dr. McWhorter, brush up your Shakespeare and join the global groundlings. ♦

JOHAN PERSSON

B&A

Unsweet Dreams

In search of a decent ghost story? Consider E.F. Benson. **BY COLIN FLEMING**

If you're a connoisseur of ghost stories you are probably aware that the best reading experiences take the form of individual, pithy narratives rather than book-length efforts. This is true for almost all of the masters, from M.R. James to Henry James, Charles Dickens to Saki, Nathaniel Hawthorne to Ambrose Bierce. Collections assembled as round-ups are frequently patchy, with the mood of several chilling tales intruded upon by a lackluster yarn.

E.F. Benson (1867-1940) was a writer who didn't suffer this common problem of ghost story scribes—which is interesting, as he wrote so much that you'd think his work would lend itself to unevenness. Benson composed more than 40 novels, the most famous being the *Mapp and Lucia* series, which sometimes out-Wodehouses P.G. Wodehouse himself—not what you'd expect from a writer who could switch lanes, directions, and means of travel entirely and fashion ghost stories that repay autumnal rereading. Or regular Christmastime reading, as Benson liked to set stories during that season.

That this same man with his love of the macabre was also a champion figure skater is no real surprise when you see the range within a single volume of his ghost stories, such as my favorite, his 1912 collection, *The Room in the Tower and Other Stories*, the best book of supernatural fiction we have. M.R. James's *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904) is a strong contender for the title, as is *Widdershins* (1907) by the wonderfully named Oliver Onions. I could even back a dark horse like Richard Middleton's *The Ghost Ship and Other Stories* (1912), which came out the same year as Benson's *Tower*, making that something of a banner year for supernatural literature.

M.R. James gets the most praise today amongst ghost story fans. He's viewed as more frightening than Benson; but there is an overreliance in his stories on a sort of gross-out technique—something fetid and slimy being discovered at the eleventh hour—that works more to provide nausea than the certain unease Benson induces. James will stay with you longer, in the sense that you'll recall a story to mind, and shudder; but Benson is better at beckoning us back, to return to his pages at all times of day, not just during the witching hours.

E.F. Benson

Consider, for instance, "Between the Lights" from *The Room in the Tower*. We are at a Christmas party in England, and the teller of the tale, feeling drowsy as he watches his wife play croquet on the lawn with his friend, takes a nap in his chair and finds himself transported to a cave deep in game territory, where subhuman primitives advance upon him. A bad dream in the middle of the day. Later, on a hunting trip, a storm that is not so much a storm but a low-lying monster of moisture affixes itself to hunter and guide, flesh and soul, compelling our hero to take shelter in a cave and—well, you will not like what he finds there.

He survives, however. Benson almost always lets his characters stay on in the world, in part so they can tell their stories, and also because they are so easy to connect with, in the sense that we'd like to be sitting across from them in some lodge, with the furze and the trees being pelted with rain, as whiskey is brought in for amiable conversation. Place is a very strong concept in stories such as these: You wish to be there, you like the setting, you like people such as the characters in "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery," a story of another Christmas party, which features adults playing hide-and-seek and a woman falling asleep in a room where toddler twins were murdered by being pushed into the fireplace. The homeowners are proud of the ghosts throughout their house, but one mustn't tarry after dark in the Long Gallery, where the twins appear.

"How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery" is that rare thing, the ghost story as happy account, and Benson was skilled at it. But fear not: He can get you when he wants to. "Caterpillars," a tale of horrific, pincer-mouthed monsters, is like a cross between television horror and M.R. James's most intensely grotesque imagery. "The Dust-Cloud" is one of the few ghost stories—and certainly the earliest—centered on an automobile, and yet it manages to feel distinctly out of time. The title story, "The Room in the Tower," is a subtle vampire narrative, with the refrain of "Jack will show you your room" sounded with grave insistence over several passages of time—a room, of course, where none of us would wish to be. ♦

Colin Fleming is the author of Between Cloud and Horizon: A Relationship Casebook in Stories.

"The letter, obtained by* Politico *and drafted for the campaigns by veteran GOP attorney Ben Ginsberg, asks networks to commit to, among other things, not asking candidates to raise their hands in answer to a question, not holding a lightning round, not allowing 'candidate-to-candidate questioning' and keeping the temperature in the debate hall below 67 degrees."

—*Politico*, November 2, 2015

NETWORK CONTRACT FOR GOP DEBATES (cont'd)

or in French, *droit du seigneur.*

- Other Green Room amenities shall include a manned carving station, omelet bar, and ice cream sundae bar. There will be an open bar featuring only the finest spirits, such as Trump Vodka.

- Valet parking will be free of charge. The network will cover both the cost *and* the gratuity. Odometers will be checked.

- A shoeshine service shall be made available to those candidates whose shoes require a buff—please, no spit-shines.

- Candidates reserve the right to keep hotel towels, washcloths, toiletries, and up to two bathrobes.

- Free pay-per-view in hotel rooms, including the more expensive films that can be played on a loop (fee description on the bill should read "MOVIE").

- Current officeholders must be addressed by their official titles. In making any reference to Hillary Clinton, moderators and candidates may refer to Mrs. Clinton as "the former secretary of state," "The First Felon," or "The Wicked Witch of the West Wing."

- Prior to any question to Governor Christie, the moderator must add, "And may I say you look great tonight. Have you been losing weight?"

- If a question by the moderator is considered biased, offensive, or just plain stupid, certain candidates have the right to say, "You're fired." Any candidate has the right to hit a button that activates a trap door beneath the moderator's chair.

- A postdebate stress-relief center shall be set up and include hot stone therapy, mud wraps, deep-tissue massage, Swedish massage, and Thai massage with optional