the weekly Standard

BATHROOM INSANITY (CONT.)
JONATHAN V. LAST • STEVEN E. RHOADS

JUNE 6, 2016 • $5.99

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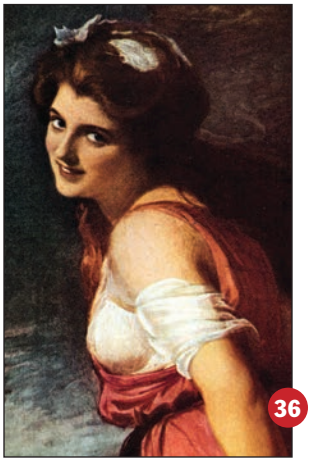


COVER BY DAVE MALAN

The *Post*'s Failed Crusade

In the annals of great American press crusades, the *Washington Post*'s relentless campaign to force the Washington Redskins to change their name surely deserves a footnote.

For the past few years, the *Post* has argued in its news and editorial pages—sometimes on a daily basis—that "redskins" is a pejorative term for American Indians, and that calling the local pro football franchise by that name is both racist and offensive. By contrast, the Redskins ownership has argued that the term is intended as a compliment, not a slur: The team originated as the Boston Braves, but when it moved to the nation's capital in 1937, the name had already been changed from Braves to Redskins, no offense intended.

For years, the irresistible force of the *Post* newsroom locked horns with the immovable object of the Redskins' present owner, Daniel Snyder. Snyder has vowed never to change the name of the team and to support his position has always cited a 2004 Annenberg Public Policy Center poll that revealed fully 90 percent of Native Americans do not consider "redskin" to be a slur. The *Post*, for its part, routinely derided the methodology of the Annenberg poll and in columns, editorials, and news stories, demanded that the Redskins change the team's name.

But then the *Post* made a tactical error: It commissioned its own poll on the subject, complete with proper methodology and detailed questions—and found that, yes, 90 percent of Native Americans do not consider "redskin" to be a slur, and that a substantial majority of American Indians like to be called "redskins." To be sure, this also means that 1 in 10 Indians agrees with the *Post* about the name of the team; but since the premise of the *Post*'s crusade was Native American opinion on the subject, the *Post*'s argument effectively collapsed with the poll's publication.

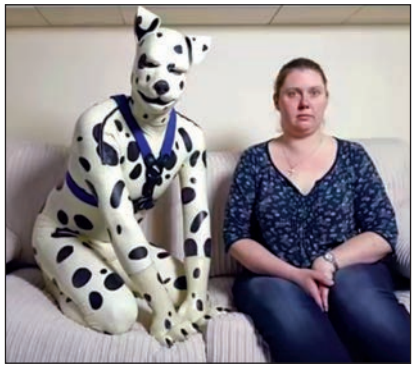
For its part, The Scrapbook attaches little significance to professional sports team names but is gratified that this particular teapot tempest has simmered down. We were struck, however, by a postmortem column written by a *Post* associate editor named Robert McCartney, a longtime Redskins fan who was also a coordinator of the name-change campaign: "It's unsettling to learn now," he wrote, "that I vented all that energy and passion on behalf of such a small fraction of the Native American population."

What The Scrapbook finds unsettling, however, is that McCartney and his *Post* colleagues, by their own admission, had been prompted and manipulated not by public opinion but by Native American "activists" with a self-evident political agenda. This strikes us as a much more significant story than the etymology of the term "redskin," and it speaks to media coverage of a broad range of emotive subjects—race relations, war, religion, sexual issues, you name it—in which political "activists" are presumed without evidence to speak for wider populations, especially when their opinions are congenial to journalists. ♦

It's a Dog's World

The Scrapbook swears it is doing its best not to turn this venerable magazine into *Identity Politics Weekly*. However, the gender-related absurdities have quickly escalated from man-bites-dog to dog-bites-man to man-identifies-as-dog—and we find it impossible to avert our gaze.

A new documentary aired on Britain's Channel 4 last week entitled *Secret Life of the Human Pups*. According to the *Guardian*, it "is a sympathetic look at the world of pup play, a movement that grew out of the BDSM community." Human pups "enjoy tactile interactions like stomach rubbing or ear tickling, play with toys, [and] eat out of bowls." According to one pup, "It feels like you can be gay, straight, bisexual, trans and be accepted. . . . All I want is for the pup community to be accepted in the same way." We can't wait until Hillary Clinton's Justice Department instructs North Carolina that the Civil Rights Act covers men in dog suits who dig up their neighbor's flowerbeds and urinate on fire hydrants.



Human pup

YOUTUBE

We wish that were clearly a joke as opposed to a plausible scenario, but it appears the left wants to keep greasing the slippery slope. To get an idea of how such lunacy is catching hold, look to—of course!—Congress. On May 26, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives held a hearing on the Obama administration's recent threat to cut off funding to schools that don't allow transgender students to choose their own facilities. To testify against letting boys in girls' locker rooms, Republicans called Gail Heriot, a member of the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

"If I believe that I am a Russian princess, that doesn't make me a Russian princess, even if my friends and acquaintances are willing to indulge my fantasy. Nor am I a Great Horned Owl just because—as I have been told—I happen to share some personality traits with those feathered creatures," testified Heriot.

California representative Zoe Lofgren was so angered by these remarks that she called Heriot "highly offensive" and "an ignorant bigot." Naturally, the left and transgender activists made Lofgren into their hero du jour for responding to Heriot's testimony with grandstanding outrage. But anyone who actually watched the hearing saw that Lofgren had embarrassed herself.

Rep. Steve King told Lofgren she was out of order, but she insisted on talking. "Mr. Chairman, it is my time, and I would just like to say that we allow witnesses to say offensive things, but I cannot allow that kind of bigotry to go into the record unchallenged." Heriot interjected at that point, asking, "Does that mean you think I am a Russian princess?" Lofgren responded, "I have no idea."

Now Heriot is explicitly making a rhetorical point, and yet Lofgren regards statements about personal identity so sacrosanct she can't bring herself to say that, no, Heriot is not, in fact, a Russian princess? But if Heriot's a princess, and wearing a collar makes one a dog, we suppose it's not too much to ask that Lofgren try to identify as a member of a more elusive species—a politician with logical faculties. ♦

Vermont's Spaceman

Bill Lee is running for governor of Vermont. Even if this weren't the year of politics outside the normal, news of the former big-league pitcher's candidacy would hardly come as a surprise. You see, The Scrapbook has followed the career of the star-child popularly known as "Spaceman" for some 40 years now. We were expecting this.

The Scrapbook, as it happens, was there that summer night in the Bronx in 1976 when the Yankees' Graig Nettles and Mickey Rivers virtually mugged Lee and dislocated his shoulder in a brawl at home plate. We watched Lee grow, blossom, and blossom more, from southpaw gadfly with the Red Sox and later the Montreal Expos (now our very own hometown Washington Nationals) to author, media celebrity, and political pundit on the very, very far left.

This isn't the first time he's run for office. In 1988, Lee ran for president. Obviously, the time was not yet right for a Vermont socialist to throw his hat in the ring. "I'm Bernie-heavy, I'm not Bernie-lite. My ideas were before Bernie," Lee told reporters last week. "I'm a pragmatic, conservative, forward thinker."

Nope, the man running on the Liberty Union ticket is none of those things. It's not pragmatic to eliminate the border between the United States and Canada, as Lee wants to do. It's not conservative to rain dollars on Vermont voters, as Lee promises. And Lee has never been "forward," which, with The Scrapbook several scoopfuls into a pint of Cherry Garcia, sounds an awful lot like "linear." No way, man. The master of the Eephus pitch—launched like a 60-foot 6-inch parabola outside of time—was anything but linear.

Insofar as The Scrapbook must confess to a soft spot for a political figure far to the left of Lev Davidovich Bronstein, it is not because the Spaceman thought outside the box, but because he pitched outside it. He got hitters out not with overpowering stuff, but through subtle management of time, speed, and place.

During his 14-year major league career, Lee won 119 games, with an ERA of 3.62. He also struck out 713 batters—but how many has he whiffed since retiring from the show in 1982? The once-lanky southpaw is still playing amateur baseball—pitching and playing first base—in Vermont and Canada. The Scrapbook is willing to wager that if you took every person Lee has struck out in his 69 years, the sum total is more than enough to push him over the top and elect him governor of Vermont—and maybe New Hampshire, too. And if he is elected governor, you can bet you'll see The Scrapbook at the inaugural ball, perhaps dancing with Susan Sarandon. ♦

Must Reading

While The Scrapbook toils away to bring readers the print version of the magazine each week, our colleagues are diligently working on The Weekly Standard's digital products, such as blog posts, podcasts, and newsletters.

If you haven't signed up for our newsletters, you're missing out on some great reading. On Mondays, the boss puts out his "Kristol Clear" newsletter, giving you a behind-the-scenes look at Washington and the stories that are lighting up on his radar. On Wednesdays, Jonathan V. Last's weekly newsletter, "From the Desk of JVL," brings a dose of sanity, with original analysis of politics and pop culture. And each weekday at 4 p.m., we send out "The Daily Standard," with links to hot stories from WeeklyStandard.com, as well as the Editor's Corner, linking to stories that are popular in our newsroom.

You can also subscribe to alerts that bring the latest from Bill Kristol and Fred Barnes to your inboxes, and to our "News Alert" newsletter, to ensure that you never miss out on our hottest stories. To sign up for any (or all!) of the newsletters, head over to http://newsletters.weeklystandard.com. ♦

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in March, fourth week in June, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005.

A Historian Turns 100

Twenty years ago, Bernard Lewis and I were walking along the Thames. We'd just seen a dreary English take on naughty French theater, which provoked remembrances of Paris in the 1930s when Lewis was a student of Louis Massignon, the great Catholic orientalist born in 1883, 33 years before my friend and teacher. A thoroughly secular English Jew, Lewis wryly remembered Massignon, a serious antisemite for whom Lewis could nevertheless express considerable scholarly admiration.

Cataloging Massignon's plusses and minuses provoked another question, omnipresent among Lewis's students who couldn't avoid comparing their intellectual inadequacy with their professor's astounding erudition: "When you look back to when you were young, when you'd started studying Islam, what drove your curiosity?" Lewis's opening surprised me: "My profound sense of inferiority."

One of the greatest scholars of the 20th century, Lewis was in awe of the generation of orientalists who'd come before him, the accomplished men who drank deeply of 19th-century European progress, pride, and discovery before World War I blew it all to hell. Lewis became a greater scholar than his famous Scottish mentor, Hamilton A.R. Gibb, who asked Lewis to write *The Arabs in History*, a compendious little book, published in 1950, that first revealed Lewis's gift for rendering wide swaths of Islamic history into elegant English prose. The work remains a classic. I asked my old teacher to assess Gibb, who is often exempted from the dubious orientalist list because of his Arabist pedigree, his anti-Zionist sympathies, and his enmity for certain Israel-friendly scholars who were Lewis's friends. Lewis remained affectionate and respectful.

Anyone who has tried to tackle the great classical Islamic languages—Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish—and the European languages necessary for the proper study of Islamic scholarship knows that students don't do this because of patriotism, the will to conquer, or even lust. They do it for knowledge, the deeply human yearning for truth, to explore unknown realms, and to see the "other" as he sees himself. Scholars of foreign lands who hate—and there certainly have been academics who've approached their subjects with enmity—rarely can sustain sufficient interest to do trailblazing work. If any great fault lies with the orientalists, it is that they were sometimes too sympathetic. The same can be said for their less-accomplished successors.

REX FEATURES / AP

Bernard Lewis, 2002

Lewis is ever conscious of the debt he owes others—the scholars before him and the contemporaries who helped him. I've always thought Lewis's generosity—and there is an army of men and women, in a wide range of professions, to whom he has shown life-changing consideration—in part springs from his sense of place, that he is a link in a long line. He also is generous because he is just so sublimely inquisitive. Lewis wrote one novel, an expression of his love for a Danish woman. He wrote the published work in her native language—as one would expect from a romantic polyglot. Since he was unsure of the result, he wrote under a pseudonym. Lewis should have written many novels in many languages: He has the fiction writer's eye for details and the fascination for people in all their glorious messiness. He is also considerably shy, which people who don't know him often mistake for aloofness. But this shyness fuels his curiosity and kindness.

It is right that Lewis has lasted 100 years: He has taken in millennia. None of his former students would disagree: We will not see another like him. He grew up in the terrible storm of the 20th century—a child of a dying British Empire and a Europe coming apart. He knew firsthand a Middle East still living off the traditions of the Ottoman and Qajar empires, when the elites still spoke French and the secularizers had the upper hand on the religious. He also knew firsthand the other Middle East, the one falling apart under native tyrannies and a surging militant faith.

Lewis voyaged often and widely, from Morocco to Pakistan, and farther into Asia wherever Muslims were to be found. He is as likely to relay stories of Afghan peasants, aging, impoverished odalisques, and fundamentalist imams as he is of Arab princes, Turkish and Iranian generals, and Pakistani prime ministers. With all, Lewis looked for the unexpected, the little twist that might bring illumination. Not long after 9/11, Lewis and I spoke, wanting to compare notes about Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. His opening line didn't surprise: He thought bin Laden to be "a man of integrity and sincerity." That wouldn't have played well on American television. But for those of us who've had the incredible good fortune to be in Lewis's company, it's why we love him.

Happy birthday, Bernard.

Reuel Marc Gerecht

the weekly Standard

The United States of Argentina?

People keep saying how unusual this year's presidential race is. They're wrong. It's an absolutely normal Third World election.

We have three candidates still standing: a self-righteous socialist who's learned nothing in 50 years except how to rally the economically illiterate and uninformed; an heir to wealth who's done nothing impressive in 50 years except to hone his skills as a self-promoter and demagogue; and an insider who's climbed the greasy pole alongside her husband, enriching herself and her family through 50 years of "public service." Welcome to the United States of Argentina.

What is to be done?

Resist. Resist the decline of America. Resist an Argentinian future. Resistance can mean lots of things over the next few years. But in the here and now, resistance means finding a serious and credible independent candidate.

Thus David French of *National Review* wrote eloquently this week urging Mitt Romney to take up the gauntlet. French points out that "at this moment, American voters face a choice between two historically corrupt, dishonest, and incompetent politicians. . . . Given the stakes of the election, to simply leave the race to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump is to *guarantee* a terrible presidency marked by incompetence and cronyism." And so, "There is just hope—however slim—of avoiding this national disaster: America needs a third option."

It would be great if Romney chose to run to provide that third option. It would be great if former vice-presidential candidates Joe Lieberman or Paul Ryan, or former cabinet officials like Mitch Daniels or Condoleezza Rice, or former presidential hopefuls like Marco Rubio or Jeb Bush, or current governors like Nikki Haley or Susana Martinez chose to run. They would all start from positions of relative strength.

But even as polls show an amazing level of public receptivity to such an independent effort, even as Donald Trump makes his unfitness for office more manifest every time he speaks, even as Hillary Clinton's unfitness for office is made more obvious by a report from the Obama administration's State Department inspector general, even as all this happens . . . major public figures may choose not to run.

Yet the fact of Trump's and Clinton's unfitness for the Oval Office has become so self-evident that it's no longer clear one needs a famous figure to provide an alternative.

So the alternative to Trump and Clinton could be a not-terribly-well-known but capable congressman like Mike Pompeo or Adam Kinzinger. It could be a respected former senator like Judd Gregg or Mel Martinez. Or the leader of the resistance could turn out to be someone who hasn't yet held elective office.

Take David French, the author of the aforementioned article making the case for Romney. The fortysomething French is a best-selling author, an attorney, and a combat veteran of Iraq. A graduate of David Lipscomb College in Nashville and then of Harvard Law School, his legal practice made him one of the nation's leading defenders of free speech on campus. He is the author or coauthor of several books, including, most recently, *Rise of ISIS: A Threat We Can't Ignore*. In 2007, having volunteered for military service, French deployed to Iraq, serving in Diyala Province as Squadron Judge Advocate for the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, where he was awarded the Bronze Star. He lives with his wife and children in Columbia, Tennessee, and is a writer for *National Review*.

I happen to know David French. To say that he would be a better and a more responsible president than Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump is to state a truth that would become self-evident as more Americans got to know him. There are others like him. There are thousands of Americans who—despite a relative lack of fame or fortune—would be manifestly superior to our current choices. And there are many, many others who stand ready to help whoever emerges to have the basic resources, assistance, and infrastructure to mount a credible effort.

Would such an effort be extraordinary? Yes, indeed. But America is an extraordinary nation. And as our most extraordinary (and one of our most unlikely) president remarked, "I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence—that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations—it is for this that the struggle should be maintained. . . . The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel."

Isn't the elevation to the White House of Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump worth resisting? Isn't such resistance the least we can do to help secure such an inestimable jewel?

—William Kristol

A Bathroom of One's Own

Two weeks ago the Obama administration issued a federal edict decreeing that every public school in America allow students to use whichever bathroom they choose, under pain of lawsuit and/or loss of federal funding.

Less than a week after that, New York City's Commission on Human Rights issued its own edict, declaring that anyone under the city's rule who refused to use the preferred gender pronouns in dealing with transgender individuals—he, she, "xe," or "hir"—would be guilty of harassment and subject to penalties up to $125,000 for the first infraction and $250,000 "for violations that are the result of willful, wanton, or malicious conduct." As law professor Eugene Volokh noted, the use of the term "harassment" is important, because it means that employers and businesses are responsible not just for their own behavior but for the behavior of their employees and customers.

And New York is, if you can imagine it, behind the times. Out in Oregon, Leo Soell, a fifth-grade teacher in the Gresham-Barlow school district, decided she was transgender. (Soell made this decision public only after receiving tenure.) Soell's transition took the form of insisting that she was neither male nor female and demanding that her colleagues refer to her as "they." When other teachers continued to call Soell "she" and "her" and "Miss Soell," Soell filed a harassment complaint. The school district settled with they for $60,000 and promised to initiate a sweeping set of transgender reforms. To hammer home the power dynamic, the school district claimed, in the statement accompanying the payout, that it was quite "pleased" with the outcome.

If you think that's depressing, it could always be worse. In Canada, the minister of justice recently introduced legislation banning discrimination based on "gender identity" and "gender expression," which could join previous legislation criminalizing anti-trans "hate propaganda." Should the bill pass, you could do up to two years, hard time, if you think the wrong thoughts or say the wrong words.

If this all seems like an inordinate amount of heavy artillery for an infinitesimally tiny issue, that's actually the point. Much as fights in academia are so bitter because the stakes are so small, transgender activists are crushingly authoritarian because the justice of their cause is so uncertain. What the trans project lacks in moral and logical clarity, it hopes to overcome with vehemence and intimidation.

The confusion is abundant. If you tell a transgender activist that gender is determined biologically, through chromosomal composition, they reply, *Well, what about people with Klinefelter (XXY) syndrome?* But even with Klinefelter's chromosomal anomalies, only a very small proportion of persons will fall into a category of "intersex." As *National Review*'s Celina Durgin points out, arguments about the tiny, *tiny* sliver of the population who are biologically considered "intersex" actually run counter to transgender ideology, which places "gender identity"—a self-discovered concept—on a separate plane above mere biology. In other words, if being biologically XX is irrelevant to whether or not you are a girl, then why should it matter if you're XXY? Resorting to arguments about the intersexed is actually an *admission* of the primacy of biology.

Or consider "gender fluidity," another pillar of the transgender project. According to this precept, some people may be one gender on Monday and another on Tuesday. Who can say which is which, or who is when? Not you. The individual is what he/she/they/xe/hir says at any given moment.

And once you've divorced gender from biology and agreed that someone who is chromosomally XY can be a woman, you have no valid reason to object if, the next day, she says she is a man again. If you sign on for transgenderism, you're signing on for gender fluidity, too.

It doesn't stop there, of course. Once you shoot past gender fluidity and the nongendered "theys" like Leo Soell and "pangenders" (who claim to be everything rolled into one), there's a whole other universe of gender identities out there. For instance, "otherkin."

What are "otherkin"? Otherkin is the gender identity of people who believe that they are nonhuman. Last summer Vice.com profiled a fellow who identifies as a fox. Some identify as dogs. Some as lions. Some as dragons. Some otherkin even go through body-modifications to make their physical selves look more like their otherkin identity.

The otherkin aren't officially part of the LGBTTQQIAAP alliance yet. But just wait. They're coming. Because to deny them their place at the table—to deny that a human person can be not just an animal, but a creature that *does not even exist in the real world*—is to put the entire transgender project in jeopardy. Because transgender theory, which posits that the self is infinitely plastic, cannot survive a single limiting precept.

Fortunately, we are not yet fighting over the rights of otherkin unicorns. In the here-and-now, we merely have wars over public bathroom and school locker room accommodations. This may seem like a small-scale concern. The Census Bureau and the *New York Times* tried to estimate the number of transgendered persons in the United States last year and came up with a figure somewhere between 21,000 and 90,000. Or, to put it another way, transgenders probably make up between 0.007 percent and 0.029 percent of the American population. When you're dealing with fractions this small, it's hard to be precise.

But because virtue-signaling is the highest form of morality in modern America, the full force of the federal government is being brought to bear on transgender bathroom rights, not only through Obama's federal edict, but through the Obama Justice Department's fight against the state of North Carolina.

In March, the elected officials of North Carolina voted on and passed a piece of legislation, HB-2, which was designed to stop the forced march toward mandating that people must be free to use whatever bathroom they desire. (It is instructive to note that the initiatives pushing the transgender agenda are almost never enacted legislatively; they are often rammed through bureaucracies and commissions or accomplished by executive fiat.)

HB-2 was not a perfect piece of legislation. But the reaction to it was illuminating. The *Charlotte Observer*'s editorial board proclaimed, "Yes, the thought of male genitalia in girls' locker rooms—and vice versa—might be distressing to some. But the battle for equality has always been in part about overcoming discomfort . . . "

Which brings us to the final bit of confusion in the transgender project. At the heart of the bathroom issue is a simple question: Is there a valid reason for separate facilities for men and women? Is there any rational justification for having separate bathrooms, or locker rooms, or changing rooms, for men and boys on the one hand, and women and girls on the other?

The trans argument, per the *Charlotte Observer*, is essentially "no." By their logic, if women just need to get over their discomfort at seeing naked men next to them, then there's no reasonable explanation for why women could want their own facilities.

Except that this would mean there is no reasonable explanation for why someone who is transgender should prefer one set of facilities over another. If biologically born women need to "overcome discomfort" about having naked men around them, why shouldn't a biological man who identifies as a woman not similarly have to overcome his discomfort at being around other naked men?

The logical paradox of the transgender bathroom war is that it insists that the type of gender and genitalia in a public facility is completely irrelevant—except to the transgendered, for whom it is of supreme importance.

At the end of the day, if you're not in favor of unisex facilities for all—one bathroom for everyone to use—then the transgender case falls apart. Because the transgender project tacitly admits that there are reasons of privacy, modesty, and prudence for segregating the sexes. It merely wishes to trump these concerns from the vast majority for the special pleading of a small, powerful, and illiberal group.

It is the very definition of the tyranny of the minority.

—Jonathan V. Last

Hidden Spending

Obamacare has raised Americans' health-insurance premiums, sapped their liberty, caused millions to lose their doctors, and funneled huge amounts of power and money to Washington. It has become a vehicle for executive lawlessness—a federal judge recently ruled the Obama administration has been violating Article I of the Constitution by giving insurers monies that Congress never appropriated. But that's not the only chicanery involving funds paid to insurers. Largely unnoticed, the architects of Obamacare have invented a new way to hide federal spending.

In addition to dumping people into Medicaid, Obamacare functions by having the federal government send billions of dollars in direct payments to insurance companies. Taxpayers pay this money to the federal government, and the government then pays it to insurers. By any normal definition of the terms, the money coming in constitutes revenues, and the money going out constitutes outlays.

Under Obamacare, however, the government is obscuring large sums of federal spending by labeling these direct subsidies to insurance companies "tax credits." Not only is the government hiding billions of dollars in spending, it is counting these hidden expenditures as tax cuts.

The strange thing about these so-called tax cuts is that when money is funneled to an insurance company, it doesn't actually lower anyone's taxes. Take a family whose income-tax burden is $5,000. If that family is eligible for a $5,000 Obamacare subsidy and picks an insurance policy with a $5,000 annual premium, the government sends $5,000 directly to the insurer, and the family pays the insurer nothing. That family, however, will still owe $5,000 in income taxes. If they don't have any income taxes deducted from their paychecks throughout the year, they will have to pay $5,000 in taxes on April 15—the same amount they would have to pay if Obamacare didn't exist. Yet the government says Obamacare has somehow given this family a $5,000 tax cut. Meanwhile, the $5,000 that the government paid to the insurer isn't counted as government spending—it is counted as money that the government, theoretically, never received.

That's how Obamacare is hiding some $104 billion in federal spending over a decade (the portion of Obamacare's direct payments to insurers that the Congressional Budget Office counts as tax cuts).

Calling Obamacare's direct payments to insurance companies "tax credits" runs contrary to the government's own definition of tax credits. Genuine tax credits go to actual taxpayers. The Government Accountability Office defines a "tax credit" as an "amount that offsets or reduces tax liability." But Obamacare's payments to insurers don't offset or reduce anyone's taxes. The GAO also says a tax credit is a "tax expenditure," and it defines the workings of a tax expenditure as follows: "Rather than transferring funds from the government to the private sector, the U.S. government forgoes some of the receipts that it would have collected, and the beneficiary taxpayers pay lower taxes than they would have had to pay." But when an insurer receives a direct subsidy under Obamacare, the government *does* transfer funds to the private sector, it *doesn't* forgo receipts it would have collected, and the "beneficiary taxpayers" *don't* pay lower taxes than they would have had to pay.

In other words, Obamacare's direct subsidies to insurance companies aren't tax credits—which means the federal government is underreporting the next decade's outlays by over a hundred billion dollars and underreporting tax receipts by the same amount.

Liberals may not care about the distinction between increasing government spending and lowering people's taxes, but conservatives should. Unfortunately, rather than confronting this false accounting, many Republicans seem eager to follow suit. Some have envisioned Obamacare alternatives featuring the same sort of faux "tax credits" because they help the proposals secure good CBO scores.

Democrats and some Republicans argue that Obamacare's subsidies are legitimate tax credits because one could choose to take them as such—that is, one could choose to pay full freight to an insurer and then take a tax credit at the end of the year. Let's allow that when that happens—which is almost never—the recipient truly is receiving a tax credit, and this is correctly scored as such. But what if someone chooses, as almost everyone in the program does, to have his subsidy sent directly to an insurance company? Some argue it remains a tax cut. But how? You can't direct a tax cut to someone else; you can merely direct an amount of the same value to be *paid* to someone else. The insurance company isn't getting a tax cut, it's getting a government payment. Nor are most Obamacare consumers getting tax cuts. They're just having money spent on their behalf.

If not confronted, this false labeling of federal outlays as "tax credits" stands to create a notorious precedent. It's a novel way to mask any federal spending that is tied to a particular taxpaying individual. Under the same rationale used for Obamacare, for example, there's no reason why all outlays under Medicare, up to the amount that a given senior pays in income taxes, couldn't be labeled "tax credits"—and hence "tax cuts"—rather than spending. Likewise, there's no reason why the government couldn't provide "free" college tuition via "tax credits," shifting dollars from the Treasury directly into university coffers, while disguising much of the spending. The list is endless.

It's bad enough Obamacare is ruining medicine—that damage can be undone through repeal and replacement. It shouldn't also be allowed to ruin government accounting practices and mask huge sums of federal spending.

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

The Selling of the Iran Deal (cont.)

Lies on top of lies.

BY MARK HEMINGWAY

In March 2015, Joe Cirincione, president of a foundation called the Ploughshares Fund, was interviewed on NPR's *All Things Considered* about the impending nuclear deal with Iran. "President Obama's political opponents try to block everything he does," he said. "But I think the center of the American security establishment is solidly behind the deal as it's been outlined." The interview was headlined on NPR's website, "Nuclear Experts Remain Optimistic About Iranian Negotiations."

Now that the Iranian deal has been finalized, so many discomfiting facts about the campaign to push it through a reluctant Congress have emerged that it's difficult to keep track of them all. The latest revelations, however, are especially startling. On May 20, the Associated Press reported that Cirincione's Ploughshares Fund apparently bought and paid for this favorable NPR coverage, giving the news outlet $100,000 last year and $700,000 in grants over a decade. Ploughshares also gave money to the Center for Public Integrity, which supports the influential nonprofit news outlet ProPublica, along with left-leaning publications such as *Mother Jones* and the *Nation* to beef-up their Iran coverage.

The AP's report, taken in conjunction with the revelations in a May 8 *New York Times* profile of Ben Rhodes, the White House deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, paint a disturbing picture of how the Iran deal was sold. No less than Leon Panetta, former CIA director and defense secretary under President

GARY LOCKE

Obama, told the *Times* that had Obama been honest about his intentions to empower Iran and disengage from the Middle East, Obama's national security team would have gotten "the [expletive] kicked out of them." To sell the deal, the White House worked with journalists and outside groups as part of a sophisticated and effective propaganda operation coordinated at the highest levels. Not coincidentally, an overwhelming number of these organizations working with the White House were also being funded by Ploughshares.

Where Cirincione claimed "the American security establishment is solidly behind the deal," Rhodes admitted the White House created an "echo chamber" to drown out opposing views within that same establishment, which he contemptuously referred to as "the Blob." Rhodes also boasted of manipulating journalists who are "27 years old and . . . literally know nothing" into "saying things that validated what we had given them to say." That task was undoubtedly made easier by Cirincione cutting checks to the employers of these same journalists.

The day after the AP report on Ploughshares, Cirincione published an op-ed at the *Huffington Post*. "It is common practice for foundations to fund media coverage of underreported stories and perspectives," he wrote. "For some, this might be global health, poverty or the impact of conflict on civilians. For Ploughshares Fund, this means bringing much-needed attention to the dangers of nuclear weapons."

Paying news outlets to enhance coverage of polarizing issues the White House is deeply invested in is decidedly not a common practice. For at least five years now, Ploughshares' main focus has been supporting the Obama administration's goal of retrenchment in the Middle East. This cause is not a benign public interest issue along the lines of poverty or global health.

Ploughshares also carefully tracked how much influence they were buying. In 2014, the foundation produced a "Cultural Strategy Report," which had a specific section about the need to "directly fund one or more national journalism positions," noting that previous "efforts supported by Ploughshares Fund in the past did not generate the desired volume of coverage (funding of reporters at the *Nation* and *Mother Jones* and a partnership with the Center for Public Integrity to create a national security desk)." NPR, though not named in the report, presumably did generate the desired volume of pro-Iran-deal coverage. They received a six-figure check from Ploughshares the following year.

NPR insists their ostensibly objective editorial stance wasn't affected by Ploughshares' generosity, but facts suggest otherwise. Rep. Mike Pompeo, a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee and a leading congressional critic of the Iran deal, revealed last week that he had asked multiple times to appear on NPR to provide balance to their discussions of the Iran deal and had been denied an opportunity. NPR responded by saying it "had no record of Pompeo's requests." The *Washington Free Beacon*'s Adam Kredo subsequently confirmed at least two email discussions between

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Pompeo's office and NPR producers.

Kredo had reported on the questionable nature of NPR's taking Ploughshares grants in 2012. His report detailed numerous instances of NPR coverage of Iran and nuclear issues right in line with the Ploughshares worldview, including Iran commentary from Stephen Walt, the coauthor of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, a deeply controversial book that claims Jewish interests dictate American foreign policy.

Ploughshares insists it did nothing wrong, but the defensive nature of the response to accusations of purchasing influence is telling. The headline on Cirincione's *Huffington Post* piece is "Why the Right Wing Is Angry That We Blocked War With Iran." But the Associated Press and *New York Times* are hardly "right wing." Ploughshares also issued a press release blasting AP reporter Bradley Klapper by name for highlighting their funding arrangements with media organizations, and that same release accused the *Times* of creating a "fictional narrative." Ploughshares and affiliated groups launched a similarly desperate bid a year ago to discredit an AP report that the Obama administration had struck a side deal with Iran that would let Iran "self-inspect" one of its own nuclear facilities, a side deal that had not been disclosed to Congress as the law required.

Coordinating rapid responses to problematic media reports is made easier by the fact that Ploughshares gave $75,000 a year for the last six years to Gary Sick, a Columbia University professor and former aide to Jimmy Carter. Sick runs an invite-only listserv for policy experts, academics, and journalists friendly to Ploughshares' views on Iran and the Middle East. According to the *Free Beacon*, which again obtained relevant emails, the listserv was riddled with antisemitic conspiracy theories.

"In one post, retired journalist Richard Sale claimed the CIA told him that pro-Israel Christian groups were 'secretly funded by Mossad,'" reports the *Free Beacon*'s Alana Goodman. "In another, Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich speculated that the Iranian-backed bombing of the 1994 AMIA Jewish community center was actually a false flag operation by the Argentine government to cover up its complicity with the Nazis."

It's clear that Ploughshares played a key role in creating groupthink on Iran. Throughout the negotiations and continuing to this day, everyone in the Ploughshares orbit has insisted on defining the issues according to a dangerously false dichotomy: Either you grant the outrageous concessions afforded to the anti-American regime by the Obama administration's nuclear deal or America goes to war with Iran.

This talking point was not arrived at accidentally. Bloomberg's Eli Lake recently reported on a 2011 memo circulated to the Iran Strategy Group—a confederation of pro-Iran-deal groups that were all being funded by Ploughshares. "On a messaging note, it would be best to describe [deal opponents] as 'pro-war,' and leave it to them to back off that characterization of their position," reads the memo.

All of this suspiciously parroted dishonesty would be damnable enough if it were strictly the sub rosa campaign of private interest groups. But it's hard to tell where Ploughshares' campaign to sell the Iran deal ends and the White House's political strategy begins. Last summer, while the deal was still being debated, President Obama struck a familiar refrain in a speech at American University. "Let's not mince words," he said. "The choice we face is ultimately between diplomacy or some form of war."

Like Ploughshares, the Obama White House was very energetic in its efforts to shape messaging—indeed, it appears to have been a pure propaganda operation. Testifying before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on May 17, Michael Doran, a member of the National Security Council in the George W. Bush administration, drew attention to the fact that Rhodes's "echo chamber" bluster was backed by a good deal of substance.

"Rhodes and key members of his staff openly admitted . . . that they built a campaign-style war room manned by approximately two dozen staffers drawn from the State Department, Treasury, and the Department of Defense," Doran testified. "The war room monitored the discussion of the Iran nuclear deal—in the traditional press, on social media, in Congress, and in the policy world—and supplied sympathetic reporters with stories, official and unofficial, that supported the goals of the Obama administration."

Doran also reminded Congress that Panetta wasn't the only member of Obama's cabinet who sounded the alarm. "Rhodes's war room is not an isolated problem: It is symptomatic of an NSC that, according to all three of Obama's former secretaries of defense, has grown imperial in both size and ethos." Doran proposed that Congress adopt a specific solution: "Cut the size of the NSC by limiting its budget and by putting tight restrictions on the number of detailees that it can borrow from other departments and agencies. This idea is already making its way through the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. The more voices that support this effort, the better," he told the Oversight Committee.

There may still be much to learn about the secretive Iran deal. Secretary of State John Kerry recently traveled to London in a bid to persuade American allies to invest in Iran, even though this is not a requirement of the Iran deal. This has led many to speculate that the administration may be hiding more secret side deals with Iran.

Compared with the Obama White House, the government of Iran has been relatively honest about its dealings and foreign policy intentions. On May 23, Qassem Suleimani, the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, gave a speech summarizing the outcome of the deal. "Iran," he said, "relied on logic during its confrontation with the U.S. and benefited from its enemies' mistakes."

Ploughshares and the White House may brag about the power of their echo chamber, but to hear Suleimani tell it, the Iran deal didn't prevent a war. Iran is already waging war on America and its other enemies—and it's winning. ♦

The Man in the Arena

Who will stand up to Trump?

BY JAY COST

Since he began his campaign, Donald Trump has been defying the conventional norms of politics. Many smart people thought he would not enter the race at all, for fear he would have to reveal he wasn't as wealthy as he claimed. Instead, Trump eagerly joined the battle and declared a net worth that left financial experts incredulous.

Indeed, Trump has knocked down one political convention after another, and thrived. He insulted John McCain for being a POW in Vietnam—nothing happened. He claimed George W. Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—nothing happened. He refused to condemn David Duke when asked point blank—nothing happened. He did not build a campaign infrastructure, develop detailed policy positions, or hire professionals to take the pulse of voters—and won the nomination anyway.

Meanwhile, the political class has responded to Trump by relying evermore on the established order he has disrupted. When Trump rose in the polls, the other candidates attacked each other, to set up a one-on-one with Trump. As the field winnowed, politicos corralled their resources to run millions in attack ads against him. When Trump built a delegate lead, they dug deep into the RNC rules, trying to identify a path by which Trump could be stopped from acquiring enough delegates. All of this was to no discernible effect: The anti-Trump forces were consistently playing defense against the insurgent, relying on a conventional playbook that had stood them in good stead for generations. Trump plowed right through their defenses.

Ironically, Trump is now hoping that the political class remains stubbornly committed to one of its oldest conventions: that an independent candidate cannot win the presidency, that it is foolish to try, and so the only thing left is to acquiesce to Trump.

If the shoe were on the other foot, would Trump give up? Of course not. He'd defy this seemingly inviolable principle and forge ahead. And who knows? Maybe he'd win. If his candidacy teaches us anything, it should be that the conventional rules of politics apply . . . until they no longer do. Electoral history is littered with examples—the contests of 1824, 1860, 1896, 1912, 1932, 1952, 1980, and 1992 tell the same story: When the old rules stop working, surprising things can happen.

The Era of Good Feelings seemed to mark the end of party politics altogether, but the election of 1824 split the presidential vote four ways, scrambled the old calculus, and led to the second party system. Before 1860, it was unthinkable to win the White House without a southern state, but Abraham Lincoln did precisely that. After the Civil War, most elections were settled by a few thousand votes—until William McKinley won by five points in 1896, becoming the first Republican to win New York City. His victory inaugurated a generation of Republican rule, and the Democrats were consigned to second-tier status. But the GOP fractured in 1912 and handed the White House to Woodrow Wilson. Seemingly unbreakable party hegemonies were also broken in 1932, 1952, and 1992. Ronald Reagan's victory in 1980 defied the conventional wisdom that a conservative Republican could not win the White House.

Prior to these watershed events, the rules of politics seemed very clear. But political laws are unlike the laws of nature. They can change, as circumstances do.

So what about the rule that an independent can't win? Well, it is not exactly fair to say it has never happened. The election of 1824 saw the total breakdown of normal politics, and the official nominee of the Jeffersonian Republicans finished in third place, behind two "independent" candidates. In 1860, both the Whig and Democratic parties split, and the four-way race that cycle is not explicable by our contemporary partisan categories.

Moreover, two elections that featured strong independent bids—1912 and 1992—tell a complicated story. Wilson's victory in 1912 was broad, but not deep. He won the same share as William Jennings Bryan had in the Democratic wipeout of 1908, and the margin between Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt was sufficiently narrow in enough states that a shift of just half a million votes would have handed TR the victory. In 1992 Ross Perot led in the polls at crucial junctures, but his erratic, unprofessional campaign turned enough voters off to aid Clinton, who won the same share of the vote as Michael Dukakis did in the Democratic disaster of 1988. Neither 1912 or 1992 was especially close—but they were close enough that the seemingly impossible *could* have happened. If TR had had better relations with the New York Republican party and moved just a handful of votes in the West, he could have won. If Perot had not dropped out

JASON SEILER

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then come back into the race, and had selected a more conventional vice presidential nominee, he could have won.

Perhaps the biggest reason there has not been an independent victory is that precious few leaders have the intrepid spirit to give it a try. That's really what sets TR and Perot apart. They came as close as they did because they dared to go against the grain. The maxim about independent candidacies was just as strong in 1912 and 1992 as it is today, but the two sensed that this was a rule ripe to be broken. Perhaps it still is—if somebody has the courage to try.

As TR famously put it:

> It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

An independent candidate with TR's plucky determination to stand and fight in the arena would be a welcome development for weary conservatives. And why can't it work this year? The verdict of history is not nearly as definitive as we have been led to believe. Moreover, the two major-party candidates in this cycle are incredibly unpopular, and Trump has demonstrated that the country seems to be in a mood to dispense with the conventions of politics.

Maybe Trump's biggest advantage is his opponents' stubborn insistence on following the traditional rules. Maybe the way to beat him is to channel some of TR's contrariness and derring-do, to rally behind a leader who is willing to stand in the arena and strive valiantly for conservative principles. Sure, the odds of victory are low, but that would not have dismayed Teddy Roosevelt, and his is an example worth following. ♦

Trump's Intellectuals

They're out there—beyond the Beltway.

BY FRED BARNES

Inside the Beltway and along the Washington-to-Boston corridor, #NeverTrump has won the hearts and minds of conservative intellectuals and the high-toned media. The dissenters—yes, there are some—make a lot less noise.

But move away from the East Coast and it's a different story. Out there, the conservative intelligentsia isn't aligned against Donald Trump—quite the contrary. Roger L. Simon, the screenwriter, novelist, and former CEO of PJ Media, predicted last August that Trump would win the presidency. Nine months later, in May, he wrote that "it still holds true."

"Like others, I want things to change . . . and Donald seems like the man with the courage and will to do it," Simon writes. "He's unafraid. He's upbeat. He's funny. He despises political correctness (as anybody with a brain does). . . . I can think of no greater antidote to Obama than a Trump presidency."

Simon is only the most enthusiastic of the conservative highbrows not mired in the East who have grappled with the Trump phenomenon. Their views cover a wide range: from mere opposition to #NeverTrump to mildly pro-Trump to recognition of Trump's strengths to disclosing they intend to vote for him.

Dennis Prager, the L.A.-based syndicated talk radio host and columnist, said when the presidential debates started "that if Donald Trump wins the Republican nomination, I will vote for him over Hillary Clinton, or any Democrat for that matter." Last week, he took on #NeverTrump conservatives.

He disputed their "conscience" argument. "I don't find it compelling because it means that your conscience is clear after making it possible for Clinton or any other Democrat to win," he writes. "But if you wish to vanquish the bad, it's not possible—at least not on this side of the afterlife—to remain pure."

The most sweeping and impressive appraisal of Trump appears in the spring issue of the *Claremont Review of Books*, written by its editor Charles Kesler, a political science professor at Claremont McKenna College and Claremont Graduate University. Kesler, too, disses the #NeverTrump movement. "Conservatives care too much about the party and the country to wash our hands of this election," he writes. "A third party bid would be quixotic."

That leaves conservatives with the task of "offering advice and help, whether or not [Trump] has the sense to take it." To find out if he's willing to learn, "conservatives will have to engage him," according to Kesler. Abstaining in 2016, "in hopes of stimulating a recovery of full-throated conservatism in 2020, is sheer desperation."

Kesler puts Trump in the context of earlier presidents. "Do obscenities fall from his lips more readily than they did from Lyndon Johnson's or Richard Nixon's?" he writes. "Are the circumstances of his three marriages more shameful than the circumstances of John F. Kennedy's pathologically unfaithful one—or that matter, Bill Clinton's humiliatingly unfaithful

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one? Have any of his egotistical excesses rivaled Andrew Jackson's killing a man in a duel over a racing bet and an insult to Jackson's wife?"

And there's a parallel, Kesler believes, between Trump and Woodrow Wilson's insistence that "the personal force of the President is perfectly constitutional to any extent he chooses to exercise it," Kesler writes. This is "not far from Trump's praise of high energy, toughness, and strength in the ideal chief executive."

Kesler rejects the notion that Trump is an authoritarian. "He talks the way a lot of bosses talk," Kesler told me in an interview. "I don't find it as some sort of sinister authoritarian streak." Nor is Trump a demagogue, Kesler says, though he expresses "a certain kind of bluster which is amateurish."

"If you compare different conservative presidents or would-be presidents to magazines," Kesler says, "Ronald Reagan was a *National Review* conservative. George W. Bush was a Weekly Standard conservative. Mitt Romney was a *Wall Street Journal* conservative. Trump will be the first tabloid conservative—the *New York Post* or *Daily Mail*. It's more a blue-collar or working-class sensibility."

Wilfred McClay, a prominent conservative scholar who holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, hasn't decided whether he'll vote for Trump. "Although defeating the Clintons, and the toxic combination of ideology and criminality that they represent, seems to me to something pretty close to an imperative," he said.

His understanding of the Trump candidacy led to this conclusion: "There is a saying, variously attributed, that when a political culture forbids respectable politicians from raising essential topics, the electorate will soon turn to 'unrespectable' ones. It is no good now to keep on complaining that Trump is unrespectable. The real problem is that more mainstream Republicans were not respecting their own voters, and haven't been for a long time. The first thing they need to do is start paying attention."

Victor Davis Hanson, a military historian, columnist, and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, wants conservatives to give Trump a chance to improve his act. What happens if by August, he's "reinvented himself into a more sober Trump and announced that if elected he'd like to appoint Ted Cruz to the Supreme Court, John Bolton as secretary of state, Larry Arnn as secretary of education, and General Jack Keane as secretary of defense?" Hanson asks in *National Review*.

Conservatives may be forced to decide not between two bad choices—Trump and Clinton—but between "a bad Trump and a far, far worse Clinton," he writes. "If it is the latter, then it's an easy choice in November."

Arnn, president of Hillsdale College, was criticized by *National Review*'s Jonah Goldberg for supportive words about Trump on Hugh Hewitt's radio show in April. In response, Arnn cited in the college's newspaper the "chief things" he'd said about Trump. He liked Trump's comments about "the regulatory state" and praised "his confidence, self-direction (he seems to say what he says because he thinks it, rather than having been advised to say it), his sense of humor, and fearlessness." About Trump's character, Arnn has a few doubts.

Meanwhile, the Western eggheads have a biting website devoted to advising, analyzing, and touting Trump and zinging his conservative adversaries. It's called the *Journal of American Greatness*. Its authors are anonymous. But Kesler says they're in the "Claremont and Hillsdale orbit" and represent "a subset of Western Straussians"—that is, disciples of the late political philosopher Leo Strauss.

There is a major dissenter out West, Michael Medved. He's an author, columnist, and talk radio host whose show goes to 300 stations nationwide. "I've taken a lonely stand for the world of talk radio: I am *not* on board the Trump train and don't expect that I will get on board," he told me.

Medved's critique of Trump is withering. "The evidence—especially the man's own pronouncements—suggests that Trump would most likely be a disaster in every regard," he says. "The risks of Trump himself utterly shredding the Constitution seem to me more formidable than the risks of Clinton-appointed justices to the Supreme Court doing that sort of damage."

But Medved says he can imagine a cleaned-up Trump who appeals to "all thoughtful conservatives," including him. "I can imagine it, but I think it's a fantasy." Judgments on Trump are often tentative. Even Roger L. Simon says, "I could change my mind on a dime . . . if other information comes to light or if Donald starts to act loony or, more precisely, excessively loony." ♦

New Sheriff in Town

Well, actually in Milwaukee.

by Chris Deaton

The middle-aged man in jeans ambles through the hotel lobby. His button-down shirt is untucked. The brim of his cowboy hat is embroidered with crossed pistols. His boots are made from the scaly skin of some pale reptile. This is what David A. Clarke Jr., sheriff of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, wears when he's not in uniform, or at least when he goes to the Conservative Political Action Conference, where I caught up with him this spring. At that right-wing Woodstock, he was treated like a

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rock star, stopped at every turn for selfies and handshakes.

A veteran lawman, Clarke found himself sheriff more than a dozen years ago, when his predecessor resigned. He was a quick study of the political part of his new job. Prepping for his first election campaign, advisers told him to make news once a week to raise his name recognition. "He ended up in the paper nearly every day," a political fundraiser told *Milwaukee Magazine* in a 2003 profile.

Black, conservative, Democratic, no-nonsense, and media savvy, Clarke quickly became a unique and notable figure in Milwaukee politics. He ran for mayor in 2004, finishing third out of 10 candidates. The winner of that contest (and mayor ever since), Tom Barrett, has become a perennial foil as Clarke has turned his sheriff's office into an advocacy platform. For example, Barrett squared off against Clarke on CNN in 2013, criticizing the sheriff for appearing in a public service announcement encouraging citizens to learn to use firearms to make up for a shortage in police. Barrett's anti-gun side of the argument was backed up by then-CNN host, Piers Morgan, who derided Clarke's intonation in the ad as something out of a "John Wayne movie."

Clarke was unfazed: "This is the way I talk," he deadpanned. "This is my voice."

I can vouch for that. At few points during our conversation does his tone rise above a smooth baritone or his volume exceed NPR levels. On the occasions that they do, it's because the conversation has moved to topics he's passionate about: He vigorously rejects the claim that law enforcement is in a state of crisis in the inner cities, and he forcefully opposes criminal justice reforms being proposed in Congress.

His father, an Army airborne ranger, gave Clarke an old-school upbringing. Not that, as a young man, he didn't try out the popular poses of rebellion. He laughs, recalling how once he saw a squad car driving past his house and raised a Black Power fist toward the cops. They stopped and backed up.

"And I'm like, 'Oh sh—.' I thought they'd keep going," Clarke says. His father made a timely appearance that day, asking the police whether there was a problem. The officer explained the situation. "My dad looked at the cop and said, 'I'll take care of this.' The cops . . . took off. They knew!"

"Get in the house," Clarke's father told him. "We go in the house, and he says, 'Why are you screwing with the police?' I said I wasn't, you know, I was just—He said, 'Leave the police alone.' And that was the end of it. Leave. The police. Alone. That was a lesson. It's why I can tell that story today. Just leave them alone! This car was just doing patrol in our neighborhood. That's what people want, right?"

Clarke says that the relationship between law-enforcement and black communities isn't as bad as the Ferguson and Baltimore riots would make you think: "The overwhelming majority of people who live in the ghettos and the slums are good, law-abiding people, and they know they've got to have the police." Cops are there, he says, "to keep the peace, not to screw with people."

Murder rates have spiked in Baltimore, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., and even in cities such as Milwaukee, where homicides rose 69 percent from 2014 to 2015. Clarke says those statistics distract from the good news, which is that overall, crime in major cities remains at its lowest rate in decades.

Which means that policing is not as dysfunctional as advertised: "I say it could be better, but it's not horrible," Clarke says. He thinks police get a bad rap because there is an effort by activists—including the activist in chief, the president of the United States—to transform policing. "We don't need to be transformed," Clarke says.

Clarke has called the Obama administration an adversary of police. He said former attorney general Eric Holder raised a "rallying cry for cop-haters across America" and that he ran a Justice Department full of "hostility towards local law enforcement."

That helps explain Clarke's own hostility toward the bipartisan congressional push for criminal justice reform, which he sees as a vanity legacy-project for President Barack Obama.

"Conservatives, they own the law and order message. Why do they want to give this away to the left? Because Obama wants it?" Clarke asks. "I'm looking at these Republicans, and I'm thinking, this guy does nothing but kick you in your ass every day, and now you want to give him a feather on the way out the door? You should look at Obama and go, 'F— you, man. You've been kicking us in our ass for eight years. We're not giving you anything.'"

Clarke is critical of GOP senators, such as Utah's Mike Lee, who have joined in the criminal justice reform effort. Lee's office says in a statement that the senator is just trying to help law enforcement, noting that the Senate bill has the support of the International Association of Chiefs of Police: "Sen. Lee has the utmost respect for Sheriff Clarke, and our legislation is specifically designed to make his job, and the job of every law enforcement officer, safer."

Engaged as he is on national issues, is Clarke angling to climb the political ladder? He's behind a PAC that bears

THOMAS FLUHARTY

his nickname, "The People's Sheriff," which has reported taking in less than $100,000 since it was formed last year. Its goal? To challenge "the leftist media." He has a weekly podcast distributed by Glenn Beck's media outlet, TheBlaze. He even said recently that he'd be open to serving in a Donald Trump administration, perhaps as secretary of homeland security.

But for now, Milwaukee suits him fine: "I'm in a good place, where I can do the things I want to do in terms of messaging, in terms of helping other people," Clarke says. "And if I can do it from here, I'm cool." ♦

How to Change Bankruptcy Law

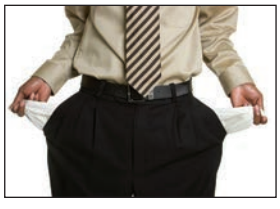
Worry less about 'fairness' and more about long-term consequences. BY IKE BRANNON

Our government isn't very good at knowing when and how to change bankruptcy law, and every time it contemplates doing so it makes the wrong decision. With Puerto Rico staring at insolvency and Congress debating some sort of relief for the island, it appears this dubious streak may remain intact.

The commonwealth's government, in case you haven't kept track, is broke. A decade-long recession and profligate spending will do that. It wants Congress to give it a mechanism to reorganize its debts. Chapter 9 of the bankruptcy code allows municipalities, utilities, and government entities of the 50 states to receive bankruptcy protection, but a state cannot reorganize its own general obligation debt. For reasons no one can quite recall, Chapter 9 does not apply to U.S. territories.

Some people (including myself) proposed last year that the federal government extend Chapter 9 to Puerto Rico. Doing so would provide it enough breathing room to reform its finances, given that only $20 billion of the island's $72 billion of total debt consists of the general obligation debt exempt from Chapter 9. Others—most notably the Heritage Foundation—argued against the unfairness (to lenders) of what would essentially be an *ex post* change in the debt agreements. They're not wrong, but given the perilous nature of the island's finances, an extension of Chapter 9 is the least-bad option available, and it would prevent the need for a federal bailout.

However, the Treasury contends that merely extending Chapter 9 to Puerto Rico is insufficient, and it is pressing Congress to allow it to haircut all of Puerto Rico's debt, including general obligations. Treasury and the House members who advocate this debt-cramming insist it would be a one-off that would not apply to the states and would not be a precedent affecting future efforts by states to reorganize their debts.



That assumes a future Congress would never seek to change the bankruptcy code when an insolvent state arrives as a supplicant on its steps. When Illinois finds it difficult to pay its general obligation debt a few years from now, would Congress offer a bailout or seek to change the bankruptcy code along the same lines as in Puerto Rico? The superficial way Congress will paper over the issue in the current legislation is by not explicitly creating a mechanism to reduce general obligation debt but instead allowing a fiscal control board to do the dirty work, and instructing it to "respect" credit priorities, whatever that means.

But the current debate involves a more general issue: When is it appropriate to change the rules governing bankruptcy, given that it fundamentally alters existing contractual relationships? Contemplating such a question is not uncommon. Several times, Congress has changed what debt can and cannot be discharged during bankruptcy, and most of these changes have been counterproductive. For instance, in the 1970s Congress made it much more difficult to escape student loan debt via bankruptcy, fearful that soon-to-be-wealthy medical students were gaming the system. Doing so changed the terms of billions of dollars of student debt *ex post* from being dischargeable in bankruptcy to being completely protected. The move made it easier for students to get loans, even to schools where they had little hope of graduating or for degrees unlikely to pay off in higher future wages. The amount of student debt grew precipitously, as did the amount of debt under technical default, and today the accumulated student debt exceeds $1 trillion. The change also contributed to boosting tuition prices across the country.

Three decades later Congress did the same thing to tens of billions of dollars of consumer debt when it required all bankruptcy filers with an income above the median to file a Chapter 13 reorganization—which requires the debtor to agree to a repayment plan with his creditors to pay most or all of the debt incurred—instead of an ordinary Chapter 7 bankruptcy. In essence, people who incurred consumer debt earlier in the decade saw what had been unsecured debt transformed into secured debt.

What's most frustrating about this history of changing the bankruptcy rules is that when such a change actually made good economic sense, people

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suddenly got religion on the errors of rewriting the rules in the middle of a game. In 2008 many in Congress—as well as my boss at the time, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson—cited the inviolability of debt laws when they rejected proposals that would have allowed homeowners who were under water to do a modified "cram down" of their home mortgage obligations in a Chapter 13 bankruptcy.

The argument for doing such a thing (besides the fact that bankruptcy law allows it to be done for all other property) is that someone who owed $600,000 on a $400,000 home—a not uncommon situation in 2008—was unlikely to keep paying on his house. At some point the futility of doing such a thing would become apparent and he would cease payments, beginning the long, drawn-out process of eviction, which can take years in some states.

Far better would have been to acknowledge the reality that whoever held the $600,000 note on the house worth $400,000 would more likely than not receive only $400,000. And the most expeditious way to resolve this would be to permit the current owner to continue living in the place, making reduced payments, rather than go through the costly rigmarole of eviction, only to bring in someone else to pay $400,000 for the house two years later. Paulson and others, however, suggested that such an action was "immoral," and we held tightly to this dubious morality tale rather than pursuing a mechanism that would have righted the housing market more quickly.

Sometimes changing the bankruptcy law is the least bad option available. But in so doing, we should contemplate its long-run consequences for everyone involved, as well as for those not involved. Creating something akin to a super Chapter 9 bankruptcy for Puerto Rico that allows it to reduce all of its debts—including the general obligation debts protected by the commonwealth's constitution—would be a terrible precedent. Municipal bondholders in fiscally troubled states like Illinois would come to fear such a solution could be imposed on them as well, and the state's borrowing costs would increase, bringing its day of reckoning ever closer and making a general obligation debt reduction even more likely.

Extending ordinary Chapter 9 bankruptcy to Puerto Rico would enable it to distinguish between general obligation debt and all other debt—to give a haircut to the latter, while fully honoring the former. To give it a super Chapter 9 via a fiscal control board that treats all debt the same may please a few lenders. But it has a high potential cost—all U.S. citizens would probably end up paying to make those lenders whole. It would be yet another example of Congress making the wrong decision when it comes to modifying bankruptcy law. ◆

The Transgender Locker Room

Coming soon to a school near you.

BY STEVEN E. RHOADS

The debate over transgender individuals and public facilities yields more heat than light. The *Washington Post* Outlook section thought it was providing perspective with a recent lighthearted spread on the long history of battles over public bathrooms. Not a word was said about the more problematic space: locker rooms.

Media discussions of the North Carolina law requiring use of accommodations consistent with the sex on one's birth certificate rarely mention that in many states one can alter one's birth certificate after sex reassignment surgery. Of course, those who have undergone hormonal and surgical treatment to make their bodies more congruent with their gender identity cause less commotion in locker rooms appropriate to their identity. But many transgender people do not want to "transition" fully or at all. I sympathize with people who feel their biological sex is not who they are, but shouldn't we feel sympathy also for people traumatized by the sight of nude bodies that certainly appear to be in the wrong locker room? At one YMCA, a woman abused as a child told the *Seattle Times* that being seen in the shower by a transgender woman who hadn't surgically transitioned would reproduce the trauma she endured when her abuser enjoyed watching her in the shower.

In practice, laws intended to allow transgendered people to use the facilities of the gender they identify with will protect heterosexual men who simply like to expose themselves or look at nude girls and women. For a case that illustrates this danger, and the difficulties of formulating policy on transgender issues, consider what happened at a Seattle public swimming pool in February. A young adult male in men's clothes used the women's changing room before and after his swim, and he did not self-identify as female. Since girls' swim teams had practices on both ends of the man's swim, girls and women were undressing while he was in the changing room. Naturally, the girls and their parents became alarmed.

When staff asked the man to leave before he entered the pool, he replied, "the law has changed and I have a right to be here." After all, Washington state allows people who are biologically male to use women's facilities—if their gender identity is female. Staff again asked

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the man to leave when he was changing after his swim. He resisted at first, but eventually did so. But did those in charge of the pool have the legal right to challenge him?

Seattle Parks and Recreation communications manager David Takami thought his authorities dealt with the situation appropriately. Pool staff had not yet come up with a policy to protect everyone, and they did not have any guidelines in place for how people should demonstrate their gender before accessing a changing room. Instead, staff relied on people's physical appearance or verbal claims, and by neither standard did this man seem to be a transgender woman.

But surely proponents of transgender rights would object to any requirement that transgender persons report their gender identity to authorities before using their preferred facilities. Mandating that they verbally single themselves out in this way could cause embarrassment to many transgender people.

And we could hardly rely on individuals' physical appearance. As feminists and other progressives have been telling us for decades, women who resist pressure to dress and present themselves in a stereotypically feminine way are nonetheless women in every sense of the word. It can be impossible to guess the gender identity of someone who is biologically female but mannish in appearance.

Some may suggest protocols allowing only transgender people who have pursued hormone treatment and/or surgery to use the bathrooms and locker rooms of the gender they identify with. That wouldn't fly because so many transsexuals want to do neither.

The folks at the Seattle pool tried to take everyone's feelings into account. They offered the use of the family changing area to both the women who complained about the male in their locker room and the male himself. I would guess that, in the typical case, the family changing area would be too small to accommodate all the offended girls and women. But in any event, it was only the male who was pressured to leave the women's changing room. If he had been in fact a transgendered female, the authorities at the pool broke Washington's rules. State regulations forbid treating the feelings of transgender people and alarmed women equally: "If another person expresses concern or discomfort about a person who uses a facility that is consistent with the person's gender expression or gender identity, the person expressing discomfort should be directed to a separate or gender-neutral facility, if available."

In other words, if the man at the Seattle pool had been a self-declared transgendered female, the authorities should have followed the example of

Lapel sticker in Olympia, Washington, January 27, 2016

Washington's Evergreen State College. A few years back, parents of girls on a high school swimming team that practiced at the college pool complained about the presence of a transgender woman, Colleen Francis, in the women's locker room. Ms. Francis, who has male genitalia, was walking around the women's changing room when not lounging with legs asunder behind a glass door in the adjacent female sauna. She calls herself bisexual with a special attraction to women. The girls on the swim team were told that they could use a small changing area nearby while Ms. Francis used the larger women's room.

One writer on *GenderTrender*, a feminist site skeptical of the transgender movement, pointed out the Evergreen State situation was reminiscent of pre-Title IX America, when girls' sports teams frequently used facilities notably inferior to those available to male athletes: "The Washington state law is being used to attach *a condition* to Title IX equality for females, and that condition is that equal access to facilities for teenage girls is predicated upon their willingness to undress and shower in front of a self-described 'kinky,' 'horny' middle-aged heterosexual man who refers to himself as 'a teen girl.'"

In Washington state, the strong feelings of a number of girls and their parents count for nothing compared with the feelings of a single transgender woman with male genitalia.

Only about 0.03 percent of Americans are transgender. But in time, under the new regime, many males who are not transgender will be using women's rooms. That's because in the real world, many men—maybe most—like to look at naked women. Too many of these men get special pleasure from looking at undressed women who are unwilling to be, and frequently unaware of being, observed. Voyeurism, like exhibitionism, is an overwhelmingly male phenomenon.

Last year the *Baltimore Sun* noted a number of high-profile cases of video voyeurism. Featured was a rabbi who would routinely record women using a changing room at a Jewish ritual bath facility. One of his victims said she worried that the recordings could be posted online, and added that now whenever she uses a public restroom, she wonders whether she's being watched.

Dr. Sharon Moore, a psychiatrist specializing in trauma disorders, told the *Sun* that victims of voyeurism can suffer stress disorders or exhibit hypervigilant behavior as a result. And voyeurs are apt to be repeat offenders, she added. "It's something that makes people feel good, either from the power or the rush."

With the widespread availability of tiny, powerful cameras, it is easier than ever to get away with voyeurism and thus more tempting. Only a small percentage of voyeurs are caught. One voyeur in Florida said he observed more than 50 women trying on bathing suits in a department store over the course of six months before he was caught with a tiny camera at a peephole in an adjoining room. Imagine how much easier voyeurs will have it when they can put on a little lipstick, declare a female identity, and roam women's facilities all over the country. ♦

TED S. WARREN / AP

It Can't Just Be a Business Deal

What's next in U.S.-Cuba relations?

BY OSCAR ELIAS BISCET & JORDAN ALLOTT

There has already been a vigorous debate about President Obama's decision to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba. His recent visit to Havana inspired a wide range of feelings, with many Cubans and Cuban Americans still believing it to be a mistake.

But what's done is done. The real question now is what the U.S. government should be pressing for in its newly established dialogue with the government in Havana.

There is nothing inherent in the idea of U.S.-Cuba relations that implies Cubans' basic human rights will ever be recognized. After all, many other tyrannical governments have reasonably constructive relationships with Washington.

As Milton Friedman liked to note, economic freedom is a necessary condition for other freedoms, but it is not a sufficient condition. For example, think of the Chinese model. Economic reforms in that country have dramatically improved the lives of Chinese citizens, to be sure. But they remain unfree to voice political opinions, unfree to worship as they see fit, and subject to press and Internet censorship. And of course, they absolutely lack any say in who governs them or how.

The same could become true in a Cuba that only opens economically, without a corresponding blossoming of other human freedoms. It is not hard to imagine a Cuba where U.S. businesses merely take advantage of cheaper labor and a new consumer market. Perhaps, at best, a small group of handpicked Cubans would be able to take advantage of some of the economic freedoms—but even then only as long as they don't step out of line.

This is the Cuba that Raúl Castro seems to think he can preserve. So far, neither the Obama administration nor the international community has offered evidence to prove him wrong.

Just look at the joint press conference that Castro held with President Obama. One defining moment came when Castro reacted testily to being asked unscripted questions by a reporter—something he normally does not have to tolerate. Castro also made clear in that same press event that he does not believe Cuba even has a human rights problem. He offered the usual false denial that Cuba holds political prisoners, a line his brother Fidel used for decades. Just about every international human rights organization in the world has evidence to prove otherwise.

I (Dr. Biscet) spent the better part of the last 20 years in prison for believing in, and publicly advocating, such basic rights as the freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to assemble, and many other fundamental rights detailed in the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights—a declaration, by the way, that Cuba has signed but is rarely pressed by the international community to live up to. When I was allowed into the general population at the maximum security prisons where I was housed, and out of solitary confinement and the physical and psychological torture that accompanied it, it was evident to me and to all the prisoners that I was just one of thousands wasting away in Cuban prisons for nonviolent political reasons.

Raúl Castro implied that there was little difference between Cuba's brutal, oppressive policies and America's supposedly inferior retirement and public health system. The absurdity of this comparison does not depend on whether that inferiority is real—Americans have a system they chose for themselves, and they can change it if there is sufficient public support. Cubans, by contrast, have no say in how their system works. That's the only comparison that matters.

President Obama and the world cannot be satisfied with a Cuba that merely opens its markets and goes no further. Moreover, the acceptance of such a Cuba would backfire. For decades, the Castro regime has blamed the poverty and other problems that it created for Cuba on exploitation by wealthy international (and specifically American) interests. For American businesses to behave in a purely self-interested manner, seeking only to exploit a new market without a corresponding opening of human freedom, would suggest that the Cuban regime was right on this point all along.

The United States should not tolerate such a halfhearted policy. It is not enough to demand economic changes while putting human rights and the rule of law on the back burner. Communist Cuba, after all, has been doing business with the rest of the world since 1959. Even American companies have sold billions of dollars in goods to Cuba for more than 20 years. If the new opening simply seeks to fulfill the demands of American industry, it will only replenish the regime's source of money, now that its support from Venezuela's oil industry has collapsed.

This would be a tragically wasted opportunity. Now is precisely the moment for Obama to demand from Castro concessions that the Cuban people really need: human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. ♦

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See You, EU?

The Brexit campaign

By Christopher Caldwell

London

Blond, burbling, bumbling Boris Johnson, the former mayor of London and the most successful Tory politician since Margaret Thatcher, has found himself the unlikely figurehead of a movement to Vote Leave—to withdraw the United Kingdom from the European Union. It was back in 1973 that Britons voted in a referendum to join the six-country European Economic Community—a bloc founded after the Second World War to promote peace through business cooperation. A lot has changed since then. The group has grown from 6 countries to 28 and changed its name, acquiring in the process a new mission: building an "ever closer union" out of the various European countries, which its detractors consider tantamount to dissolving them. This mission was acquired openly at first, through the Maastricht treaty of 1992. But more and more as the years have passed, it has been furthered through bureaucratic subterfuge and backroom legerdemain. When voters in two countries rejected an ambitious, statist constitution by overwhelming margins in 2005, EU politicians simply canceled the remainder of the referenda in countries that were due to hold them and passed the rejected agenda through a series of bilateral treaties.

Boris Johnson irons a 'Vote Leave' flag at a factory in Derbyshire on May 16.

Britain has been the most "Euroskeptic" member of the EU ever since it joined. But the country's mumbled complaints about "Europe" have lately grown to a roar. The EU is a plot hatched by international capitalists and their bureaucratic enablers, some Britons say. It seeks to undermine Britain's constitution and replace it with the sort of arrangements that twice in the 20th century turned continental Europe into a killing field. It overregulates Britain's businesses and is quickly extinguishing its 800-year-old tradition of popular sovereignty.

None of these complaints is without evidence. One result of them has been the growth since the 1990s of the U.K. Independence party. UKIP urges withdrawal from the EU, in order that Britain might better secure its borders and keep its distance from the euro, the EU's flighty currency. For more than a decade UKIP threatened to run away with the votes of the most conservative third of the Tory party. In 2013, with his own parliamentary majority dependent on a coalition with the upper-crust, antiwar Liberal Democrat party, Tory prime minister David Cameron resorted to a desperate measure to hold on to voters tempted by UKIP. He promised, should he be reelected, an in-or-out referendum on EU membership before 2017. It didn't help Cameron in European elections—UKIP is now the largest British party in the European parliament at Strasbourg, with 24 seats. But the promised referendum may be responsible for the majority the Tories won in Westminster last year. UKIP, too, has broken into the Parliament at Westminster, with 4 million votes, although under Britain's system these have been enough to win it only one seat.

Cameron himself is for Remain—he wants to stay in the EU. His whole identity is bound up in it. Tories of Cameron's stripe usually paint UKIP as a bunch of backward-looking "Little Englanders"—xenophobes and bigots, to use our terminology. UKIP's position can be compared to that of Buchananites in the Republican party 20 years ago, Tea Partiers 6 years ago, Trumpites a year ago. Their call for leaving the EU is backed by a solid majority of English people in the countryside. Support for staying comes from the Scots, who see in the EU umbrella a protection for their own nationalism, and from London, with its population of immigrants and multimillionaires. That left Boris Johnson on the fence.

NEWSCOM

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A classical scholar by avocation and a journalist by trade, Johnson spent decades writing harrumphing, curmudgeonly, and rollickingly funny columns for the *Telegraph*, a newspaper by and for people who think England was better in the old days. A big part of making himself presentable to the demographic mosaic of London came from displaying his love of Indian food, bike trails, and double-decker buses and stressing his own multiethnic background as the great-grandson of a Muslim immigrant from Turkey. That's why, as Vote Leave launched its campaign in a South London skyscraper in early May, Johnson sang Schiller's "Ode to Joy" in German, boasted that he liked to read books in French, and described himself as a "liberal cosmopolitan." He is one. "*Freude, schöner Götterfunken*," Johnson sang.

Johnson's announcement at the end of last winter that he would join the Leave forces was still a shock. It also convinced Cameron, his Eton contemporary and rival, that Johnson was challenging him for the party's leadership—not without reason. A YouGov poll taken May 23-24 puts "Remain" and "Leave" neck-and-neck. Should Leave win, Cameron would have to resign. There is nonetheless a general belief that Remain will pull it out. The bookmaker Ladbrokes gives Leave only a one-in-five chance.

Matthew Elliott, left, and Dominic Cummings

PROJECT FEAR

The Tory party under Cameron has become what the Republican party would have become had anybody followed the recommendations laid out by the RNC elders who convened the "Growth and Opportunity Project" after Mitt Romney's drubbing in the 2012 election. Cameron came of age in the Tory wilderness decades that began with the rise of Tony Blair's "New Labour" in the mid-1990s. Redemption through wussification is his motto. He has learned to talk about global warming and quality of life. Although something of a Euroskeptic in his youth, he is now on a positive crusade against Little Englandism and xenophobia, and has convinced himself that the Brexit campaign is a symptom of both.

Cameron has always been one of those politicians (somewhat like Hillary Clinton) who uses organization and preparation to compensate for a lack of charisma, and the campaign he is running against the referendum he himself called is something to marvel at. It is a masterpiece of political choreography. Investment banks (Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley, and Citigroup) and bigfoot British political donors (Lord David Sainsbury, Roland Rudd) have bankrolled a mighty organization—Britain Stronger in Europe—to campaign for Remain. It uses top politicians from both the Labour and Tory parties. The group's gloriously designed website would be the envy of an Italian art magazine. On top of that, Cameron has converted almost every government agency within his reach into a full-time EU propaganda machine. He has used $13 million from the government budget to print leaflets urging a vote for Remain. He has used government websites to lay out the case against leaving. The Bank of England has warned there will be a recession. Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne has calculated that home prices will fall—by up to 18 percent—and interest rates will rise. The Treasury issued a report tallying the probable job losses at 800,000. Cameron himself says running its own affairs would leave Britain at risk of war. These predictions have been accompanied by others from a raft of executives beholden to government regulators. Carolyn McCall of EasyJet has been banging the drum for Remain since February. This rebranding of vested interests as "experts"—which, of course, vested interests always are in their way—is a hallmark of pro-Remain lobbying.

Cameron has solicited foreigners, many of whom are indifferent to or ignorant of the trajectory of Europe in our time, to offer testimonials to the catastrophe that awaits Britain should it reclaim the sovereignty to which it clung so shabbily and unimpressively at Runnymede, Agincourt, Trafalgar, Waterloo, and Dunkirk. These warnings are released daily. Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe warns that a vote to leave would scare off Japanese investors. Christine Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund has predicted that the consequences of Brexit range from "pretty bad" to "very, very bad" and has helpfully scheduled a report to that effect for June 17, six days before the vote. Cameron roped together 13 U.S. secretaries of defense and state and national security advisers, led by George Shultz, who signed a letter scolding Britons for embarking on what Cameron called an "act of supreme irresponsibility." Michael Froman, the U.S. trade representative, warns Britain, "We're not particularly in the market for free-trade agreements with individual countries." (Apparently, Britain cannot aspire to the grandeur, in Obama administration eyes, of Chile or Morocco, each of which has such an agreement.) President Obama himself said on a visit to London that, should Britain leave the EU, it would have to get to the "back of the queue" on trade deals.

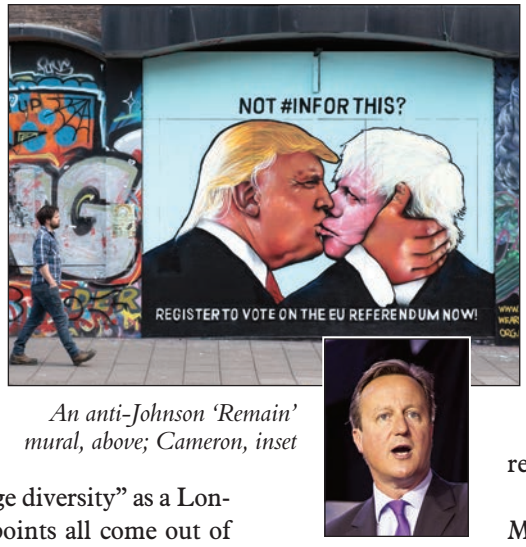
IMAGES: NEWSCOM

Of course, it can come to the *front* of the queue the next time we need its young men to die in one of our wars. Johnson speculated that Obama had inherited an anti-British animus from his Kenyan father. After Obama's remarks against leaving the EU, a poll taken for the *Times* of London showed a *rise* in Leave sentiment.

BOJO ON THE TRAIL

The problem for the Remain forces is that testimonials are all they have. Two days after his South London speech, Johnson boarded a bus and went on tour, not to sing Beethoven but to fire up the people of Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset for the Leave side. The people in the crowd who were unconvinced tended to mouth the slogans that Cameron's lobbies had focus-grouped. "I just think we're stronger together," one of the last harbor-front workers in Charlestown, on the Cornish coast, told me.

But Johnson's Leave forces don't particularly know what to talk about either. They are in a trap. The case for Brexit is sovereignty, self-rule, independence. Those are abstractions. The best politicians of the last generation—very much including the 51-year-old Johnson—have prospered by avoiding abstractions like the plague. They assume the only thing voters care about is paying less and getting more. Johnson may have learned to "manage diversity" as a London mayor. But his stump talking points all come out of the Thatcher era. They tend to involve silly regulations. "The EU tells us how powerful our vacuums are supposed to be," he says. "The EU requires that packets of smoked salmon tell consumers they contain fish." And "Ten billion pounds we never see goes to Greek bailouts and Spanish bullfights." It's funny. It's true. It's also true that the half-billion dollars (£350 million) earmarked for Brussels every week could pay for a new hospital. But having had the bejeezus scared out of them by Cameron's ads, voters may decide that more sensible salmon-packaging is hardly worth the risk of Armageddon, however small that risk may be.



An anti-Johnson 'Remain' mural, above; Cameron, inset

The Leave case is about self-rule or it is about nothing. The people who have laid it out most logically are the two young Tory policy thinkers who run the Vote Leave organization, Dominic Cummings and Matthew Elliott. Cummings spent three hours this spring parrying the hostile questions of a parliamentary "treasury select committee." (Why such a committee has any business interrogating a political campaign is a constitutional mystery.) When a member of Parliament asked Cummings to explain what his economic policy for an independent Britain would be, he explained that such questions were off the topic:

> The heart of the argument over the European Union is: "Are we going to be a normal self-governing democracy or are we not?" And if you are a normal self-governing democracy, by definition the public make choices in elections and vote in or out people like you, with your priorities, and the chips fall where they may. . . . So of course one can't say "This is what the future will be" or "This is how things will work out." That's not the point of it.

Cummings puts forward another reason for getting out while the getting is good. The European Union is not stable, although it has been a triumph of the Remain forces to portray it as such. It is constantly sucking in new resources to avoid collapse. There will be an "inevitable next wave" of centralization to which Britain will be subject. The European Court of Justice has been overriding national laws in a way that Cummings compares to the U.S. Supreme Court. Although Britain, not being a member of the euro, has avoided most responsibility for resolving its exchange-rate crisis, the EU's "Five Presidents' Report" envisions new responsibilities for EU members.

But the Leave camp are divided. Most of the rank and file in the Vote Leave movement are schooled in the Cameron-style Toryism that views any claims for the cultural specificity of Britain as "xenophobic" and bigoted. They would be mortified to have it said that they were fighting on the same side, and for the same principles, as the proles at UKIP. And UKIP members, almost without exception, sense that political operators are trying to muscle them out of a role in the movement that they alone were brave enough to fight for over the last quarter-century. Most UKIPpers look at Vote Leave as primarily a vehicle for making Boris Johnson the next prime minister, only secondarily about getting Britain out of the EU. They have joined a separate organization, Leave.eu, bankrolled by the brash investor Arron Banks.

Non-Tories who have come to the Leave campaign have tended to find Leave.eu more congenial and better at getting down to constitutional brass tacks. This includes that longtime scourge of the Iraq war George Galloway,

MURAL, NEWSCOM; INSET, PHILIP HUNTON PHOTOGRAPHY

who described in February the moment when his own passions for Britain's sovereignty were rekindled. Galloway discovered that an Englishwoman he had never heard of, Catherine Ashton (Baroness Ashton of Upholland), had become, under the terms of the constitution rejected by European voters but imposed by the European leadership, "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and First Vice President of the European Commission." In Brussels they refer to her as the European foreign minister. Galloway does not. "Who *are* you?" he asked. "Who *elected* you? Who can *remove* you?"

IMMIGRATION AND CONSENT

As the campaign has worn on, it has become evident that one issue is capable of uniting the disparate strands of the Leave movement: immigration. At every stop in Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset, it was the first thing people wanted to talk about—to reporters and to Johnson himself. You can sense, however, that voters feel constrained by political correctness from speaking about the elements of immigration that really bother them.

The thing voters feel they are *allowed* to talk about is the management of migrants from within the EU, who are permitted to settle in Britain. When Polish citizens got the right to free movement as new EU members in 2004, Britain's economic forecasters—including many of the same ones now predicting recession and plague—told the country to brace for between 5,000 and 13,000 migrants. It got 627,000. As an old mayor of multicultural London, Johnson is good at herding questioners onto the safe territory of efficient provision of government services. Net migration into the U.K. runs well over 300,000 a year, a multiple of the "tens of thousands" Cameron has set as his target. When journalists ask Johnson whether that is too high, he pauses before answering. "Put it this way: To add a city the size of Newcastle every year to the U.K.—" he says. "It's too high to do *without consent*."

It is a good answer, but it does not address voters' real anxiety. A lot of them look at Europe and see a future of racial strife and right-wing government. Waves of Muslim immigrants—some of them refugees from Syria, most of them economic migrants—are now pouring across the Mediterranean to accept an offer of welcome, delivered on the EU's behalf but without its consent, from German chancellor Angela Merkel. In order to help stem the flow of migrants she unleashed, Merkel has in recent weeks accelerated negotiations to admit massive, Muslim, increasingly theocratic Turkey to the European Union. This would give Turks the same right to become Londoners that Poles now have. As former cabinet member Iain Duncan Smith says, "Turkey is on the ballot paper."

It also didn't calm matters when the race to succeed Johnson as London mayor was won by Sadiq Khan, a Muslim human-rights lawyer and community organizer from South London. The Tories never quite realized what a special politician they had in Johnson. All the rich, multiethnic cities in the world, with the possible exceptions of Madrid and Moscow, are naturally run by limousine liberals. The Tories did their best to nominate a modern, multicultural candidate—Zac Goldsmith, an outspoken environmentalist whose former brother-in-law is the Pakistani cricketer and politician Imran Khan (no relation to Sadiq). But Goldsmith could not finesse issues of Islam and race. His supporters mentioned that Khan was an ex-brother-in-law of the "hate preacher" Makbool Javaid, that Khan had "shared a platform" with al Qaeda-supporting radicals (never a fair criticism, as sharing a platform with ideological adversaries is what responsible citizens do), and that Khan had referred to moderate Muslims as "Uncle Toms." Now the papers are deploring the "ugly" and "shameful" campaign Goldsmith ran in even alluding to such things. Cameron's adviser Steve Hilton warned that Tories were showing themselves to be the "nasty party" that he and Cameron had fought so hard to "detoxify."

But this is mere scapegoating. Goldsmith was not such a poor candidate. Conservatives did not fail to get their message out, as excuse-making politicians often claim. Their problem is that London has become a Muslim city. It is not majority Muslim demographically, certainly. But it is at least an eighth Muslim and growing. This means that if Muslims vote en bloc, as they did for Khan, they can control the city even if nearly 60 percent vote against them. That was the formula 19th-century Irish immigrants to the United States used for controlling certain northeastern cities in perpetuity. It helped Khan that he was able to rally business interests by cheerleading for the information economy. His tenure appears likely to resemble that of Bill de Blasio in New York—a simultaneous drumming up of ethnic consciousness and business.

After his election Khan spoke in Southwark Cathedral, introduced by Doreen Lawrence, the mother of a boy killed in a racist attack in 1993. There was lots of talk about uniting and not dividing. The week after his election it was announced that Islamic Relief, a big, government-backed charity, would be putting posters on city buses in London, Manchester, Leicester, Birmingham, and Bradford reading "Subhan Allah" (Glory to Allah) and urging Muslims to fulfill their charitable duties by giving to Syrian refugees during Ramadan. The *Daily Mail* noted that last year, the country's leading cinema chains—Odeon, CineWorld, and Vue—had refused to show an advertisement that featured the Archbishop of Canterbury reciting

the Lord's Prayer. None of this is making Britons happier about being in the European Union.

SICK OF BEING LIED TO

Khan's election has revealed a power vacuum at the heart of the Labour party. The Iraq war wound up changing the course of British history. Tony Blair, who dominated the party for a quarter-century, has been repudiated in the wake of it. In a late May poll by YouGov, a majority of Britons (53 percent) say they can "never forgive" him for taking the country to war, and only 8 percent agree with the statement that he "did nothing wrong."

One consequence is that Labour was last summer taken over by a Cold War-era leftist—specifically, a protégé of the 1970s Labour politician Tony Benn. Party leader Jeremy Corbyn is a sort of Bernie Sanders *avant la lettre*. Naturally Khan can't stand Corbyn, because Corbyn, like Sanders, does not see the new leftism (built on organizable minorities claiming rights) as an improvement on the old (built on forging consensus for national programs). Khan is Labour's most full-throated defender of EU membership. Most of his colleagues believe Corbyn, in his heart of hearts, opposes it. But Corbyn, having the loyalty of neither the Blairites nor the Khanites, is dependent on Britain's now-vestigial trade unions, and Cameron has done a masterful job of exploiting that dependency. By watering down anti-union legislation, passing a "living wage" of $13 an hour, and considering a plan to open an inquiry into how Margaret Thatcher policed the miners' strike of 1984, Cameron has won the unions over to Remain. That has sufficed to win Corbyn—or at least to silence him. Cameron has a chance of hobbling the national Labour party.

'Glory to Allah' on a London bus

But he has a slightly better chance of hobbling his own. Half of Tory members of Parliament favor leaving the EU. So do most of the party rank and file. The longtime fear of the party establishment has been that, if the referendum is even close, the Leave camp will find reason to make common cause with UKIP, hoping to reconstitute the British right around a new pole. In recent weeks the establishment has become more pessimistic still: They believe the party may break up no matter what happens. Reports are that dozens of Tory members have agreed to challenge Cameron's leadership as soon as the referendum is over.

Charles Moore, Margaret Thatcher's biographer and a prominent conservative editor and columnist, considers himself a member of the establishment. He nonetheless admits to being taken aback by the anti-Brexit testimonials being drawn up for Obama and other foreign leaders in Downing Street. Politicians are scheming against the people, he wrote in early May: "I am learning from this referendum just how frightened many of them are that the voters now have a choice." UKIP leader Nigel Farage put it more colorfully. Cameron, he told the *Guardian*, "hasn't played with a straight bat."

In the second week of May the Office of National Statistics revealed that, although the official number of EU migrants to the U.K. between 2010 and 2014 was under a million, the number of national insurance cards issued to EU migrants was 2.2 million. So the ONS revised its estimate upward to 2.4 million. One is left with a government that is positively virtuosic when it comes to organizing, scripting, synchronizing, and deploying hundreds of the busiest organizations and celebrities of the world into a carousel of propaganda running nonstop for six weeks—but it cannot keep statistics on the single issue of most concern to its citizens. When Cameron's armed forces minister Penny Mordaunt said that Turkish accession to EU membership would allow Turkey's citizens to settle in Britain, she was only citing EU law. But Cameron scoffed. "At the current rate of progress they will probably get round to joining in about the year 3000," he said. Anyway, Britain has a veto on Turkish membership, he stressed. True, but as the most steadfast advocate among European leaders of Turkish membership, he would not, in the event, use it.

It may not matter how Britain votes on June 23. For British reasons and European reasons, it is difficult to see Britain anchored in a viable European Union five years from now. *All* of Cornwall's members of Parliament are Conservative, but it was there, in early May, in the rapidly gentrifying port town of St. Ives, that voters passed an ordinance banning the sale of houses as second homes. House prices in St. Ives average £400,000 ($600,000), about 20 times the average annual salary. Government lawyers in London are trying to block the measure. But on the campaign trail you can hear even conservative politicians talk about how "mainlining" cheap labor from abroad has sapped Britain's industrial base, about Britain's trade deficits, about the looting of the pension plans at the failed department store BHS and elsewhere, about how the austerity being imposed on Greece is a "disgrace." This campaign is starting to look like what, in retrospect, the 2012 election in the United States was—a referendum on whether the public is sick enough of being taken for fools or whether they can stand it for one election more. ♦

MATTHEW CHATTLE / REX / SHUTTERSTOCK

It's Anything but a SNAP

We're from the government, and we're here to help you cook

By Abby W. Schachter

Monday through Friday, when our four kids come home from school they want a snack. Now, what I give them to eat is always a balancing act between competing interests. Do I offer them something to tide them over until dinner; get them out of the kitchen as soon as possible so I can make dinner; allow them a limited amount of junky food—a small bowl of veggie straws or cheesy puffs or two cookies and a glass of milk—which is quick, what they actually want to eat, and something they can mostly get for themselves; or offer them something a little more involved and nutritious—a rice cake with peanut butter or crackers with cream cheese and cinnamon—which requires more effort on my part?

A USDA photo of a 'charger wrap'

The United States Department of Agriculture says I'm doing it all wrong. Instead, I should be making a "healthy" snack called a "charger wrap," which a helpful YouTube video explains starts with gathering up to eight ingredients: romaine lettuce, tomatoes, green pepper, grated cheese, a whole wheat tortilla wrap, lemon juice, black pepper, and cooked chicken breast. Then I'm supposed to cut the chicken into cubes (there is no indication of when or how I was supposed to have cooked the chicken). Next, I am to toss the cubed chicken with lemon juice and black pepper, after which I put it on the tortilla. Then I slice the tomato and green pepper and shred the lettuce, and add all three to the tortilla and chicken. Finally, I sprinkle the grated cheese (which again is magically already prepped) onto the tortilla, wrap it up, *et voilà!* A healthy snack.

I've got three words for the USDA: *Never. Gonna. Happen.* And apparently I'm not alone. Because the same way I'm not going to follow this too-involved and utterly impractical recipe is the same way recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (the official name for food stamps), the folks for whom the charger wrap recipe was designed, are also not going to follow it. But too complicated is just one of the problems with SNAP and just one of the many reasons to reject the growing public policy drumbeat insisting that what is most needed to correct SNAP's ills is more taxpayer money.

The importance of SNAP benefits to millions of Americans cannot be understated. In 2011, as reported by the USDA, SNAP provided on average $134 per person to nearly 45 million individuals in 21 million households every month. That's one in seven Americans. And the numbers aren't much lower these days. Indeed, reading the USDA's annual report on SNAP you'd think the government was proud of all the people who need help rather than being focused on lowering the need to participate. As the USDA admits, participation in SNAP was lowest at 17 million in July 2000 when the economy was strongest. Since the recession and weak recovery, participation has skyrocketed to current levels. The USDA trumpets SNAP's flexibility to shrink when the economy is growing and to grow when the economy is shrinking. And with no end in sight to our current stagnation, the USDA is proud to have an expanded SNAP. The USDA also never misses an opportunity to complain about eligibility reform that lowered the rolls or to cheer the reversals of those reforms, which made signing up easier again.

Who are SNAP recipients? Kids, a lot of kids. Forty-seven percent of all participants are under 18 years old, and about half of all households include at least one child. Single-parent families make up just over half of all

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

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recipients, and more than 40 percent of all SNAP participants "live in a household with earnings," while "20 percent of households have no gross income." Meaning, there are lots of people who are unemployed who are getting SNAP but lots of others for whom it is truly a supplement to their existing income.

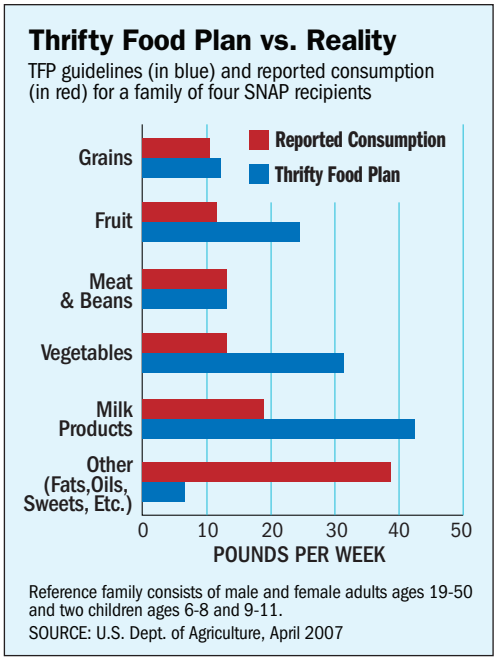
"SNAP households must have monthly gross income less than 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines," the USDA reported in 2012, which equaled just under $30,000 a year for a family of four. According to that same report, the maximum monthly allotment for a family of four was $668. "Nearly 40 percent of SNAP households receive the maximum allotment because they have little or no income," the report explains.

As important as the program may be, however, the rules are contradictory and the USDA doesn't make them easy to follow. In a nod toward freedom of choice, there are lots of foods you can purchase with your handy debit-like benefit card, some of which aren't exactly the basic building blocks for nutritious eating. Juice, soda, candy, cookies, ice cream, and cakes are all eligible for purchase according to SNAP rules.

On the other hand, there is the Thrifty Food Plan, which is in effect a too-stringent mess of rules and categories. SNAP benefits are based on the Thrifty Food Plan, which is meant to guide consumers on how to purchase healthful diets at different cost levels. In the 1920s, the USDA established its first guide for nutritious eating. By the 1960s, those guidelines were officially named the TFP, which began to be used as the basis for food stamp allotments. There are three cost levels: low, moderate, and liberal plans.

TFP isn't calculated on the basis of cost alone, since that would be too simple. There are 15 baskets divided by participant age groups, for example, 19-50-year-old females or 14-18-year-old males. Each basket is divided among 29 different food categories that make up what the USDA defines as a balanced diet. Thank heaven for small mercies, the categories were recently *pared down* to 29 from a high of 58. The cost of the TFP is calculated each month to provide SNAP recipients a clear picture of what they should buy and for how much. And the costs assume that all meals and snacks are purchased at stores and prepared at home.

The basis for the nutritional guidelines won't come as a shock to anyone who has kids in public schools, since the USDA also controls nutrition policy for school lunches. The basic outline is well known. Low fat, little to no salt and sugar, whole grains, some protein, and lots of fruits and vegetables. Though there is disagreement about the importance of fat, and the USDA can get a mite fanatical about sodium and sweets, there is nothing terribly wrong with the outline of the diet. The problem is conforming to the standards at every meal, every day.



In his 2007 study for the *Journal of Nutrition, Education and Behavior*, "Food Stamps, the Thrifty Food Plan, and Meal Preparation: The importance of the time dimension for US nutrition policy," Tulane University professor Donald Rose looked at the TFP and found some glaring problems. Taking as a test case a family of four (two parents and two kids), he followed all the component nutritional guidelines and designed two weeks of meals. The goal was a meal plan that "met all nutrient and food component recommendations in the latest Dietary Reference Intakes and in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and met food intake recommendations from the MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern; cost no more than the Food Stamp Allotment; and was as close as possible to actual diets, i.e., to mean consumption levels of these food groups as reported in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey." Already it seems an impossible task. But having done all that, Rose found that the amount of time it would take to prepare all this food, which the food stamp program assumes is going to be prepared at home, was 16.1 hours per week or 2.3 hours per day.

I cook for six people most every day of the week, and I can tell you that while I do spend more time cooking on the weekend than on weekdays, it does not come out to 16 hours a week.

Rose then posed a serious question about rules that produce such a result. "Government policy encourages low-income women to go out and work in the labor market," Rose explained, "but it provides a food safety net, i.e., Food Stamps for these working poor, assuming they will stay at home to cook from scratch." Quite a contradiction. And even when looking at the amount of food prep the unemployed do compared with those holding down

jobs, Rose estimates, their time in the kitchen is still well below the government standard, 13.9 hours versus 16.1. "For employed women, the divergence between meal preparation reality and TFP expectation is even greater," he writes. Indeed, the average number of hours spent on food preparation among women who work is 4.5 hours per week. Is the USDA really expecting the 40 percent of SNAP recipients who have some employment to spend four times as long as the average American in food prep?

Having pointed out this important contradiction, however, Rose concludes that this discrepancy between the cooking times demanded by TFP and the cooking time actually available to working women means that "food stamp allotments are too low." *Obviously*. Seems it is too complicated for the researcher to even consider the possibility that the program is badly designed and executed.

When two Virginia Tech professors, George Davis and Wen You, looked at the TFP, they also found the time component especially troubling. Their 2010 study, "The Thrifty Food Plan Is Not Thrifty When Labor Cost Is Considered," published by the *Journal of Nutrition*, asks why typical SNAP family recipients are failing to meet TFP nutrition guidelines even when they have sufficient resources to eat a healthy diet. Their answer is that when the government fails to calculate the labor cost (i.e., the monetary value of the time it takes to prep and cook the food), the consequence is underestimating the overall cost of eating healthy. "Once labor was included," they write, "we found the TFP is not very thrifty." Like Rose, Davis and You found that while following the TFP requires 16 hours per week prepping and cooking the food, the actual amount of labor expended equated to households spending 40 percent less than enough to meet TFP requirements. They conclude that ignoring labor costs provides SNAP recipients with a "disincentive to adhere to the TFP and the accompanying food guidelines and helps explain why many households do not come close to the dietary guidelines associated with TFP."

At least Davis and You have the decency to conclude that the best way to make the TFP workable for more SNAP recipients is to simplify the meal plans. "One simple and practical policy solution is to develop more labor-efficient recipes that satisfy the TFP," they write.

Simplification would indeed be very helpful. Really, who takes into account 29 food groups when planning meals? The TFP is based on an otherworldly idea of how people cook for their families, adhered to nowhere outside a government lab. But it's of course naïve to presume that being helpful to low-income or no-income individuals and families is what drives such programs. Indeed, actual hunger isn't even the problem being tackled. Instead the problem is "food insecurity."

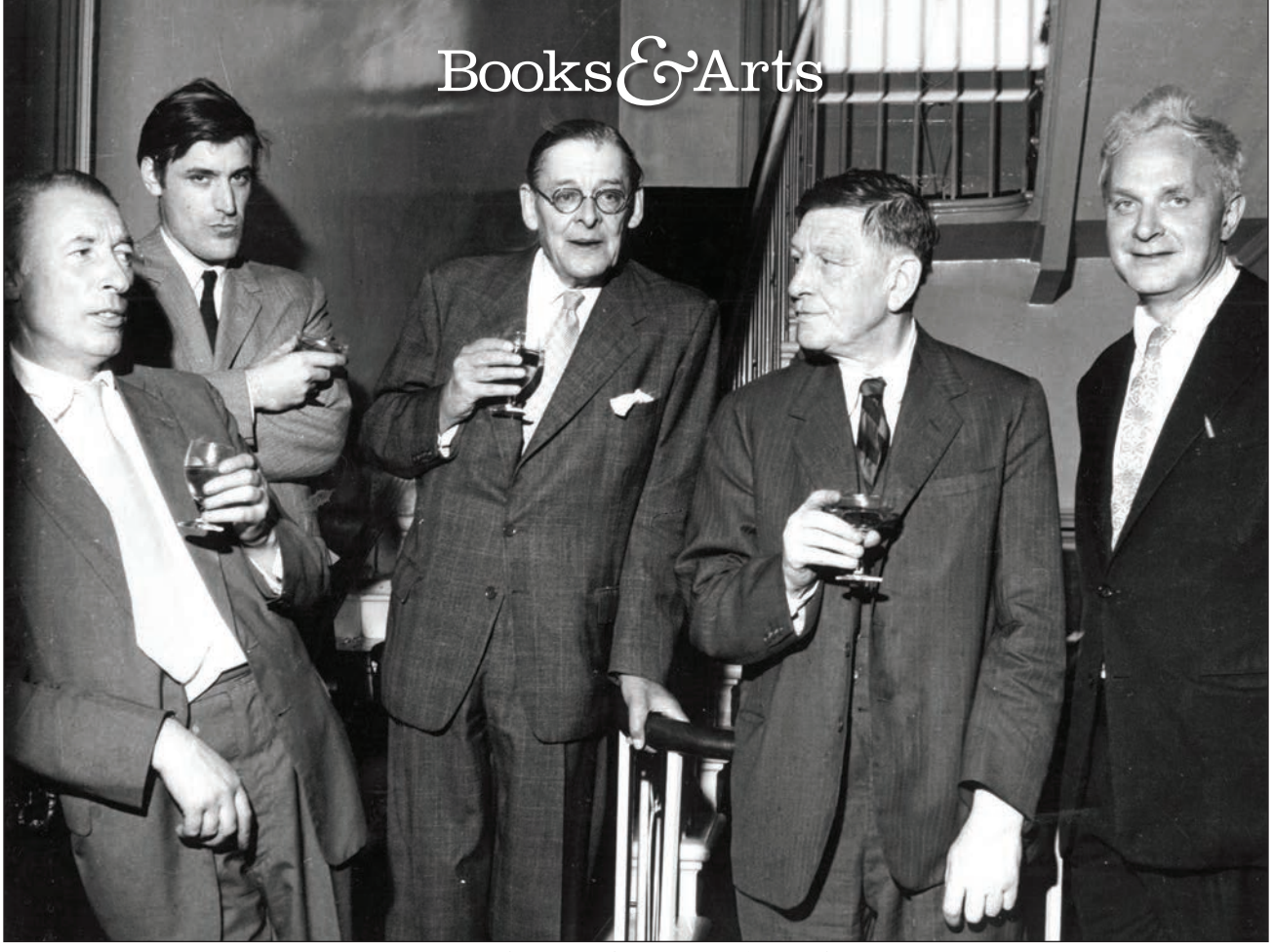
As the late pediatrician and infant and child nutrition expert George G. Graham wrote in the *Public Interest* 30 years ago, "There is little evidence of major or even significant hunger and malnutrition in this country." Three decades later, good luck finding any hard data that the situation has reversed. Scan the national data offered by the Forum on Child and Family Statistics' Key National Indicators of Well-Being for 2015 and there is no mention of hunger, malnutrition, or deprivation, only food insecurity. Diseases that in generations past were commonly associated with hunger and malnutrition, such as rickets and scurvy, still occur but are so rare that news stories are written about the unusual cases of adults who suffer from these "18th-century" maladies. In response, the broader, more amorphous category—food insecurity—has been created to keep the need for a safety-net sound like a life-and-death matter.

According to the USDA, 14 percent of American households (17.4 million households) were *food insecure* at "some time" in 2014. What does this mean? These folks "lacked access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members." USDA is especially upset about the "5.6 percent of U.S. households (6.9 million households) [that] had very low food security" in 2014. *Severe food insecurity* is defined as "the food intake of some household members was reduced and normal eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year due to limited resources."

The Obama White House joined the act last year when it issued its own SNAP report embracing the complexity and the fog. In its December 2015 report on the long-term benefits of SNAP, the White House argued that current benefit levels are insufficient. After pronouncing SNAP "the cornerstone of alleviating hunger," the report moved on to food insecurity. "A growing body of evidence suggests that the benefits are, if anything, too low to allow a family to purchase an adequate, healthy diet. One manifestation of this is the fact that the current level of benefits often cannot sustain families through the end of the month—causing children to go hungry and endangering their health, educational performance, and life chances."

And just last month, in an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*, Robert Rubin and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach lobbied for more SNAP benefits on the basis of the alleged understated extent of the food insecurity problem *and* the labor costs of cooking TFP meals.

It is hard but necessary to remain clear-eyed when digesting these statistics and claims. SNAP benefits are enjoyed by nearly 50 million Americans at a cost of $74 billion of taxpayer money. For that sum and the enormous responsibility of alleviating true suffering, we have complicated menus, contradictory rules, and cloudy definitions of goals. ♦



Louis MacNeice, Ted Hughes, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender (1960)

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Old Possum's Nest

A second look at the poetry of T. S. Eliot. BY MARJORIE PERLOFF

This long-awaited critical edition of T. S. Eliot's poems is a scholarly milestone, a watershed in publishing history. The elaborate notes Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue have provided for each line—indeed, each word—of each and every Eliot poem are so informative and the overviews for each stage of Eliot's career contain so much of the poet's own germane commentary that one can now trace Eliot's poetic development using no further aids than these two volumes.

The opening background section, "A Beginner in 1908," for instance, reproduces every key statement Eliot made, whether in essays, lectures, or letters to friends, about his literary origins. From a 1946 essay on Ezra Pound, for example:

> Whatever may have been the literary scene in America between the beginning of the century and the year 1914, it remains in my mind a complete blank. I cannot remember the name of a single poet of that period whose work I read.

And further, in a 1924 letter to Pound not widely known, Eliot similarly dismisses British turn-of-the-century poets, especially the "Swinburnians," with the words, "I am as blind to the merits of these people as I am to Thomas Hardy." Again—and to me surprising, given the London milieu in which he was circulating—in a 1945 letter to A. Benedict Crannigan, Eliot insists, "I had no knowledge of the so-called Imagists until 1915, and Imagism made very little impression upon me." Henry James

The Poems of T. S. Eliot: The Annotated Text
Volume One: Collected & Uncollected Poems
edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue
Johns Hopkins, 1,344 pp., $44.95

The Poems of T. S. Eliot: The Annotated Text
Volume Two: Practical Cats & Further Verses
edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue
Johns Hopkins, 688 pp., $39.95

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was important but, after all, he wrote novels and hence was not much use to a poet.

Indeed, the only significant contemporary, so far as Eliot was concerned, was his great friend Ezra Pound, to whom he repeatedly acknowledges his debt. Otherwise, he insists, his inspiration came from France—from "Baudelaire and his immediate followers, Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé." And the editors provide references to Eliot's most important remarks on French Symbolist poetry and especially his views on *vers libre*: "The pleasure one gets out of the irregularity of such verse is due to the shadow or suggestion of regular metre behind." The kind of "free verse" D.H. Lawrence wrote, says Eliot scathingly in a 1924 essay on Whitman, produces "more notes for poems than poems themselves."

Nine pages of close commentary elucidate the background of Eliot's first volume *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), and the title poem is given 17 further pages. No matter how well we think we know "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," there is sure to be new information here. I did not know, for instance, that in a little-known essay (1959) in the *Kipling Journal*, Eliot remarked that "I am convinced [the poem] would never have been called *Love Song* but for a title of Kipling's that stuck obstinately in my head, *The Love Song of Har Dyal*." And under the notes for "Hysteria," one of Eliot's rare prose poems (1917), the editors have culled some of the poet's most important—and little-known—comments on the genre, which are tersely caustic, as in "I have not yet been given any definition of the prose poem which appears to be more than a tautology or a contradiction." Or, conversely, "verse, whatever else it may or may not be, is itself a system of *punctuation*"—a pithy comment made in a set of letters to the *Times Literary Supplement* under the heading "Questions of Prose" (1928).

Such notes are more than helpful: They are transformative, and Eliot scholarship and criticism will never be the same. For *The Waste Land*, the editors have supplied "An Editorial Composite," which is to say "a 678-line reading text of the earliest available drafts of the various parts and passages of the poem." These drafts will be familiar to readers of the facsimile edition of *The Waste Land*, edited by the poet's widow, Valerie Eliot (1971); but to read the text in its earliest form, before Eliot and then Pound made the crucial cuts and changes, is a sobering experience. It is not just that the overwritten imitations of Popean satire were eliminated, but Pound challenged every phrase, every modifier so that

Terrible city I have sometimes seen and see
Under the brown fog of your winter dawn.

becomes

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn.

The change of "Terrible" to "Unreal" was Eliot's own, thus cementing the echo of Baudelaire's "Fourmillante cité." But the qualifier "I have sometimes seen and see," which dilutes the force of the apostrophe, is bracketed by Pound, and the latter also understands that the "winter dawn" should not be "your" (the city's) but "a."

Indeed, comparing *The Waste Land* drafts with the final copy reminds us that when Eliot was good he was very, very good but when he was bad he could be quite horrid. No 20th century poet writing in English has written more memorable, more resonating, and brilliant poems than "Prufrock," "Gerontion," and *The Waste Land*, with "Portrait of a Lady," "Preludes," the *Ariel Poems*, *Ash Wednesday*, and *Four Quartets* coming in a close second. But Eliot, as this edition inadvertently makes clear, often compromised his genius by letting his innate snobbery, his schoolboy nastiness, and his inveterate racism hold sway.

In the 1960s, when I was in graduate school, the quatrain poems, especially "A Cooking Egg" and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," were widely studied and admired for their condensation and reinvention of so much difficult classical source material. But reading the quatrain poems here with fresh eyes, and noting that those grotesque mechanized humans who look and behave like zoo animals have names like "Apeneck Sweeney," "Rachel née Rabinovitch," and "Sir Ferdinand Klein," I find myself less than enchanted.

The hundred-odd pages of "Uncollected Poems" contain passages like the following from "Ballade pour la grosse Lulu":

The Outlook gives an interview
An interview from Booker T.
Entitled 'Up from Possum Stew!'
Or 'How I set the nigger free!'

This dates from Eliot's student days (1911), but after all, so does "Prufrock." And the race-baiting doesn't disappear: Here is "Dirge," a 1921 draft for *The Waste Land*, whose first stanza reads:

Full fathom five your Bleistein lies
Under the flatfish and the squids.
Graves' Disease in a dead jew's eyes!
When the crabs have eat the lids.
Lower than the wharf rats dive
Though he suffer a sea-change
Still expensive rich and strange.

Add to such tasteless passages the youthful pornographic King Bolo poems, originally sent in letters to Conrad Aiken and other friends, which take up more than 40 pages of Volume Two, as well as the (to me) embarrassing love poems Eliot evidently wrote to his wife in his last years, and for which the editors depend on the fair copies in *Valerie's Own Book*—poems that contain lines like *My fingers move softly below, to her navel / And touch the delicate down beneath her navel / coming to rest on the hair between her thighs*—and one is left wondering how Eliot himself would have felt about this "complete" edition of his poetry.

In a few cases, he registered his disapproval: "Defence of the Islands," for example, which is the first poem included under "Occasional Verses," was written in 1940 at the request of E. McKnight Kauffer, who was then working for Britain's Ministry of Information. Eliot explained to his friend John Hayward that this "collection of captions" would appear as an inscription "to go round the walls of a room of war photographs for the New York [World's] Fair," and the headnote to "Defence"

tells us that Eliot did want to preserve this piece because it was written just after the evacuation of Dunkirk and commemorates that tragedy. But a year later, he wrote Hayward, "I was disconcerted to find it featured as a *poem*." And again in 1953, "I have always declined to republish these lines as they are not self-explanatory, and furthermore, I did not intend them to be considered as poetry. They are merely a kind of prose commentary on a series of photographs of the war effort in Britain."

I cite these remarks from the Ricks-McCue commentary: The editors are obviously well aware of Eliot's feelings. Their case for inclusion is that any poetic scrap Eliot wrote in the course of his life is germane to the *oeuvre*, that we may learn something about that oeuvre from reading even the most minor bits and pieces. My own preference would have been to move the relevant textual notes now in Volume Two to the first volume, and in exchange move the "Occasional Verses" and "Uncollected Poems" to Volume Two, alongside *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* and the "Improper Rhymes." The translation of St. John Perse's *Anabasis* (in Volume Two) might be omitted altogether, since translation is, after all, another story and belongs, perhaps more properly, with Eliot's critical prose, especially his essays on Paul Valéry. And it would be good to make clear that Volume Two is secondary, a volume for specialists, rather like one of those side-rooms at the Louvre or the Uffizi where lesser paintings or small studies by the masters are shown.

As it stands, I fear, Volume One will not enhance Eliot's reputation in America. Yes, the wonderful poems are here in all their glory: No other poet of the 20th century has written lines more memorable than the concluding ones of "Prufrock":

We have lingered in the chambers of
the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red
and brown
Till human voices wake us, and
we drown.

Or as rhythmically daring as these lines from "Gerontion":

I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving
a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought.

But the nasty streak that runs through the "Uncollected Poems"—and even some of the collected ones—remains problematic, reminding us that Eliot was a profoundly elitist poet, one with a marked distaste for the lower classes, especially those of its members who were Jews, Irishmen, Eastern Europeans, blacks, and for that matter, women. Woe to the poor little typist who, in the first draft of "The Fire Sermon," "lays out squalid food in tins."

It is one of the ironies of literary history that Eliot's friend Ezra Pound, a poet who was to be so severely judged for his own brand of antisemitism, had no such contempt for the lower classes. Pound's solution, so far as ordinary people were concerned, was to mythologize them, to make them part of his grand classical-Confucian design. For Eliot, the only poetic solution—a solution found, after the poet's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism, in *Ash Wednesday* and the *Quartets*—was to eliminate the real people completely: *A people without history / Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern / Of timeless moments.* ◆

B&A

Moorish Dreams

Considering the evidence of Islamic Spain.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise
Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain
by Darío Fernández-Morera
ISI Books, 376 pp., $29.95

The author of this volume—a professor of Spanish and Portuguese studies at Northwestern—wrote it with provocative intent. But whether *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* will stimulate the academic and media debate he desires cannot be predicted. Darío Fernández-Morera's arguments are undermined by the stridency of some of them, the novelty of others, and, for close readers, his failure to resolve ambiguities in Spanish Islamic history. He promises not to "pass judgment on today's Muslims, Jews, or Christians, or on their religions," a pledge coming after his opening promise to "demystify Islamic Spain." And he "advises readers to be cautious and keep in mind the differences that exist between the medieval and the modern worlds of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity." But he fails to do so himself.

It is undeniable that, among *bien-pensant* commentators, it has become habitual to romanticize the lives of local Muslims, Jews, and Christians during the nearly 800 years from the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula by Muslim Berbers in 711 to the fall of the last Spanish Islamic state, in Granada in 1492. The social arrangements that existed then are usually described as *convivencia*, a term to which the author returns repeatedly and unfavorably.

Fernández-Morera is touchy about that, and about other items in the contemporary academic vocabulary. He has fashioned as a usage "Christian Greek Roman Empire" to refer to the Byzantine territories in the Middle East and North Africa that Muslim armies subdued before their conquest of Spain. Byzantine power was also influential in pre-Muslim Spain, but Fernández-Morera appears intent on exaggerating it. Spain was

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mainly part of the Western Roman Empire. The author has also committed his own form of retrospective idealization in his treatment of the Christian Visigoths, a Germanic tribe who ruled Spain (originally as vassals of Rome) before the arrival of the Muslims. He evokes Visigothic Spain as a brilliant civilization, although he admits that the Visigoths were less than admirable in their treatment of the Jews among them.

The narrative here describes both Islamic and Christian states in medieval Spain as highly stratified. In Islamic territory, Muslims were supreme and the two non-Muslim "protected" communities—Jews and Christians—were subordinated, except when the necessities of the Islamic rulers required some relief of that humiliation, usually in individual cases. Generally, Muslim rule was strict in administering relations between the dominant faith and minority believers. Jihad was a constant—as was, from the Christian side, the military effort to regain control of the land, known as the *Reconquista*. Slavery was a well-established institution in Muslim Spain, and many prominent Muslims were descendants of converts to Islam or slaves granted their freedom.

Medieval Spain was *not* a modern state. That should be obvious.

Fernández-Morera correctly criticizes Anglo-Saxon academics for their poor knowledge of Spanish sources. He is effective in describing beheadings, massacres, destruction of churches, and other atrocious acts committed by Muslim rulers. But even he stipulates that "Islamic Spain enjoyed no harmonious *convivencia*; rather, Muslims, Christians, and Jews had a precarious coexistence." He returns to this admission near the close by declaring, "In Islamic Spain there was no tolerant *convivencia*, but a *precaria coexistencia*." This seems a manipulation of words: *convivencia* and coexistence are not so different from one another as to be necessarily opposed.

Between these reworded appreciations of the complexity of Spanish Islam, Fernández-Morera commits himself to unexpected polemics, occasionally contradicting himself in condemnation. While he affirms that Muslims adopted Greek science, technology, and philosophy, he complains that they ignored Greek "*sculpture, painting, drama, narrative, and lyric*" (his italics) because of religious prohibitions. Yet he repeatedly discounts Muslim poetry as an erotic product of moral laxity. Aesthetic achievements, he says, do not reflect the life of the mass of people. But that was true no less of classical Greece and the Roman dominions than of Islamic Spain. And one would not imagine, from reading this work, that Spanish Muslim literature and philosophy were influential among Jews and Christians inside, and outside, the peninsula.

The author is casual in his discussion of unpleasant aspects of the history of Christendom, deriding "the ubiquitous Spanish Inquisition!" as a topic and referring to the "so-called Dark Ages." Throughout, he endeavors to discredit the 12th-century Spanish Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (known to the West as Averroës) mainly because he served as an Islamic law judge, which, Fernández-Morera alleges, is ignored by "some scholars today . . . who deal with him as the great and enlightened philosopher." As he treats Averroës, his tone becomes increasingly insulting.

Fernández-Morera arrives at a dangerous juncture when he takes up the position of Jews in Islamic Spain. As non-Muslims, Jews were subject to restrictions on their public life, but "It is true … that the Jewish community experienced better living conditions under Spain's Muslim conquerors than under the Catholic Visigoths. It is also true that, as a result, for some centuries Andalusian Jewry thrived, producing a brilliant cultural output." Nevertheless, "none of this meant that Islamic Spain represented a beacon of tolerance." Once again, a verbal artifice is at work.

The subject of Jews in medieval Spain leads Fernández-Morera to repeat accusations that, resenting their treatment by the Visigoths, the Jewish community supported the Islamic takeover of most of Spain and even guarded occupied cities for the Muslims. The Jews, he says, "continued to collaborate with the Muslim rulers," providing a counterweight to the majority of Christian subjects. But in pursuit of this curious allegation, Fernández-Morera, as he does with Averroës, does not hesitate to criticize the Islamic philosopher's contemporary, the great Andalusian rabbi Moses Maimonides, for his adherence to "exclusionary" laws similar to those imposed by Muslims and Christians. Religious restrictions on social interaction among Muslims, Jews, and Christians (in the view of Fernández-Morera) are definitive proof that *convivencia* is a myth. Thus, if medieval Spain, both Muslim and Christian, was lacking in modern tolerance, Fernández-Morera would seem to find equal blame among all who lived there.

When he turns to the conditions under which Christians lived, he reveals discomforting aspects of Visigothic rule. Unlike the Muslims, who taxed and employed Jews without seeking their conversion to Islam, the Visigoths intended "to make [the Jewish community] disappear." Visigothic laws against Jews included bans on performing circumcisions, practicing their dietary laws, or keeping books (such as the Talmud) considered inimical to Christianity. But here, too, the author insists that the removal of Visigothic anti-Jewish laws by Muslims "did not contribute to harmonious *convivencia*; the best that could be expected was some kind of grudging coexistence."

In choosing to handle a historical issue for which a scalpel would be the ideal imaginary tool, the author wields a metaphorical broadaxe, and his ire extends in many directions. Moreover, there are many missing pieces in this mosaic of Islamic Spain. But one question occurs: To defend the world today from the threat of radical Islam, do we need to dig up and scourge, in medieval style, the bones of Averroës? ♦

B&A

Jane for Moderns

In translating 'Pride and Prejudice,' it helps to understand it.

BY ANN MARLOWE

Eligible is one of more than a hundred reworkings of *Pride and Prejudice* listed on Goodreads and it's part of a recent publishing enterprise, The Austen Project, which has paired six Austen novels with six contemporary novelists. (None of the four released so far has been a critical success.) When a novel is fair game for retelling, it's entered a special domain, where the bar is both higher and lower than other fiction. On the one hand, no one can cavil with the basic premise; on the other, you had better be able to add something fresh.

In some respects, Curtis Sittenfeld had an easy task: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is the most mythic of Austen's novels, echoing Cinderella (the sisters and the high-born suitor who chooses the hidden gem) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (the witty, bickering lovers). In a poll a dozen years ago it was chosen the second-best-loved novel in Great Britain, after *The Lord of the Rings*. But the problems with *Eligible* are the author's lack of passion for the story and the quality of her prose, which are surely related. Jane Austen's novel is structured in 61 short chapters and tallies just 99,000 words. *Eligible* takes 181 chapters to retell the story, and all too many are the writerly equivalent of those cardboard-like rice cakes some well-meaning parents feed their toddlers.

Maybe Curtis Sittenfeld wasn't a natural choice for this task. *Prep*, the only one of her four previous novels I've read, is a big, thumping, maximalist book whose strength is its immediacy and devastating social detail. Still, a voluble, underedited take on *Pride and Prejudice* could have worked if it were as heartfelt and energetic as *Prep*. But something has gone very wrong here. Perhaps Sittenfeld believed she was echoing Austen's formality and precision, but there is a lot of clumsy, unlovable exposition in *Eligible*. She misunderstands the cadence of Austen's sentences, which were Latinate, and the art of using long clauses gracefully eludes her:

> The eldest and second eldest of the five Bennet sisters had lived in New York for the last decade and a half; it was due to their father's health scare that they had abruptly, if temporarily, returned to Cincinnati.
>
> . . . Almost immediately, a maelstrom of activity was swirling. The following evening, while it was still afternoon in Los Angeles, Liz, Jane, and Chip participated via speakerphone from Liz's apartment in a conversation with both Chip's agent, whose name was David Scanlon, and the *Eligible* producer with whom Chip had discussed Jane, whose name was Anne Lee.

The dialogue is a little better, but the author doesn't seem sufficiently engaged with her characters, who in *Pride and Prejudice* are mainly revealed through speech. Sittenfeld does good, if not particularly imaginative, work with Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, and is best at reimagining the sullen, studious sister Mary—though she stops short of the kind of sympathy that would have opened up the novel in a new way. Jane remains the lovely cipher she is in the original. Lizzie is the big problem here: literal and rude without being funny, pedestrian without the original's refreshing, down-to-earth sensibility. When the original Lizzie Bennet banters with Fitzwilliam Darcy, she's like a good psychoanalyst speaking with a patient. She takes up and makes him hear the absurdities and neuroses in his speech.

Eligible
by Curtis Sittenfeld
Random House, 512 pp., $28

Changing, or eliminating, minor characters in a rewrite or adaptation for film can be like randomly yanking a part out of a car engine. More than you'd guess goes wrong when Sittenfeld transforms Darcy's aunt (Lady Catherine de Bourgh) into a celebrated feminist thinker, modeled on Gloria Steinem, who plays no role in the Liz/Darcy romance and has nothing to do with Mister Collins. Indeed, we lose the dark humor of Mister Collins's flattery of his patroness and the sense of misery in Charlotte Lucas's marriage. We also lose an articulation of the opposition to the Liz/Darcy union, which scarcely exists in Sittenfeld's version.

There's something else. Lady Catherine de Bourgh functions in the original as a counterweight to Lizzie, an example of a brave, intelligent woman, prohibited from a career, who turns her considerable abilities to trivial targets and contemptible ends. In the incendiary final confrontation between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth Bennet, where Lizzie trounces the older woman's insistence on aristocratic order and arranged marriages with ruthless, lawyerly logic, Jane Austen forces her heroine's hand and creates an extraordinary moment in cultural history: "I have not been used to submit to any person's whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment. . . . *That* will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on *me*."

When Lizzie concludes—"I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to *you*, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me"—we hear the spirit that runs through the Declaration of Independence, which was just 37 years old when Austen published. Curtis Sittenfeld may feel we live in degraded times, and her use of the culture of reality TV to frame her retelling is doubtless meant by way of criticism. But *Pride and Prejudice* is not a cynical book; it's a revolutionary book, and a rewrite that doesn't capture, and renew, its earnestness isn't worthy of the name. ♦

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B&A

People's Monstrosities

The archaeology of Soviet architecture.

BY J.P. O'MALLEY

Palace of the Republic, East Berlin

In his concluding chapter, Owen Hatherley cites a passage from Alexander Herzen's *From the Other Shore* (1851), which argued that ideals and aspirations, as they float around in our minds, don't tend to take the same shape when they metamorphose into the material world. Herzen, a political theorist of 19th-century Russia, wholly distrusted the idea that human suffering and appalling cruelty were justifiable actions worth taking to bring about a utopian future.

The Bolsheviks stood at the opposite side of this ideological spectrum. When grabbing power from the provisional government in Russia in 1917, they believed a Communist revolution—perhaps the most ambitious experiment in social engineering ever witnessed in human history—could deliver a world where social justice would arrive in abundance, camaraderie of fellow man would be the norm, and intellectual/artistic ideas would flow as naturally as water amongst the peasant classes, who would eventually overthrow the bourgeois and create a classless society.

Landscapes of Communism
A History Through Buildings
by Owen Hatherley
New Press, 624 pp., $35

Unfortunately, the opposite happened: Free speech was curtailed, state terror and murder intensified, and anyone with notions of individual liberty was likely to be imprisoned for life or executed. By 1921, a new autocracy had replaced the old czarist regime, and Lenin stated—without irony in his *The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism*—that when the Bolsheviks overthrew capitalism on a global scale, gold would be used "for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of some of the largest cities in the world." Three years later, Leon Trotsky declared in *Literature and Revolution* that communist "life in the future will not be monotonous."

Owen Hatherley continually fixates on this distinctive, idiosyncratic tic of Bolshevism: the transformation of infrastructure into an epic narrative where the so-called scientific laws of history would prevail. Communism always dwelt on the notion that mythology and symbolism were just as important as events in the real world. So it's hardly surprising that buildings and monuments in the Soviet Union were purposely built by a totalitarian regime that always reminded its subjects that they were working towards a utopian future, where posterity would flourish and prosper.

If it took millions of deaths for this idea to be achieved—well, that was a sacrifice the Bolsheviks were more than willing to make. Futurism and a very distinctive vision of modernity, which sought to disown the past and look towards an imagined paradise, became intrinsic to the physical, intellectual, economic, and architectural structures of Soviet communism.

Landscapes of Communism seeks to understand how life in the Soviet states operated culturally, socially, and politically by asking the following question: What do Communist buildings tell us about Communist societies?

It also asks: What sort of cities did Communist governments construct? Was it all as gray and miserable as the buildings, at first glance, suggest? And if not, what kind of interesting legacies did Soviet communism leave behind?

Some of the places Hatherley visits include public libraries throughout the Soviet bloc; art-house cinemas and milk bars in 1960s Poland, where surrealism almost became a standard decorative form; television towers in Moscow and Vilnius, which became monuments of modern mass media; the brutalist apartment complexes of Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania, where

PROBST / ULLSTEIN BILD / GETTY

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society more closely resembled North Korea than Russia; and the metro stations of Moscow, which Hatherley believes are the one specimen of Soviet architecture and public infrastructure superior to anything built in the West.

Hatherley's prose style is a strange hybrid: He mixes an informal first-person diary tone with highbrow political and historical analysis. Sometimes, however, this doesn't work so well, and his writing descends into casual journalese. But this is only a minor problem in an engaging work from an erudite writer who knows his modern European history.

In 1997, as a teenager, I took my first trip across the region, by train. It was a glorious time to visit the former Soviet empire: The countries had only recently emerged from the rusted barriers of the Iron Curtain, and as Hatherley suggests, you really do need to visit a country, and interact with its people, before you can start making pertinent observations about its society, cultural practices, and social norms. In the West, in particular, we've become accustomed to viewing the history of Communist societies through simple soundbites and clichéd images: brutalist tower blocks, the gulags, jokes about substandard Soviet cars.

Of course, there is truth in these stereotypes: The spatial hierarchies of High Stalinism or Ceausescu's Romania were fully as grotesque and obscene as they appear at first glance.

But the immense housing estates built by successive Soviet governments were (so Hatherley argues) the embodiment of egalitarian living—as were the theaters, squares, public canteens, and cinemas constructed throughout Eastern Europe during the Soviet era. He has the sense, as a socialist and grandson of British Communists, not to romanticize these totalitarian-Communist regimes. But traveling through the former Soviet states, with a degree of empathy and historical objectivity, the author puts these grotesque architectural remains in a balanced, consistent, and illuminating perspective. ♦

B&A

The English Look

George Romney, portraitist of an age.

BY EDWARD SHORT

In *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1997), his study of English culture in the 18th century, John Brewer made a vital point when he argued that, although we might look back on the culture of the Georgians and see an enviable "order, stability and decorum," the Georgians themselves considered it "modern, not traditional," proof "that their society and way of life [were] changing." And he concluded that what most characterized this admirable culture was not "respectability or elegance" but "dynamism, variety and exuberance."

To immerse oneself in this three-volume catalogue is to see the force of Brewer's point, for no painter captures the "dynamism, variety and exuberance" of his Georgian subjects better than George Romney (1734-1802), who, together with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, was one of 18th-century England's greatest painters.

Alex Kidson's catalogue has many virtues: It corrects erroneous, and reveals hitherto unknown, attributions; it chronicles how commissions were carried out; and it meticulously trawls account books, ledgers, sketchbooks, newspaper reports, reviews, and the writings of Romney's contemporaries to supply the contemporary background for an oeuvre that spans nearly 2,000 portraits. But it also shows how Romney proved Brewer's point by bringing an altogether new inventiveness and élan to portraiture. As Kidson has written in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Romney was … an artist who, under the cover of his professional image, experimented, developed, and reinvented himself continuously, and who in retrospect appears by temperament one of the first great modernists in British art."

George Romney
A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings
by Alex Kidson
Paul Mellon Centre, 960 pp., $350

After the art dealer Joseph Duveen resuscitated Romney's reputation in the early 20th century sufficiently to make him appealing to deep-pocketed collectors, his reputation languished, and it has only been Kidson's sedulous, exacting work that has restored the painter to his proper place as the "bridging figure between the classicism of Reynolds and the brilliant informality of [Thomas] Lawrence."

The autodidact son of a Lancashire joiner, Romney chose to become an artist after reading Shakespeare and Milton, the grandeur of whose work would make an abiding impression on him. Indeed, one early augury of the portraits to come was Romney's striking portrayal of Lear stripping off his clothes on the heath—an apt theme for a portraitist keen on making portraiture truly revelatory. Although taught by a painter from Kendal named Christopher Steele—who bequeathed to his apprentice a delight in bold, dramatic color—Romney remained aloof from other artists. After working briefly with Steele in York, he returned to Kendal to launch his own career.

Wedding his landlady's daughter after she nursed him back to health from a fever, and bore him a son, Romney would leave his wife and children behind when he set off for London. (Apparently, he had been told by Reynolds that "marriage spoilt an

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artist.") His own absentee marriage notwithstanding, Romney always portrayed the marriages of his sitters with insightful sympathy. Still, to beguile the guilt he felt for living apart from his family, Romney painted incessantly, conducting seven 90-minute sittings per day and plunging into portraits without any preliminary sketching. Maintaining this manic schedule throughout the 1770s, '80s, and '90s made him the most fashionable painter in London, where he lived, for many years, in Cavendish Square; but it also wrecked his health. Leaving London, he returned to Kendal a broken man, though his wife took back the prodigal and nursed him for the last three years of his life. That his son (who wrote his biography) had nothing but praise for his father shows that Romney, however absentee, was not unloved.

Like all proper artists, Romney was continually dissatisfied with his art. His friend and fellow artist John Flaxman recognized that the painter's "heart and soul were engaged in the pursuit of historical and ideal painting." When Romney traveled to revolutionary France and saw the variety of historical themes that Jacques-Louis David had been commissioned to paint, his heart sank: This was the sort of grand, visionary painting that he had wished to produce himself. Nevertheless, if the portraits gathered here show Romney's yearning to transcend the limits of portraiture, they also show that it was only within those limits that the artist in him shone.

Indeed, it is his very impatience with conventional portraiture that gives Romney's best portraits their distinction. In his great portrait of Warren Hastings, for example, we see the onetime governor-general of Bengal in 1795, seven years after he was impeached in the House of Lords and tried by Edmund Burke and his Whig friends in the House of Commons. Of course, Hastings was acquitted on all counts, though he left his trial a ruined man: The £80,000 he had brought back with him from India—a tidy sum in Georgian England—had vanished in court costs. All he had left by the time Romney painted him

THE PRINT COLLECTOR / GETTY

'William Cowper' (1792)

was his disillusionment, which made this once-redoubtable grandee not so much bitter as baffled that he should ever have imagined the world's prizes worth pursuing.

Then there is Romney's pastel portrait of William Cowper, which shows the poet gazing away from the artist at something beyond the canvas—proof that he, like Romney, was preoccupied with yearnings that the surface of life, no matter how enticing, could never satisfy. What gives this study in desolation added poignancy is Cowper's conviction that he was irredeemably damned: In what amounts to an anti-portrait, his coat blends indistinguishably with the pastel's background, and his shirt and nightcap do little but isolate his near-disembodied head, with its great wondering eyes and disconsolate, quizzical lips. If Romney's Warren Hastings shows a public man come to grief, his William Cowper shows a fellow artist who has never known anything but grief—for Romney, a sympathetic soul.

Another example of this ability to defy the conventions of portraiture can be seen in what Alex Kidson rightly regards as "one of the greatest self-portraits of the 18th century," now in the National Portrait Gallery. In this riveting *aperçu*, Romney leaves everything unfinished but the sullen, brooding gaze he turns to the viewer, as much an aesthetic gauntlet as a *cri de coeur*. Here is the artist weary of the "shackles" of portraiture, but also the proud, unhappy man contemptuous of the fashionable world on which so much of his livelihood depended.

Nevertheless, to look at these portraits is to see how the artist in Romney sought to make portraiture serve his art. His wonderful depiction of Lady Louisa Lennox, for example, captures not only a fascinating individual—a strong, intelligent, subtle woman of complex beauty—but an entire social order, founded on hierarchical rank and subordination, but also on a deep attachment to the English countryside. The wife of Lord George Henry Lennox, who had served in the

Emma Hart as Ariadne (1785)

Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante (1785)

Seven Years' War and later became a member of Parliament for the family borough of Chichester, Lady Louisa is shown dressed in riding attire sitting with a spaniel on her lap, completely at one with her rural setting. Here are aristocratic beauty and grace removed from their usual opulent settings, but also a certain simplicity, even sweetness.

William Cobbett might have regarded the nobility as "these mean, these cruel, these cowardly, these carrion, these dastardly reptiles." But Romney, putting them before his viewers in a favorable though never sycophantic light, humanizes them.

Those who maintain that women in Georgian England were marginalized victims, cowering under their fathers and husbands, must come away from Romney's art impressed by how well he bundles away this patriarchal tyranny: None of the wives and daughters here have the least look of victimhood about them. The marital portraits—whether of Mr. and Mrs. William Lindow or Sir Christopher and Lady Elizabeth Sykes—exhibit bonds of affection and esteem. In the charming "promenade" portrait of the Sykeses, for instance, it is Lady Elizabeth who leads the way, not her "stiff and business-like husband," as Kidson puts it, who follows his lady's lead with grateful docility.

Another myth exploded here is that 18th-century women were overwhelmed not only by unwanted pregnancies but unwanted children as well. Page after page of these volumes confute that claim by showing how philoprogenitive the mothers were who sat for Romney with their children. If one of the ways that Georgian portrait painters endeared themselves to their upper-class clients was to enter into what truly mattered to them—whether their families or their estates—Romney obliged his sitters by fully entering into their delight in their children. And in gratifying his clients' demand for portraits of children, Romney transformed not only the mother-and-child portrait but the family portrait as well.

Kidson's catalogue includes all of the portraits that Romney painted of his favorite sitter, Emma Hart, later Lady Hamilton, the seductively beautiful daughter of an illiterate blacksmith who would go on to enrapture Admiral Nelson. Emma was introduced to Romney's studio in 1782 when she was 16 and he was 47: Over the next four years, she had nearly 200 sittings with Romney and appears in 28 portraits. For Romney, as Kidson writes, Emma "rekindled the possibilities of portraiture itself." Here we see Emma as Circe, Mirth, Nature, Calypso, Absence, a Sybil, a Vestal, St. Cecilia, "Spinstress," and a Bacchante.

Unfortunately, after Nelson was killed at Trafalgar, and the government refused to give her a pension, Emma ran up debts she couldn't repay and died of cirrhosis in a Calais boarding house—a melancholy end to a most improbable life, though it would have confirmed Romney's sense of the transience of human beauty, which he captured so splendidly in his incomparable portraits. ♦

LEFT, FINE ART IMAGES / HERITAGE / GETTY; RIGHT, PRINT COLLECTOR / GETTY

A Seventies Paradox

Hard times yield good TV, bad movies.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The last time America felt this bad about itself was the 1970s, and perhaps the only enduringly positive result of that time was how that rotten mood led to some genuinely great moviemaking. One could say the same today about television, and indeed the dark, anxious, impending-doom-like spirit of the great cable TV programs mirrors the pessimism of the present just as Hollywood reflected the Vietnam-Watergate-OPEC-inflation days.

Perhaps only one medium at a time can capture the zeitgeist, because Hollywood is now as awash in escapist banality as television was during the previous American low. That banality extends even to earnest efforts to evoke the kinds of movies Hollywood used to make in the 1970s.

The new George Clooney-Julia Roberts picture *Money Monster* was directed by Jodie Foster, whose participation in the great 1976 Martin Scorsese film *Taxi Driver* nearly changed history when it inspired the near-assassination of Ronald Reagan. It is not Scorsese to whom the movie pays homage but rather Sidney Lumet, who directed *Dog Day Afternoon* in 1975 and *Network* in 1976. *Money Monster* is, like *Dog Day Afternoon*, the story of a hostage-taking in New York City that unfolds over the course of a few hours; and like *Network*, it is a partly satirical portrait of an unserious television culture and its terrible impact on people's daily lives.

These are good movies to emulate. But if you're going to emulate a good movie, or make any kind of movie, the movie you make ought to be good, too. *Money Monster* isn't. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Money Monster
Directed by Jodie Foster

The Nice Guys
Directed by Shane Black

First, Foster asks us to believe that a weird-looking guy carrying a package could somehow sneak through security up the elevators and right onto the set of a live cable-television program dedicated to stock picks—all the while carrying a gun and a Semtex-lined vest. We are then asked to believe that he will force the vest onto the person of the Jim Cramer simulacrum played by George Clooney. Our hostage-taker is a working-class kid from Brooklyn, but he knows enough about the inner workings of television that he can tell when the network feed is and isn't running and how to force the show's director, Julia Roberts, to keep him on the air while he berates Clooney for giving him a bad stock tip.

Clooney is supposed to be playing a ridiculous, cynical clown who doesn't understand that people are risking their financial futures on his recommendations. But Clooney doesn't know how to look silly, and just looks silly trying to look silly. And, of course, it turns out that his character isn't really the villain but just another chump in the Machiavellian hands of an evil billionaire—who tanked his own company's stock in order to make money off a strike in a South African mine. Or something.

I'd go on about how lousy this movie is, and immoral, but the point here is that it's just astoundingly false. No such thing could ever happen, and the ludicrousness of the proceedings just grows as Clooney and his kidnapper exit the studio to confront the billionaire. The opposite was true of *Dog Day Afternoon*, which was based on a true story about a married Brooklyn bank robber who was stealing money to buy his boyfriend a sex-change operation. It felt like a documentary—and so, in its own odd way, did *Network*, even though it's deliberately outrageous and ends with the greatest punch line in movie history ("This was the story of Howard Beale, the first known instance of a man who was killed because he had lousy ratings"). *Money Monster* is what would happen if Robert Reich (who appears in the movie's final minute) drank a bottle of crème de menthe and then wrote a screenplay about Wall Street.

Hollywood's other recent 1970s fiasco is *The Nice Guys*, a misbegotten attempt at a buddy-comedy private-eye flick set in 1977 Los Angeles. Cowriter/director Shane Black doesn't know whether he's making a parody of such films or an homage to them, and the result is as soft, lumpy, flavorless, and rotted as a three-week-old cantaloupe.

Ryan Gosling plays the world's worst detective and gives an astonishingly ill-conceived performance—at one point, the movie stops for a minute while, seeing a dead body, Gosling does a full-on Lou Costello imitation. Lou Costello was bad enough; having to see him copied is like entering the ninth circle of Hell.

Gosling's Bud Abbott here is Russell Crowe, who is fitfully amusing but who looks as though he's still in shock from the fact that he derailed his career by throwing a phone at a desk clerk's head in the lobby of a chic New York hotel in 2005. But then, this is not the right era for Crowe. He should be in better movies than this; indeed, an actor as fearless as he is would have been a perfect Hollywood star of the 1970s. He should go into television. But if he does sign up for *True Detective: Season 3*, Ryan Gosling must not be allowed to do it with him. ♦

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

"Mullah Mansour . . . was killed in a U.S. drone strike over the weekend in southwestern Pakistan. . . . His killing could precipitate another battle over leadership, one that could cause the Taliban to fragment further."

—Wall Street Journal, *May 23, 2016*

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TOP SECRET
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(cont'd)

Ina's lemon chicken breasts.

HAQQANI: Lucky you. Not one of my twelve wives even knows who The Barefoot Contessa is!

HAIBATULLAH: Ina Garten is the best. I own most of her books.

YAQOOB: I am sorry to interrupt, my brothers, but shouldn't we be discussing who will succeed our beloved Mullah Mansour?

MANAN: Don't look at me! Just because my brother was Mullah Omar does not mean I can fill his slippers. I can't even fill a bottle of sheep's milk without spilling half of it!

HAQQANI: So that's why there's a milk shortage? You know I need that milk for my ulcer!

HAIBATULLAH: Again with the ulcer.

HAQQANI: I'm serious! There is no way I can take command in my sensitive condition. Remember when I thought your snoring was the sound of a drone? I was in cot for two days! We need a leader who is young.

YAQOOB: Oh great, that would be me. May I remind you of my dust allergy? And you know where there's lots of dust, don't you? In caves!

MANAN: Are you really allergic to dust? Are you sure it isn't pollen?

YAQOOB: Nope, it's dust. And dust mites. I have a note from my doctor right here. Oh, wait, that's a note about my irritable bowel syndrome.

HAIBATULLAH: You should get one of those dust mite covers for your mattress. I hear they sell them just over the border in Pakistan.

YAQOOB: Nice try.

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