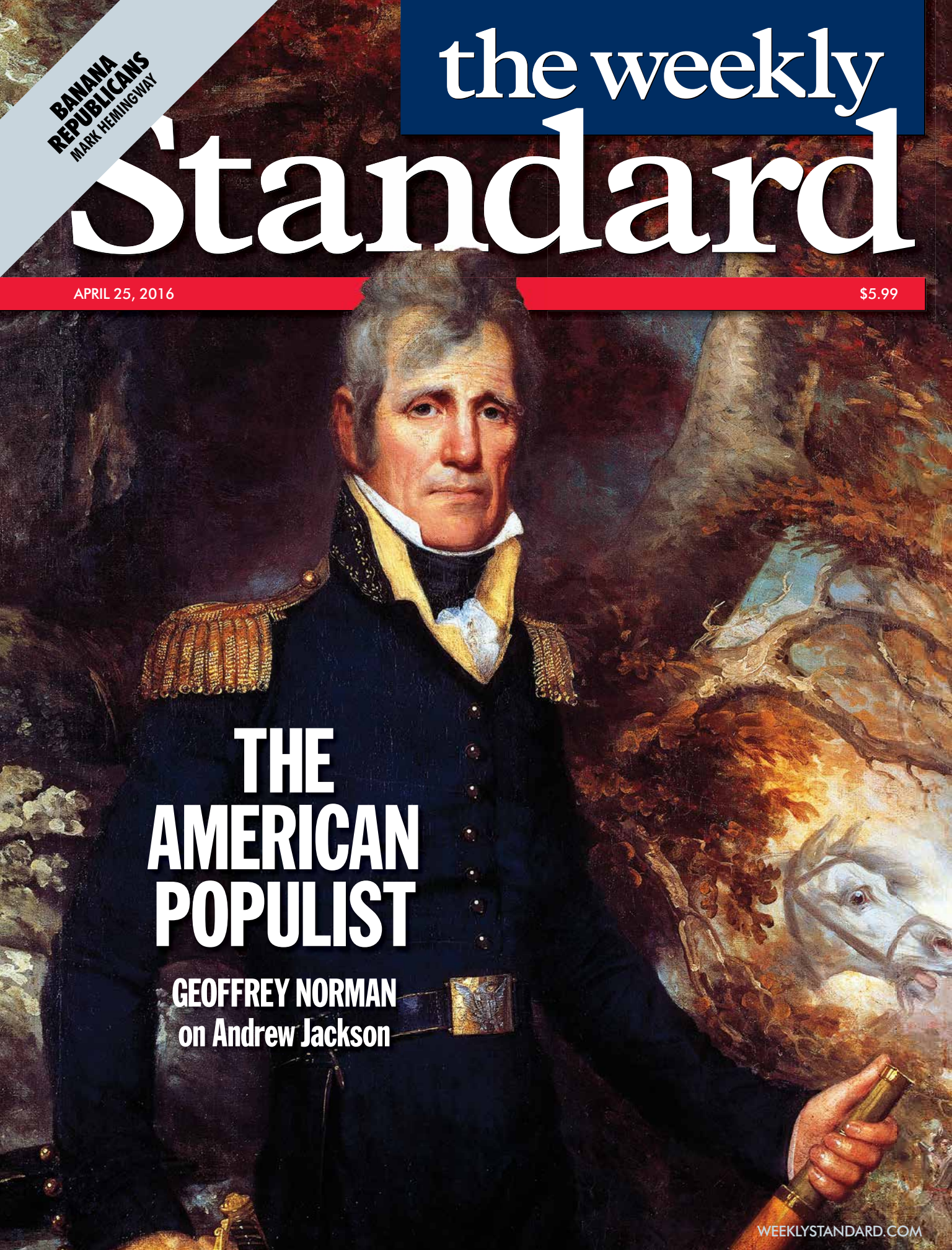
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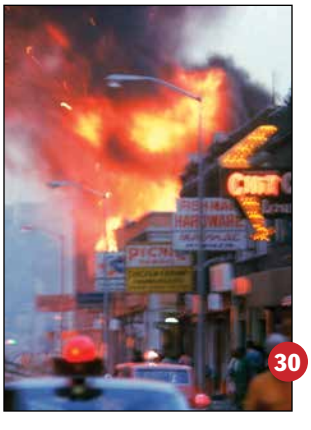

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The Worst Government Agency?

For generations, the IRS has held the distinction of being America's most hated government agency. Its title is now in jeopardy.

Last week the *Washington Post* had a short metro item about the sad state of affairs of the Memorial Bridge and the National Park Service. Memorial Bridge spans the Potomac, connecting Arlington National Cemetery with the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. Built in 1932, it is a beautiful structure, with elaborate sculptures at the base. And if you care about quotidian matters such as utility, it is traversed by some 68,000 vehicles daily. It is also falling apart.

Memorial Bridge, looking towards Arlington National Cemetery

Because the Memorial Bridge is part of the National Register of Historic Places, it falls under the administration of the National Park Service, which has been agitating for funding to fix the bridge. Last spring, for instance, NPS chief administrator Jonathan B. Jarvis held a press conference on the bridge, warning that if taxpayers didn't pony up, his agency might close the bridge to vehicle traffic entirely within six years.

You may recall Jarvis's name. He's the Obama appointee who, during the budget showdown of 2013, eagerly shut down every national park in America in order to further the Obama administration's claims about Republican dereliction of duty. And Jarvis didn't just shut down parks that the NPS spent manpower working on. He sent staffers to erect barriers around unstaffed sites—such as the World War II Memorial in Washington—so that citizens couldn't visit them. He sent officers to Claude Moore Colonial Farm, a site privately funded and run, and ordered it to close down under pain of arrest. He sent members of the National Park Service to block off scenic overlooks near Mount Rushmore to prevent anyone driving by from being able to see the monument.

Jarvis showed amazing contempt for his fellow citizens. But however despicable his prissy authoritarianism was, one had to admire his diligence. Jarvis displayed the kind of zeal that would have made Inspector Javert or Dolores Umbridge proud.

But it turns out that when his duties turn from harassing taxpayers trying to honor their country to more mundane matters—such as fixing major pieces of transportation infrastructure—Jarvis is somewhat less diligent.

The cost of fixing the Memorial Bridge is estimated to be $250 million. The Park Service was supposed to apply for $150 million in funding from the federal FASTLANE, a hyper-competitive program that has $800 million to grant to important transportation programs.

As of April 14, the NPS still hadn't submitted its application. (The deadline was that night.) Worse still, applications require cooperation from state and local partners, and the NPS did not reach out to D.C. and Virginia officials until just a few days before. The story in the *Post* was one of abject panic from local lawmakers—every last one of them a Democrat—who were amazed at the NPS's incompetence.

What does not seem to have occurred to them is that the Memorial Bridge fiasco might be an example not of the National Park Service's incompetence, but its priorities. ♦

Feeling Bitter, Are We?

To spread awareness of the putative wage gap between men and women, members of the Democratic National Committee had a plan. On the occasion of the fatuous "Equal Pay Day" (April 12), they would open a lemonade stand at a Metro stop in Washington and charge two prices: 79 cents for women, a dollar for men. How clever!

The problem was, well, there were a lot of problems. The weather, for one, was cold and rainy. But as *Washington Post* columnist Dana Milbank reports, that was just the beginning:

> The Democrats, further, did not have a permit to sell, which meant they had to give the stuff away for a "suggested donation." Nor were they aware that they would be competing with a charity selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts on the very same spot.

NEWSCOM

They also, apparently, didn't have authorization to set up their stand, which caused the station manager to call the transit police. . . .

[W]ith a Cuban cigar box for a cash register and two plastic bottles of lemonade for product, they displayed a hand-colored sign: "Lemonade. Boys $1.00, Girs 79 cents."

"I forgot the L" in girls, one of the young Democrats explained.

Commuter responses included "You registering people to vote?" "I'll do it on my way back," and "I don't take drinks from strangers." (Indeed, accepting a cup of lemonade from kids at a neighborhood sidewalk stand just isn't the same as getting a cup of yellowish liquid from adults at the Capitol South Metro station.)

The female Democrats amassed $53.60 in donations before retreating to a nearby coffee shop, their lemonade jug still partly full, and, as Milbank put it, "perhaps inadvertently confirming the oft-leveled charge by Republicans that Democrats wouldn't even know how to operate a lemonade stand." ♦

Consciousness Raising

The highly religious, on average, get together with extended family more regularly than the nonhighly religious, according to the Pew Research Center's third "U.S. Religious Landscape Study." The highly religious are more satisfied with family life and just plain happier in general.

That said, the power of religion in our lives has its limits. According to the study, for example, the highly religious are no more likely than the nonreligious to exercise regularly (that's "exercise," not "exorcise"). The highly religious are just as likely as their irreligious peers to overeat.

But possibly most attention-grabbing was the revelation that the faithful are not particularly socially conscious. That is to say, when it comes to issues of social consciousness, "people who pray every day and regularly attend religious services appear to be very similar to those who are not as religious." But is it true? It all depends on whether one buys the researchers' definition of "social consciousness."

According to Pew, the highly religious failed to recycle at rates any higher than the nonreligious. "And when making decisions about what goods and services to buy," Pew says, the highly religious "are no more inclined to consider the manufacturers' environmental records or whether companies pay employees a fair wage."

What's interesting about this isn't that the religious are indistinguishable from the nonreligious on these questions, but that these are the measures by which one is judged to be socially conscious or not. Because, as Pew readily reports, the highly religious are significantly more likely to volunteer regularly and to donate "money/time/goods to the poor."

You might be forgiven for thinking that these latter are a better measure of real social consciousness—a willingness to devote one's own time and treasure to improving the lives of the poor and suffering. But according to Pew that's just "community involvement" (which sounds

as though it might be a measure merely of one's willingness to play in a bowling league).

The honorific "social consciousness" is reserved, instead, to describe the effort-free behaviors of the morally self-congratulatory, the folks who think well of themselves for buying, say, a Prius or even a Tesla rather than a Camaro.

In any case, maybe there's a reason the religious don't outrate the nonreligious when it comes to the pieties of environmentalism—they already have something to believe in, thank you very much. ♦

The Classiest Bicycles Ever

With the Republican National Convention in Cleveland rapidly approaching, local officials are taking advantage of a $50 million federal security grant to stock up for the coming protests.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*'s Andrew J. Tobias reports some recent purchases:

> Three-hundred bicycles and 310 bike helmets from Safariland, LLC, a Jacksonville, Fla.-based manufacturer of police equipment, for $386,800. City officials picked Safariland over two competing bids, including a $565,269 offer from Volcanic, LLC, a Seattle-based company.

The Scrapbook, which occasionally uses D.C.'s Capital Bikeshare system to avoid giving more money to Washington's failed Metro system, was intrigued. So we reached out to Safariland, LLC, and the City of Cleveland to learn more about the contract. After all, that's a lot of money for 300 bicycles that will be used for a week or two. Neither Safariland nor the City of Cleveland responded to a request for comment.

The Patrol Bike

According to their website, Safariland sells black police bicycle helmets for $55. Cleveland opted for the considerably more expensive Bell Super 2R MIPS helmets, which Safariland is selling for $145 each. The helmet, which looks like an elaborate hockey mask designed for motocross bikers, seems classy indeed.

The Bell Super 2R

As do the bicycles. Cleveland's bid request seeks "Polic [sic] Patrol Bikes—Volcanic VX7 or approved equal or better as specified in Section C and D of the attached specifications."

Safariland's website does not list the Volcanic VX7, only the Safariland®/Kona® Patrol Bike - 29″ Wheel bicycle, which retails for $1,589.95. Cleveland is getting them for the low, low price of $1,124.50. Here's how the bicycle is described:

> Built with the same handcrafted power and excellence you've come to expect for our legacy law enforcement and security products, The Safariland®/Kona® Patrol Bike delivers optimum performance. Designed by law enforcement officers for law enforcement officers, the Safariland/Kona Patrol Bike was built from the ground up to offer the advanced features needed on patrol today.

Fancy!

The Scrapbook got a kick out of this line: "The 29-inch wheels allow riders to clear obstacles such as curbs and stairs effortlessly."

A similarly sized bicycle from Walmart retails for $149, but since we don't know what the Safariland bicycle is outfitted with, it's hard to know whether Cleveland got a good deal. Does it come with a carrier rack? Lights? Sirens? Who knows?

One thing's for certain: When the tear gas is flying and you're running from heavily armored riot police with ASP batons, the police officer ordering you to get down on the ground will have a much easier time on a $1,000 bicycle complete with lights and sirens.

Especially if it involves stairs or curbs. ♦

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No Need to Read All About It

I first acquired a connoisseur's interest in dull headlines in 1963, when I read, in a note in the air edition of the English *New Statesman*, that the London *Times* had staged a contest for the dullest headline to appear in the paper over the past year. The winning entry was "Small Earthquake in Chile, Not Many Dead." Something exquisite about the irrelevance of that headline: an earthquake so far away and one with apparently so little consequence. Every word in it suggests there is no need to read the story beneath it.

As my own interests narrow, I find more and more headlines above stories that cry out to be ignored. Two from the *Wall Street Journal* that recently caught and instantly glazed my eyes are: "Highway Bill Heads for House" (December 5, 2015) and "E-Commerce in Mexico Takes Coaxing" (January 1, 2016). Years ago a *New York Times* headline that I thought a genuine nongrabber read: "Chief Justice Warren Sees No Trend in Burger Court." All three of these headlines are up there with that old suburban neighborhood paper perennial, "Cookie Sale Planned."

A headline is the barker outside the strip joint, promising something enticing to bring in customers. The 1983 *New York Post* headline "Headless Body in Topless Bar" does the job nicely. Some headlines live off their cleverness. *Variety*'s "Sticks Nix Hick Pix," describing rural audiences' lack of interest in movies about rural subjects, qualifies splendidly here. The *New York Daily News* was known in an earlier day for startling headlines. During the 1962 New York newspaper strike, a humor magazine edited by Victor Navasky called *Monocle* ran parody issues of all the New York papers. The headline they used on the front page of the *Daily News* parody issue was "Priest Plugs Punk." The story beneath recounted how a priest shot a young thug coming down the nave of his church with a zip gun. "How the priest came into possession of the zip gun is unknown" was the story's final sentence.

During the days before it began whoring after youthful readers, the *New York Times* ran many notably dull headlines. The ever-alert Tom Wolfe caught this and remarked that the standard *New York Times Magazine* cover of that time might show a water buffalo standing in a rice paddy, under the headline "Asia Tackles Poverty," or, as Wolfe then put it, "some such masculine verb." Sports headlines, of course, go in heavily for masculine verbs, almost to the point of unnecessary roughness, with teams trouncing, crushing, and smashing one another.

DAVID CLARK

The most mistaken headline written in the modern era, surely, is the *Chicago Daily Tribune*'s 1948 dazzler, "Dewey Defeats Truman." Whoever wrote that, or had ordered it written, must have found it a touch difficult to come into work the next morning. A shame the *Onion* wasn't in business in those days to mock it. I don't see the *Onion* regularly, but two headlines from its pages that have stuck in my mind are "[Bill] Clinton Vaguely Disappointed by Lack of Assassination Attempts" and, shortly after the election in 2008 of Barack Obama, "Black Man Given Nation's Worst Job."

I never worked on a metropolitan daily, and so never had a hand in composing headlines. I did work for a few years on a New York weekly political magazine, the *New Leader*, and suggested headlines for articles and reviews, not all of which found acceptance. For the review of the complaint-filled memoirs of an East Indian woman I suggested "Days of Whine and Neurosis," but, alas, it didn't get through. More than fifty years later I still can't forget a *New Leader* headline that read "Agonizing Opportunity in Southeast Asia." The reason I can't forget it is that I hear the young Lauren Bacall saying, "You know how to create an 'Agonizing Opportunity in Southeast Asia,' don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together and blow."

I find pleasure in supplying titles, which are in effect headlines, for compositions of my own. My favorite among these is "Why Madame Bovary Couldn't Make Love in the Concrete," which comes from a line in a student paper from my teaching days. I still rather fancy the title "Don Juan Zimmerman," which I gave to a short story about a skirt-chasing Chicago lawyer. The favorite of my own book titles is *Fabulous Small Jews*, a phrase I found in a Karl Shapiro poem.

A group of publisher's editors, over drinks, decided that the title for a certain bestseller would be *Lincoln's Mother's Doctor's Dog*, which has all the subjects of which bestsellers are made: Lincoln, mothers, doctors, and dogs. At this same barroom session they decided that the world's dullest possible book title would be *Canada, Sleeping Giant to the North*. Sounds a winner in the dullness derby to me. Wuxtry, wuxtry, no need to read all about it.

Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

No Whining

If you're a conservative, you admire Edmund Burke—and you may recall this passage—a bit hyperbolic perhaps, but stirring and powerful:

> But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that charity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

Edmund Burke

Thus Burke in 1790, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. At that very time, the American rebels of 1776, by contrast with their French successors, were vindicating their revolution by becoming Founders of a successful experiment in self-government. It has always been the claim of American conservatives that here, on this side of the Atlantic, glory is not extinguished, the spirit of an exalted freedom is not dead, and manly sentiment and heroic enterprise remain possible, consistent (if in some tension) with the principles and practice of a modern republic.

The rise of Donald Trump is a challenge to that proud claim. Perhaps Burke was right. Perhaps ours is destined to be an age of sophisters and calculators. And not merely of sophisters and calculators, but of suckers and con men.

Perhaps. But surely we need not concede defeat. As William Gladstone, an admirer of Burke, put it almost a century later, "The resources of civilization are not yet exhausted."

Still, one can ask: Are we deploying those resources as energetically and resolutely as we could be? Are those of us in the anti-Trump and #NeverTrump camps really doing all that we can do at this moment of crisis? At a time when not just the outcome of this year's election but the fate of the American conservative project is very much in question, are we rising to the moment?

It would require superhuman stoicism for an American conservative not to be depressed by the Trump phenomenon. But being depressed by a real problem is one thing. Moping about feeling sorry for oneself is another. Ted Cruz has said, correctly, that Donald Trump is a whiner. But there is, unfortunately, whining on the anti-Trump side as well.

There's the whine of disappointment: "Gee, we won in Wisconsin. We thought Trump was stopped. Now look at the New York polls. And the states after New York are tough. Can you imagine what a slog it's going to be?"

There's the whine of foreboding: "And then what? Can you imagine what a mess a convention that denies Trump the nomination would be? Paul Ryan says it would be even worse if the delegates select a nominee who hasn't been a candidate. Maybe it's time to begin accepting Trump?"

There's the whine of wishfulness: "Maybe if he wins the nomination, Trump won't be so bad for the Republican party or conservatism after all. Let's not be rash. We could probably influence him. Or we could at least protect the down-ballot candidates against him."

There's the whine of wistfulness: "Ah, if only we now had better alternatives. If only Marco Rubio hadn't frozen for two minutes in the New Hampshire debate. If only Scott Walker's campaign manager hadn't wasted all that money. If only. . ."

There's the whine of fatalism: "Yes, Cruz would probably be a good president. But surely he can't win a general election. Yes, he only trails Hillary Clinton by four points now. But do you know anyone who likes him?"

There's the whine of difficulty: "And if it comes to an independent candidacy—well, won't it be tough to get on the ballot in Texas and North Carolina? Won't it be hard to find the perfect candidate? Has it ever really worked before?"

These whines are not without basis in fact. Whines usually do have some plausible grounding in reality. The odds may be daunting, but a serious political movement is about winning, not whining.

Donald Trump is a test for American conservatism. It's not too much to say he's a test for America. Are we so lacking in "manly sentiment" and "heroic enterprise" that we can't defeat him?

—William Kristol

A World Unmoored

Why is John Kerry eager to provide Iran with more economic benefits by publicly declaring the Iranians may actually deserve more relief? Why did the secretary of state tell Charlie Rose that the United States and Iran want the same thing when it comes to ending the war in Syria? Why does America's top diplomat give Iran a pass on its ballistic missile tests, even though they violate U.N. Security Council resolutions? Why? Because Kerry hearts Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister.

It's hardly a secret that Kerry has a man crush on his Iranian counterpart. Even the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee intimated as much last week when he described the White House's waltz with the clerical regime in Tehran: "There are some people who are invested in this and have developed relationships and I think are trying to bend this in a way that will benefit Iran," said Sen. Bob Corker.

It's hardly a secret that Kerry has a man crush on his Iranian counterpart. Even the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee intimated as much last week: 'There are some people who . . . have developed relationships and I think are trying to bend this in a way that will benefit Iran,' said Sen. Bob Corker.

John Kerry and Iran's Mohammad Javad Zarif

Democrats as well as Republicans say the White House misled them on the Iran deal. The administration said it would not allow Iran access to the U.S. banking system, but top officials are now saying that Iran may be allowed to exploit a loophole having to do with offshore banking to access the dollar that way. Permitting Iran to make dollar transactions, said Rep. Brad Sherman, "is clearly not required" by the nuclear deal. "This will set bad precedent," the Democratic congressman from California told the Associated Press, "and it will not be the last time the Iranians and/or their business partners receive additional relief."

Meanwhile the Obama White House refuses to say that ballistic missile tests are in violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, to the dismay of allies, U.S. lawmakers, and even administration officials. According to the *Washington Free Beacon*, there are voices in the administration who want "to use harsher language against Iran," but "they're being overruled by others who are defending Russia and Iran's interpretation." That sounds a lot like John Kerry.

Kerry reportedly speaks to Zarif on the phone regularly. In the first two weeks of this year, the AP has reported, the two spoke at least 11 times. That's a good thing, says Kerry, because it means there's now a channel open to discuss issues between the two countries—like when Iran kidnaps American sailors, lays siege to the diplomatic missions of U.S. allies, or launches ballistic missile tests. That is, the purpose of the newly opened channel with Iran is to facilitate America's ability to complain when the clerical regime acts up.

Why Kerry boasts of this dubious achievement is partly a function of his vanity. The secretary of state seems to believe that diplomacy is the practice of mawkishly ingratiating himself with counterparts. The pictures of Kerry laughing with Zarif as well as his opposite number in Moscow, Sergey Lavrov, are evidence of something gone wrong in Washington policy-making circles. The opposite of glad-handing the Iranian and Russian foreign ministers is not war but a measure of propriety and dignity. After all, the Iranians threaten America's chief Middle Eastern ally, Israel, with genocide, while the Russians are trying to drag another U.S. partner, Turkey, into conflict. America's leading diplomat praises Zarif and Lavrov on a talk show for their "helpfulness" on Syria, when he should show contempt and revulsion for representatives of two governments that are assisting Bashar al-Assad in an atrocity-filled war on his own people.

Kerry is off the reservation, but it's the president who is

JASON DECROW / GETTY IMAGES

giving Iran concession after concession. This makes Kerry Obama's ideal point man—the former senator from Massachusetts tells himself he's doing diplomacy while Obama lets critics at home and abroad stick Kerry with the charge of appeasement. But it's not really appeasement—it's an Obama reeducation program. He's correcting American foreign policy by changing what he's called a mindset "characterized by a preference for military action over diplomacy."

As Obama recently told the *Atlantic*, a "very proud" foreign policy moment of his presidency was his decision not to order strikes against Assad in August 2013 for using chemical weapons, crossing Obama's own red line. Obama believes he freed himself from what he calls the "Washington playbook," which comes "out of the foreign-policy establishment. And the playbook prescribes responses to different events, and these responses tend to be militarized responses."

The issue, as Obama saw it, wasn't just the Iraq war but the kind of American thinking that led to the war. Decades of American thinking were wrong, maybe a whole century was wrong. Obama offers a different kind of thinking: Publicly insulting American allies is honorable. The only way to avoid war is to consort with a state sponsor of terror. Peace and security is the result of giving tens of billions of dollars to a regime that is making war across the Middle East.

It's a travesty. The purpose of America's post-WWII foreign policy was to clarify a complicated and often dangerous world for the leaders of a large republic responsible for the life, liberty, and prosperity of its citizens by ensuring a degree of stability abroad. These are our allies, it said, and these our adversaries, for we know them by their actions and affections. Did it sometimes lack nuance? Yes, because it wasn't meant to be a work of art but a guide to making life and death decisions.

The "playbook" Obama disparages provided Kerry with what was surely his finest moment as secretary of state. When the Syrian despot tested not only an American president's promise but the moral content of the international order, America had to act, Kerry said, and lead. "History," said Kerry in a stirring speech on August 30, 2013, explaining why it was necessary to strike Assad, "would judge us all extraordinarily harshly if we turned a blind eye to a dictator's wanton use of weapons of mass destruction against all warnings, against all common understanding of decency."

Obama hadn't let his secretary of state know that he wasn't going to strike Assad, making a fool of Kerry. But Kerry's incoherence since then, his efforts on behalf of Zarif and Lavrov, his romance with monsters are evidence of something much more ruinous. In dismantling the global order backed by American power and leadership, Obama has left the world, including his secretary of state, unmoored.

—Lee Smith

The School Lunch Debacle

Kids just won't swallow it.

BY ABBY W. SCHACHTER

"We don't need directives," says Tony Aquilio. He's principal at Penn-Trafford High School, in a school district east of the city, where they've tired of having Washington tell them what to serve in the cafeteria: The school board there voted April 11 to opt out of the National School Lunch Program. Aquilio explains that instead of feeding students the limited menu approved by the federal government, he wants to give students the skills to make their own healthy eating choices: "We need to trust them to do that."

Trusting students and even school administrators to figure out healthy meals on their own isn't exactly what the National School Lunch Program is all about. The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, issues mandates and then punishes schools that don't meet the standards the bureaucrats set. And those standards keep getting stricter: In 2010, Washington put new calorie, sodium, sugar, and fat limits in place.

School lunches are just one of the child nutrition programs administered by the USDA. And as the *Washington Free Beacon* has reported, the department is proposing new rules for the programs, rules to be enforced with fines and other punishments. The USDA says it is "proposing to establish criteria for assessments against State agencies and program operators who jeopardize the integrity of any Child Nutrition Program." In plain English, "assessments" means "fines." The government's proposal also threatens "eliminating cost-reimbursement."

Cost reimbursements have been both a carrot and a stick. When first lady Michelle Obama championed rewriting the old school lunch menus along new and improved nutritional guidelines, the idea was to limit portion size and increase kids' consumption of fruits and vegetables. To encourage school districts to participate in the program, the government increased the amount it would reimburse schools per meal and increased, as well, the number of children eligible for reduced-price and free lunches. The reimbursements were offered as a way schools could offset the cost of the new and more expensive menus. But once those reimbursements are built into their budgets, schools are that much more bound by federal mandates, because they can't risk losing the subsidies.

And so the mandates get even more onerous. In 2014, the USDA enacted "Smart Snacks in Schools" rules that set nutrition guidelines for any foods offered at school—whether part of the lunch program or not. The rules specified breads be at least half whole-grain. Fat could account for no more than 35 percent of calories. And there are limits on calories, along with restrictions on salt and sugars.

The trouble with the mandates isn't that schools have trouble making the meals, but the fact that kids don't like them very much.

That might not have mattered as much if the USDA hadn't been reducing the reimbursements that had made the program attractive to schools in the first place. But add to the losses of reimbursements the losses because kids won't buy the food being offered, and the program looks less and less attractive. Penn-Trafford business manager Brett Lago told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* that the district has been losing about $20,000

DAVE MALAN

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per year because of low student participation in the lunch program. "We are not in this to make a profit," Lago said. "Our goal is to break even as possible." The program is wasteful, he said, requiring students to take fruits and vegetables they don't want.

And it's students who have been behind the effort to get government out of the kitchen: Five-hundred students—40 percent of the Penn-Trafford High School population—signed a petition to opt out of the school lunch program. Federal guidelines "are very counterproductive to what they are trying to achieve," Lago told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. Students know when their choices are being limited and they've been voting their displeasure for some time by not buying school lunches. As at Penn-Trafford, there are public schools in California, New York, Kentucky, and Illinois that have chosen to step away from the USDA lunch program.

Opting out isn't without cost: Penn-Trafford stands to lose $100,000 in federal subsidies. The school hopes it will make up the difference if students, tempted by food they actually want to eat, buy lunch more often. The current food service provider says it can keep costs low even as it offers more choices to the high schoolers. "There will still be plenty of healthy options for students," said Robin Duff of Aramark, the district's food service director.

Schools with greater numbers of low-income and poor students are no happier with the menus that have been forced on them and might like to follow Penn-Trafford's lead. But they don't have the luxury of giving up the subsidies.

For Principal Aquilio it comes back to education and trust. Students at Penn-Trafford "are going to be making choices at other meals, dinner and on the weekends, and we want them to make good decisions all the time." He has a word of encouragement for those thinking of opting out of the federal school lunch program. "Other schools can do the same thing," he says, and "trust their students to make good choices." ♦

Will the Wheels of Justice Grind Hillary?

Put not your trust in email scandals.

BY DANIEL HALPER

GARY LOCKE

Where you come down on the Hillary Clinton email scandal is likely a matter of political—or at least candidate—preference.

Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus believes Hillary Clinton will get indicted. So does former attorney general Michael Mukasey, a Republican who served in the George W. Bush administration, as does the Senate majority whip, John Cornyn of Texas.

Many—perhaps even most—Republicans believe the former secretary of state will face some sort of legal consequence for keeping classified information on her private email system.

Republicans cite the cases of national security adviser Sandy Berger, CIA director John Deutch, and General David Petraeus to show clear precedent for prominent officials facing consequences for mishandling classified information. They point to the preponderance of public evidence clearly and indisputably showing a bevy of classified information was stashed on Clinton's home-brew server.

Democrats, no surprise, are curious to know what Republicans are smoking. Bernie Sanders famously declined to make an issue of the emails in his campaign against Hillary Clinton for the party's presidential nomination. Clinton herself recently said in an interview that Republicans "live in that world of fantasy." She added, when an interviewer raised the possibility of a perp walk: "There is not even the remotest chance that it's going to happen."

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Perhaps Clinton's opinion is not uninformed—her ties to the Department of Justice are deep, a benefit of being married to an ex-president, being a former U.S. senator, and serving as a cabinet member in the Obama administration. Her key spokesman, Brian Fallon, was the top press wrangler at Justice, and Eric Holder, the former attorney general who is believed still to be close to the president, is a big booster of her presidential candidacy.

Or perhaps her opinion reflects a political calculation that it is better to show steely resolve and to insist nothing wrong was done than to reveal true concern.

Regardless, there is no public explanation for Clinton's confidence in being exonerated. But surely it helps to have the president of the United States—the boss of the top cop, Attorney General Loretta Lynch—in your corner. Even if Barack Obama maintains the investigation is being done without political interference.

"I do not talk to the attorney general about pending investigations. I do not talk to FBI directors about pending investigations. We have a strict line and always have maintained it," Obama told Chris Wallace, the host of *Fox News Sunday*. "I guarantee that there is no political influence in any investigation conducted by the Justice Department, or the FBI, not just in this case, but in any case."

So partisan expectations are set on a collision course, and a day of reckoning approaches. Or does it?

The FBI will be interviewing Clinton soon, according to news reports, signaling a possible winding down of the many-months-long investigation. The bureau will have to review all the evidence—most of which, it's worth recalling, has likely *not* been released to the public, despite massive document dumps of tens of thousands of Clinton's emails. The bureau will then recommend to the lawyers at the Justice Department whether Clinton should be indicted, or perhaps one or more of her assistants.

The key question will be whether there is enough evidence to prosecute a case that will hinge on whether Clinton *knowingly* and *intentionally* broke the law.

What Loretta Lynch does after that is almost guaranteed to be a scandal for the Obama administration. Indicting the Democratic nominee for president would once again pit the Clinton machine versus Team Obama, setting off a battle royal that would in all likelihood tarnish the reputations of everyone involved.

But not pursuing legal action on Clinton opens up the administration to the very charges Obama was so sensitive to avoid in his interview with Wallace—that his Department of Justice is a political organ, working to save the Democratic nominee. The Obama IRS targeted Republicans and conservative groups, while Justice covers for Democrats.

All of which is to say that, for Hillary Clinton and for her former boss, Barack Obama, the least discomfiting outcome might be for the email investigation to continue to drag out inconclusively, at least for the rest of the campaign.

That would leave Republicans unhappiest of all. As one top GOP hand advised, "I don't think anyone should base their strategy for November on a hope that the Obama administration's own Justice Department will indict their party's nominee."

Of course Republicans might be less given to fantasies of Hillary's downfall if they weren't flirting with nominating the most unpopular candidate in the history of either party. ♦

The Ultimate Test for a Dealmaker

Getting to 1,237 delegates.

BY FRED BARNES

Is Donald Trump as good at making deals as he says? He'd better be or his chances of winning the Republican presidential nomination are likely to vanish before his eyes.

Absent a miracle, the primary season will end on June 7 with Trump short of the 1,237 delegates needed for a majority. To win the nomination on the first ballot at the GOP convention, he'll have to recruit more delegates. At the moment, we don't know how many, but maybe as few as 52 (the rough estimate of THE WEEKLY STANDARD's John McCormack) or somewhere north of 100 if Trump loses badly in the California primary.

There are two places to find available delegates. One is the group of around 150 who will be "unbound" and thus free to vote for whomever they prefer. The other is the collection of delegates committed to a candidate no longer in the race. The most important bloc is Marco Rubio's, with 171 delegates.

Trump will have to negotiate no matter where he stands. The closer he is to 1,237, the stronger his position in seeking additional delegates. At some point, he may be seen as the party's presumptive nominee, as unpleasant as that will sound to his opponents.

Whatever the case, Trump will be brimming with bravado, which he defines in his book *The Art of the Deal* as "truthful hyperbole." It's part of his strategy for selling himself and his ideas. "I know about deal-making," he said in his speech to AIPAC in March. "That's what I do." And what's needed in Washington, he said in the

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Donald Trump greets supporters after speaking at a rally in Albany, April 11, 2016.

Republican debate in Miami, are "people who can make deals."

If Trump is short of a majority by 100 or fewer delegates, he can go after unpledged delegates one-on-one or in small groups. He can't say that he would give them a job in his administration if he's president. That would be illegal. But there's a lot he can dangle in front of them.

President Ford's campaign in 1976 wrote the book on this. He invited unpledged delegates from New York to a glamorous state dinner held in the White House for Queen Elizabeth. It worked. Along this line, Trump could say he'd like to invite delegates as his personal guests to a weekend at Mar-a-Lago, his club in Palm Beach.

If Trump's overall delegate count is less than 1,100, he'll have to take more drastic action. He'll need to tap into delegates committed to Rubio or Kasich. Trump has already mentioned both, along with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, as possible vice presidential running mates. That may help, but his prospects of gaining the support of Rubio's or Kasich's delegates appear unpromising for now.

Rubio said last week that he wants a conservative nominee, and the only conservative still in the race is Ted Cruz. He stopped short of an endorsement because that would have freed his delegates. But nearly all the Rubio backers at the Colorado Republican convention on April 8 helped Cruz win all of the state's 34 delegates.

And most of Rubio's delegates, once released by Rubio himself, are unlikely to migrate to Trump on their own. It would probably take a strong effort by Rubio to persuade a chunk of them to vote for Trump.

Kasich is another story. His strategy is to remain a candidate through early ballots on the hope that Trump and Cruz fail to win a majority and the convention turns to him as an electable alternative.

Trump would have to coax Kasich into dropping out. He has 143 delegates and may win a few more. He may be unwilling to let them go. But Trump can be persistent. "I aim very high and then I just keep pushing and pushing and pushing to get what I'm after," he wrote.

Newt Gingrich, a friend of Trump who talks to him frequently, says Trump will have to negotiate "even if he's at 1,237" when the convention begins in Cleveland on July 18. He will have to deal with unhappy Republican and conservative leaders to create party unity. "There's no way he can avoid negotiating," Gingrich says.

This may be Trump's most difficult task, assuming he's the nominee. The Republican party is divided, and many of Trump's foes say they won't vote for him under any circumstances. He may also face the threat of a third-party conservative candidacy that could draw millions of votes from him.

For unity's sake, he may have to make serious concessions to the point of violating his own rules. "The worst thing you can possibly do in a deal is seem desperate to make it," he wrote in *The Art of the Deal*. "That makes the other guy smell blood, and then you're dead. The best thing you can do is deal from strength, and leverage is the biggest strength you can have. Leverage is having something the other guy wants. Or better yet, needs. Or best of all, simply can't do without."

But if he's a nominee threatened with mass defections, he wouldn't be dealing from strength. His critics would have the leverage. They would have something he needs, the ability to provide unity. And that's something he couldn't do without.

There's one more situation where Trump would be pressed to negotiate: if he loses the nomination and claims he was cheated. Having Trump march out of the convention in a huff would be a problem for the nominee who beat him.

What might assuage Trump, softening the blow to his ego? The nominee could hint that he would make a fine Treasury secretary. But there's a better option. Trump could be given the job of building the wall along the border with Mexico. A crazy idea, for sure, but not a bad one. ♦

NEWSCOM

Conventional Wisdom

Is Cruz stealing delegates from Trump?

BY JAY COST

After Ted Cruz won every delegate up for grabs at the Colorado Republican convention, Donald Trump began complaining that the process at such conventions is unfair. His claim is that party insiders should not be making these choices, but rather that the power should be vested with the voters. As a consequence, Cruz is "stealing" delegates from Trump, and in so doing defying the will of the voters.

Trump's accusations are specious and disingenuous. The process that has been playing out is perfectly legitimate. Trump's real problem is that he is being outhustled by the Cruz campaign.

Ted Cruz

The Republican nomination process operates along two tracks. The first—which garners most of the attention—is the binding of convention delegates to a presidential candidate, through primaries and caucuses. When one sees news reports that Trump has 743 delegates, Cruz has 545 delegates, and Kasich has 143 delegates, these are the number of delegates obliged by the party rules to vote for that candidate on the presidential ballot in Cleveland.

But only a handful of the actual delegates have been selected so far. That is the second track, and it happens in three ways. Some delegates are directly chosen by the candidates, and others are directly voted upon by primary voters. But the overwhelming majority are selected by the party organizations in the states and territories, through a series of party conventions, usually held at the congressional district and state levels. In a few cases—Colorado, Wyoming, and some of the territories—these conventions are also tasked with binding the delegates. But most party conventions simply pick the people who will be delegates in Cleveland, leaving the task of binding to the voters in the primaries and caucuses.

Trump has been complaining that *all* of these conventions are unfair because his kneejerk reaction is to whine about anything that does not go his way. These conventions present two problems for him. In Colorado and Wyoming, Trump lost out on opportunities to win delegates pledged to him (i.e., the first track). But in other convention battles—for instance in Iowa, North Carolina, and Virginia—his problem has to do with the second track, in particular the growing number of Trojan horse delegates.

These Trojan horse delegates are obliged by party rules to vote for Trump on the presidential ballot, but they are otherwise loyal to Cruz. Just because they are required to vote for Trump for the presidential nomination does not mean they need to back him on other matters before the convention. Trojan horse delegates are free to vote with Cruz on disputes over rules or delegate credentials. They can also support Cruz on matters presented to the convention floor. All of that is important, as Cruz will undoubtedly try to tweak the convention rules to make it more difficult for anybody else to win the nomination. Crucially, the bulk of convention delegates are only bound to presidential candidates for a specified number of ballots. By a fourth or fifth ballot, almost all of them would be free to vote for whomever they prefer. Delegates loyal to Cruz but bound temporarily to Trump could ultimately deliver the nomination to the Texas senator.

Naturally, Trump thinks this is grossly unfair. This is nonsense. Nobody changed the party rules in the middle of this process, and nobody fed the Cruz campaign inside information that was not available to the Trump team. The rules have been a matter of public record all along. The Cruz campaign took the time to understand them and use them to its advantage.

Party conventions are open processes. Delegates to these gatherings are not handpicked by party bosses. They are regular Republicans who participate because they have the time and interest to do so. The Cruz team put in the effort to organize regulars loyal to its candidate; the Trump campaign failed to do so. Consider, for instance, the Colorado convention held earlier this month. Delegates to that convention were chosen at precinct caucuses held on Super Tuesday—*and any registered Republican was invited to attend*. That the Trump campaign failed to get its supporters to those caucuses is not the fault of the Cruz campaign, the Colorado Republican party, or anybody else except the Trump campaign.

The Republican party does not belong to its presidential candidates in the way that Trump presumes. In important respects, it still belongs to the party regulars who attend these conventions. Starting in the 1970s, the party organization began sharing authority with voters to select the presidential nominee, but sovereignty was never handed over to the electorate lock, stock, and barrel. The delegates to the national convention, chosen mostly by these state and district conventions, have always retained a role—not only to act when the voters fail to reach a consensus, but to conduct regular party business.

This is hardly antidemocratic, by the way. Party organizations such as these are a vital, albeit overlooked part of our nation's democratic machinery. The party regulars at the district, state, and national conventions do the

GAGE SKIDMORE

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quotidian work of holding the party together between elections: They establish its rules, arbitrate disputes, formulate platforms to present to the voters, and so on. It would be impossible to have a party without these sorts of people doing work the average voter doesn't care about.

And these people are hardly the "establishment" in any meaningful sense of the word. Consider the process in Colorado. There was a hierarchy at play, no doubt—delegates at precinct caucuses voted for delegates to district and state conventions, who voted for delegates to the national convention. But the process was open to any registered Republican, and more than a thousand people served as delegates at the state convention. There were some big political players involved, naturally, but by and large they were just average people. The same goes for the state conventions in places like Wyoming and North Dakota. These meetings in Cheyenne and Bismarck are in no way beholden to, or the equivalent of, the power players working on K Street.

Trump might retort that Cleveland delegates should never be unbound from him, that they should be required to vote for him through the duration of the convention. But how would the party ever reach consensus in a scenario where no candidate won a majority and every delegate is bound forever? If the voters cannot agree among themselves, then somebody has to find the middle ground. The convention delegates, chosen through a fair and open process at the precinct, district, and state levels, are an obvious choice to complete this task. And this indeed will be their job in Cleveland.

Trump could have worked harder to win loyal delegates at these local conventions. He might also have broadened his appeal, so that he stood a better chance of winning a majority of pledged delegates on the first ballot. But he did neither and now is trying to delegitimize the process. His complaint is the only thing that is illegitimate. The truth is that this process of selecting delegates is fair and proper. It just hasn't worked out to Trump's liking so far. ♦

NEWSCOM

China's Caesar

Xi Jinping and the Cultural Revolution.

BY GORDON G. CHANG

Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited major state and Communist party media outlets in February, where he demanded "absolute loyalty."

"All the work by the Party's media must reflect the Party's will, safeguard the Party's authority, and safeguard the Party's unity," he said at national broadcaster China Central Television. "They must love the Party, protect the Party, and closely align themselves with the Party leadership in thought, politics, and action."

An apostle and his demigod, knickknacked

Former Chinese official Liang Jing says Xi's day of lectures to media cadres—widely scorned and ridiculed both inside and outside the country—marked the "official opening of Xi Jinping's Cultural Revolution."

The original Cultural Revolution began 50 years ago next month, instigated by Mao Zedong, the charismatic first leader of the People's Republic. On May 16, 1966, the party's Politburo, spurred on by Mao, created a "Central Cultural Revolution Group" to cleanse the ruling organization. His stated aim was to rid the party of careerists and counterrevolutionaries—those he said "wave the red flag to oppose the red flag"—but his real goal was to purge personal enemies.

Mao's fourth wife, Jiang Qing, had already begun a purge of officials in the Ministry of Culture and had started a campaign against writers critical of her husband. Taking her lead, a professor in Peking University's philosophy department wrote a "big-character poster" denouncing the school's administration. Soon faculty and students in universities and high schools across the country were doing the same.

Jiang Qing stoked the radical movement, handing out armbands to students, calling the eager, impressionable youths "Red Guards." At a mass gathering in Tiananmen Square in August 1966, Mao himself donned a red armband. Students, he said, should "learn revolution by making revolution."

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a personal power play that eventually became a decade-long movement, almost destroyed the People's Republic. Mobs closed government offices, party agencies, schools, and factories after Mao urged some 11 million Red Guards to "Bombard the Headquarters." He called on them to destroy the "Four Olds"—old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. The upheaval eventually became a civil war in many parts of the country, leaving scars that remained long after the army restored order, after Mao died, and even after Jiang Qing and the other members of the notorious "Gang of Four" were sentenced to long prison terms.

Now, four decades after the Cultural Revolution burned itself out, another Maoist is running China.

Xi Jinping adopted overtly Maoist themes and promoted Maoist-inspired policies right after becoming the

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party's general secretary in November 2012. He made a show of visiting locations Mao made famous, reminded audiences of the Great Helmsman's iconic sayings, and reinforced Maoist education and indoctrination from one end of the country to the other. He has even tried to build a Mao-like personality cult around himself.

In Xi Jinping's universe, the main ideological crime is "historical nihilism," criticism of China's Communist past. It is one of his "Seven Don't Mentions." Today, propaganda guidelines permit no criticism of Mao. Xi has linked survival of the party to its reaffirmation of Mao Zedong.

Xi could not celebrate Mao except in a period of enforced orthodoxy made possible by his relentless accumulation of political power. To accumulate that power, he had sought to rid himself of competitors. His primary weapon has been a campaign against corruption, a ruthlessly convenient way to get rid of anyone who opposes him. As Charles Burton of Brock University points out, Xi's ongoing campaign has all the hallmarks of Mao's "continuous revolution." In his time, Xi has "deconstructed" the patronage networks of his adversaries and in the process made himself the most powerful leader since Deng Xiaoping, Mao's canny successor—or perhaps even since Mao himself.

Moving with an aura of power, Xi has looked different than his contemporaries. "I have sensed from the start that he has the kind of ambition that makes other people worry," says the University of Pennsylvania's Arthur Waldron, a noted China historian. "I feel that he is reaching for more power than any of his immediate predecessors had and that he is also seeking to lift himself up above the group of people who would otherwise seem to be very similar to him." As Burton says, Xi has "maneuvered himself into a position of unassailable authority."

That is exactly what Mao did as he became the party's undisputed leader prior to his victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949. His near-absolute power led to enormous mistakes like the Great Leap Forward, which eventually forced him to the sidelines of China's politics. The Cultural Revolution was Mao's way of making himself the center of China again.

The eerie parallels between Mao and Xi have made many worry about the possibility of Cultural Revolution 2.0.

Chinese politics these days is filled with references to the original Cultural Revolution. That deadly decade, however, is poorly understood in today's China, largely because the Communist party has limited discussion of it. In 1981, while the political situation was still unsettled, the party under Deng issued its official verdict—the Cultural Revolution was termed "a most serious setback and loss." Many in China have gone along with the official silence that followed because as onetime Red Guards they have crimes in their youthful past to hide.

This year, however, the Chinese have evidently decided to talk about that disastrous decade, not because of the impending anniversary but because Xi has been imposing "red culture" on a resistant people and trying to achieve a uniformity of opinion in an increasingly modern society. As the *Global Times*, a tabloid controlled by the party's *People's Daily*, complained in March, critics "like to overuse the label of the Cultural Revolution, linking it to all problems today, and to make their case that the Cultural Revolution will return."

Critics are found throughout society. For instance, the 81-year-old Wang Meng, a former minister of culture, essentially called for a reassessment of the Cultural Revolution when in early March he declared that the party had an obligation to "further explain" that time.

Xi's propaganda officials disagree and are trying to derail any questioning of the official 1981 verdict. Twice this year, the *Global Times* has issued editorials on the topic. "If China brings up a wave of reflections and discussions as wished by some," the paper said last month, "the established political consensus will be jeopardized and turbulence in ideas may occur."

The political consensus may already be in some jeopardy. Xi's enemies have dared in the last few months to challenge him publicly, an extraordinary show of defiance. The party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the main instrument in Xi's "anticorruption" campaign, recently took a swipe at his authoritarianism with an online essay titled "A Thousand Yes-Men Cannot Equal One Honest Adviser." There was a mysterious public call for Xi to resign, posted on a semiofficial website, and the official Xinhua News Agency published an article calling him "China's last leader."

Today, like fifty years ago, China's leader has lost support. Will Comrade Jinping turn to some sort of Cultural Revolutionary, Maoist movement of his own? Unlikely. Because China is an increasingly outward-looking nation, and the Chinese people cannot today be as easily manipulated into another mass campaign. Xi, unlike Mao, does not have a monopoly on information, and his emphasis on Maoism does not sit well with an increasingly sophisticated populace. Most Chinese condemn, not celebrate, Mao's great tragedies. As the University of Pennsylvania's Waldron says, "Now the Chinese people are stirring, thinking for themselves, and asking questions for which Xi has no credible answers."

Xi's problem is that he sounds as if he is from another era. He can say, as he did in mid-2013, that "our red nation will never change color," but it in fact already has. The Chinese people, now modern, have simply moved on.

Xi, however, is not the type of autocrat to let modernity stand in the way of his vision for China. That determination ensures continuing alienation—and friction—between him and the Chinese people, as he must increasingly coerce them into accepting his rule. That means more repression, which only delegitimizes the Communist party in the eyes of an increasingly skeptical public.

Which is bound to make Xi's China even less stable than it is now. And more dangerous too. As we saw in the Cultural Revolution, insecure Maoists are capable of most anything. ♦

The Future of the Past

Protecting endangered antiquities.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

New Haven, Conn.

Ziad al-Saad is an archaeologist at Yarmouk University in Irbid. The Jordanian city is near the site of ancient Gadara, where the biblical swine went over the cliff. It is also near the border with Syria and the United Nations-run Za'atari camp for Syrian refugees. "We're under a great deal of pressure," Saad says, "but this is also giving us the strength to fight back." Ancient Gadara was a cosmopolitan Roman city, and Saad, the erstwhile director general of Jordan's Department of Antiquities and now his university's vice president, wants to preserve the complexity of our common heritage. "Culture and identity are vital to the fight against extremism and the dark forces that are trying to take us backwards."

We were talking after Saad's lecture at the eighth Global Colloquium of University Presidents (GCUP), which met last week at Yale University. The GCUP is part of the United Nations' Global Compact program, an initiative for furthering U.N. goals through collaboration with businesses and institutions. Peter Salovey, Yale's president, chose as this year's GCUP theme the preservation of cultural heritage, "challenges and strategies."

"We are witnessing the destruction of cultural treasures on a vast scale," U.N. secretary general Ban Ki-moon declared in his keynote address at Yale's Sprague Hall. The "common assets of humanity" are the "hallmarks of our human existence." Echoing the NATO charter, Ban said, "An attack on cultural heritage in one part of the world is an attack on us all."

The U.N. likes to set global standards, and Ban sets the global standard in platitudes. He has ingested the regnant pieties of the U.N. so deeply that he can regurgitate them at will. He is infuriatingly charming in person, and diplomatic in speech to the point of nihilism. At Sprague Hall, he sketched out a "geopolitical" context for the destruction of priceless antiquities while avoiding the dread words "Islamism" and "ISIS." Listening to Ban's fairy tales of "watershed declarations" and anti-extremism summits in Geneva, you wonder if his real plan is to lull the dictators and kleptocrats of Turtle Bay into a hundred-year sleep, from which they shall awake refreshed and democratically accountable.

The mountainside Buddha statue in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, on December 18, 1997, left, and after its destruction by the Taliban on March 2, 2001

Worse, everything Ban said was true. The world really does seem to be at a "critical juncture," with half its population under the age of 25, extreme disparities of wealth and development, and chaotic flows of people across cultures and oceans. Who could not be revolted by the barbarous demolition of other peoples' histories? Who could approve of the illegal trade in antiquities, a "cycle of theft and profit" that enriches terrorists? Closer to home, who could disagree with his gentle chiding of the zealots among Yale's student body, who should "listen to each other, and each other's ideas"?

Still, Ban's speech at Yale was about as useful as a degree from Trump University. As that morning's academic presentation had made clear, there has never been a better time for strategies of cultural preservation and statements of shared purpose among the "international community." But there has rarely been a worse set of challenges or a more dangerous abdication of leadership by the United States. Technical advances in mapping, preservation, and prevention contend with the Four Horsemen of the modern apocalypse, described by Salovey as "human activity, war, natural disaster, and climate change." We might add a fifth: the indispensable nation dispensing with its international responsibilities.

The key strategy for preservation, says Alark Saxena of the Yale Himalaya Initiative, is "managing for uncertainty." Where there is danger, there can be "risk mitigation" and "hazard mapping." After the Nepal earthquake of 2015, the initiative created a Yale Himalaya Hazard Mapping Team, to identify which monuments and historic structures lie in high-risk areas and to aid preemptive strategies. Perhaps the Obama administration should have done some hazard mapping before leaving Iraq.

The earthquake that hit eastern Japan in 2011 was a thousand times stronger than the 2010 Haiti earthquake and was complicated by the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Yet preemptive design saved many of the artifacts in Fukushima's art museum.

NEWSCOM

Dominic Green, the author of Three Empires on the Nile, *teaches politics at Boston College.*

Small measures, like watertight doors in low-lying areas and shock-proof pedestals for sculptures, are cheaper to implement than expensive fixes after the event, like cleaning books with ultrasonic waves and freeze-drying, or vacuuming and scrubbing radioactive dust from a Buddha statue.

"You need to be proactive, not only scientifically, but also at the policy level," says Tor Broström of Sweden's Uppsala University. Broström contributed to the EU's Noah's Ark project, which created a "vulnerability atlas" of Europe's cultural heritage. His speciality is protecting Sweden's stone churches and wood-framed buildings against climate change. He offers some advice to the owners of historical American properties. If temperatures and humidity rise, look out for new kinds of insects and mold, which, as Broström discovered in Sweden's medieval churches, will eat up your frescoes. Try to stabilize the situation by integrating your heat, ventilation, and dehumidification policies.

In the stabilized environment of Sprague Hall, Ban Ki-moon described how UNESCO restored the 14 mausoleums in Timbuktu, Mali, that were vandalized by Islamists in 2012. "A UNESCO team stands ready to travel to Palmyra," Ban announced. Then he admitted that UNESCO cannot safely go to Palmyra. This is the gap between strategies and challenges, hope and reality. Ban is a global leader for our times: He talks about lowering the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere while emitting a lot of hot air.

Professor Saad listened intently in the back row. Earlier, I had asked him how an American university conference could save priceless artifacts half a world away, when political will seems so weak.

"If we have a common heritage, we have a common responsibility," Saad replied. "International cooperation and establishing links with American universities are very important. The U.S.A. has a major responsibility in this, because it is a superpower. It has the resources and the know-how that can preserve culture for all humanity." ♦

The Green Energy Bust

It's the 1970s all over again.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

Almost 40 years ago, the last "green" president, Jimmy Carter, went on national TV and glumly told the nation from the Oval Office: "We could use up all of the proven reserves of oil in the entire world by the end of the next decade."

Can you get any more wrong than this?

This prediction wasn't just foolish. It turned out to be tremendously expensive to taxpayers, with billions of dollars poured down a rat hole of green energy programs that never worked—including the "Synthetic Fuels Corporation," which was going to provide an economical substitute for scarce oil.

Then Ronald Reagan was elected president and in his first days in office he lifted all remaining Nixon-Ford-Carter-era oil and gas price controls and later repealed windfall profits taxes on the oil industry. This deregulation of the oil and gas markets led almost overnight to a massive increase in domestic oil and gas production and over time a tumbling in the price of oil and gas for two decades. As for the government-sponsored alternative energy programs that had been all the rage during the Carter years: They went bust because instead of oil prices of $50 to $100 a barrel, the price fell below $20. Whoops. The Synthetic Fuels Corporation was long regarded as one of the biggest government "investment" boondoggles of all time.

Well, until 2009. That was the year Barack Obama entered office with a new generation of experts again predicting "peak oil." They lectured us that the price of fuel could soar to $200 or $300 a barrel as fast-growing China and India and other developing countries added more demand for energy. Meanwhile, Obama (on the heels of George W. Bush, whose experts also bought into the oil scarcity nonsense) would ignore the lessons of history and spend well over $100 billion on green energy—battery cars, wind and solar energy, cellulosic ethanol—to replace "dirty energy," as the left calls it, namely oil, gas, and coal.

The excuse for this taxpayer subsidy blitz was that oil and gas supplies were rapidly running out—just as Carter had warned decades earlier. Renowned energy experts told us that oil was "a finite resource" and insisted commodity prices would continue to rise. But no one had the energy story wronger than Barack Obama. From the day he entered office he warned Americans that oil is "a fuel that is rapidly disappearing," and "we're running out of places to drill," and that "we can't bet our long-term prosperity, our long-term security, on a resource that will eventually run out." He even chided his critics that they would soon call for drilling "next to the Washington Monument."

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Those lines sound laughable today as global supplies keep deluging the market, with cheap oil now hovering between $30 and $40 a barrel. The shale oil and gas revolution doubled recoverable energy supplies in the blink of an eye. As the Institute for Energy Research recently put it: "Mr. President, America isn't running *out* of oil, we are running *into* it." The *Financial Times* put it best in early 2016: "The world is drowning in oil."

For the vast majority of people, cheap and abundant energy is a gift that will raise living standards worldwide and help the poorest most. The irony, of course, is that the left keeps obsessing about income inequality, but cheap energy is one of the greatest ways in world history to pull up the poor and equalize incomes. It makes *everything* more affordable.

So why is the left apoplectic? Because the fossil-fuels boom means that green energy is dead again.

To fully appreciate how nonviable green energy is in this new age of cheap oil, consider the economics of electric cars like those made by Tesla. In an article published in the most recent *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, the authors report that after extensive testing, current battery costs for a Tesla and other electric vehicles are roughly $325 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). How does that cost fare against standard gasoline in the tank? "At a battery cost of $325 per kWh," the authors wrote, "the price of oil would need to exceed $350 per barrel before the electric vehicle was cheaper to operate."

In other words, the price of gas would have to be eight times higher than today for battery-powered cars to make financial sense.

Meanwhile, solar companies are facing the same bleak financial and technological predicament. The infamous Solyndra bankruptcy is proving to be the norm, not the exception, as fossil fuel prices fall. The *Wall Street Journal* reported in March that "a federally backed, $2.2 billion solar project in the California desert isn't producing the electricity it is contractually required to deliver to PG&E Corp." The *Journal* story adds that "the solar plant may be forced to shut down" without more government intervention.

The obvious question is this: Could one think of a more foolish national energy strategy than pumping hundreds of billions more tax dollars into this sinkhole? This would be like buying stock in rotary telephones on the eve of the iPhone. Cheap and abundant shale oil and gas are here to stay, but all Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Barack Obama, the Sierra Club, and the United Nations want to talk about is green energy.

Because the economics are so dismal for renewables, the green-energy left is scrambling for Washington lifelines. They got a big assist from Congress late last year when the omnibus spending bill provided a 30 percent tax credit for wind and solar energy—which basically says taxpayers foot almost one-third of the bill. But oil prices are still so low that the Obama administration has called for a $10 a barrel tax—which would regressively raise gas prices by about 20 to 25 cents a gallon—and would use the revenue for still more subsidies to solar and wind power, which account for about 3 percent of our energy production.

Yep, it turns out you can.

It's important to understand that the solar and wind industries wouldn't even exist today—by their own admission—were it not for the endless corporate welfare funneled to Big Green through refundable tax credits, R&D spending, renewable energy mandates, loan guarantees, consumer incentives, and layer upon layer of other payments. Solar Energy Industries Association executive director Rhone Resch admitted to Congress: "The reality is that we will lose 100,000 jobs if we lose the [investment tax credit]—and these are conservative numbers. Ninety percent of solar companies will go out of business."

Yet even with herculean government support systems to prop up pre-industrial-age energy sources, the money is never enough and the industry is still headed over a financial cliff.

Instead of celebrating the 21st-century gift of abundant energy, Washington is doing all it can to make energy more expensive for taxpayers and ratepayers. Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are all in on green energy.

This isn't just bad economics, it's even questionable environmental policy. Obama's own Department of Energy reported last month that U.S. carbon emissions fell 2 percent in 2015 mainly because of increased use of clean-burning shale gas. Yet the greens are trying to shut down domestic shale gas production.

No matter what the facts show, the green delusion lives on. "In fields from Iowa to Texas," President Obama fantasized in his State of the Union address in January, "wind power is now cheaper than dirtier, conventional power. On rooftops from Arizona to New York, solar is saving Americans tens of millions of dollars a year on their energy bills and employs more Americans than coal—in jobs that pay better than average."

In reality, green energy costs Americans twice, as taxpayers and as ratepayers. The math doesn't lie: Coal and natural gas prices (which account for about 66 percent of our electricity production) have both fallen by more than half over the last several years. But retail electricity prices have risen by about 3 percent per year over the same period. Why? Renewable energy requirements force utilities to buy expensive wind and solar power, which drives up utility bills.

The nation is being snookered into another bad energy bet—and this one too will wind up wasting hundreds of billions of dollars. Time to pull the plug. ♦

STAN SHEBS

A Dangerous Man

Andrew Jackson was a killer president

By Geoffrey Norman

When he was 13, but more man than boy, Andrew Jackson got his first taste of war, helping his mother tend to the casualties after the Battle of Waxhaws. The May 1780 battle became, in legend, a massacre of defenseless colonials by British redcoats under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton. Continentals who attempted to surrender were run through and slashed by the men under Tarleton, who was everything that Jackson was not. An aristocrat cavalryman and a fop, Tarleton eventually went back to England and became a member of Parliament and a general, and had his portrait painted by both Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. He was ultimately made a baronet and in 1820 a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.

An 1876 depiction of Jackson's run-in with the officer

Jackson, a hardscrabble rebel born somewhere close to the border between North and South Carolina, was penniless, proud, and tough. And there were much bigger things than baronetcies in his future.

The following year, Jackson and his brother were captured by the British. One of the officers holding Jackson—but not the hated Tarleton—had picked up some mud on his boots and ordered Jackson to clean them. When Jackson refused, the officer slashed at him with his saber. Jackson deflected the blow, slightly, with his hand but still took a deep cut to his scalp. The wound healed, but the scar was still plainly visible, many years later, when Jackson stood on the steps of the U.S. Capitol to take the oath of office as president, and a breeze lifted his hair just enough to expose the angry mark left by the wound.

The psychic scar remained also. Jackson would recall, later, how on one occasion he had watched, from concealment, as Tarleton rode by and how easily he could have shot the man they called "the Butcher" out of his fine saddle. But Jackson would get his revenge on the British, and then some, at the Battle of New Orleans, where his soldiers killed so many redcoats that he would write, about looking over the dead scattered there, "I never had so grand and awful an idea of the resurrection as on that day."

Even in his dying years Jackson was convinced that the British were plotting to get a foothold in the free state of Texas and wrote of the need to "take and lock the door against all danger of foreign influence."

Jackson was a fighter, in a sense that makes the contemporary politician, bragging on himself as "always fighting" for one great cause or another, come off as something of a joke. Jackson was what we would call the real deal. He spilled blood, his own and his enemy's. The saber cut was just the first of several serious wounds. When he took the oath of office as seventh president of the United States, there were two bullets embedded in his body. One was the result of a duel he had fought with a man who insulted Jackson's wife, accusing her of infidelity and bigamy. She and Jackson had married thinking, mistakenly, that she was legally divorced. When the divorce was finalized, Jackson and Rachel had quickly gone through the rituals again. For the rest of his life, Andrew Jackson would tolerate no insult aimed at her.

He met Charles Dickinson, who was known to be a good shot, near the Red River in Logan, Kentucky, on May 30, 1806. Dickinson got off the first shot and the ball hit Jackson in the chest, very close to the heart. But he remained upright, though bleeding heavily and in pain. Jackson steadied himself and took his time with his aim. So much time, in fact, that witnesses later called it dishonorable. His shot, when he finally took it, hit Dickinson, who died later that day. The ball in Jackson's chest lay too close to the heart to risk extracting it. So it remained there for the rest of his life.

In 1813 a feud between Jackson and the Benton brothers boiled over in the streets of Nashville. Jackson was shot

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again. This time in the shoulder. Doctors wanted to amputate Jackson's arm but he said that he would "just as soon keep it." That bullet stayed with him until 1832, when a doctor removed it—without anesthesia. By then, Jackson and Thomas Hart Benton had patched up their differences. Jackson was president of the United States and Thomas Hart Benton was a senator from Missouri, and they were political allies in one of the many epic political battles of the Jackson presidency. This one over the Bank of the United States.

But before he and Benton could become allies and before Jackson could take on the bank and its supporters, there were many more fights. These were political, not physical, but still intense and remorseless, leaving scars that were real if not so visible as the one on Jackson's head.

Andrew Jackson remains one of the more troubling figures in American political history: the original populist, maker of the modern Democratic party, defender of the common man. . . and a defender, also, of slavery, who owned slaves himself and treated them with his customary hard hand. And then there were the Indians whom he fought mercilessly and subdued in battles like the one at Horseshoe Bend in Alabama, in 1814, and whose exile to the lands beyond the Mississippi River he engineered. The Trail of Tears was his doing, although the worst of the death march took place after he had gone home to Tennessee.

The fight that defined his place in American political history was the election of 1824. Jackson, the frontiersman, was one of four candidates and received the greatest share, but not a majority, of the electoral votes cast. Jackson's 99 electors gave him a plurality and put him ahead of John Quincy Adams at 84. But 131 were needed to win. Jackson also ran ahead of the others in the popular vote. Which counted for nothing—except to stir passions in arguments about fairness. Of which there were to be many.

So the thing went to the House of Representatives where Henry Clay, one of the presidential candidates, was the speaker. The House was to determine which of the three top finishers would become president. This cut Clay out, since he had finished fourth. But he had those electoral votes, and he had his own agenda, namely, denying Jackson the presidency, which he believed would be "the greatest misfortune that could befall the country."

When the House voting was done, John Quincy Adams was the new president. He promptly named Henry Clay his secretary of state.

This became, in the minds of Jackson and his supporters, the "corrupt bargain." Jackson put it colorfully, "So you see, the Judas of the West has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver—his end will be the same."

It was all done within the rules and wasn't corrupt in the sense that favors or cash were exchanged. Clay was arguably the right man to be secretary of state. And John Quincy Adams was certainly qualified to be president. More qualified, perhaps, than anyone in the land. Well bred, well educated, experienced in government, and enlightened in his views.

But while Jackson had been fighting the British and getting his scalp laid open by that officer's saber, John Quincy Adams had been in Europe, at his father's side while he conducted diplomacy for the would-be republic. Jackson and Adams could not have been more different. Adams understood the rituals of court. Jackson knew war on the frontier. That was his essence. Adams had his eye on the enlightened future of America, Jackson on the country's immediate and tumultuous expansion.

The bitterness and anger over the "corrupt bargain" ate like acid into the Adams presidency. He had entertained visions of an era in which "the spirit of improvement is abroad upon the earth." He had plans for, among other projects, a national university and saw government as the duty and calling of educated and enlightened men. He despised the kind of partisan politics that had come into being around the figure of Jackson, who would be running again in 1828.

Congress would not go along with Adams's plans, and his administration failed and floundered. Jackson wrote of Adams's big vision, "I shudder for the consequence—if not checked by the voice of the people, it must end in consolidation and then in despotism."

But if Jackson feared the consequences of a strong and energetic executive, it was an opinion based not on principle but on the current occupant of the White House. When it was his time, he would bring more energy to the executive than John Quincy Adams or anyone else could have dreamed of.

Well before the election of 1828, Jackson's supporters were organizing and preparing. Martin Van Buren, then a congressman from New York and the most able of Jackson's supporters and lieutenants, assembled a coalition of "the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the north." What this coalition became was a formidable political party.

The campaign, from which Jackson remained aloof, was unambiguously dirty. His supporters floated stories about how, when he was a minister to Russia, John Quincy Adams had procured women for the czar. The Adams forces brought up all the old rumors about Jackson's wife. She was a bigamist, and Jackson's mother, by the way, a whore.

For all the sleaze, there was an important and essential subtext to the campaign. It was a fight between what Lincoln might have called two "conceptions" of the new and growing nation. What it was and would be. The conception represented by Adams was of a nation led by natural aristocrats

who would see to the general welfare. That of Jackson and his supporters was of a nation in which the people ruled, through the instrument of those they elected. The distinctions were between the urban and rural. The yeomanry and the aristocracy. The common people and the elite.

Jackson won decisively. Turnout was heavy, four times that of the election of 1824. Jackson won just under 70 percent of the electoral votes and 56 percent of the popular vote. But the price was heavy. His wife suffered intensely from the attacks against her during the campaign. "The enemies of the General have dipped their arrows in wormwood and gall and sped them at me," she wrote. Her husband's election did not relieve a heavy sense of melancholy. Three days before Christmas, she died of a heart attack. They had been together for nearly 40 years.

"My mind is so disturbed," Jackson wrote to a friend, and "my heart is nearly broke."

Jackson left Tennessee for Washington still grieving over her death and angry at the slanders directed at her during the campaign. His enemies had cost him first the presidency and then his wife. It had never been the plan for him to go to Washington and preside over another "era of good feelings." Compromise and civility were not high on his list of virtues. He was going to Washington as he went everywhere in his life, to fight.

His inaugural address was almost cryptic. He promised to "keep steadily in view the limitations as well as the extent of the executive power, trusting thereby to discharge the functions of my office without transcending its authority." He would, as well, "observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy" and would "give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people."

And, finally, he promised to undertake "the task of reform, which will require particularly the correction of those abuses that have brought the patronage of the Federal Government into conflict with the freedom of elections, and the counteraction of those causes which have disturbed the rightful course of appointment and have placed or continued power in unfaithful or incompetent hands."

Pedants might argue that he was 0-for-3 on those promises. Especially as regards the Indians.

Still, he was now president, and it was time to celebrate. Throngs of spectators followed President Jackson to the White House, which, in those days, was open to the public on inauguration days. The numbers overwhelmed good order. People climbed in through the ground floor windows, broke some furniture, and left a mess. Jackson was obliged to leave by a back entrance until order was restored. Accounts of the episode exaggerated it until it became a kind of drunken brawl and served to confirm the worst fears of Jackson's political enemies, who believed that with his election, the age of mob rule had arrived.

Jackson quickly went to work on those patronage abuses he'd spoken of. He believed the government was full of corrupt officeholders who had been given their jobs as political favors. He seems to have been sincere in this belief and in his conviction that "rotation" of these positions would be good for the health of the republic. So his administration began removing people from their positions, replacing them with, inevitably, its "own people." One of his supporters in the Senate, William L. Marcy, of New York, made the case about as succinctly as possible, saying that in politics, as in war, "to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy."

If the aim was to weed out corruption, the new administration came up short. Particularly in the case of one Samuel Swartwout, who had served with Jackson in the Army and was made collector of customs for the New York City port, a post he used to line his own pockets. By the time he'd fled the country and landed in Europe, Swartwout had embezzled more than a million dollars, which was real money in those days.

Such was the spoils system. Jackson's defenders argue that his intentions were good, that the bureaucracy of the day had grown sclerotic where it wasn't corrupt and that the changing of personnel was a good and invigorating thing. And maybe so. The age of Jackson introduced the tradition of office-seeking and politically inspired appointments that eventually led to the creation of the civil service system. So perhaps Jackson had it right. If it was too easy for him to replace a federal officeholder, sometimes on a whim and often for reasons of raw politics, it has since become far too difficult, as a result of reforms, to get rid of the incompetent and even the plainly corrupt. One wonders how Jackson would handle, for instance, the Department of Veterans Affairs of today.

The "rotation" of officeholders was just the first of many battles Jackson carried out during his two terms in office. It was one fight after another, and Jackson picked many of those fights. A few were forced on him, and he did not back down. One suspects that Jackson's plans did not include dealing with a sex scandal of the 19th-century sort. But in this, as in many other things, he and his administration were ahead of the times.

The "scandal" involved Jackson's secretary of war, John Henry Eaton, who was the president's only personal friend among his cabinet officers. Eaton had married a young widow named Margaret O'Neale Timberlake, considered by the proper ladies of Washington a bit, well, loose. The wives of his cabinet members shunned Peggy Eaton, and Jackson viewed it as the same kind of treatment that he believed had driven his Rachel to her grave.

He was convinced, too, that his vice president, John C. Calhoun, was using the situation to push Eaton out of the cabinet and strengthen his own position in the administration. Jackson and Calhoun feuded to the point of severing all but the most necessary relations.

Among the members of Jackson's cabinet, only Martin Van Buren, the secretary of state, sided with the president. When he and Eaton offered to resign, Jackson accepted, and demanded the resignations of the rest of the cabinet. Jackson then named Van Buren ambassador to Great Britain, but the Senate deadlocked on approving the nomination. Calhoun broke the tie by voting against Van Buren, who then became Jackson's choice for vice president in 1832, which may have been the most significant consequence of the entire business. That and the enduring and mutual loathing between Jackson and Calhoun.

The feud became something more than a clash of two formidable personalities and, in fact, anticipated the great crisis and tragedy of American history, the Civil War.

The question of union had not been settled. Not, anyway, in the minds of some whose loyalty was to their state and, usually, to the institution of slavery. This was nowhere more true than in South Carolina, Calhoun's home state.

Southerners in general and South Carolinians in particular were opposed to high tariffs that favored New England at their expense. Congress had legislated some reductions in tariffs in 1832, but this was not enough in the view of South Carolinians, who called a convention where they declared the tariff unconstitutional—a move known as nullification. The state would block the collection of the tariff at its ports and also organize to defend itself if the government in Washington intervened.

Jackson wasn't opposed to further reductions in the tariff. This was negotiable. But on the business of "nullification" he was, well, Jacksonian. He made threats, in private, to march on South Carolina and hang John Calhoun.

He had also taken such prudent steps as warning the forts guarding South Carolina's coast to prepare for attacks, thus anticipating by almost 30 years the firing on Fort Sumter. Jackson also arranged for the stationing of vessels off the coast that would be charged with stopping shipping for the purpose of collecting the tariffs. And, finally, he delivered a conciliatory message in which he proposed further lowering the tariff and called for "moderation and good sense."

Jackson as 'King Andrew I,' imperiously wielding a veto, 1832

NEWSCOM

Then, a few days later, he came down like thunder with a proclamation on the issue of "nullification," which he called a "metaphysical subtlety in pursuit of an impractical theory." The Constitution, Jackson declared, "forms a government, not a league."

"Be not deceived by names," he threatened. "Disunion by armed force is treason. Are you really ready to incur its guilt?"

Civil war and armed conflict was avoided, and the inevitable was postponed for a few years. The cooler heads were those of Henry Clay and, oddly, Calhoun who may, rightly, have feared that Jackson would indeed march on South Carolina. The crisis passed. Clay and Calhoun claimed credit, which Jackson didn't seem to mind. Though years later, when he was out of the White House and back in Tennessee, the story is told that he regretted he "didn't shoot Henry Clay and . . . hang John C. Calhoun."

Of all the fights in which he so robustly engaged while president, the one that most engaged and typified the man was fought over the rechartering—and, indeed, the existence—of the Second Bank of the United States.

Jackson's opposition to the bank was as much visceral as cerebral. He made Jeffersonian arguments but he also, plainly, just didn't like the idea of fancy bankers getting their fingers on public money and prospering thereby. He once said, "Ever since I read the history of the South Sea Bubble, I have been afraid of banks."

It was of no consequence to Jackson that the bank was doing what it was designed to do: namely, providing some financial stability to the economic affairs of a chaotic young nation. Jackson wanted it gone.

So when, after much maneuvering, a bill to recharter the bank arrived on his desk in July 1832, he vetoed it. The arguments and the personalities of the fight have long since died off, but the language of Jackson's veto message resonated down the years and might well be taken as a populist manifesto.

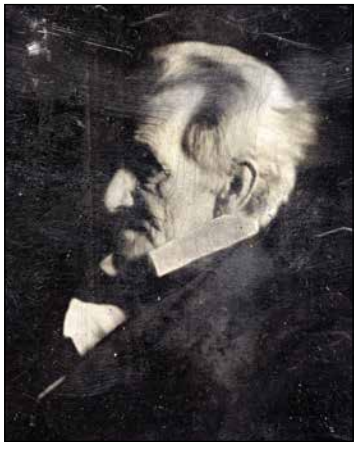
> It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry,

economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing.

Because it was Jackson, and his spirit had so permeated that of the age, the fight not only went on but intensified. The veto became an issue in his campaign for reelection against his old enemy Henry Clay. Jackson won the election, but opposition to him ran hot enough to forge a new party, the Whigs.

Having won the fight against rechartering the bank *and* the election, Jackson might have been content to let things run their course. The bank's charter would, after all, run out in 1836.

But Jackson was never one to pass up a fight or to show leniency to an enemy who needed to be punished. The president of the bank—Nicholas Biddle—had worked hard against Jackson's reelection, so Jackson determined to withdraw the deposits of the government from the bank. Either on principle or out of pique, or both.



Jackson photographed (circa 1845)

But this was not so easy as it might have appeared. According to the bank charter, only the secretary of the Treasury could authorize such withdrawals and he needed, first, to clear them with the House. When his Treasury secretary refused to make the withdrawals, Jackson fired him and eventually replaced him with someone who would, and who got it done while Congress was not in session.

This was too much even for some of Jackson's allies in Congress. He was acting, they said, as though he were above the law. Indeed, and it was a precedent for much that has followed. And it was the essence of the Age of Jackson.

The Senate in 1834 was controlled by the new Whig party. It refused to confirm the appointment of Jackson's new Treasury secretary, and it passed a resolution of "censure" against Jackson for having assumed "authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both."

Jackson fired back. The Senate, he said, had done a backdoor impeachment, neglecting the formalities of a trial and a two-thirds vote.

Jackson supporters launched a campaign to overturn this constitutional curiosity and were successful in the waning days of his second term. The effort was led by Thomas Hart Benton, who had brawled with Jackson in Nashville all those years before. Henry Clay reacted to the expungement of the censure resolution saying, "The Senate is no longer a place for any decent man."

Thus, the Age of Jackson. He had fought many fights, won more than he lost, and changed the conception of the presidency. And he presided over the creation of the strongest and most durable political party in American history.

There is no contemporary Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. to write *The Age of Jackson* today and win a Pulitzer for the book. Jackson fails to excite and rightly repels the contemporary imagination for what he did to the Indians and did not do for the slaves. Nor is there any point in arguing that he was a man of his times or anything of that sort. He owned slaves and enabled the expansion of slavery even as he was pushing the exile of the Indians. Case closed.

But it is fascinating to think of the old frontier brawler who could fight nearly to the death with Thomas Hart Benton over an insult to honor and then become his political ally. Fascinating, also, to consider how he was seen in the consciousness of his times. There was, for instance, this from Tocqueville:

General Jackson, whom the Americans have for the second time chosen to be at their head, is a man of violent character and middling capacities; nothing in the whole of his career indicated him to have the qualities needed for governing a free people; moreover, a majority of the enlightened classes in the Union have always been against him. Who then put him on the President's chair and keeps him there still? It is all due to the memory of a victory he won twenty years ago under the walls of New Orleans.

And then there is this more spirited appraisal from the pen of Herman Melville:

Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God; Himself! . . . who didst pick up Andrew Jackson from the pebbles; who didst hurl him upon a war-horse; who didst thunder him higher than a throne! Thou who, in all Thy mighty, earthly marchings, ever cullest Thy selectest champions from the kingly commons.

He was, then, the apotheosis of the common man. The first great American populist. And Donald Trump couldn't polish his boots. ♦

NEWSCOM

Banana Republicans

The battle for the U.S. Virgin Islands

By Mark Hemingway

Making sense of the 2016 Republican primary is a task best left to future historians, but here's one rough measure of how crazy things have become: Results of one hotly contested primary in March are still being disputed. And the fight has gotten so bitter that negative campaign ads are being run on the radio—not against one of the GOP candidates but against one of the lowly 2,472 elected delegates tasked with going to the Republican convention and voting for the party nominee. The story involves a multigenerational rivalry between two Republican powerbrokers from Michigan, and at stake are six delegates awarded to the U.S. Virgin Islands—a primary most Americans likely don't even know exists.

Since neither Donald Trump nor Ted Cruz is likely to amass the 1,237 pledged delegates needed to win on the first ballot at the GOP convention, the nominee will probably be determined on subsequent ballots. Under that scenario, even a handful of delegates—like the six from the U.S. Virgin Islands—could prove surprisingly consequential.

John Yob

On March 10, a slate led by Republican operative John Yob won the Virgin Islands Republican primary. Yob has a lengthy résumé of involvement in national campaigns and only recently moved to the Virgin Islands. Curiously, his slate of six delegates ran not on behalf of any of the four candidates on the ballot but as "uncommitted," so they could vote for whomever they want at the national convention in Cleveland. John Canegata, the head of the Virgin Islands GOP, has since tried to declare Yob's delegate slate ineligible and appoint alternates, but this is still being hashed out before the courts and within the local party's rules committees.

Aside from the 50 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands are among a half-dozen jurisdictions—the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands—that are awarded delegates and given representation at the GOP convention. Outside of Puerto Rico and D.C., which have significant populations, delegates awarded by the remaining territories might seem like an afterthought. But mathematically, these islands have been given disproportionate influence. For example, in the Wisconsin primary Ted Cruz was awarded three delegates for winning Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District in the Milwaukee suburbs, where approximately 190,000 votes were cast. In the Virgin Islands primary to award six delegates, about 1,600 votes were cast.

Yob, who owns a number of successful campaign-related businesses and was most recently national political director for Rand Paul's presidential campaign, has a reputation for being a brilliant political tactician. In fact, he all but telegraphed his plans. He moved to the Virgin Islands in December. On February 18, he self-published a book on Amazon—*Chaos: The Outsider's Guide to a Contested Republican National Convention 2016*—in which he emphasized the disproportionate influence at conventions of the island territories. And on March 10, his slate won the primary. The radio ads now being run against him in the Virgin Islands accuse Yob of being an interloper with his own agenda, unrelated to the interests of the Virgin Islands. They almost have to be heard to be believed. Canegata, who is behind the ads, is a native of St. Croix. The ads are narrated in a thick island patois: "Ya mon, what's up? Did ya hear da news?... The outsider who just move here and are tryin' to take us over. Dat guy? John Yob? Ya him."

But calling Yob an interloper isn't entirely fair. He's visited the Virgin Islands extensively and been in talks about moving his businesses for some time. His rumored scheme has been whispered about for years among politicos who know him in D.C. and Michigan. If you establish residency in the Virgin Islands, you may see a drastic reduction in U.S. federal income tax—a sweet deal for high-flying political consultants who do well-remunerated contractual work. Further, Yob's lucrative campaign businesses—polling, database management, and credit card processing—are all Internet-based. There's no reason they need to be located

JOHN YOB

Mark Hemingway is a senior writer at The Weekly Standard.

stateside. And when Yob did move to the Virgin Islands, he really took the plunge, buying a multimillion-dollar house and enrolling his kids in school.

There was just one small hiccup in Yob's brilliant plan. Another Republican operative, one Yob knows all too well, had already planted his flag in the Virgin Islands. "I have had a history full of friction with Saul Anuzis," he writes in *Chaos*. "Regardless of how you interpret those battles, Anuzis is one of the more talented operatives and leaders in the Republican party."

Saul Anuzis

John Canegata

Anuzis is the former head of the Michigan GOP and unsuccessfully ran for chairman of the Republican National Committee in 2009 and 2011. When the 39-year-old Yob was still a kid, Anuzis was tangling with his father, Chuck Yob, who was Michigan's representative to the RNC for almost two decades. The Yobs and Anuzis have genuine, if grudging, respect for each other, and John Yob even helped Anuzis in his 2011 bid for RNC chair. Most of the time, though, they have found themselves on opposite sides of internecine party battles in Michigan. And ironically enough, those disputes often revolved around floor fights at the Michigan GOP's state convention. (See "High Noon in Michigan" in this magazine's July 3, 2006, issue.)

In fact, the Michigan state Republican convention on April 9 proved to be another noteworthy event, if you're keeping score on the national impact of local rivalries. When Michigan's 59 delegates met at the end of the convention—to elect eight representatives to the committees in Cleveland that will decide on voting credentials, nominating rules, platform issues, and convention operators—Ted Cruz's campaign was completely shut out. The result was more than a little shocking, because the Cruz campaign has been outhustling and outorganizing the Trump campaign at the state level.

But what happened in Michigan wasn't really a case of the Trump campaign getting its act together. Heading into the meeting, the Cruz campaign had a deal with the Kasich delegation to shut out Trump at the convention. Or so they thought. "We got nailed as we came into the meeting," Anuzis, who is co-chair of the Cruz campaign in Michigan, told the *Detroit News*. "We clearly got double crossed." As for who did the double crossing, well, it's probably not a coincidence that Chuck Yob got elected to the credentials committee at the national convention. (A number of the other Michigan delegates elected at the meeting for committee roles in Cleveland have ties to the Yobs as well.) This is the same committee that will be deciding which delegates are eligible to vote for the presidential nominations in the event that their status as valid delegates is disputed, and conveniently, that's exactly the situation Chuck Yob's son John is dealing with in the Virgin Islands.

Aside from Anuzis's work with the Cruz campaign, he also happens to have business interests in the Virgin Islands, where he has been visiting for years. Specifically, Anuzis is the go-between for the Virgin Islands GOP (VIGOP) and ForthRight Strategy, a D.C.-based direct-mail fundraising firm. If you look at the fine print on various fundraising appeals sent out by ForthRight on behalf of political action committees and other groups, you see disclaimers at the bottom of the page such as "Paid for by STOP HILLARY NOW-VIGOP."

As a nonprofit entity, the VIGOP is entitled to do mass mailings at a substantially cheaper rate than for-profit political firms. ForthRight, which sends out millions of fundraising appeals a year on behalf of political action committees and the like, struck a deal to use the VIGOP as a pass-through on their mailings. In return, the VIGOP gets a cut of the savings. It's a lucrative—and perfectly legal—arrangement for Canegata and the VIGOP, as well as for Anuzis and ForthRight.

But the arrangement is the source of some tension within the VIGOP. The way direct mail works is by "prospecting," that is, laying out huge expenditures up-front to send thousands or millions of mailers to identify the much smaller subset of people who actually respond to the appeals. As a result, the VIGOP, which is far from a large organization, has almost $350,000 in debt on their books from fronting the cost of ForthRight's mailings. Warren Bruce Cole, the treasurer of the VIGOP Territorial Committee, has been outspoken in his opposition to the business arrangement and refuses to put any of the money accrued as a result of it into the party's bank account.

That debt may be short-lived, but members of the VIGOP are antsy about paying it off. And it doesn't help that ForthRight Strategy used to be known as BaseConnect. The firm changed its name after it received a lot of negative publicity following accusations it unfairly bilked clients. Yob has intimated that the radio ads being run

TOP, NEWSCOM; BELOW, V.I. CONSORTIUM

against him are being paid for with the party funds earned from the deal with ForthRight. Anuzis flatly denies this is the case and suggests that businessmen friendly to Canegata might be behind the deal.

Another wrinkle is that Anuzis's advisory role with Ted Cruz's campaign involved helping to secure delegates in the Virgin Islands for Cruz. When Yob swept in and captured the Virgin Islands' six delegates, in spite of Anuzis's close relationship with the VIGOP, it had to seem a little personal given Yob's "history full of friction" with Anuzis.

Last October, *Politico* reported, "For months, Cruz and his allies have been working the five U.S. territories—Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam and the Virgin Islands," well aware of the advantage that might accrue to the campaign that scooped up delegates in these typically neglected places. Cruz thought the Virgin Islands delegates consequential enough to send his father Rafael to campaign there last fall.

But in one fell swoop, Yob came in and upset Cruz's plans while interfering with Anuzis's business arrangement—to what end, exactly? Bragging rights? Yob may be a great tactician, but no one knows what he plans to do with six uncommitted delegates at the national convention. Yob is also not one to go out of his way to make friends. He last made national news in September when Marco Rubio's campaign manager punched him in the face in a bar during the Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference in Michigan.

Still, no one disputes Yob got the votes to win the primary honestly. Virgin Islands election officials did initially raise questions about whether Yob and two others on his slate met a requirement that delegates must be residents of the Virgin Islands for 90 days ahead of the election. However, on March 22 the Virgin Islands superior court ruled them eligible.

Following the court ruling, Canegata started claiming that Yob and his slate had not followed party rules requiring a formal declaration of willingness to attend the GOP convention in Cleveland within five days of their election. Canegata then announced his intention to replace them with alternate delegates. This dispute centers on differing interpretations of when the results were ratified. So there are now two sets of delegates vying to represent the Virgin Islands in Cleveland.

Though a court had ruled the first delegate slate eligible, GOP head John Canegata announced his intention to replace them with alternate delegates, disputing when the first results were ratified. So there are now two sets of delegates vying to represent the Virgin Islands in Cleveland.

Canegata has written a nine-page memo about the situation that raises as many valid points as unanswered questions. Yob sent The Weekly Standard about 200 pages of documentation from various ad hoc committees of the VIGOP that may or may not be authoritative on how the rules should be interpreted.

Not helping matters is the fact that the VIGOP itself is riven with infighting over Canegata's leadership. This appears to have been an issue long before the Yob-Anuzis rivalry blew up. Canegata's leadership was the subject of some controversy last fall, when he tried to change the rules for the 2016 Virgin Islands primary. The changes were decided on via email, and some members of the VIGOP complained this was a less-than-transparent process. In response, the RNC rejected Canegata's attempts to change the rules and mandated that the VIGOP stick with the same rules that were in place for the 2012 primary.

Canegata is also up for reelection as head of the VIGOP in August, and who's put in charge of the VIGOP is more hotly debated than usual, given that the once-backwater Republican organization is suddenly sitting at the nexus of potentially lucrative deals between competing political operatives. Yob is quick to emphasize that his decision to run in the primary was unrelated to the disputes with Canegata. "The turmoil in the VIGOP has been going on for years over the ballooning party debt, and presidential campaigns and delegate candidates are unfortunately left to pick up the pieces," he tells The Weekly Standard. For his part, Anuzis confirms that the power struggles and enmities within the VIGOP are not new developments, and says that Yob is just trying to exploit the rifts for his own gain. "He's good and I give John credit. He knows what he's doing, but he's overplayed his hand," he says. In Canegata's own memo, the VIGOP chairman quotes an email he received from Warren Bruce Cole, the local party treasurer. Cole prefaces an otherwise pleasant note by acknowledging, "I realize our relationship is not one of strawberries and ice cream."

Speaking of understatements, everyone involved in the Virgin Islands primary should at least be able to agree with John Yob about one thing. If the VIGOP dispute is at all a harbinger for a contested national Republican convention in Cleveland, chaos may only begin to describe what the Republican party is in for. ♦

LBJ meets the press (November 1967).

EVERETT COLLECTION

A Not-So-Great Society

The failure, and success, of Lyndon B. Johnson. BY JAMES PIERESON

The rise and fall of Lyndon B. Johnson from 1963 to 1968 is now recalled as a cautionary tale in the history of postwar America, illustrating at once the possibilities and perils of bold presidential leadership. Few presidents have achieved the popularity and electoral success Johnson enjoyed in his first few years in office. Throughout 1964 and 1965, his approval ratings hovered around 70 percent, which largely explains why he won the 1964 presidential election in a historic landslide. During those same two years, Johnson surpassed all 20th-century presidents, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, in the number of important progressive programs he managed to steer through Congress. For a brief time, LBJ's oversized presence on the public stage diverted Americans from memories of the awful events in Dallas that elevated him to the presidency.

Prisoners of Hope
Lyndon B. Johnson, the Great Society, and the Limits of Liberalism
by Randall B. Woods
Basic Books, 480 pp., $32

Johnson's collapse was as startling as his ascent. By late 1966, beset by urban riots and rising crime, mounting opposition to his policy in Vietnam, and the unanticipated costs of Great Society programs, Johnson lost control of the national agenda—and along with it his influence over Congress. His approval ratings fell to 35 percent in 1967 and 1968. By this time, LBJ's critics were beginning to look back upon Kennedy's assassination as a turning point that gave power to an ambitious politician ill-equipped to exercise it. Under attack from left and right, and facing primary challenges from Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy, Johnson told the nation in early 1968 that he would not seek his party's nomination for the presidency. Defeated and

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discredited, he served out the remaining months of his term before retreating in poor health to his Texas ranch, where he died in January 1973.

The Johnson saga has been told many times and in many ways, by liberal critics who identify LBJ's presidency with the failed intervention in Vietnam, by conservatives who see in the Great Society a case study in governmental "overreach," and by a list of historians and journalists who attribute Johnson's collapse to his own personal failures. Who was the real Lyndon Baines Johnson: the scheming and power-hungry politician, the reckless cold warrior who took the nation into a ground war in Southeast Asia, or the visionary architect of the Great Society and the civil rights revolution?

Johnson, due to his background in Southern politics and rough personal style, was never convincing as a spokesman for the liberal movement, especially among contemporaries used to rallying around the likes of FDR, Adlai Stevenson, and John F. Kennedy. For this reason, historians and liberal leaders who followed Johnson emphasized the negative lessons of Vietnam while blurring his achievements as a breakthrough domestic reformer. For those who came after, LBJ's presidency was recalled more for its failures than its achievements. Thus it was Kennedy, and not Johnson, who emerged from the 1960s as the symbolic standard-bearer of the liberal cause.

Randall B. Woods introduces some balance into the record in this highly readable single-volume history of the Johnson presidency. A professor of history at the University of Arkansas and author of a previous biography of LBJ, Woods sets forth a political history of the Johnson years, attributing his downfall to a mix of events that Johnson did not foresee or could not control. He acknowledges Johnson's personal faults while resisting the temptation to view him through a psychological prism. More important, while recognizing the failure in Vietnam, he argues that Johnson's lasting legacy should be found elsewhere, in his Great Society programs and civil rights legislation. These were monumental breakthroughs, he argues, at least equal in importance to the domestic programs adopted during the New Deal. Moreover, they were lasting achievements: When liberalism fell into disfavor in the 1970s and '80s, Johnson's programs survived intact. Many of them continue to shape our politics to this day. For good or ill, we still live in the shadow of the Great Society.

It would be an understatement to say that Johnson "hit the ground running" when he inherited the presidency on the day Kennedy was assassinated. He wasted no time grieving for his slain predecessor. As the nation—and the Kennedy family—mourned, Johnson organized all-night sessions with staff and colleagues to lay plans for his presidency. The eagerness with which LBJ seized the reins of power shocked the Kennedys and poisoned relations between the two sides for the duration of Johnson's administration. Even so, Johnson let it be known that he would honor Kennedy's legacy by pushing through Congress the stalled elements of his domestic agenda: a tax cut to stimulate the economy and a major civil rights bill. But Johnson also signaled that he would go further. On the day after the assassination, he told an aide, "I am a Roosevelt New Dealer. . . . Kennedy was a little too conservative to suit my taste."

The New Deal, however, was a response to depression and mass unemployment, conditions that no longer prevailed in the mid-'60s. FDR used the crisis of depression to make the case for reform; Johnson would use postwar abundance as the foundation for his agenda. At the time, John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and other liberal theorists were writing about the challenge of recasting liberalism to address "quality of life" issues that had become important in the postwar era of affluence and suburbanization. In a time of plenty, even poverty might be cast as a problem to be solved instead of an ineradicable condition of life.

With the help of aides Bill Moyers and Kennedy holdover Richard Goodwin, Johnson settled on "The Great Society"—borrowed from the title of a 1914 socialist tract by British political scientist Graham Wallas—as the slogan through which he would communicate his updated vision of liberal reform. In May 1964, in a commencement address at the University of Michigan, he used the term for the first time.

> For a century, we labored to settle and to subdue a continent. For half-a-century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people. The challenge of the next half-century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization. . . . For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society.

Johnson, sounding very much like a committed liberal, claimed that America's new wealth could be deployed to eliminate poverty, end racial discrimination, rebuild the cities, fix the schools, clean up the environment, and address all manner of national problems.

Johnson, however, was an activist and reformer but by no means a liberal ideologue. In fact, according to Woods, he was something of the opposite: a consensus builder who saw that he needed support from all quarters to win the votes needed to pass his agenda. It was partly for this reason that the liberals in his party never completely trusted him. He told middle-class voters and business leaders that reform was the conservative alternative to violence and upheaval. Johnson worked Congress on a daily basis, calling and meeting with members regularly, either to cajole or browbeat them as the situation required.

His approach succeeded: In 1964 alone, he won approval for Kennedy's tax cut, the Civil Rights Act, and the Economic Opportunity Act that codified his "war on poverty." LBJ's working relationship with Everett Dirksen, leader of the Republican minority in the Senate, was essential to the passage of this legislation. The civil rights bill, in particular, which was opposed by Southerners in Johnson's own party,

could not have won approval in the Senate without overwhelming support among Republicans. Johnson also rode the wave of a booming economy: From 1963 through 1966, real GDP grew at a rate of nearly 6 percent per year, the most rapid three-year expansion of the entire postwar period.

With the political and economic winds at his back, Johnson won the 1964 election with 61 percent of the popular vote, thus outdoing FDR in his 1936 landslide reelection, while also bringing in safe majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives. LBJ, now elected in his own right, proceeded in 1965 to steer through the 89th Congress the lasting pillars of the Great Society: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (providing federal aid to schools with concentrations of poor children); the Higher Education Act (providing federal funds for scholarships and work-study programs for low-income students); Medicare and Medicaid (new entitlements providing federal support for health care for the elderly and the poor); the Voting Rights Act; and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, eliminating pro-European quotas in U.S. policy and opening the doors to immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The passage of these programs brought about large changes in national policy that continue to shape our politics today. Medicare and Medicaid established a permanent federal role in health care, one that continues to grow in expense year by year. Medicare began with about 19 million participants in 1966 and has expanded to about 57 million participants today and is projected to grow to 80 million by 2030. Medicaid has grown even more rapidly, from 4 million beneficiaries in 1966 to nearly 70 million today.

The education acts similarly established a large and ever-growing role for the federal government at all levels of the educational system. The immigration act has brought waves of new immigrants into the United States from Asia and Latin America. The Voting Rights Act, thought to be a temporary measure required to ensure black voting rights in the South, won renewal and expansion by Congress periodically through the decades, most recently in 2006 (though an important section of the bill was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013). Professor Woods takes the reader through these various programs, noting how they have evolved or have been reformed over the decades but stressing that, a half-century later, they continue to win support from voters and key interest groups.

Woods points to the summer of 1965 as a key turning point during which Johnson's political fortunes suddenly went into reverse. Ironically, in view of the general tenor of Johnson's policies, his downfall was set in motion by liberals and leftists who should have been allies and by groups that his policies were designed to help.

The previous spring, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then working in the Labor Department, prepared an explosive statistical report showing that the black family, under stress from poverty and urbanization, was showing signs of breaking apart due to rising numbers of out-of-wedlock births. After reviewing the report, Johnson delivered a commencement address at Howard University in June 1965 in which he described the growing problem and pledged new policies in his war on poverty designed to expand opportunities for the poor and keep urban families intact. Johnson's remarks seemed to point toward some kind of guaranteed family income, as opposed to a strategy that delivered services to the poor while sending the money to middle-class providers.

When Moynihan's report appeared in a national magazine several weeks later, liberals and leftists denounced it for exaggerating the problem and for "blaming the victim" for responding in understandable ways to the conditions of poverty. On August 6, LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act. Five days later, rioting broke out in the Watts section of Los Angeles that lasted for six days and led to the deaths of 34 people and injuries to more than a thousand others. In response to this event, black activists began to question the value of integration and the goals of the war on poverty. Big-city mayors, including Richard Daley of Chicago, began lodging complaints with the White House that activists were using federal "community action" funds to finance demonstrations and sit-ins in their cities. Johnson soon scrapped his ideas for expanding the war on poverty and distanced himself from Moynihan's report. At almost exactly the same time, he approved an increase in American ground troops in South Vietnam from 60,000 to 125,000 and an increase in the military draft from 17,000 to 35,000 young men per month.

From this point forward, Johnson played defense against escalating attacks on his domestic and foreign policies. The riots in Watts were only a prelude to scores of urban uprisings during subsequent summers. Rates of violent crime spiked year by year through the 1960s. Students disrupted college campuses in protest against the war in Vietnam. By 1968, the United States had descended into something resembling a "dystopia," to use the author's term. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy were assassinated within weeks of one another during the spring of that year; in August, the Democratic National Convention in Chicago was disrupted by more riots in full view of a national television audience.

Johnson, who ascended to power in a tragic moment of national unity, left the presidency with the nation in revolt against his policies and at war with itself.

The trajectory of Johnson's presidency, Woods acknowledges, badly tarnished the Great Society: Many believed that LBJ's programs caused the violence and disorder that accompanied them. Nevertheless, in Woods's view, Johnson's Great Society programs (mostly) survived the tumult of the 1960s and have proven their worth by the sheer fact of their persistence.

The author argues that, despite Johnson's downfall, the Great Society improved American society over the long haul by reducing poverty, expanding educational opportunities for the poor, extending affordable health care to the poor and elderly, introducing environmental concerns into national

politics, and breaking up the racial caste system across the South. Woods rejects any link between the Great Society and the disorder of the 1960s. If Johnson erred, he writes, it was in other areas: in his Vietnam policy, for example, and in ordering the FBI to spy on domestic opponents, including civil rights leaders, antiwar groups, "black power" advocates, and (even) Robert Kennedy.

It is true that the Great Society represented a significant break from the policies of the past; and probably true also that the Great Society exceeded the New Deal in the scope and scale of its programs. Most of these programs, by now, are securely embedded in the national system. At the same time, the Great Society set in motion a sequence of destructive consequences that cannot be ignored in settling accounts of the Johnson years.

In the first place, critics had a point when they drew a link between the war on poverty and urban crime and disorder. Between 1964 and 1969, for example, a period of expanding economic opportunity, the welfare rolls in New York City tripled from around three hundred thousand to more than a million people because the mayor and community activists saw an opportunity to take advantage of the new availability of federal funds. Those numbers on public assistance stabilized at a million or more until the 1990s, when reform efforts succeeded in paring back the rolls. What happened in New York City occurred throughout the country: Welfare rolls multiplied, and so did crime, disorder, broken families, dysfunctional schools, and out-of-wedlock births. The unraveling of America's cities largely took place within a few years in the late 1960s, corresponding to LBJ's time in office. Ronald Reagan once remarked that "In the '60s, we waged a war on poverty, and poverty won." That statement may have been an exaggeration, but it also contained an element of truth: The scores of burned-out, crime-ridden, and bankrupt cities in America today must be counted as part of the legacy of the Great Society.

Taken together, Johnson's various initiatives smashed what James Q. Wilson once called "the legitimacy barrier," the older idea that the federal role was limited to a few clearly defined and agreed-upon fields. By the time he left office, there was no important area of American life in which the federal government did not take an active part. Was this a good thing? The effect of this process was to politicize vast new areas of American life and to bring all major institutions under the financial and regulatory control of the federal government, including especially local schools, colleges and universities, social service organizations, and even museums and symphony orchestras. To a great degree, state and local governments are now heavily dependent upon federal aid and thereby burdened by the cumbersome regulations that accompany federal assistance.

More profoundly, the Great Society gradually turned the Democratic party into a "government party," organized around public employee unions, lobbyists and interest groups, and would-be recipients of federal funds. Many of the once-vital institutions of America's civil society have been turned into appendages of the national government.

Then there were the economic and financial consequences of Johnson's spending binge. Johnson's "guns and butter" policy soon placed pressure on the federal budget and led, in turn, to rising inflation. This was a key factor that led to the breakdown of the international monetary regime forged after World War II. Under that system, foreign currencies were pegged to the dollar and the dollar, in turn, was pegged at a fixed rate to gold. Rising inflation in the late 1960s led to an outflow of gold reserves from the United States, which, by 1971, forced the United States to abandon the gold standard altogether.

The breakup of the Bretton Woods regime led to a decade of economic disorder, here and abroad, as the United States and our trading partners battled a combination of slow economic growth and rising inflation. In addition to that, Great Society programs placed the federal budget on autopilot so that it expanded relentlessly year-by-year, regardless of expense or other priorities—a condition we still wrestle with today, and the main reason why we now have a $4 trillion federal budget and over $19 trillion in national debt.

Professor Woods is certainly correct: We still live in the shadow of the Great Society. But that is far from being the benign reality that he portrays in *Prisoners of Hope*. What, then, are the lessons of the Johnson years—or, indeed, what are the limits of liberal reform? These are deep questions, and Woods deserves credit for raising them. Nevertheless, despite the subtitle of his book, he does not begin to answer them, which is the main defect in this otherwise admirable history. ♦

Detroit in flames (July 1967)

DECLAN HAUN / GETTY

B&A

Flowers of Evil

Exercising judgment in a nonjudgmental world.

BY MICAH MATTIX

Taste—to paraphrase a good line from a bad writer—is the hobgoblin of little minds. At least, that's the general view today. People who complain about sagging jeans, low-cut blouses, and high-cut skirts are either laughably old-fashioned or offensively narrow-minded. Those who take exception to crude language lack a certain expansiveness of spirit. Those who criticize the superficiality and ugliness of contemporary art are unsophisticated. To make an appeal to propriety or taste is to mistake a culturally constructed norm for an unchanging aspect of beauty or truth. Some African tribes insert clay or wood discs in their lower lips; some European women pierce their ears with small rings or studs. Who's to say one's better or more beautiful than the other?

The problem with this is that, while there is, of course, a subjective element to all judgment, to view it as *only* subjective is as absurd as it is hypocritical. If all judgments were merely subjective, all ideas and actions, all products of human creation, would be equally valuable or invaluable, as the case may be. There would be no difference between an installation of human feces and the Eiffel Tower. But of course, there is a difference, and we make such distinctions all the time with the understanding that the difference is not one of mere preference but located in the thing itself.

In this excellent collection of essays, Anthony Daniels argues that the belief that judgment is relative in a mushy, egalitarian way has not made judgment obsolete but has impoverished it. The result is that people are just as opinionated today as they've always been, but with less reason and eloquence. In reality, judgment is comparative, Daniels notes, citing Samuel Johnson; and it is in the exercise of nuanced distinctions that our judgment becomes better, which until recently was considered one of the touchstones of civilized life. There is plenty of both reason and eloquence here, as well as a fair amount of humor. The essays, which have been selected from Daniels's *New Criterion* columns, focus on literature but also deal with art and a handful of miscellaneous topics—from gooseberries to Vladimir Lenin in Zurich.

Good and Evil in the Garden of Art
Discrimination as the Guarantor of Civilization
by Anthony Daniels
Criterion Books, 267 pp., $20

Some critics work in paragraphs. Daniels's specialty is the *mot juste*. Virginia Woolf, he writes in an essay on her rather unprogressive treatment of her household servants, "was that peculiarly emblematic type of our age, a person of advanced views and reactionary feeling." Kahlil Gibran, he writes, "mastered the difficult art of writing entirely in clichés without saying much that is true." On Gibran's semi-erotic sketches: "If ever there were an exhibition of his drawings, it might with justice be titled Nudity for Prudes." The popularity of Harold Pinter's plays can be attributed to the fact that they happened to be "in tune with the nascent intellectual fashion for believing that the unpolished and the brutal were somehow more real and authentic than the refined and civilized." In an essay on literary prizes, he writes that because of our childish "fascination with, and trust in, lists … the repeated award of literary prizes to the wrong authors for the wrong books never seems to destroy their prestige."

His judgments aren't all negative. He praises the playwright Terence Rattigan's "subtle [exploration] of human dilemmas and of the tragically destructive power of passion." R.S. Thomas's "rage," he writes, was "the source of, or at least essential to, his poetic greatness."

In a long essay on George Orwell, Daniels splits the difference. On the one hand, he praises Orwell's honesty, humility, and bravery. ("Insofar," Daniels adds, "as it is possible for an intellectual in a liberal democracy to be brave.") On the other, he revisits Orwell's "vicious" *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), in which Orwell praises the destruction of churches (lamenting that the Communists didn't also raze Barcelona's Sagrada Familia) and rationalizes the forced enlistment of children as "the easiest way of providing for them." Orwell claimed in 1946, "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism." Poppycock.

> It requires a kind of dimwittedness not to see that forced collectivization of land, nationalization of industry, and the complete equalization of pay for work of all kinds, such as Orwell strongly advocated, must have profound economic effects and consequences for freedom.

"Either he forgot what he had written" in *Homage to Catalonia*, Daniels concludes, or "didn't understand its implications."

An Englishman who practiced medicine until 2005, Daniels often brings science and psychology into conversation with philosophy and literature. In "Mr. Hyde and the Epidemiology of Evil," Daniels makes note of the use of the Jekyll and Hyde metaphor by some of his patients to shirk any personal responsibility for their evil actions. Their point, Daniels writes, in claiming that they are "a Jekyll and Hyde," is that they are essentially good people (Jekyll) but due to *outside* forces, over which they have no control, they

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sometimes do bad things (Hyde). Robert Louis Stevenson's novella suggests no such view of evil. In fact, it presents the opposite view: Evil is intrinsic in Jekyll and, by extension, in all of us.

"The chemicals do not create the evil," Daniels writes, "they release it from the chains in which virtue has hitherto imprisoned it. Jekyll is a very fortunate man. … But once he gives in to the attractions of evil, he decisively changes the balance between good and evil within him." The moral of the novel is that "Character is habit … if you practice evil, you become evil."

One of the most intriguing pieces is a comparison of the work of the 17th-century still-life painter El Labrador (Juan Fernández) with that of contemporary hyperrealists. Despite the obvious technical skill of both Fernández and the hyperrealists, there's a difference: "The realism of the former is contemplative and elevating while that of the latter is brash, jarring, superficial." The hyperrealists offer no critique of the "garish" objects often depicted in their work. They live, Daniels writes, "in a world of perpetual bright light and primary colors, without subtlety or nuance or restraint":

> El Labrador exercised his skill for a transcendent purpose; these painters exercise it as an end in itself. Indeed, they choose their subject matter, at least partly, with the wonderment of the viewer in mind. Theirs is technique worshipping itself: a reaction, perhaps, against the accusation often made against modern art, that any child could do it. Well, they said, I'll show them! I'll give them something they couldn't do!

While the relationship between an artist and his audience is complex, Daniels is right that the art of our age is often little more than a game of one-upmanship, one in which museum curators and art critics happily participate since it also happens to be a rather rich one.

Witty without superficiality, wise without stuffiness, *Good and Evil in the Garden of Art* is a reminder that intelligent and entertaining criticism is still alive and well today, if rarer than in the past, and mostly ignored by so-called cultural elites. So be it. One day, the truth will out. ♦

B&A

Rockets' Red Glare

A visit to Edith Wharton's metaphorical battlefield.

BY SYDNEY LEACH

On July 30, 1914, as war was beginning to be declared throughout Europe, Edith Wharton stood in the glow of Chartres Cathedral. Wharton's collected writings about her travels to the front in World War I, originally published in 1915, begin with her visit to the medieval cathedral. She describes Chartres's famous windows:

> Steeped in a blaze of mid-summer sun, the familiar windows seemed singularly remote yet overwhelmingly vivid. Now they widened into dark-shored pools splashed with sunset, now glittered and menaced like the shields of fighting angels. . . . All the tranquillizing power [a great cathedral] can breathe upon the soul, all the richness of detail it can fuse into a large utterance of strength and beauty, the cathedral of Chartres gave us in that perfect hour.

The light at Chartres was doubtless matched by the luster of the 1914 summer itself. Nevertheless, "that perfect hour" Wharton references would be shattered by the outbreak of the Great War. By that time, Edith Wharton had been living in France since 1907 and her reputation as a writer was established. Deeply attached to France's history and traditions, as well as its artistic life, she was shocked at the prospect of war and disturbed by the threat she believed it posed to France's ancient, civilized culture.

When asked by the French Red Cross to help with the war effort, and report about the needs of military hospitals, she readily agreed. As she noted in her autobiography, *A Backward Glance*: "What I saw there made me feel the urgency of telling … of the desperate needs of the hospitals in the war-zone, and I proposed to Monsieur Jules Cambon [a French diplomat] to make other trips to the front, and recount my experiences in a series of magazine articles."

Sydney Leach is a lawyer who writes from Virginia.

Fighting France
From Dunkerque to Belfort
by Edith Wharton
edited by Alice Kelly
Edinburgh, 224 pp., $120

While traveling near (or at) the front lines in France from February to August 1915, Wharton published four essays in *Scribner's* magazine about her observations, notably the devastating effect of the war on French troops and civilians, as well as on the towns and cities themselves. In late 1915, these essays, and two additional ones, were compiled into *Fighting France* and published in book form by Charles Scribner's Sons.

An advocate of American intervention, Wharton hoped through her writing to galvanize American public opinion on behalf of France and her allies. *Fighting France* has often been characterized as propaganda and not accorded the same respect or status as Wharton's other writing; in an attempt to bring renewed attention to Wharton's wartime writing, and to offer a critical reappraisal of it, Alice Kelly has edited this admirable new edition on the centennial of its publication.

In a thoroughly researched and thoughtful introduction, Kelly argues for a "closer look" at *Fighting France* and locates it among a variety of literary genres, including war correspondence. She makes an effective case that *Fighting France* is not merely skillful propaganda but a work worthy of deeper study. And to assist the reader,

she includes detailed annotations that explain Wharton's many (and sometimes oblique) historical, biblical, and literary references. Kelly avoids the false choice of characterizing Wharton as either propagandist or artist and suggests that her use of various literary devices not only demonstrates her innate skill but, ultimately, creates more effective propaganda.

In one example, she cites Wharton's repeated imagery of a scarred physical and architectural landscape as a useful metaphor for the human devastation caused by the war: "The most persistent example of Wharton's effective propaganda," she writes, "is the extended motif of death and violence in relation to land and buildings, which work as a substitute for human corpses." Kelly also notes Wharton's evocation of the abiding "nearness of the war" through her juxtaposition of scenes from the front lines with normal French life, reflecting the disorientation experienced by a civilian witness to war and the often indeterminate location of the combat itself. A reader could infer that such literary devices—damaged landscapes, unlikely juxtapositions—suggest the very fragility of the civilized and cultivated world Wharton cherished and believed to be under threat.

Such incongruous juxtapositions are woven throughout Wharton's essays. In one town she sees the white light of flares exploding at night and compares the flash to white flowers: "Below us the roofs of Cassel slept their provincial sleep, the moonlight picking out every leaf in the gardens; while beyond, those infernal flowers continued to open and shut along the curve of death." And with death always near, Wharton gives us an especially poignant image of destruction and fragility in her description of a chapel serving simultaneously as a hospital in a small French village:

> The church was without aisles and down the nave stood four rows of wooden cots with brown blankets. In almost every one lay a soldier—the doctor's "worst cases." . . . One or two heads turned on the pillows as we entered but for the most part the men did not move. . . . A handful of women . . . had entered the church and stood together between the rows of cots; and the service began. It was a sunless afternoon and the picture was all in monastic shades of black and white and ashen gray.

It is the inverse image of Chartres. The church is a "graveyard" drained of light, strength, and beauty. The "perfect hour" is gone. And it is the artist who tells us. ♦

B&A

The Beauty Part

Anthony van Dyck and his rarefied world.

BY JAMES GARDNER

New York

Imagine if we chose our favorite painters the way some people vote for president, by posing that famous question: "With whom would you rather have a beer?" If the choice were between Peter Paul Rubens and his disciple Anthony van Dyck, the answer would be obvious: Rubens would drink you under the table, while wenching, dancing at a kermesse, taking in some Tacitus, and pounding on a rommelpot. As for van Dyck, the more relevant question would surely be whether he wanted to have a beer with *you*—and the answer, I'm afraid, is probably not.

Unlike most painters of the Old Masters tradition, who rose from fairly modest circumstances, van Dyck was born into a well-to-do family of Antwerp silk merchants. Although not of the nobility himself, he was, in the words of his 17th-century biographer Giovanni Bellori, "resplendent in rich attire of suits and court dress" and his manners "were those of a lord rather than a commoner."

Indeed, the case can be made that van Dyck singlehandedly invented that surprisingly resilient genre, the British aristocratic portrait, which inspired everyone from Reynolds and Gainsborough in the 18th century to Whistler and Sargent in the 19th—not to mention all those inglorious imitators down to the present day who will never want for food or shelter as long as, somewhere in the world, there is a prosperous periodontist with immortal longings.

That being the case, it would be hard to conceive of an artist more retrograde to contemporary taste, or more hostile to the habits of our democratic age, than Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641). But that hasn't stopped him from becoming the subject of an unusually fine show at the Frick, an institution that—and I mean this as a compliment—has rarely felt the need to cater to the *profanum vulgus*. Instead, it has maintained the loftiest standards imaginable, targeting art historians and collectors more than the man on the street. Perhaps it is no accident, then, that the Frick is admirably stocked with van Dyck's portraits, eight of them being on permanent display. And with ten others hanging a few blocks north at the Met, New York City is one of the best places in the world to appreciate this rarefied artist. Together with these holdings, 90 paintings, drawings, and engravings have now been assembled in the Frick exhibition, one of the most thorough examinations of the artist in recent memory.

Whereas Rubens was something of a late bloomer among artists, straggling into his thirties before finding his true idiom, van Dyck was one of the most precocious painters in the history of art. Even in his teens, he

Van Dyck
The Anatomy of Portraiture
The Frick Collection
Through June 5

James Gardner's latest book is Buenos Aires: The Biography of a City.

possessed an extraordinary ability to render a human face—often his own—with preternatural accuracy. To this he joined a rich, satisfying painterliness, and, above all else, the alchemical knack for ennobling even the commonest face with the verve and glamour of a courtier. This exhibition follows van Dyck from his early years in Antwerp to Genoa, back to Antwerp, and finally to England. There he became the court painter of Charles I, whom we now conceive of (together with most of the Stuarts of his generation) through the essentially British portraits of this Flemish master.

As remarkable as the quality of his work was the swiftness of its execution: Some 260 portraits survive from van Dyck's nine years in England, or roughly one every two weeks. This effortless mastery is also on display in the black-chalk drawings, mostly of fellow artists, that van Dyck included in his *Iconographie* series. Such a combination of beauty and skill has never been surpassed and has been equaled, if at all, only by Ingres and Degas two centuries later.

Entirely by design, van Dyck's strikingly naturalistic portraits reveal nothing about their sitters that we would care to know. In his portrait of Frans Snyders, languidly arrayed in black robes and set against a dark and shallow background, van Dyck is manifestly uninterested in the inner man. He does not assail his sitter, as Velázquez does, with the laser-like penetration of his gaze; nor does he seek out that glowing soul that shines forth from amid the ambient darkness of Rembrandt's portraits. We have little reason to suppose that Snyders—a fine still-life painter in his own right—was the lithe and sinuous serpent who appears in this portrait. In his opulence and splendor, he is a fiction, but a great fiction, of van Dyck's contrivance, even as he embodies the defining idea, the stock in trade, of all subsequent society portraits, that status is essence.

Yet van Dyck is not exactly superficial: He appears to believe *deeply* that the surface is all there is—or more exactly, all that matters. This focus is hardly new to Western art. One could make a similar claim for Ghirlandaio and Bronzino in the 15th and 16th centuries. But in both of those artists, the surface never presumes, as in van Dyck, upon the status of the soul. These Italian forebears sought to account only for the pure exterior form of their sitters, even as they left the in-dwelling spirit to the viewer's imagination. For the Flemish master, through the skill with which he spins his fiction, through the apparent naturalness with which his kings and counselors stand in a posture of exquisite ease, we are seduced into thinking that we are seeing a realistic portrait, a perfection of exterior form, a saturation of aristocratic spirit, that has never truly existed in the world.

Portrait of Nicholas Lanier (1628)

It is this fact, perhaps more than any other, that makes Anthony van Dyck so difficult to love but so immensely easy to admire and enjoy. ♦

B&A

One Day's Lesson

A grateful memory of Pat Conroy, 1945-2016.

By John Connor Cleveland

Three-quarters of the way through Pat Conroy's *The Prince of Tides*, the narrator Tom Wingo describes the death of a relative, lamenting in the process an inability to fully articulate the loss. "The only word for goodness is goodness," he notes, "and it is not enough." Ever since I learned of Conroy's death last month, I've been thinking about that line and a day I spent with him in 2002.

For me, and for many growing up in South Carolina, Pat Conroy was a mythic figure: part documentarian, part poet laureate of the Palmetto State. Through his writing he was able to put into words what some of us innately understand, bound as we are by heat and history. He portrayed the South in full—all its contrasting mystery and ugliness, beauty and brine, laid bare—and did so in a way that made it feel accessible to outsiders and refreshing to those of us who live here. In some ways, Pat Conroy put South Carolina back on the map: on bestseller lists and in Hollywood, but also in the minds of its inhabitants, sensitive as we are to decaying legacy and diminished status.

I met Pat through my mother. A writer herself, she became acquainted with him after a random encounter in the late 1990s. Never lacking for congeniality, she returned from that

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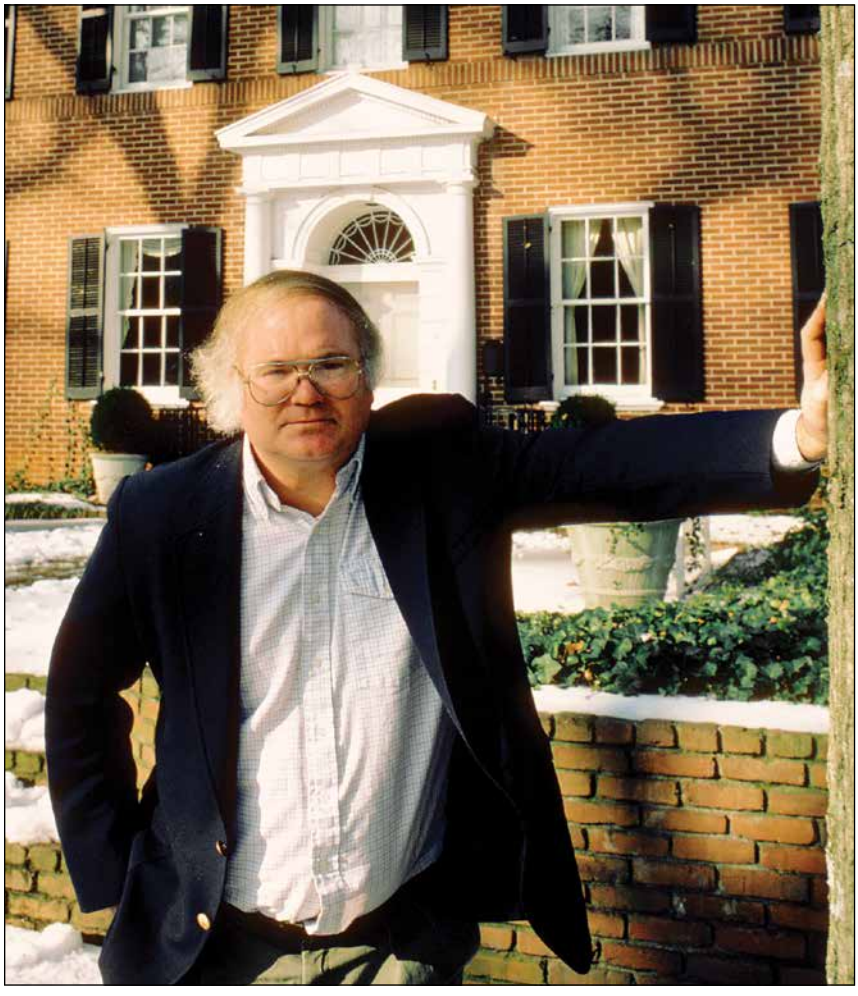

Pat Conroy (1988)

occasion with a new best friend and a note, addressed to me:

> I met your charming mother, who tells me you want to be a writer. A little advice. Read everything, keep a journal and pay attention to the way people talk. Most importantly, marry someone just like your mama.

Four years later, I was 17 years old, sullen, going through many of the growing pains familiar to the young and (creatively) restless. One day my mother—who is inclined toward "growing experiences" and was, perhaps, grateful for any chance to get me out of town and away from my friends—announced a day trip: "We're going to meet Pat Conroy," she told me. And soon enough, we were in the car and headed from Columbia to Beaufort, the coastal antebellum gem that Conroy called home.

We met him at a little restaurant near the water where the purpose of the visit quickly revealed itself: My mother meant for me to spend the day with him, clearly in the hope that he could instill a little inspiration, if only by osmosis. I was game.

Conroy was exactly what you might expect him to be: warm, thoughtful, empathetic, with the right touch of Irish gregariousness. He was the kind of man attuned to whatever it is that sparks internal struggle, and he had no trouble relating to a skinny kid going through a hard time. As one critic wrote of *The Prince of Tides*: "The characters do too much, feel too much, suffer too much, eat too much, signify too much and above all talk too much." That was probably not far from Pat's own inner workings.

He suggested we take a drive, and off we went on a tour of Beaufort, a city of stately old mansions set against a rural backdrop no longer found amidst the gentrified grandeur of Charleston. As we drove, Pat peppered me with questions about myself, punctuated with his own stories and asides as we passed various landmarks from his childhood.

Occasionally, we would stop outside a house or some particular place: "I put that dock in *The Prince of Tides*," he would say, or "that house is in *The Great Santini*."

At one point, we pulled beside a white-columned building that had been a Union hospital during the Civil War; Pat told me the inside was covered in the patients' graffiti. The wounded and their guards, he explained, had taken to drawing on the walls to stave off boredom, and the markings from their lead pencils refused to fade over time. At about two o'clock we stood in front of the grave of the Great Santini—Pat's father, Don Conroy, the subject of so much of his writing. Pat didn't say much, but I remember him speaking about his father's bravery, referring to himself as cowardly by comparison. Surely this wasn't true, I remember thinking; but it was a humanizing moment from a man whose rocky relationship with his father had given him so much to write.

Conroy was enamored of teachers and teaching, which he called "a heroic act," so it was fitting that, after meeting the man who had raised him, I met the man who had inspired him. His old high school English teacher turned out to be a delightful guy, mischievous and mustachioed, who told us about Pat's time in class, and about Thomas Wolfe, another Southern writer with a penchant for finding grandeur in the everyday. Clearly, the young Conroy had found genuine kinship in the classroom, which was probably what he meant to teach me.

It may well be outside my knowledge or ability to write a fitting eulogy for Pat Conroy, whose own gifts were unmatched. I know that he was a brilliant writer, and that his words will surely find literary permanence—lead markings scrawled onto the Southern soul. Beyond that, I can only say that he was kind to me, and that he was a good man. It is not enough. ♦

ULF ANDERSEN / GETTY

B&A

Snap Judgment

The moral implications of the war on terror.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

How often can you say you've seen a movie that takes on a key moral and philosophical issue raised by the war on terror and does right by it? Maybe *Zero Dark Thirty*—although that initially garlanded and subsequently defamed picture, which does not kowtow to the screechy assurances of the self-righteous about the ineffectuality of waterboarding, never really knows what to make of itself and ends up oddly flat. A new British film called *Eye in the Sky* is anything but: This taut, tense, literate thriller is basically about a house in a Nairobi neighborhood—and what happens after the Kenyan intelligence service informs the British military that a U.K. national married to a Somali terrorist is headed there.

The U.K. national and her husband—a leader of al Shabaab, the al Qaeda affiliate in Somalia—are two of the West's key terrorism targets in East Africa. A military operation commences, led by Colonel Powell (Helen Mirren). She is at a base in Sussex with her team, which includes an officer in charge of risk assessment and a lawyer. Her commanding officer, Lieutenant General Benson (the late Alan Rickman), is in a conference room at Whitehall with the British attorney general, an undersecretary of foreign affairs, and a member of Parliament. Two Kenyan intelligence officers are on the ground tracking the couple.

Meanwhile, in Nevada, two young enlistees in the U.S. Air Force (Aaron Paul of *Breaking Bad* and Phoebe Fox) enter a stark and windowless hut in the desert whose interior is set up like a very roomy cockpit with captain and copilot chairs and computer screens. They are the controllers of a drone flying 9,500 miles away over East Africa. Their unmanned plane—the "eye in the sky"—will be used to surveil the house in Nairobi. The goal is to capture Mr. and Mrs. al Shabaab and bring them to Britain.

Eye in the Sky
Directed by Gavin Hood

Helen Mirren

The operation goes perfectly, and the painstaking screenplay by Guy Hibbert cross-cuts between these locations and elements of the mission in an assured display of old-fashioned storytelling. Posing as a seller of buckets in the street across from the house, playing a video game on his phone, Kenyan spy Jama (Barkhad Abdi, a Somali from Minnesota who made such a spectacular impression as the lead pirate in *Captain Phillips*) controls a mini-drone that resembles a large fly and gets it inside the house. And what they all see from Jama's drone—the colonel in Sussex and the high-ranking team in London and the drone pilots in Nevada—are two men being fitted with suicide vests.

The big drone piloted by the Americans has two Hellfire missiles on it. Can the mission shift from seizure and capture to a direct strike on the house that will kill everyone inside? The British military personnel are of one mind; they must strike. The drone pilots in Nevada are suddenly faced with the possibility that they may have to fire missiles at a house and not just watch it.

And the politicians and bureaucrats panic. There is no question that the legal standard for action—imminent and unmistakable danger to civilians in Nairobi—has been met. But it is still a judgment call. Will the act of hitting a house in a heavily populated neighborhood have blowback consequences, since the world will have to take it on faith that the strike was necessary to prevent far greater loss of life? The foreign secretary is off in Singapore with a bout of food poisoning and says the prime minister must decide. The prime minister's aide says the foreign secretary must make the call. A staffer on the National Security Council is patched in and says the president will be disappointed and angry if Britain refuses to act.

Meanwhile, a little Kenyan girl we've been watching since the movie began leaves her house nearby and wanders into the potential blast zone.

From what I've read, it was Hibbert's goal to make a standard-issue denunciation of the excesses of the West in fighting the war on terror. But screenwriters are counseled to structure a plot that continually raises the stakes, and Hibbert clearly came to recognize that his story would have greater power and more tension if he fleshed out all the possible logistical and moral permutations of a drone strike—and forced the movie's characters to deal with these questions without the luxury of time to debate or pass the buck.

In "The Case for Drones," his definitive 2013 article in *Commentary*, Kenneth Anderson wrote that "if you believe the use of force in these circumstances is lawful and ethical, then all things being equal as an ethical matter, the method of force used should be the one that spares the most civilians while achieving its lawful aims." Hibbert and his director, Gavin Hood, probably do not believe this about drones. But they've made a movie that pays respect to those who do, and in that regard alone, *Eye in the Sky* has to be considered a singular achievement. ♦

BLEECKER STREET

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

"Rigged race means Hillary takes more delegates in Bernie's Wyoming win"
—New York Post *headline, April 9, 2016*

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STOP, THIEF!

Sanders stuns Clinton—but gets fewer delegates!

Hillary celebrates Tuesday night in Westchester. (Photo: head, Gage Skidmore)

In the most shocking upset of the election season, Bernie Sanders defeated Hillary Clinton 52 percent to 48 percent in yesterday's Democratic primary. But based on DNC rules, the Vermont senator receives a paltry 10 delegates while the former secretary of state lands a whopping 281. According to Rule 24601, aka "the Cankle Clause," a "majority of delegates is awarded to the candidate who most often wears pantsuits." Mrs. Clinton also grabbed the bulk of superdelegates, described as "an essential part of the process" by DNC chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a superdelegate herself along with her husband and three children. All five of them say they are planning to support Mrs.

SEE PAGES 8-9

Bill Clinton to Gawker: 'Check out *MY* video' PAGE 6

Melania wins cookie contest
'Bit of gold leaf never hurts' PAGE 11