the weekly Standard

DON'T CRY FOR HER
NOEMIE EMERY

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Trump Crossing the Potomac

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Lego Offensive

Readers who regularly partake of our abundant offerings at weeklystandard.com will have to forgive us for shamelessly ripping off what follows from our colleague Jonathan V. Last's online update last week of the latest p.c. doings at the Lego Group, which we thought was too piquant not to share with magazine readers.

Barbarian

Lego, in case you haven't heard, has decided to pull all its advertising in London's *Daily Mail*. That paper has been targeted by an activist group called Stop Funding Hate, whose latest campaign is to shame companies into not advertising in three British papers: the *Sun*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Daily Express*.

And what, you might ask, is the "hate" being spread by the three targeted newspapers? All three are skeptical of the left's open-borders immigration policy. That's it. That's the "hate."

Not that we should be surprised that the Lego Group is willing to be mau-maued. They've been invested in liberal virtue signaling for a long time. In 2014, the company discontinued selling Lego sets with the Shell Oil logo in them, over opposition to Arctic drilling. This year they're marketing a mini-fig of a stay-at-home hipster dad with a high-powered corporate wife. Like good Scandinavians, the Lego folks want you to know they have all the right opinions.

Not that it's ever enough. In 2013 they were attacked by activist groups for a Star Wars model of Jabba the Hutt's palace that was deemed insensitive to Muslims. In 2014 they introduced a figure in a wheelchair—and were criticized because the figure in the wheelchair was an older man and not a young child, thereby reinforcing ageist stereotypes and denying disabled children a role model. The same year the company debuted a set featuring women as super-smart scientists. Professional feminists were not placated. Here's one in the *Guardian* attacking the Lego Lady Scientist set:

Elderly man in wheelchair, above, and diner waitress, below

> I had a look at the other new figures that make up series 11 of the Lego minifigures range. There are 16 in total. Male figures include a Constable, a Barbarian, a Mountain Climber (very heroic he is too) and an Island Warrior. Female figures ... hmm. Lego, you are about to lose a lot of brownie points. Apart from our scientists, there is a "Lady Robot" (who exists mainly to party), a "Pretzel Girl," a "Diner Waitress" (who will boss you about if you don't agree with her recommendation of which burger is best for you), and "Grandma." I am not making those up. Read them again. I cannot tell you how much I wish I was making them up.
>
> Denmark, where Lego is based, is famed for being better at gender equality than most other countries. Yet this year, it has produced a toy range that has traditional alpha male heroes and traditional helpless (and bossy) females. That is undoubtedly damaging to both young boys and young girls, and also to the future of society.

You cannot make this up. In the end, what the Lego-*Daily Mail* story tells us is that the left has learned a great lesson from the gay marriage movement. Same-sex marriage activists won the day by convincing people that opposition to a drastic, undemocratic change in public policy was simple "hate." The transgender project took this line and ran with it; opposing the redefinition of gender so that men can use women's locker rooms and boys can compete on girls' sports teams has been branded as "hate," too. We cannot be far from the moment when favoring an increase in interest

LEGO

What They Were Thinking

NEWSCOM

rates by the Federal Reserve will also be deemed "hate," if the professional left opposes it.

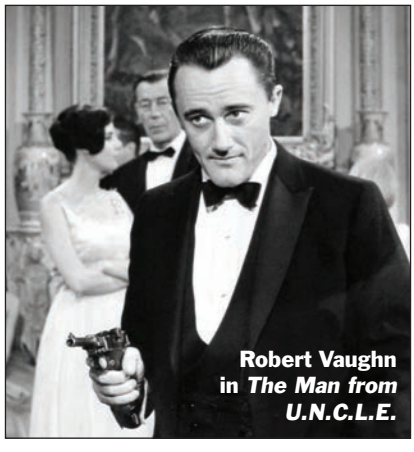
At the end of the day, groups such as Stop Funding Hate aren't actually trying to use market forces to create social change. They're using intimidation to bully businesses in the hopes that the public will get the message, too. By branding policy disagreement as hatred, they're destroying the civility that is the lubricant of all healthy civil societies. And however well meaning its gesture, the Lego Group contributes to this breakdown of civility by going along. ♦

Robert Vaughn, 1932-2016

Baby boomers had reason to feel slightly more decrepit than usual last week when it was learned that Robert Vaughn, the veteran character actor who played the debonair secret agent Napoleon Solo on the popular television series *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1964-68), had died at the age of 83.

Moreover, Vaughn expired from natural causes: He wasn't struck down by a laser beam, or vaporized in an atomic blast, or betrayed by a sultry brunette in a Manhattan penthouse. And adding insult to injury, Vaughn's obituaries reminded boomers that the Scottish actor David McCallum, who played his teenybopper-heartthrob partner Illya Kuryakin, still appears on television, also age 83.

The Man from U.N.C.L.E. was very much a product of its times, the high tide of the Cold War—but with a twist. The popularity of the early James Bond movies had led to a series of knockoffs: the Derek Flint films, starring James Coburn, the Matt Helm movies featuring Dean Martin, and TV shows such as *U.N.C.L.E.* But like the Bond films, the knockoffs of the 1960s were only half-serious: The villains were identifiably bad guys and usually spoke English with an ominous foreign accent. But their nationalities tended to be indeterminate, and their good-guy adversaries went into battle in black tie (or a slim-fitting gray worsted suit in Napoleon Solo's case), with perfectly coiffed hair, an abundance of wisecracks, and an entourage of glamorous women.


Robert Vaughn in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*

VAUGHN: NBC TELEVISION

Only TV's *Get Smart* (1965-70), featuring a clueless/incompetent agent played by a stand-up comedian named Don Adams, played the genre exclusively for laughs.

The Scrapbook would argue that in the midst of all the guffaws and gunfire there was an irony at play. The real Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was no laughing matter, was going on at the time: The first James Bond movie (*Dr. No*) was released the same year (1962) as the Cuban Missile Crisis. And yet, with an exception or two, the villains' identities in these movies and shows were obscure at best. James

Bond's adversaries tended not to be the KGB but power-crazed capitalists in underground complexes; Napoleon Solo's employer, the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement (U.N.C.L.E.), seemed to be a kind of multinational agency like Interpol.

Indeed, Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin were a Hollywood liberal's dream come true: two good-looking secret agents—one American, one Russian—joining forces against predatory businessmen and privatized armies. Just as James Bond rarely mentions Moscow, the men from U.N.C.L.E. were cold warriors in a world without a Cold War. So it's fitting, in a sense, that Robert Vaughn should have died in the same week as the first election in which Democrats discovered that Russians can be the bad guys. ♦

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The Long Haul

My family and I recently moved to Virginia Beach. It is, according to my calculation, the 13th time we've moved since my wife and I were married 20 years ago and the 20th time I've moved in my 43 years.

We've moved for a variety of reasons and in almost every way—by air, land, and sea. We've rented both U-Haul and Penske trucks—from a short 12-footer to a 26-foot Freightliner with attached trailer—for drives across town and across the Southeast. We've moved by boat, shipping our affairs internationally three times. One time, when our lease was up in a neighborhood we liked, we rented the house across the street and simply carried everything over by foot. When we moved from Connecticut to North Carolina and found we couldn't afford to rent a truck, we sold all of our second-hand furniture and shipped the few items we wanted to keep by UPS.

I wish I could say I've learned something profound about moving, but carrying banana boxes of books down slippery stairs or driving an overloaded truck with hot brakes down a mountain doesn't exactly put one in a philosophic state of mind. Seneca is probably right when he tells Lucilius that we travel because we think a change of place will change us for the better. It doesn't. "Though you may cross vast spaces of sea," he writes, "your faults will follow you whithersoever you travel." Moving usually adds a few.

What I *have* learned is that most practical moving advice is, at best, only partially right. *BuzzFeed* posted an article a few years ago offering "33 Moving Tips That Will Make Your Life So Much Easier." This is the first mistake: believing that you can do anything to make moving easier or that there is such a thing as a "smooth move." There's not.

Sure, you could "pack an overnight bag containing all the essentials" so that you have them "within easy access" after the move, but you also have to find it when your house is littered with half-opened boxes.

DAVID CLARK

Leave it at your old place, and you're toast. That's why I like to diversify my essentials across containers. You may not be able to find your toothbrush, but at least there's toilet paper and deodorant.

You can label your boxes, use a color code, and give a map of your new house to people helping you so they know where to put things—all to save time. Just be sure to ignore how much time these preparations took and all the misplaced boxes.

Put your screws in sandwich bags and label those, too. I have. But don't be surprised if you're still somehow a screw short. We've moved our current kitchen table six times and have lost a screw almost every time. Thankfully, it still works and the creaking adds charm.

No matter how small a box you use for books, it will always feel too heavy. Buy bubble wrap, put your wine bottles in socks, and tie everything down in the truck. But if you really don't want anything broken, don't move.

This isn't to say that everything that can go wrong will. That's also false. Most things actually go according to plan in a move. But something always does go wrong—usually when you least expect it and when you are so tired that you are unable to handle it with anything like a "proper perspective." I didn't seriously consider abandoning my family after I jackknifed the car trailer in our driveway just a few months ago, but I did think about shooting our dog when she wouldn't stop barking at the truck.

And if you are moving yourself, expect, too, that there will be a point when you feel you are unable to continue, realizing, of course, in the same instant that there's no turning back. My wife told me it's a little like giving birth. You reach a moment when the only thing you want to do is magically turn back the clock and become unpregnant, and the only thing you can do is push.

I've never seen an article about how to have the "perfect" birth, though I'm sure they exist. Most women know better, I'm guessing. Labor is first about *not losing*—not losing the baby, not losing too much blood—and managing the pain before it is about welcoming a new life into the world.

Maybe moving is also about not losing—not losing too many screws and too much perspective. And once you're done and settled in your new home with your family around you, happy and healthy, you'll slowly forget how painful the whole thing was and think: *I wonder what it's like to live in Antigua.*

Micah Mattix

the weekly Standard

The Trump Administration

Who now gives much thought to the presidency of Warren G. Harding? Who ever did? Not us.

But let us briefly turn our thoughts to our 29th president (while stipulating that we're certainly no experts on his life or times). Here's our summary notion: Warren G. Harding may have been a problematic president. But the Harding administration was in some ways an impressive one, which served the country reasonably well.

It was possible to say, before Warren G. Harding was elected, that he wasn't particularly well-qualified to be president. And he did turn out as president to have, as we say nowadays, some issues. But his administration was stocked with (mostly) well-qualified men who served with considerable distinction.

A president is known by the cabinet he staffs.

Andrew Mellon was a successful Treasury secretary whose tax reforms and deregulatory efforts spurred years of economic growth. Charles Dawes, the first director of the Bureau of the Budget, reduced government expenditures and, helped by Mellon's economic policies, brought the budget into balance. Charles Evans Hughes as secretary of state dealt responsibly with a very difficult world situation his administration had inherited—though in light of what followed in the next decade, one wishes in retrospect for bolder assertions of American leadership, though in those years just after World War I, they would have been contrary to the national mood.

In addition, President Harding's first two Supreme Court appointments—William Howard Taft and George Sutherland—were distinguished ones. And Harding personally did some admirable things: He made pronouncements, impressive in the context of that era, in favor of racial equality; he commuted the wartime prison sentence of the Socialist leader, Eugene V. Debs. In these ways, he contributed to an atmosphere of national healing and civility.

The brief Harding administration—and for that matter the eight years constituting his administration and that of his vice president and successor, Calvin Coolidge—may not have been times of surpassing national greatness. But there were real achievements, especially in the economic sphere; those years were not disastrous; they were not dark times.

President-elect Donald J. Trump probably doesn't intend to model his administration on that of President Warren G. Harding. But he could do worse than reflect on that administration's successes—and also on its failures, particularly the scandals that exploded into public view after Harding's sudden death. These were produced by cronies appointed by Harding to important positions, where they betrayed his trust and tarnished his historical reputation.

Donald Trump manifestly cares about his reputation. He surely knows that reputation ultimately depends on performance. If a Trump hotel and casino is successful, it's not because of the Trump brand—that may get people through the door the first time—but because it provides a worthwhile experience thanks to a good management team, fine restaurants, deft croupiers, and fun shows. If a Trump golf course succeeds, it's because it has been built and is run by people who know something about golf. The failed Trump efforts—from the university to the steaks—seem to have in common the assumption that the Trump name by itself would be enough to carry mediocre or worse enterprises across the finish line.

To succeed in business, the brand only gets you so far. Quality matters. To succeed in the presidency, getting elected only gets you so far. Governing matters.

It would be ironic if Trump's very personal electoral achievement were followed by a mode of governance that restored greater responsibility to the cabinet agencies formally entrusted with the duties of governance. It would be ironic if a Trump presidency also featured a return of authority to Congress, the states, and to other civic institutions. It would be ironic if Trump's victory led not to a kind of American Caesarism but to a strengthening of republican institutions and forms. It would be ironic if the election of Donald J. Trump heralded a return to a kind of constitutional normalcy.

If we are not mistaken, it was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (though sadly unaware of the phenomena of either Warren G. Harding or Donald J. Trump) who made much of the Irony of History. But how Hegelian it would be if the thesis of the Bush and Clinton dynasties,

TRUMP: MICHAEL VADON

followed by the antithesis of a Trump victory over first a Bush and then a Clinton in 2016, were to produce an unanticipated synthesis: a Trump administration marked by the reconstruction of republican normalcy in America. In its own way, that would be a genuine contribution to making America great again.

—William Kristol

A Culture War Casualty

The most crushing defeat for Democrats on November 8 was quite obviously Hillary Clinton's. The party's next most significant loss, however, may well be that of Brad Avakian. He was an obscure candidate for what might seem to be a relatively inconsequential position. But as it turns out, Oregon's secretary of state race provides an instructive lesson about the Democratic party's culture-war extremism.

Avakian briefly gained national headlines last year when, in his capacity as the Oregon commissioner of labor, he fined Aaron and Melissa Klein, the proprietors of Sweet Cakes By Melissa, $135,000 for refusing to bake a cake for a lesbian commitment ceremony. (Gay marriage was not yet legal in Oregon at the time.) The Kleins said they would be happy to serve gay customers, but they drew the line at participating in a specific ceremony contradicting their religious beliefs. What was especially notable about the fine Avakian doled out was its egregiously punitive nature. Owing to public outrage, the Kleins had shuttered their bakery a year and a half earlier. Aaron Klein had then taken a job as a garbageman to support his family.

However, Avakian had his eye on higher office. It was very likely the case that Avakian saw the publicity surrounding his draconian treatment of the Kleins as a launching pad for his campaign to become Oregon's secretary of state. From there it would have been a short hop to governor.

But it didn't work out that way. Avakian didn't just lose his race—it was the first statewide victory for a Republican in the now-solidly blue Beaver State in 14 years. A Republican hadn't been elected secretary of state since 1980. Compounding Avakian's humiliation, Hillary Clinton won the state by 10 points. Merely having a "D" by his name should have dragged him across the finish line.

It helped that Avakian faced a skilled Republican opponent. Dennis Richardson was a respected former gubernatorial candidate who, impressively, garnered a number of high-profile newspaper endorsements. Still, the *Oregonian*'s endorsement of Richardson specifically criticized Avakian for articulating "a more activist role defined more by his borderless ambitions" and further warned about Avakian's promise to abuse the mostly nonpolitical powers of the secretary of state to audit political enemies. They did not specifically ding Avakian for policing thought crimes at Mom-and-Pop bakeries, but given the notoriety the episode earned him, the subtext was there. If Avakian's brand of aggressively enforced identity politics didn't earn him the support of liberal editorial boards or voters in Portland's suburbs, it's hard to imagine it's a winning political platform outside very small, very liberal jurisdictions.

Yet nothing about Avakian's agenda was outside the mainstream of his party. Across the country there were episodes where the Democratic-media-industrial complex wantonly and aggressively tried to undermine religious liberty and enforce the party's intolerant and destructive beliefs about sexual ethics. Across the country, florists, bakers, T-shirt printers, pharmacists, and pizza parlor owners found themselves the object of two-minute-hate campaigns because they dared to believe that the First Amendment spells out a reasonable balance between merely operating a commercial enterprise and being forced to swallow one's religious convictions. All the while, Democrats were too blind to see that they were sending a message to America's Christians: *We're coming for you.*

President Obama came to power ostensibly opposing gay marriage. He leaves office using the force and might of the federal government to push transgender high school locker rooms, oblivious to how such radicalism cuts against Americans' core beliefs. Contrary to the outgoing president's arrogant rhetoric, nothing about cultural change is inevitable. Our culture reflects what we choose to cultivate. The limits of bake-me-a-cake-or-else liberalism have now been revealed. The sooner Democrats come to grips with the unpopularity of their punitive social crusades, the better off their party—and our country—will be.

—Mark Hemingway

Doomed Deal

Will President-elect Donald Trump crash the Iran deal on day one, as he said on the campaign trail? If so, Barack Obama's signature foreign policy initiative, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will melt into air. Obama allies and Iran deal supporters at home and abroad are already showing their anxiety.

The president-elect shouldn't tear up the agreement, argues the National Iranian American Council, a key voice in the administration's deal-promoting echo chamber.

NIAC's Reza Marashi and Trita Parsi wrote last week that it's "in the interest of the United States to build on the Iran nuclear deal to resolve remaining tensions with Iran and help stabilize the Middle East."

The Europeans are also concerned. Last week, EU foreign ministers issued a statement from Brussels. "The upholding of commitments by all sides is a necessary condition to continue rebuilding trust and allow for continued, steady and gradual improvement in relations between the European Union, its member States and Iran."

As we argued in these pages last week, the Iran deal is likely to collapse under its own weight if the incoming administration merely enforces its terms—something the Obama team has conspicuously failed to do. Instead, the Obama White House has bribed Iran, drummed up business for the regime, kept Congress from imposing nonnuclear sanctions, and excused Iranian violations. If the Trump White House simply stops propping up what the president-elect has called the "worst deal ever negotiated," the Iranians are likely to walk.

The art of the bad deal: JCPOA partners in September

What worries the deal's supporters is that the new commander in chief will take an even more aggressive posture and undo with his own hands what he has called a "lopsided" agreement. Some argue that's undesirable, and others impossible.

Senator Bob Corker, for instance, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, suggests that Trump should take a more tempered approach. "I don't think he will tear it up, and I don't think that's the way to start," said Corker, rumored to be in the running for secretary of state. "I think what he should do is build consensus with these other countries that [Iran is] definitely violating the agreement."

Indeed, Iran *is* violating the agreement. Last week, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, noted that Iran had again exceeded its limit of heavy water (used to produce plutonium for nuclear warheads). Certainly the new president should seek to work with the deal's signatories and other allies to build consensus on Iran. However, renegotiating the JCPOA—with a less than helpful Russia and China at the table, never mind Iran itself—involves risks. What if the world's most famous negotiator can't get a better agreement than his predecessor? It would lend weight to the Obama administration's contention that the deal it secured with Iran was the best to be had. Worse, it leaves the new president with egg on his face and someone else's deal in his pocket.

Trump is thus cornered, say Iran deal supporters; he has no choice but to abide by the agreement. The JCPOA is a "multilateral accord," the European Union's head of international affairs, Federica Mogherini, said last week. The JCPOA, she said, was "not concluded with one country or government but was approved by a resolution of the U.N. Security Council, and there is no possibility that it can be changed by a single government."

Actually, that's not true. There is very little to stop the Trump White House from toppling the JCPOA. The United States can reimpose its own nuclear-related sanctions, and more important it can reimpose multilateral sanctions—unilaterally. The means are outlined in Article 37 of the JCPOA and in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which explain how the snapback measures work.

The instrument was designed to take advantage of the United States' veto power at the U.N. Security Council, while sidelining the veto wielded by Iran's two closest allies among the deal's signatories, China and Russia. Let's say Iran is found to be not in compliance with the JCPOA (and it is not, as the IAEA found last week). Any of the signatories can notify the Security Council, at which point the Security Council has 30 days to address the issue. If the concerns are not satisfied, a resolution comes before the Security Council to continue suspending nuclear sanctions on Iran. This is where the power of the veto comes into play—the United States would use its veto power to strike down the measure, at which point all multilateral sanctions would be reimposed. At that stage, Iran almost certainly walks out of the deal.

Iran deal supporters are likely to argue that the Trump White House cannot avail itself of this measure, even though the unilateral trigger on the "snapback" mechanism was how the administration sold the deal to some of its critics. The explanation for why Trump can't use it is likely to be as bizarre and ad hoc as nearly everything that's come out of the Obama administration's Iran echo chamber. But here's the thing—the advocates of the deal, like NIAC and other Obama surrogates, were powerful only because they were plugged into the White House for the last eight years. The "echo chamber" was just a well-funded fiction-writing workshop—as long as it was directed by the president of the United States, it produced what Obama deputy Ben Rhodes calls "narrative." Once cut off from the White House, the echo chamber will simply spin fairy tales that bear no relationship to reality.

Untangling the Obama administration's many myths will be among the multitude of tasks facing the incoming Trump White House. It can start with the simple expedient of enforcing the Iran deal, at which point it will die a quick death.

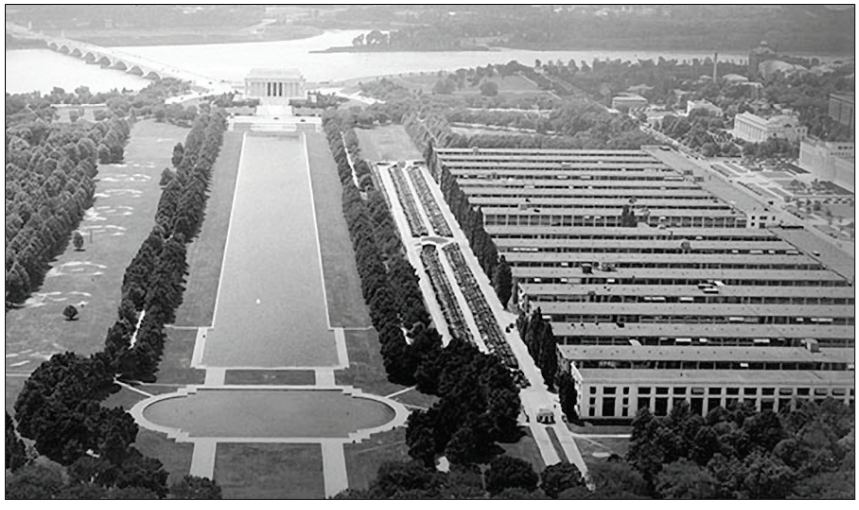
—Lee Smith

NEWSCOM

What Trump Can Learn from Nixon

Presidential power vs. bureaucratic tenacity.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON



The objects of Nixon's ire: the "temporary" naval offices abutting the reflecting pool

After all the wild stories in an unpredictable year, we are now at last moving into a news cycle that is reassuringly predictable, with discoveries as foreseeable and unstoppable as the coming of the cherry blossoms in April or the choking of the Caps in May. Suddenly, we are told, The Presidential Transition Is In Chaos. This is a hardy perennial, or quadrennial, of Washington jibber-jabber, and I don't want to be the little Tootsie Roll floating in the punchbowl who has to point out that every presidential transition, from John Adams through Barack Obama, at one point or another falls into chaos. So I won't.

But history might make a more helpful contribution. We can point out that no matter who ends up manning the White House staff, it will matter less than we think, if only because it can be very difficult for the White House staff to get anything done. And the difficulty embraces the president too.

White House memoirs always tell one or two stories about how irrelevant an executive decision can be. Even if it comes roaring out of the Oval Office, it often falls to rest in the lower reaches of the bureaucracy with a barely audible tinkle. William Safire's great account of his years working for Richard Nixon, *Before the Fall* (1975), offers two instructive examples from early in Nixon's presidency, back to back.

As Pastor Niemöller would have said if he were an organizational consultant, first they came for the Tea-Tasters. The federal Board of Tea-Tasters was a panel of civil servants that beginning in 1897 met annually to taste and approve imported tea, for reasons no one could any longer recall. The Food and Drug Administration screened imported tea, too. In a presidential message to Congress in 1970, Nixon cited the board as an almost comical redundancy, a textbook case of a government institution that had long ago outlived its purpose and survived solely by inertia.

Or so Nixon and his men thought. After Nixon singled out the tea tasters for dismissal, as Safire tells it, a handful of congressmen emerged in their defense, doing the bidding of tea importers who had a vested interest in the board. A Nixon ally in Congress introduced a bill to kill the tea tasters—only figuratively, of course—but it died in committee. Lawsuits were filed against the executive branch, and the threat of a writ of mandamus forced the president to reinstate the board.

There's a happy ending, though. Congress did vote to defund the board, and it died a quiet death—in 1996. This was more than a quarter-century after Nixon first tried to shut it down and two years after the former president himself sipped his last cup of oolong.

The other example had a more ominous ending, according to Safire. Early in his first year in office, Nixon's beady gaze fell upon an unsightly set of office buildings crowding the north side of the National Mall along Constitution Avenue. Nixon knew them well. They had been built as "temporary" naval offices in 1918 under the order of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt, and Nixon had worked there as a young officer in World War II. Now as president, Nixon instructed his aides to put an end to the 50-year-old temporary buildings—or as he put it, speaking Nixonese, "knocking down those goddam eyesores on the mall."

It was a simple order, easily comprehensible and fully within the president's authority. In the summer of 1969, the word went forth. Memos shot out of the White House in the direction of the responsible naval authorities. The president was dogged about the order, whether from his own aesthetic sense or simply as a way of flexing the presidential muscles. Safire writes that Nixon took to interrupting meetings filled with a dozen momentous and unrelated matters to demand of his staff, "Tear 'em down, kick the Navy the hell out!"

More memos followed. "The ball rolled a little way," Safire writes, "and

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then stopped." Naval staff at last made their demurral explicit. They said that some of the buildings were already scheduled to be demolished, just not right away. The largest of the buildings, housing Navy brass, could not be taken down until replacement offices could be put up at an Air Force base in Maryland, probably not for another five years. Plus, in one of those math calculations that only bureaucrats can understand, they argued that keeping the dilapidated buildings in place actually saved the taxpayers money in the long run. And in these days of tightened budgets . . .

Above, a federal tea-taster in the early 20th century; below, Nixon in 1969

And so on. As the inaction progressed, Nixon took to stoking his own indignation, rerouting his limousine to drive past the buildings so he could see if or when demolition had begun. He well knew the bureaucratic dodge that counters any demand that a specific order be immediately acted on: "Never say no—but never say when."

Months went by. A score of naval personnel, Safire says, showed up at the West Wing to give a presentation to senior White House staff. Maps and charts were deployed. The charts Safire reprints are stunning in their boring incomprehensibility. (Coupled with the passage of time, boredom is the bureaucrats' most powerful weapon.) One of the Navy's charts showed how many congressional committees would need to be involved if the president's order were to be carried out—meaning the chances that it would be carried out would fall to zero.

Then anonymous stories appeared in the newspapers detailing the economic havoc that the demolition would bring to Washington, D.C., and even neighboring states. The White House responded by leaking stories of its own, including one aimed, Nixon-style, right at the vitals: "The President has told his aides that there is a Navy admiral who will soon be an ensign if those buildings on the Mall are not torn down."

With that threat, Safire writes, "the logjam began to break up."

Nixon's order was uncontroversial with everyone but a small platoon of naval bureaucrats. The demolition could have been accomplished in a week. Still, when it was finally carried out by the end of 1970, a mere 16 months after it had been issued, it seemed like a miracle. Nixon called one of his staffers to celebrate. "We have finally gotten something *done*," said the most powerful man in the world.

You wonder what President Trump will do when he formalizes one of his whims into an executive command and then finds himself staring into the blank, unresponsive face of the federal bureaucracy. Safire has his own theory about how Nixon reacted to being repeatedly frustrated by the inertia of the government's lifers. In effect, Safire wrote, "[Nixon] could try to take all control inside the White House." This scheme, along with a failed program to seed the agencies with his own loyalists, led to the "bunker mentality" that Nixon's White House became famous for. And of course the bunker mentality led to a scandal of its own. ♦

Tearing Up

Don't cry for the first woman almost-president.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Not long after the election, the front page of the *Washington Post* featured a wonderful piece about how Bill and Hillary Clinton lost touch with their home base and with it the White House; along with that came a number of other good stories about how and why. So far so good, as the paper's A section featured its A team of political reporters and writers. But then came the B and C sections with the B and C teams, which were all p.c. and quivering feelings and throwing around sand. There was sob after sob and piece after piece about the deep wracking grief that coursed through all right-thinking people, as the dream of anointing the First . . . Woman . . . President slowly but certainly sank.

And so it went on in print and on websites and the stories were always the same. They were of the old, kept barely alive by the great hope of seeing a woman in the nation's highest office, and of the young, taken by parents to be part of the historic moment, allowed to engage in the quasi-religious experience of filling the check-box on the ballot or pulling the lever themselves. In the evening, little girls gathered, and perhaps went to bed, thinking they were winning. And then came the dawn. "Now What Do I Tell My Daughters?" ran a story in *Fortune*, describing months spent building up to the historic great moment. Children were told to expect to see history. "I was supposed to wake her up around midnight with happy tears and champagne." It was like waking up Christmas morning to find that someone had stolen the furniture. Santa had taken away toys, not brought them, stockings had been stuffed with coal. "What this taps into is the most primal parenting fear. I can't protect you from everything," one parent in the *Washington Post*'s Style section had mourned.

No one to blame but herself

Some phrased it in terms of a death in the family: Something unexpected and bad had occurred for no reason, or for reasons no one could explain. Actually, there were many ways that one could explain it, but they were hard to see through the tears. One was that a lot of people who didn't like Donald J. Trump had voted for him, because they had some pretty big problems that nobody else had thought to consider. Another was that Hillary Clinton had lost the election because she was a very bad candidate who had run a complacent, misguided campaign.

What people should have been telling their daughters, if they wanted them to grow up to understand anything, is that Hillary Clinton didn't lose the election because life is unfair. She lost it because she had more baggage than the carousel at a major airport, a paranoid streak that rivaled the one last seen in Richard M. Nixon, and a sense of entitlement, encouraged by her fans and her supportive if often unfaithful husband—a set of liabilities that vastly exceeded her skills. She was bright, she worked hard, and she worked for the right things as she saw them, but she was also dishonest and greedy, traits she might have controlled had she stayed in the Senate. But when she moved to the Obama cabinet the temptations became overwhelming, and to her eternal discredit she slipped.

Because she was secretary of state and did government business on an insecure email server, she opened herself to criminal charges, and when this was discovered, she lied. The public was in no mood to give her the benefit of the doubt because back when they were first getting to know her, she had lied also, about the use of insider trading to make a profit of $100,000 in cattle futures as the first lady of Arkansas, which she had tried to explain away as something she had learned to do by reading the *Wall Street Journal* at night. This tied her untruthfulness into her greediness, another recurring theme in her story that undercut the image of the conscientious do-gooder she was trying so hard to project.

While in the White House, the Clintons were accused of "renting out the Lincoln Bedroom" for campaign donations, and when they left the White House in 2001 they took along with them a lot of furnishings they had not brought with them and, though both soon were making millions of dollars, set up a gift registry to relieve them of the burden of paying to furnish the two new estates—just off Embassy Row in D.C. and in New York's Westchester County—that they were buying or bought.

In the window between the time she left the State Department in 2013

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and formally announced her candidacy almost two years later, she racked up a staggering $22 million in lectures, charging the people she spoke to around $250,000, and which she did up until the very last minute, though well-wishers around her were urging restraint. The move to State also opened up new problems concerning the Clinton Foundation and donations to it, as the benefits of buying the goodwill of the husband of a United States senator paled in comparison to having the ear of the spouse of someone making decisions affecting every part of the world. Bill Clinton's speech fees exploded exponentially with his wife in the cabinet, sometimes reaching $750,000 and assuring that the aura of greed would permanently envelop the pair of them, making it hard to run a positive campaign based on character or exploit similar weaknesses in the character and career of the man who she was running against.

The Clintons' character failings, together and separately, would cancel out those of Trump and make the two sides seem equal—Bill's female accusers vs. Trump's female accusers, Trump's greed vs. Hillary's, and the lies of all three about practically everything would deprive her attacks upon Trump much of their force. After she lost, Hillary would blame FBI head James Comey for cutting short her momentum with his letter to Congress before the election about the possibility of new information that had surfaced reviving the email investigation. But without her behavior, there would have been no case at all and no emails to surface. And if her aide, friend, and protégée hadn't married a man whose favorite pastime was sending pictures of his genitals over the Internet to very young women, investigators wouldn't have seized his laptop, a complication one cannot imagine these mothers who write for the *Post* and for *Fortune* having tried to explain to their girls.

Clinton's loss means that the First Woman President, when we do get one, will be a much better deal for the world. Hillary's rise was both derivative and celebrity driven. And one way or another, her career always happened because she was Bill Clinton's wife. It was as Bill Clinton's wife that she burst on the world as a "new kind of First Lady," as Bill Clinton's wife that she lost both houses of Congress for her husband and party in 1994, as Bill Clinton's wife that she emerged as the woman wronged in the epic impeachment-and-Monica scandal, and it was as Bill Clinton's wife that she ran for the Senate with all of the force of the White House behind her and won election in a state she never had lived in, as compensation for all she'd been through.

In the Senate, she turned into herself; it was a good fit for her gifts and she ought to have stayed there, but as Bill Clinton's wife she was hooked on their common idea that they both should be president; and it was his presence and influence as his party's most recent president that made her at once the frontrunner. It was as herself that she lost to Barack Obama, and the story repeated itself eight years later, her political instincts and skills not being up to the demands of a grueling two-year national campaign.

This is not the path of your normal career politician, and when we do get a first woman president, she will most likely decide to do it the old way, deciding to run, defining her program, finding her allies, climbing the stairs one by one. She will also not run as the First Woman President, but more as John Kennedy ran in 1960, not as the First Catholic President out to crack ceilings, but as a senator who asked for no more than a fair break from the voters and didn't want what he thought an irrelevant issue to stand in his way. The good news is that eight years after Kennedy won, after a campaign that had its share of stories of tunnels to Rome, two other Catholics ran for president—his own brother Bobby and ex-seminarian Eugene McCarthy—to no comment whatever about their religion. Since then, Catholics and others have been running for president, and no one has batted an eye.

The other good news is that right behind Hillary (and in most cases, not remotely inspired by her) is a large group of women in both major parties who have risen in the profession without president-husbands and the truckloads of baggage: governors Nikki Haley and Susana Martinez, recently defeated senator Kelly Ayotte, who may be planning a comeback, Senator-elect Tammy Duckworth, who lost both of her legs in Iraq. Proponents of the girl-power, girls-can-do-anything school should look very hard at the cadre of veterans: Duckworth, Tulsi Gabbard, Joni Ernst, and especially Martha McSally, a retired Air Force colonel, first woman to head a USAF fighter squadron, first American woman to fly in combat. If you want someone promoting girl power, there's no better example than that.

How do those women and girls now lamenting not understand what a bubble it is that they live in, what a minority they are and have been in this country, which for a great many months has viewed this election not with awe and excitement and wonder, but with apprehension and fear and disgust? That focus groups could turn up not one participant who could say one good thing about either contender? That both candidates' unfavorable ratings were in the sixties? That polls showed both contenders were disliked and distrusted? That most of the people who voted for Clinton or Trump did so only with grave reservations, and spent much time wondering just which of these evils was the lesser one? Hillary Clinton did not lose because of misogyny or backlash or hatred of women, but because 67 percent of the country, women included, thought her dishonest, and with good reason.

For all of the tears in the blogs and the B and C sections, her feminist creed and her personal reputation were a gigantic turnoff for millions of voters, who were not devastated at all on Wednesday morning, had nothing to explain to their non-shell-shocked children, but were simply relieved the election was over, and calmly went on with their day. ♦

Repeal, Replace, Resist

Trump will need to be the salesman in chief.

BY FRED BARNES

Republicans should have no trouble repealing the Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare. They can invoke the procedure known as reconciliation, which means only 51 votes in the Senate will be needed to kill the unpopular health insurance plan. Since there will be 52 Republicans in the new Senate in 2017 and a Republican in the White House, repeal is a safe bet.

As for Obamacare itself, Republicans won't waste their time negotiating over saving any of it. Senate Democrats want to keep the entire program alive by tinkering with its parts and bailing it out with billions in new funding. Forget that. Republicans are committed to a total replacement that emphasizes free-market incentives and patient choice. Both of those features are anathema to Democrats.

But Senate passage of a replacement is far from assured. It will take a second vote in which reconciliation will not apply. With Democrats all but certain to stage a filibuster, Republicans will need 60 votes to enact an alternate health plan. Assuming all 52 Republicans vote for it, they will still need 8 Democrats.

And that's where President Trump comes in. Passing an Obamacare replacement is likely to require the use of the bully pulpit by Trump. And not because he's a bully. The bully pulpit was President Teddy Roosevelt's name for exploiting the White House as a platform to advocate a proposal or an agenda or simply making a large point.

Trump is well equipped to use his new platform. His 17-month campaign consisted mostly of speeches at rallies—as many as six a day in the final weeks of the presidential race. While he did poorly in three debates with Hillary Clinton, the speeches in which he exhorted large crowds to vote for him were effective. They were Trump the candidate at his best.

Coming right up

His bully pulpit style will be different from those of other presidents. President Reagan relied on persuasion. In two nationally televised speeches in 1981, he motivated millions of Americans to urge their representatives in Washington to back his spending reductions and tax cuts.

President Obama tends to lecture. He didn't need the bully pulpit in his first two years because Democrats had large majorities in the Senate and House. Later, when he exhorted the country to support gun control, he failed. His approval rating dipped, and gun control went nowhere.

Trump is neither a persuader nor a lecturer. He is a salesman. At rallies, his speeches were like sales pitches for real estate. They were filled with exaggerations and superlatives about himself and his chief issues, illegal immigration and the defects of trade treaties. But he won the argument on those issues and propelled himself to the White House.

The bully pulpit offers many options for exerting political pressure and selling his agenda. Like Reagan, he can address the nation on TV. He can speak in the home states of Democratic senators. He can invite them to the White House and pressure them in person. He can tweet his message with the expectation his followers will retweet it.

He will have an advantage in selling a new health insurance plan: It's bound to be an improvement over Obamacare and more popular as well. Obamacare was put together, hastily and sloppily, in secret in the office of then-Senate majority leader Harry Reid in late 2009. Republicans were offered no role, much less any concessions or compromises. Democrats took sole ownership of Obamacare and still have it.

Trump's initial targets are the five Democratic senators up for reelection in 2018 in states he won easily (by 19 percentage points or more): Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Jon Tester of Montana, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, and Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

Four other Democratic senators face reelection in states Trump won by small margins. Republicans believe they can beat Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin in 2018 but doubt she will abandon Obamacare. Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, who got special treatment for aging Floridians in exchange for his vote for Obamacare, will face a strong challenge if Republican governor Rick Scott decides to run against him. (He must be rooting for Scott to get a cabinet post in the Trump administration.) Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Bob Casey of Pennsylvania are tougher targets.

Even without Trump's intervention,

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these senators should have figured out that Obamacare is ruinous for their party and a gift to Republicans. It was chiefly responsible for the landslide in 2010 that turned the House over to Republicans. And it was an effective GOP issue in 2014 when Republicans won nine Democratic seats and control of the Senate. It worked again this year for Trump.

Ward Baker, who runs the GOP's Senate campaign committee, says Democrats in Trump states "should be terrified." The mere threat of losing in 2018 may prompt vulnerable Democrats to back at least some of the Republican agenda. Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell told reporters that Democrats from Republican states are "going to want to be cooperative with us on a variety of different things."

Obamacare is first on the list. After its removal, Republicans intend to move quickly on border security, tax reform, and regulatory relief. Trump will have to use the bully pulpit to win on those issues too.

It will be harder to win across the board than Trump suspects. Democrats may be unhappy, but Minority Leader Chuck Schumer will try to enforce as much party discipline as possible. He will encourage filibusters.

"I think they'll unite in opposition to things we support and side with him on things we don't," a Republican official says. "So Trump may end up attacking us as much as them." But using the bully pulpit against his own party—President Trump would never do that, would he? ♦

Infrastructure and Infra Dig Structures

Monumental buildings or massive boondoggles?

BY ERIC FELTEN

As a general organizing principle, if Nancy Pelosi is for something, it's probably a bad idea. What, you ask, could be wrong with chocolate ice cream? And yet, when one learns that the House minority leader has a scoop on a sugar cone every morning for breakfast, the stuff immediately goes from delicious to suspicious.

Just about the worst thing, then, that can be said about President-elect Donald Trump's infrastructure-building agenda is that Pelosi is all for it. Infrastructure spending is "an important priority for us," Pelosi said the day after the election, telling her Democratic House colleagues "we should work together" with Republicans "to pass a bill very fast."

Trump's platform called for transforming "America's crumbling infrastructure into a golden opportunity for accelerated economic growth and more rapid productivity gains." That may all be imminently doable and eminently sensible. But there is always the nagging risk that spending on infrastructure, instead of promoting economic growth, degenerates into boondoggles—boat-anchors dragging on the economy. The stimulus, anyone? Anyone?

Some infrastructure projects are no-brainers. To get the Keystone XL pipeline under construction, the federal government doesn't need to offer money, just regulatory approval. Trump promised, from the early days of his campaign, that if elected president, he would sign off on the pipeline right away.

Maintenance isn't hard to justify either. Money spent repairing and refurbishing existing roads and bridges may not offer ribbon-cutting opportunities, but it costs less than building new roads, and without all the delays that come from securing rights-of-way and getting the dreaded environmental impact studies that can be expected from new projects. Harvard economist Edward L. Glaeser is generally skeptical of the boffo claims made about how infrastructure investments pay off, but he cites approvingly a 1988 Congressional Budget Office study finding that "spending to maintain current highways in good shape produces returns of 30 percent to 40 percent."

If some infrastructure ideas are easy to embrace, there are others to which the only reasonable reaction is to run away screaming. Let us please have no more said about that perennial white elephant, high-speed rail, those bullet-trains so beloved of Euro-yearning progressives and guaranteed to bleed billions of dollars away from useful infrastructure.

A tougher call are new public projects that appear to be worthwhile but have to be paid for somehow. Trump's platform promises "a deficit-neutral plan targeting substantial new infrastructure investments." To keep all the proposed new spending from adding to the deficit, candidate Trump proposed leveraging private investments with the promise of federal tax credits. Some pro-market economists, such as George Mason University's Alex Tabarrok, are all in favor of this sort of "public-private partnership."

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But is such investment worth the tax breaks and forgone revenues? It depends on how much impact one thinks infrastructure spending has. Economists differ dramatically in their estimates, depending on what they're counting and how. Harvard's Glaeser points out that many economists assessing infrastructure investments downplay "standard cost-benefit analysis in favor of broad macroeconomic surveys," which make it easier to find elusive benefits to offset the costs. Or they adopt a broad definition of what sort of job is created by building infrastructure. For example, in the Brookings Institution report "Beyond Shovel-Ready: The Extent and Impact of U.S. Infrastructure Jobs," Joseph Kane and Robert Puentes claim that most "workers employed in infrastructure jobs tend to operate physical assets, rather than constructing or installing them." In other words, if you are going to count the jobs produced by infrastructure, you have to include not just the crews building the road but all the truckers who move freight on it in the years to come. You might as well count, say, air traffic controllers as infrastructure jobs because they work at airports—which is just what the Brookings team does.

Trump might be happy to use that sort of accounting to boost the appearance of economic benefits from infrastructure construction, especially when it comes to airports. One of Trump's most consistent promises has been to do something about the dingy, down-at-the-heels bus stations that pass for airports in America.

Yet if building new airports is a boon to the economy, then Spain's economy should be booming. (It isn't.) Before the crash, Spain was on a public and private airport-building bonanza, with such extravagant efforts as the Ciudad Real airport, which cost over a billion dollars. One could say there just wasn't enough infrastructure spending—Spain never built the station and track to connect the airport to the region's high-speed rail. This proved to be a problem as Ciudad Real is over a hundred miles from Madrid, the city it was supposedly going to serve. And it's hardly the only "ghost airport" in the country. Albacete Airport limped along with an average of about four passengers a day in 2015. At least that beats Huesca-Pirineos Airport—built for $80 million—which saw only 242 passengers all of last year.

In other words, if we are going to spend money on airports, we should make sure that they will prove worth

Above, a walkway to a missing train station at Spain's Ciudad Real airport; center, Los Angeles International Airport; bottom, Grand Central Terminal in New York.

FROM TOP: OLI SCARFF / GETTY; LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT; DILIFF

it. But worth it, how? Assuming we're not talking about ghost airports, maybe the advantage to be gained by building new airports is more aesthetic than utilitarian. There was a telling comment that Trump made during a debate: that "our airports are like from a Third World country." This isn't so much a dig at the functionality of the New York-area airports Trump often singled out as it is a complaint that they are shabby and run-down. Whatever happened to the gee-whiz of flight? Back when the jet age was new and shiny airports were gleaming emblems of confidence in the future, JFK was distinguished by Eero Saarinen's TWA Flight Center (the swooping futurist structure now no longer a terminal but on its way to becoming a retro-chic hotel). The populuxe flying saucer that made LAX look like Tomorrowland is now Yesterdayville. Trump isn't wrong to bemoan modern American airports as utilitarian and glamour-starved—in a Trumpian word, *sad*.

Nearly 20 years ago, David Brooks decried in The Weekly Standard the unwillingness of conservatives to embrace an agenda of national greatness. The article called for "restoring American greatness," and the elements of greatness Brooks identified resonate at least in part with the sort of greatness Trump has in mind. Brooks had as his touchstone the original Library of Congress, now known as the Jefferson Building. The officials behind it "saw the building as a statement of American greatness," Brooks argued, "and as a way to elevate America *to* greatness."

It may seem silly to compare airports to libraries as opportunities for aspirational architecture. But in the digital age, libraries aren't quite the civic centers they once were. One of the ways a city is known is by the look of the place one arrives. The docks may not have been fancy, but oceangoing passengers sailing into New York were greeted by the lady in the harbor. Grand Central Terminal is still a grand introduction to the city. And the destruction of the original Pennsylvania Station wasn't just a crime against architecture; it diminished New York City by destroying its most eye-popping gateway. So too airports are important public spaces that tell travelers a lot about the city, and country, in which they've landed. A beautifully designed and built airport declares to passengers that they have arrived.

The biggest challenge to this sort of greatness is what passes for great architecture these days. Trump's tastes are as well known as they are incoherent—on the outside, glass boxes of the Mies knock-off school; on the inside, gold-plated bathroom fixtures and ersatz Louis Quatorze furniture. But the president-elect's aesthetics are positively benign compared with the high-concept follies favored by public building and monument poobahs. Andrew Ferguson has chronicled in these pages Frank Gehry's laughable (and pricey) designs for an Eisenhower Memorial. That sorry saga demonstrates just what suckers politicians and commissions and councils are for starchitects' merry pranks. Piles of giant aluminum Fritos (Gehry's default idiom) are not a statement of American greatness.

Thus the outline of what could be a successful, if distinctively Trumpian, infrastructure agenda: (1) Let the pipeline builders build; (2) rehab, restore, and resurface existing roads, bridges, and tunnels; and (3) build some grand airports that proclaim confidence and creativity. Oh, and (4) be sure to file the Gehry submissions away with the high-speed rail plans. ♦

The Consolations of History

Which, as we know, is just one damned thing after another.

by Geoffrey Norman

The recriminations and agonies among the defeated have begun, and they are enough to break your heart. Hillary Clinton, who has been in the political world her entire adult life, is treated as a tragic figure by some. Jonathan Alter writes in the *Daily Beast* that

> Clinton had the best résumé of anyone who ever ran for president, the respect and admiration of those who worked with her, and—as she showed in her moving concession speech—most of the other qualities we look for in the White House.

It occurs to one that Dwight Eisenhower was pretty well prepared for the responsibilities that come with being president of the United States and commanded a fair amount of respect and admiration. He had, after all, invaded Europe, and not many candidates have *that* on their résumés. George H.W. Bush had checked more boxes than Mrs. Clinton, though to be fair, he had not served as first spouse. He had been a member of Congress, director of the CIA, and vice president for eight years. And long ago, it was believed that nobody had ever been so suitably prepared to become president as had Herbert Hoover. We all know how that one worked out.

On the other hand, maybe Hillary Clinton was just a lousy candidate who believed she could coast to victory on her money and her name. She did not, for instance, deign to visit Wisconsin, and the state returned the favor.

In the days that followed her defeat, some have wept bitter tears while others have rampaged through the streets.

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As Adam Kredo writes at the *Washington Free Beacon*:

> Mental health professionals practicing in Washington, D.C. described an unprecedented increase in patients worried about the country's future as a result of Trump's victory over Democratic contender Hillary Clinton. "This is very different," said David Sternberg, founder and director of D.C. Talk Therapy, a psychotherapy group that practices in the District's upscale Woodley Park neighborhood. "This is pretty unprecedented," Sternberg said, explaining that patients are expressing feelings of "anger, frustration, anxiety, [and] sadness."

Mixed in with the despair has been a lot of dark talk about the last days of not only the Democratic party but of the republic itself. Andrew Sullivan, for instance, has visions that fall just this side of Hieronymus Bosch in their awfulness.

> [Trump] controls everything from here on forward. He has won this campaign in such a decisive fashion that he owes no one anything. He has destroyed the GOP and remade it in his image. He has humiliated the elites and the elite media. He has embarrassed every pollster and naysayer. He has avenged Obama. And in the coming weeks . . . will seek unforgiving revenge on those who dared to oppose him. The party apparatus will be remade in his image. The House and Senate will fail to resist anything he proposes—and those who speak up will be primaried into oblivion. The Supreme Court may well be shifted to the far right for more than a generation to come—with this massive victory, he can pick a new Supreme Court justice who will make Antonin Scalia seem like a milquetoast. He will have a docile, fawning Congress for at least four years. We will not have an administration so much as a court.

If the people spinning these grim prophecies actually believe them, they might want to turn to recent history for consolation and instruction.

First the consolations: Consider the election of 1964 and how in the days following Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory, it appeared that the conservative cause, if not the Republican party, was now extinct in American politics. The liberal vision of paradise would be made manifest on earth with the creation of something called the Great Society. And for a while, Congress couldn't write legislation, or spend money, fast enough, with the few Republicans left in captivity rushing to join their Democratic colleagues in passing just about every bill that Johnson sent them.

Tears flow at Clinton's Election Night Event in New York on November 8

And then, the deluge. Johnson tried to have a war he had promised he wouldn't send American boys "nine or ten thousand miles away" to fight—and he tried to have it on the cheap. By the end of his first term, the nation's cities were in flames, and he was limiting his appearances to military bases. Johnson could not run for reelection. Nor could he attend his party's disastrous convention in Chicago. He finished out his term and went home to Texas to die. Largely unmourned.

Most of recent American political history is, in fact, a case study in the worthless assumptions made in the wake of presidential elections. Consider: Donald Trump is not old enough to have voted in 1960. But he surely remembers the election of John F. Kennedy and the shock of his assassination. It changed everything, of course, and you could argue that the nation still hasn't gotten over it. Nobody, of course, saw it coming.

After the catastrophic failure of Johnson (despite his landslide election) came the rise of Richard Nixon, who of course had been written off for dead in 1962. He was reelected in one of the great landslides of American history in 1972, and the Democratic party in turn was written off for dead, as "the party of McGovern." We, briefly, had ourselves an "emerging Republican majority."

It just as quickly un-emerged, when Nixon became the first president to resign the office. He did this to avoid being impeached, convicted, and forced from office. He was pardoned by his unelected successor, who then lost when he actually needed the support of voters to retain the office.

Ford's successor came and went without leaving footprints. Ronald Reagan, whom none would have ever called "inevitable," was elected and then reelected, in one of those landslides that are supposed to forever change the landscape of American politics. He was even able to get his vice president elected to succeed him, for a rare three-term win of the White House by the same party.

The aforementioned George H. W. Bush got up to 89 percent in the polls at one point before sinking below 40 percent and being shown the door.

Bill Clinton actually did manage to get himself impeached. Something that had not happened in over a century and for which he will be forever

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

remembered. Especially by his wife, whose ambitions were hobbled by her husband's actions, which didn't really seem worthy of being described as "high crimes and misdemeanors."

And then, it was another Bush. This one did manage to get himself reelected, whereupon he sank to the sort of numbers that had doomed his father. The slow fade of the second Bush and his party's fortunes was followed by the election of a candidate who would, we were told, truly change American politics and, perhaps, put the Republican party out of its misery once and for all. Barack Obama would assemble a permanent and expanding Democratic majority. The Republicans would become the party of aging white men—or, if you preferred more colorful locutions, "bitter clingers" and "deplorables."

But somehow, things did not work out that way. They seldom do. So those in need of counseling and comforting to help them over the trauma might want to look instead to the all-purpose quotation from Lord Melbourne, regarding some long-forgotten event:

"What all the wise men promised has not happened, and what all the damned fools said would happen has come to pass." That's pretty much how it always rolls. ♦

The Old Electoral College Try

A sensible anachronism.

BY JAY COST

On November 8, Donald Trump won a decisive victory in the Electoral College, capturing 306 of its 538 votes, more than any Republican in nearly thirty years. Even so, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton. Ballots are still being counted, but the latest tally by Dave Wasserman of the Cook Political Report has Clinton ahead by nearly 1.5 million votes, and the number will surely grow.

Liberals are up in arms about this, as they were 16 years ago when George W. Bush won the Electoral College even as he lost the popular vote to Al Gore. Why should the will of the people be thwarted by an antiquated institution? The Electoral College should be abolished!

Regardless of how one feels about the particular result our system produced this month, the Electoral College deserves to be defended against these assaults. Far from being a vestigial organ of our system of government, it is in fact a perfect example of how the plan is supposed to operate within the body politic. Appreciating its origins serves as a good reminder of what it means to be a constitutionalist.

As so much else in our Constitution, the Electoral College is the product of *compromise*. James Madison's initial proposal called for the president to be chosen by the Congress, just as most everything in his Virginia Plan revolved around the national legislature. But Madison's legislature was to be wholly apportioned according to population, including the Senate. This was done away by the Great Compromise in 1787 between large and small states, which called for a popularly elected House and a Senate with each state given equal representation. Madison staunchly opposed this deal, which more or less converted the Senate into the dysfunctional Confederation Congress.

After the Great Compromise, Madison endeavored to constrain the Congress as much as possible, including liberating the other branches from its influence. He worried that if a Congress constructed this way were to select the president, the victor "would intrigue with the Legislature, would derive his appointment from the predominant faction, and be apt to render his administration subservient to its views." He further opposed selection of electors by state legislatures, which had "betrayed a strong propensity to a variety of pernicious measures" under the Articles of Confederation—particularly tyrannies of the majority stomping on the rights of minorities. He thought popular election of the president, though imperfect, was the best choice available.

Madison and his allies, of course, faced opposition at every turn, and they ultimately had to cut a deal. The final compromise was designed to draw in as many delegates as possible. The national legislature would not play a direct role, and neither would the people. An alternative system—the "Electoral College" (a phrase that does not appear in the Constitution)—would be used instead. Electors would be apportioned by the total number of a state's representatives and senators and chosen by the state legislatures, but free to select any candidate they liked.

The Electoral College, like other aspects of the American system, took on its own, surprising character once the government was placed into operation. Electors quickly came to respect the preferences of the people in their states. As the late political scientist Martin Diamond noted, "In 1796, every single elector cast a basically mandated ballot for either Adams or Jefferson, the two recognized choices of the electorate." Four years later, the previously defeated Jeffersonians turned the tables by mobilizing voters in the swing states to vote for state legislators who would appoint friendly electors. By 1828, every state except South Carolina and Delaware allocated

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electors based on the popular vote.

When viewed up close, the Electoral College cannot be defended along purely rational lines. But criticizing it in that way is also nonsensical, for the particulars of the compromise reflect the spirit of the Constitution itself.

Madison summarized this spirit in *Federalist* 39: Ours is a system that is partly national and partly federal. It centralizes power in a national government, which derives its authority from the people of the whole United States. But only to an extent. The powers of the national government are limited by the Constitution; the states retain a measure of sovereignty and play a crucial role in the operation of the national government.

So it is with the Electoral College. The system for selecting the president is an amalgam of nationalism and federalism. It is national in the sense that electors are apportioned, in part, by population. It is federal in the sense that every state, large and small, is guaranteed at least three electors, and that state legislatures have the authority to determine how the electors are appointed.

The Electoral College is thus a microcosm of the compromise that the Constitution itself embodies. Does this system make sense? At the Convention, Hamilton had argued, not without merit, "Two Sovereignties can not co-exist within the same limits." The national government "must swallow up the State powers. Otherwise it will be swallowed up by them." The delegates to the convention decided differently, though many of them (Hamilton included!) did so for practical purposes. A system of blended sovereignty, such as ours, may not have made sense—*except* that it was the one plan that could get the requisite votes.

It should come as no surprise that the left complains so vociferously about the Electoral College. Their objections go deeper than the results of the most recent election. Since the days of Woodrow Wilson, progressives have been on a crusade to do away with the blended nature of our Constitution. What conservatives see as a prudent compromise vindicated by history, progressives see as a problem. Thus, they prefer to read Congress's enumerated powers as a plenary grant of authority; they disdain the filibuster and other devices that grant minorities a role in the day-to-day functions of government; and they attack the Electoral College, as we have seen again the last two weeks. These complaints are all of a piece: They wish to undo the federal-national compromise that is at the very heart of our union.

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It should come as no surprise that the left complains so vociferously about the Electoral College. Their objections go deeper than the results of the most recent election. Since the days of Woodrow Wilson, progressives have been on a crusade to do away with the blended nature of our Constitution. What conservatives see as a prudent compromise vindicated by history, progressives see as a problem.

Progressives may as well pound sand when it comes to the Electoral College. It is not going anywhere. By vesting the choice of electors with state legislatures, the Constitution creates an intractable collective action problem for the left. Even if they concede it would be better to have a national popular vote, a sufficient number of states will never sanction such a change, for it amounts to shifting power from themselves to, in effect, the biggest states, like California and Texas, where the most votes are located.

Still, liberal bellyaching should serve as a good reminder of the philosophical divide between liberals and conservatives. As Diamond wrote (back in 1977), "It is hard to think of a worse time than the present, when so much already tends toward excessive centralization, to strike an unneccessary blow at the federal quality of our political order." The left wants an all-powerful national government, at the center of which sits the president, the living embodiment of the national will. Conservatives, following the guidance of the Framers, should view the president primarily as the chief magistrate of the nation. He is not to be an omnipotent tribune of the people. In our system, no single agent occupies such a rarefied position. Instead, Congress is the most reflective of the popular will, and it is charged with exercising *enumerated* powers. The remainder are retained by the states and the people.

The Electoral College may not make "sense," strictly speaking—but it is *sensible* when viewed through this properly constitutional framework. If we are so bothered that the president-elect won fewer votes than his opponents, maybe the problem is that we have ascribed too much authority to that office. In that case, the solution is not to eliminate the Electoral College, but return the office of president to its original, and highly proscribed, limits. ♦

'Minnesota Men' Go To Prison

The judge explains his sentences.

BY SCOTT W. JOHNSON

U.S. District Judge Michael Davis in his Minneapolis chambers, July 8, 2015

Minneapolis

The case lay at the intersection of immigration, Islam, and terrorism and, coincidentally, ended the week following the victory of President-elect Donald Trump. To borrow a Trumpian term, the "Minnesota men," as media generically referred to a circle of Somali-American ISIS supporters, are bad *hombres*. At a campaign stop in Minneapolis on November 6, Trump delivered the message that we "have seen firsthand the problems with faulty refugee vetting, with large numbers of Somali refugees coming into your state, without your knowledge, without your support or approval." It was the sons of some who sought refuge in the United States from the bloodshed in their native land who became enamored of the idea of causing more of it.

The first "Minnesota men" were indicted in April 2015; eventually 10 in total were charged with seeking to leave the United States to join ISIS in Syria. One is presumed dead in the Middle East. Six pleaded guilty: Zacharia Abdurahman, Hamza Ahmed, Adnan Farah, Hanad Musse, Abdirizak Warsame, and Abdullahi Yusuf. And three—Abdirahman Daud, Guled Omar, and Mohamed Farah (Adnan Farah's older brother)—contested the charges at trial in federal district court and were found guilty earlier this year (see "'Minnesota men' on trial," June 20, 2016). Judge Michael Davis presided over that trial, as he had previous trials against Minnesotans charged with supporting a terrorist group (in those cases, Somalia's al Shabaab), and sentenced all nine men at individual hearings over three days this month: first, the two who cooperated with the prosecution, followed by the four who pleaded guilty without cooperating, and finally the three who pleaded not guilty and lost. The judge's punishments ranged from time served to 35 years in prison.

Despite the gravity of the offenses committed by the defendants, all well-spoken males in their early 20s with access to education and employment, they enjoyed substantial support within the Somali community and among the Twin Cities crowd of social justice warriors, such as those gathered under the umbrella of Minnesotans Against Islamophobia. These supporters charged the FBI with entrapping the defendants and demanded their freedom. The incredibly incriminating evidence produced by the government—including 40 hours of recorded conversations with an informant—proved that accusation ludicrous. Even the defendants themselves rejected it. "I'm certainly not being persecuted for my faith. I was certainly not entrapped," Daud declared at his sentencing hearing. "I was not going there to pass out medical kits or food. I was going strictly to fight and kill on behalf of the Islamic State."

Judge Davis made clear his view at virtually every one of the nine sentencing hearings. "I have traveled the world trying to figure out what to do with this jihadist behavior," he said. "Terrorists and their supporters should be incapacitated for a long period of time." His pronouncements were aimed variously at the defendants' families and the broader Somali community, the defendants' supporters, and Minnesotans generally. "This community needs to understand there is a jihadist cell in this community. Its tentacles spread out. Young people went to Syria and died," he said at one hearing. "You're dealing with a terrorist organization that's the most dangerous this world has ever seen," he declared at another. "Our own community won't even live up to it and understand that what is happening is something that must be prosecuted."

Judge Davis invited each defendant

JEFF BAENEN / AP

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to make a statement prior to sentencing. He then interrogated them regarding their beliefs and their conduct, asking them to acknowledge that they are terrorists. He clearly hopes the affirmative answers he received will dispose of the myths retailed in the Somali community and the disparagement of law enforcement that is rampant among the social justice crowd. "I've seen all the lies, all the deception, that this conspiracy—this cell—has put forth. It's out of the playbook of ISIL," he said. The judge directed any children present to leave the courtroom and then played excerpts of the gruesome ISIS videos that inspired the young men as they plotted to join the group in Syria. The defendants had seen the videos, of course, many times over. He didn't play them for the defendants; he played them to show their family and friends in attendance their deadly objectives.

The judge orchestrated the sentencing hearings to serve a purpose beyond punishment. In their sentencing memorandum for Omar, the purported ringleader, prosecutors suggested why sending such a message was necessary: "No trial in the aggregate memory of the U.S. Attorney's Office has been conducted in more of an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment, and incipient violence than the trial of this case. The families of cooperating defendants were harassed in the courtroom, in full view of the testifying witness; there was a fistfight in the corridor outside the courtroom; multiple individuals had to be ejected from the courtroom for not following the Court's rules of behavior."

In their sentencing memorandum for the purported ringleader, prosecutors suggested why sending such a message was necessary: 'No trial in the aggregate memory of the U.S. Attorney's Office has been conducted in more of an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment, and incipient violence than the trial of this case.'

Judge Davis rewarded the cooperating defendants with lenient sentences—in one case, time served, in the other case, 30 months—and those who didn't cooperate but pleaded guilty with sentences of 10 to 15 years. He gave two of the men found guilty at trial, Daud and the older Farah, 30 years. Guled Omar, who testified at trial and baldly lied to the jury about his exploits, received 35 years. "You're charismatic, and that's why you're being locked up for the period that you are," the judge told him. Omar had quoted the Southern Agrarian writer Wendell Berry at his hearing and claimed, "I always had energy for justice as a young man, but I lost my way." ♦

Trump's Winning White House Bet

He wagered on his message triumphing over the media's

By Rich Danker

Did Donald Trump just win the biggest arbitrage bet in history? Having been elected leader of the free world, it sure seems like he did. What was Trump's presidential campaign strategy, after all, if not an arbitrage play on the value of media coverage found in the difference between media exposure and media criticism? Trump perceived that his ability to talk to voters about his message through the media would have more impact on his candidacy than how the media attacked that message. He made an all-in bet on the notion that people won't be told by their elites what to do, an idea long respected in American politics but never tested on the scale of a presidential campaign.

Trump the reality TV star-businessman

Donald Trump has thus become the first major-party nominee and first president to be without any experience in elected office, government, or the military. That is an incredible feat. What he did bring to his candidacy, overlooked by the string of opponents he bulldozed or humiliated along the way, was four decades of nonstop experience in the public eye that began with his first major real-estate deal, for New York's Commodore Hotel (what became the Grand Hyatt) in the late 1970s.

Some of that experience was high-prestige (the many first-rate buildings you can walk into and see for yourself) and some of it was low-prestige (casinos, beauty pageants, boxing and wrestling productions). It added up to more practice in the spotlight than all of his rivals. And it's clear now that this experience left him well equipped to run for president using a communications-based campaign against an opponent using an organization-based one.

We don't know when Donald Trump decided he could seriously run for president. The turning point may have come during the heyday of *The Apprentice*. Somewhere along that ride on prime-time television, Trump had an epiphany about the resonance of his newfound good will in an unexpected conversation with NBC's corporate boss.

In a scene recounted in former *New York Times* television reporter Bill Carter's book *Desperate Networks*, General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt called up Trump asking to meet him for the first time. The Trump Organization had a financing deal with GE Capital to develop a property on Park Avenue, and Trump assumed this was why Immelt had called.

> "Great," Trump said. "So then you're happy with the job we've done on the Park Avenue building?"
> "Building? What building?" Immelt replied. "Are we doing a building together?"
> "Yeah," Trump said. "It's a tremendous success, on Park and Fifty-ninth."
> "Oh, well, no," Immelt said. "I was calling to tell you how happy I am with the job you're doing on *The Apprentice*."

The lazy argument about the show's impact on his presidential candidacy is that it presented a stylized version of Trump through the lens of reality TV. The truth is that *The Apprentice* let America see what Trump was really like as a fully formed businessman—tough, decisive, and

NBC

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an aggressive but stable problem-solver. The Trump that people got on the campaign trail was the Trump they had seen for years on NBC. The media never moved off the eighties-era *Spy* magazine caricature of Trump as "the short-fingered vulgarian," but the viewing public had been primed to see him as a leader, if the circumstances warranted it. In 2016 they did.

By the time he turned up alongside nine of his opponents in Cleveland at the first Republican debate in August 2015, it was clear that Trump knew how to wage an argument before the public. Behind his entertainer persona's outbursts and discursions was a core set of concerns that answered why 70 percent of voters saw the country on the wrong track. Income inequality was real, the immigration system was in chaos, and the military had one hand tied behind its back. Strikingly unlike his competitors, Trump wouldn't automatically agree that America's best days were ahead. There was too much work to be done, and he seemed eager to roll up his sleeves.

Trump talked mostly in generalities and adjectives, but he could be more specific when he wanted to be. Common Core would go. The Federal Reserve needed to stop with easy money. Supreme Court picks would come from a list of conservative judges. For years, he had maintained an open-door policy at Trump Tower for Republicans, hearing out everyone from fellow presidential aspirant Rick Santorum to CEO-turned-senator David Perdue about where the country needed to go and how Democrats could be beaten. He paid a staffer to listen to talk radio to find out what issues people were calling about. Backstage at events, he was known to quietly ask everyday workers about their lives and their jobs. Trump's populism wasn't a stance; it was an informed point of view.

From his first day as a presidential candidate to his last, the media never wavered from the conclusion that he was patently unacceptable. Trump was a sideshow, then a dunce, then a lunatic, then Bill Cosby, and finally Barry Goldwater. It's possible to imagine many other candidates who would have buckled and decided to pack it in under a similar torrent of criticism. But Trump would only fight back. In doing so he wove his issues into a siren call that the system—the media, the Democratic donors, the branches of government connected to special interests—was rigged. Or, as Trump's top strategist Steve Bannon put it, "Elites have taken all the upside for themselves and pushed the downside to the working- and middle-class Americans."

Trump asked voters for once-in-a-lifetime permission to blow up the modern American political superstructure and get back to basics. As Bannon said, "This is not the French Revolution. They destroyed the basic institutions of their society and changed their form of government. What Trump represents is a restoration—a restoration of true American capitalism and a revolution against state-sponsored socialism."

Sensing the potency of this message, the media in the latter stages of the campaign shifted its day-to-day criticism of Trump to nonstop fact-checking. If Trump was wrong on basic statistics related to governing, the logic went, he would be seen as unqualified for high office. The networks ran Trump fact-checks on their news tickers. The media universe of Twitter became a space for reporters to test-run new ways to call Trump a buffoon.

In a recent *Atlantic* article on Trump's ability to botch statistics on topics like unemployment and yet still resonate with voters, Salena Zito offered this pithy insight: "When he makes claims like this, the press takes him literally, but not seriously; his supporters take him seriously, but not literally."

JIM COLE / AP

Greeting a visitor at a breakfast in New Hampshire, January 21, 2014

Trump's handicaps as a nonpolitician were forgiven because his seriousness about solving an urgent problem mattered more than the evidence he cited about the problem's existence. This was the case for illegal immigration, ISIS, health care costs, and other public ills easily seen by voters but not taken so seriously by Democratic politicians.

As something of a closing argument, on Halloween, Peter Thiel gave a speech at the National Press Club explaining his support for Trump. It was a widely covered event since much of the press was stunned that a titan of Silicon Valley would go all-in for Trump ahead of a potential blowout election loss. Thiel tried to get them to understand why, in the face of the *Access Hollywood* tape

and other Trump comments that drove up his unfavorable numbers, his candidacy was still appealing to so many Americans. As a contrarian with a history of many winning bets, Thiel was especially well suited to turning the Trump media clichés on their heads.

"No matter how crazy this election seems, it's less crazy than the condition of our country," Thiel said. "I don't think the voters pull the lever in order to endorse a candidate's flaws," he went on later. "It is not a lack of judgment that leads Americans to vote for Trump; we are voting for Trump because we judge the leadership of our country to have failed."

Thiel rattled through the areas where it had failed, from the financial crisis to Obamacare to college tuition to the trade deficit. "Now that someone different is in the running, someone who rejects the false reassuring stories that tell us everything is fine, his larger-than-life persona attracts a lot of attention. Nobody would suggest that Donald Trump is a humble man. But the big things he is right about amount to a much-needed dose of humility."

There was some personal humility, too, if you looked for it. Trump spoke often of the debt he owed America. Outside of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., near the end of the Republican primaries he casually told the audience of 15,000 people that he worked all hours of the night "just like you people do." The effusive gratitude he offered to supporters of his candidacy—there was never a speech where he wasn't "so honored" by someone or some group's support—registered as genuine.

In 17 months of frenetic campaigning, Trump trusted correctly that voters would reach their own conclusions about his candidacy and not accept the context handed down by Hillary Clinton and the media that they didn't really have a choice at all.

Having dismissed Trump as a viable choice, Clinton chose to fill her campaign presentation with platitudes and activate the vaunted Democratic turnout machine. Her aides expected that the methods perfected during Obama's two victories—microtargeting of voters, organized early voting, and granular logistical decisions informed by polling—would achieve the same success.

Trump refused the technocratic view of politics that was pushed on him by most Republicans. He refused to inflate the size of his campaign. He refused to match Hillary Clinton on ad spending. He refused to build a proprietary ground game with the associated software and logistics. He refused the professionals' narrative about Obama's two winning campaigns because he believed Obama won by being Obama, and that Trump could win by being Trump.

Jim Messina, who managed Obama's 2012 reelection campaign, published a *New York Times* op-ed five days before the election about the importance of data. He reminded us that his campaign's computers had predicted Obama's electoral vote total on the dot at 332, and that the lack of parallel sophistication on the GOP side was a harbinger of defeat. He dismissed Trump's ability even to know where he stood in the race because of his refusal to adopt the Democrats' methods:

> Today, campaigns can target voters so well that they can personalize conversations. That is the only way, when any candidate asks about the state of the race, to offer a true assessment.
>
> Hillary Clinton can do that. To my knowledge, Donald J. Trump, who has bragged that he doesn't care about data in campaigns, can't.

Did any of those targeted voters feel they had a personalized conversation with Hillary Clinton? Was it via a YouTube ad or an automated text message that the "conversation" took place? The only hint of discontent with the superficial nature of these tactics came from the last Democrat to have won before Obama. Bill Clinton was reportedly upset that the campaign was obsessed with turnout and organization at the expense of having a message like Trump had.

The hyperbole from Messina and other political technocrats about advanced techniques lulled Democrats into the belief that the campaign itself mattered more than the candidate. In turn, the political press spent much of the race contrasting Clinton's operation with Trump's and portraying the election as a proxy contest between two campaigns of wildly unequal size and ability. Framed this way, they saw no way Clinton could lose.

Trump, for his part, refused the technocratic view of politics that was pushed on him by most Republicans. He refused to inflate the size of his campaign. He refused to match Hillary Clinton on ad spending. He refused to build a proprietary ground game with the associated software and logistics. Trump refused the professionals' narrative about Obama's two winning campaigns because he believed Obama won by being Obama, and that Trump could win by being Trump.

Nor did Trump accept the related conventional wisdom

that the only way for him to win was if the election was a referendum on Hillary Clinton. His second of three campaign managers, Paul Manafort, reportedly told his boss at the outset of the general election, "The best thing we can do is to have you move into a cave for the next four months. If you're not on the campaign trail, the focus is on her, and we win. Whoever the focus is on will lose."

Trump's plan was always the exact opposite: grab the spotlight and keep it on himself. The media wrote this off as an uncontrollable vanity play. But Trump internalized something about his prospects of becoming president few others did: His unique claim on the White House required an aggressive sales pitch. He would have to tell voters why he wanted to be their president. There would be no such thing as Trump backing into victory as the default winner while Clinton suffered death by a thousand cuts.

This is why Trump's strategy called for him to be anywhere and everywhere getting his message out and doing rapid response. When his aides wouldn't let him sit for national TV interviews during the general election, he did more rallies. When his campaign ground to a halt as the nation heard his "locker room talk" in the leaked *Access Hollywood* tape, he brought Paula Jones, Juanita Broaddrick, and Kathleen Willey to the second debate two days later and sat them by his family. At the third debate he refused to say whether he would concede if the race were called against him on election night. At every opportunity to stand down, Trump insisted on competing.

In addition to fending off the pressure from the media and his own party to stand down, Trump had to mostly dismiss the polls in order to believe his strategy was successful. He never led in a single public poll in Wisconsin. He never led in Michigan or Pennsylvania (save for one survey in July) until the very last polls in each state taken by the same Republican firm (Trafalgar Group). The final *Real Clear Politics* polling average had Trump at 42 percent, five points off his popular vote share (Clinton finished two points above her final average). The exit polls were so bad that Frank Luntz at 3:43 P.M. on Election Day tweeted "Hillary Clinton will be the next President of the United States."

It's clear that there was a hidden Trump vote that enabled him to outperform his projections in most swing states and grab narrow wins in the three Blue Wall states mentioned above. The media shaming of Trump seems to have made some respondents reluctant to participate in a poll or willing to claim they were voting for someone else (Gary Johnson and Jill Stein together had almost 7 percent support in the *Real Clear Politics* final average and ended up getting around 4 percent of the vote). After two presidential elections in which the polling averages and the prognosticators got it right, respect for polling science has swung from high to low.

The same undressing is happening to the media, which didn't realize until it was too late that America was getting *The Apprentice* version of Trump rather than the *Spy* version of Trump. If consumers were already cynical and distrustful of the media before the election results, it's hard to see where the floor is on how far their respect falls. Trump's victory may bring realignment not only to the political parties—toward a more working-class GOP and provincial Democratic party—but also the media landscape. This would mean a flattened media power structure, where the *New York Times* and mainline TV networks lose their long-held ability to influence coverage down through a hierarchy of outlets that look up to them.

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From left, Paula Jones, Kathleen Willey, and Juanita Broaddrick at the presidential debate, October 9

The power of the media sits atop a long list of political sacred cows that Trump trampled on his way to the White House. These include: polling, punditry, ground games, technology, endorsements, political parties, money, ads, debates, the Clinton dynasty, the Bush dynasty, the Blue Wall, "The economy, stupid," "All politics is local," and the 2012 RNC "autopsy."

If the professional conception of politics has been shattered, one can hope this will encourage more nonprofessionals to enter politics. That class of people may be better prepared than political careerists to lead because their opinions are not scripted for them. Whether they supported him or not, many people in this country who have the talent to lead may be less afraid to try to do so because of Donald Trump. He proved that what a candidate really needs is a connection with voters. The message that forges that connection can triumph over whatever else is said about it, especially by the media. ♦

With Smugness Toward None . . .

A modesty proposal

By Andy Smarick

As Election Day approached, there was renewed interest in former President George H. W. Bush's magnanimous handwritten 1993 note to his successor, incoming President Bill Clinton. In it, Bush offered Clinton encouragement and wished him great happiness in office, then closed patriotically, "You will be our president when you read this note. . . . Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you." With the backdrop of 2016's extraordinarily divisive campaign, the letter was held up, understandably, as a model of political civility.

It seems, however, that we're at risk of missing the note's larger lesson. Yes, it demonstrates America's proud tradition of peaceful transitions of power and highlights Bush's ability to show kindness and maintain impeccable manners in what must have been his most dispiriting professional moment. But that generous letter is also the byproduct of a worldview; it's a point on a straight line between a political philosophy and an approach to public policy. We do ourselves, and our politics, a disservice by separating the letter and its sentiments from the author's views on governing. They're part of the same fabric.

Inauguration Day, January 20, 1993

Over the years, much has been written about the "conservative temperament" of modesty, a disposition regularly displayed by Bush 41 and epitomized by that letter. But it's worth revisiting in this particular moment because its absence helps explain not just the toxicity of more recent elections but also the centralizing nature of so many contemporary policy proposals and the "smugness" that many observers have identified in current political commentary.

Put simply: When we are certain and self-satisfied, we're liable to be caustic and incurious and advance prescriptions that are bold, swift, and sweeping. When we're uncertain and modest, we're likelier to be charitable and inquisitive and offer reforms that would incrementally build on yesterday's successes.

THE CASE FOR HUMILITY

The essence of the conservative mindset is a recognition of limits. As imperfect humans, our knowledge and understanding are always incomplete. We forecast poorly. We have contradictory principles and priorities. We're self-interested. We can be greedy.

In a 2011 article for *Policy Review*, the University of Toronto's Andrew Stark made the case that this worldview has a predictable influence on how the right thinks about collective action. Humility, he argues, serves as the common denominator across conservatism's disparate communities; each possesses a doctrine carrying "within itself the notion that it's very difficult for human beings, when they act as political creatures, to get matters right." Though factions within conservatism may occasionally find themselves at odds on policy matters, they all recognize "our hobbled abilities, as fallible beings, to bend the world to our will."

As a result, conservatives are deeply skeptical about governing strategies that presume too much about our capacities—for instance, centralization, muscular government, expert administrators, and grand schemes. This naturally leads the conservative to seek to limit the authority of others: decentralization, the separation of governmental powers into branches, trusting small voluntary associations

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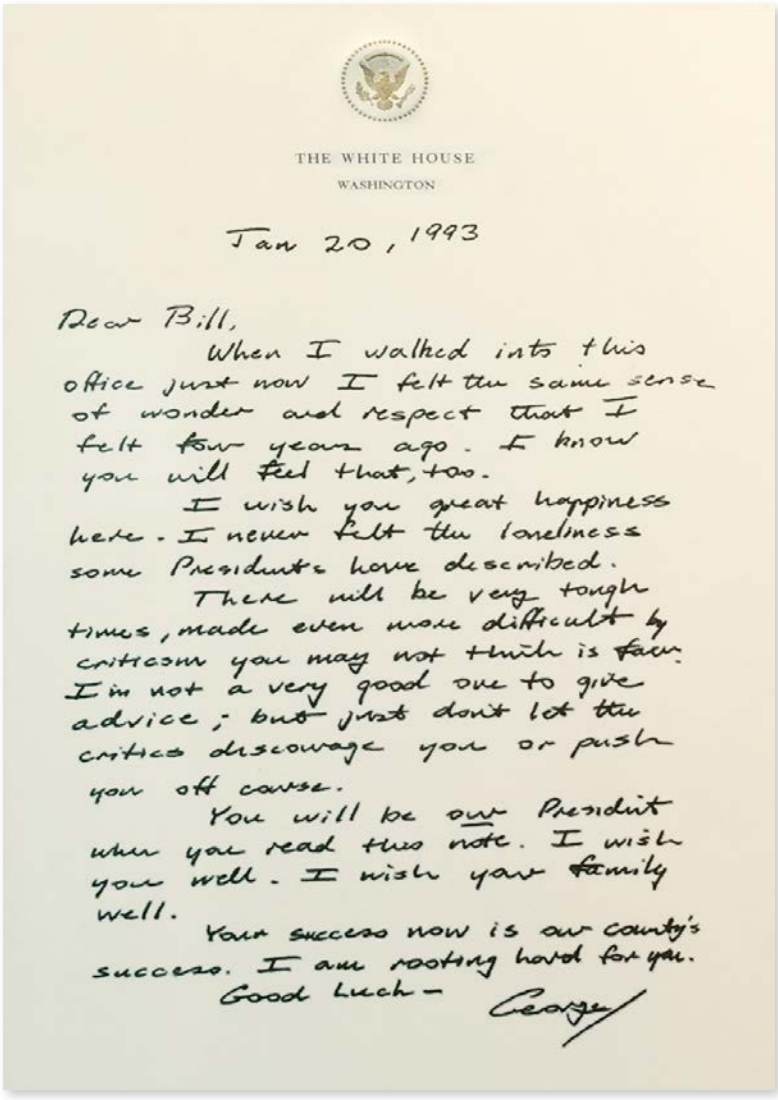
over compulsory state bodies, putting faith in markets over central plans. But—crucially—this humility extends down to the self and shapes how the temperamentally conservative individual engages in the public's business: *I* am limited. *I* may be wrong. *I* need to trust others.

Bush learned and exhibited this mindset early. His biographer Jon Meacham notes that Bush had been taught as a child never to talk about himself. Later, he volunteered for dangerous military service. Then there was his fundamental "reticence," his unwillingness to reveal—much less promote—himself. This personal humility translated into confidence in and dependence on others, which can be seen clearly in his most noteworthy presidential moments: exhaustively building the broadest possible international coalition prior to the Gulf war, compromising with congressional Democrats on budget and tax issues, refusing to triumphantly celebrate as the Soviet Union fell.

For someone less modest, going it alone in war, risking a government shutdown, and dancing on a crumbling Berlin Wall might have seemed sensible, even preferable. But for Bush, that would have been out of the question. As President Obama said during a 2013 White House ceremony recognizing Bush's volunteer work: "Given the humility that's defined your life, I suspect it's harder for you to see something that's clear to everybody else around you, and that's how bright a light you shine."

For the humble leader, a heavy reliance on others and the suppression of many personal preferences serve as a cornerstone of policymaking. One critical element of this is explained in Justus Myers and Philip Wallach's 2014 *National Affairs* article "The Conservative Governing Disposition." They argue that "because people are fallible and the world is complex," the conservative maintains a "healthy respect for evolved social practices and institutions." These "embody the accumulated wisdom of trial-and-error experience" collected across the ages. Indeed, at the Constitutional Convention, John Dickinson offered the sage advice, "Let experience be our guide. Reason may mislead us."

Deference to history is an invaluable tool for dialing back hubris. No matter how smart and sophisticated one believes oneself to be, it is prudent to pay heed to the time-tested habits and institutions produced and preserved by preceding generations. "Tradition," in G.K. Chesterton's classic formulation, "means giving a vote to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead." Or, as the British writer Danny Kruger put it in his 2007 book *On Fraternity*, the authority that emerges from relying on custom "is the cumulative, collective vote of all generations past and present."



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jan 20, 1993

Dear Bill,

When I walked into this office just now I felt the same sense of wonder and respect that I felt four years ago. I know you will feel that, too.

I wish you great happiness here. I never felt the loneliness some Presidents have described.

There will be very tough times, made even more difficult by criticism you may not think is fair. I'm not a very good one to give advice; but just don't let the critics discourage you or push you off course.

You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well.

Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you.

Good Luck—

George

George H.W. Bush's letter to Bill Clinton

While looking back, the humble conservative also looks out. He trusts the wisdom, decency, and energy of individuals and their small communities spread far and wide. Alexis de Tocqueville famously chronicled and celebrated Americans' unusual ability to self-organize and nimbly solve countless challenges. The 18th-century British philosopher and statesman Edmund Burke similarly lauded the "little platoons" of society that foster deep relationships and facilitate joint action for the public good. Yuval Levin, author of *The Fractured Republic*, is today's most prominent

conservative advocate for pushing authority down to citizens and neighborhoods. In a recent *Wall Street Journal* essay, he argues for "a decentralizing conservatism of bottom-up solutions" that shifts power away from large, faraway, state-controlled entities and toward America's vast array of local civil-society bodies.

These intertwined concepts—personal modesty, deference to longstanding institutions, and dependence on local decision-making—provided the backbone for what might have been George H.W. Bush's finest speech. In his address to the Republican National Convention in 1988 accepting the party's nomination, Bush used self-deprecation ("I'll try to hold my charisma in check"), recounted lessons learned from others, and made only passing reference to his extensive résumé (alluding to his military heroism, for example, as "I almost lost my life in [war]"). Then, underscoring his reverence for the accumulated wisdom of the past, he explained, "I am guided by certain traditions," "I respect old-fashioned common sense," and "I like what's been tested and found to be true."

He took the air out of the inflated ambitions of self-styled experts, admitting to "no great love for the imaginings of social planners." He called out the conceit of the "technocrat who makes sure the gears mesh but doesn't for a second understand the magic of the machine." As an alternative, he offered his take on the decentralizing concept of subsidiarity: "From the individual to the family to the community, and then on out to the town, to the church and the school, and, still echoing out, to the county, the state, and the nation—each doing only what it does well, and no more." As though channeling Tocqueville, he argued, "We're a nation of community; of thousands and tens of thousands of ethnic, religious, social, business, labor union, neighborhood, regional, and other organizations, all of them varied, voluntary, and unique."

Perhaps Bush was able to handle his reelection loss with such equanimity and show such generosity to the man who turned him out of office precisely because he had such a modest view of himself, because he trusted the many over the mighty, because he understood that voters might have seen something that he couldn't, and because he had such faith in our institutions, even when those institutions produced outcomes not to his liking.

But what becomes of our politics and policies when our commentators and leaders *don't* have a humble disposition—when they have extravagant views of their own abilities, when they belittle and condescend to others, when they don't trust the wisdom of their fellow citizens and the institutions of our nation? For instance, when they scornfully call a rival's supporters "irredeemable" and "deplorable" or pompously pronounce to admirers that "we are the ones we've been waiting for."


Woodrow Wilson; Jon Stewart

THE POLITICS OF SMUG

Though the politics of 2016 has given us plenty of reason to despair, there has been one great pleasant surprise: growing appreciation of the dangers of conservative humility's opposite, namely progressive "smugness." The right has long bemoaned the left's haughtiness—progressives' self-styled superiority and caricaturing of conservatives as uneducated, unenlightened rubes. But what made 2016 unusual is that this smugness has also been self-diagnosed by the left. The biggest splash came in April from *Vox*'s Emmett Rensin in an extended essay, "The Smug Style in American Liberalism." Rensin diagnosed the condition as "a way of conducting politics, predicated on the belief that American life is not divided by moral difference or policy divergence—not really—but by the failure of half the country to know what's good for them."

The article argues that, in the eyes of a significant part of the left, there is simply a gulf between rational, intelligent, cosmopolitan progressives and the "stupid hicks" who are "conned by right-wingers and tent revivalists." This mindset not only shields the left's policy positions from scrutiny—*of course our views are right; they're informed*—it leads to contempt for others: Our opponents don't simply disagree with us; they are simple, incurious, and deluded by faith. The progressive community, Rensin argues, can then issue "a condescending, defensive sneer toward any person or movement outside of its consensus."

In an August *Huffington Post* article, "The Culture of the Smug White Liberal," Nikki Johnson-Huston agreed, writing, "Somewhere along the way we stopped fighting for the little guy and became the party of the smug, educated elites who look down on those with less education and deem them unable or unworthy of being able to make personal decisions for their own lives." The day after the election, Will Rahn of CBS News conceded the press corps's progressive bias, writing that "with a few exceptions, we were all tacitly or explicitly #WithHer." Reporters missed the story of Trump in part because they had "spent months mocking the people who had a better sense of what was going on" due to "modern journalism's great moral and intellectual failing: its unbearable smugness." Just days after the election, the *New York Times* columnist Frank

STEWART, PEABODY AWARDS

Bruni lamented the "smugness and sanctimony" that had contributed to the left's losses.

Interestingly, several writers maintained that the posture taken by Jon Stewart's *Daily Show* typified the problem. As Rensin wrote, it was a program that "advanced the idea that liberal orthodoxy was a kind of educated savvy and that its opponents were, before anything else, stupid." Similarly, in an August article for *Tablet*, "How Jon Stewart's Culture of Ridicule Left America Unprepared for Donald Trump," author Jesse Bernstein argued that Stewart helped create a "very specific type of internet-era liberal smugness." The righteousness of those "in the know" was assumed, and opponents were treated with scorn. Bernstein smartly noted the unfortunate influence this style of thinking has on public debate: "When ridicule replaces reasoned discourse, there's no longer a place for persuasion."

Some have wondered if shutting down discussion is less a byproduct of smugness than its key purpose. In a May *New York Times* column, "A Confession of Liberal Intolerance," Nicholas Kristof worried that progressives seem to believe in diversity until it includes conservatives. "Liberal arrogance," he argued, can imply "that conservatives don't have anything significant to add to the discussion." The president of the University of Chicago, Robert Zimmer, was sufficiently alarmed by campus illiberalism rooted in progressive superciliousness that he felt compelled to defend the value of intellectual diversity in the *Wall Street Journal*. The recent wave of student demands for "silencing of speakers, faculty, students and visitors" can emanate from a group's "moral certainty that its particular values, beliefs or approaches are the only correct ones and that others should adhere to the group's views."

In our politics, it's been common to assign stubborn certainty to the devout churchgoers on the right. But it looks like a kind of proselytizing zealotry has swept the secular, progressive left. At minimum, this has contributed to today's political polarization and the venom in contemporary debates. For sure, overconfidence can afflict leaders of any political persuasion; a Texas swagger may have played a part in the misguided military forays of both left-leaning Lyndon Johnson and right-leaning George W. Bush. But while many on the left made note of Donald Trump's insinuation that the only explanation for his potential loss would be a rigged election process, too few have applied similar scrutiny to the ongoing presumptuousness of the Obama administration.

It requires a herculean sense of self to stage a nomination speech in front of ancient Greek columns, to dismiss Congress so cavalierly, to expand Uncle Sam's reach over health care and schools, to issue so many far-reaching executive orders via the "pen and phone" strategy, and so on. As the Democratic party reassesses and rebuilds in the years ahead, it is probably worth their asking how the outgoing administration's behavior paralleled, even energized, the politics of smug.

It has been refreshing, however, to witness the uniform postelection graciousness from all three major players in the presidential drama. In his conciliatory congratulatory speech about the winner, President Obama conspicuously used the exact language of Bush's 1993 letter about "rooting" for his successor's success. In his victory speech, President-elect Trump showed kindness to his opponent, pledged to unify the nation, and promised to reach out to those who opposed him. Secretary Clinton expressed hope for the winners' success.

In an August *Huffington Post* article, 'The Culture of the Smug White Liberal,' Nikki Johnson-Huston wrote, 'Somewhere along the way [Democrats] stopped fighting for the little guy and became the party of the smug, educated elites who look down on those with less education and deem them unable or unworthy of being able to make personal decisions for their own lives.'

In other words, the democratic forms of our presidential transitions are being respected at the top, for which we can be grateful. But no one should be accused of cynicism for doubting that the national political scene is about to enter a golden age of humility. It may well be the case that politics will always privilege hubris. We get fired up for "hope and change," "morning in America," and "happy days are here again," not for modest expectations and incrementalism. The buoyant confidence of FDR, Reagan, Bush 43, and Obama was rewarded with reelection. The humility of a Gerald Ford or Bush 41 was not.

But we should also recognize that the greatest line in our greatest president's greatest speech masterfully blended conviction and modesty. Abraham Lincoln ended his second inaugural by encouraging the nation simultaneously to pursue justice while recognizing our limited ability to ascertain it—"with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." Perhaps appreciating—even embracing—the tension between those cardinal principles was essential for acting with malice toward none, offering charity to all, and binding up the nation's wounds. ♦

Jeremy Thorpe outside the Old Bailey (1979)

What Rinka Wrought

How to feel better about American politics. BY JUDY BACHRACH

In October 1975, on a lonely stretch of Exmoor, an incompetent hired hitman pointed a 1910 Mauser at a voluble, unbalanced British homosexual named Norman Scott, at which point the gun jammed several times. The only casualty of that strange evening: Scott's dog, a famously pleasant Great Dane named Rinka who, moments earlier, was successfully shot by that same gunman. (Evidently he was afraid of dogs.) Thus began one of the most spectacular British scandals ever recorded in a nation that has historically provided its subjects with plenty of competition, much of it embellished by gallons of newspaper ink.

A Very English Scandal
Sex, Lies, and a Murder Plot at the Heart of the Establishment
by John Preston
Other Press, 352 pp., $27.95

Because of that murdered dog, Jeremy Thorpe, then leader of Britain's Liberal party and Scott's onetime lover, not only found his reputation in tatters, and his political future wrecked, but himself on trial at the Old Bailey for the attempted murder of a man he wanted silenced. Because the dog died, three of Thorpe's co-conspirators also found themselves judged in the Old Bailey, and Thorpe's close friend, a former Liberal member

GETTY IMAGES

Judy Bachrach, a contributing editor to Vanity Fair, *is the author, most recently, of* Glimpsing Heaven: The Stories and Science of Life After Death.

of Parliament named Peter Bessell, testified against him. Most astonishingly, because of the dead dog, the British establishment itself, which for years had unflinchingly protected one of its own—a corrupt political leader who in the end actually used party funds to pay off the ineffectual gunman—also underwent some scrutiny. (But alas, never quite enough.) And because of Rinka's death, much of this story has been examined and reexamined in the decades since. But nothing comes close to this excellent, elegantly written account.

As it happens, I know quite a bit about Jeremy Thorpe, his frantic homicidal plots, and the fragility of the British system of justice, because, in May 1979, I was packed off by the late Murray Gart, then editor in chief of the *Washington Star*, to cover Thorpe's trial. On a day-to-day, practically hour-to-hour, basis. When I protested—who in the United States wants to hear the minutiae of some British politician's crime?—Gart silenced me with a few sentences: "In the first place, this isn't just the story of a murderer who happens to be a famous politician. This is the story of the intricate ways the British themselves view homosexuality. Read about the trials of Oscar Wilde," he said. "And in the second: a dog was killed instead of a person. In Britain that's a much, much bigger tragedy."

Gart was right on both counts. When I arrived at the Old Bailey on Day One, the place was stuffed with rows of happy journalists as well as nervous lawyers—one of whom informed me he was secretly representing former prime minister Harold Wilson—and my petition for a precious seat was rejected immediately and out of hand until I bribed some court official with two armloads of fresh tulips. (I have no idea, to this day, why that worked.) Everyone in the dock or on the stand—the inept gunman, nervous Norman Scott, and especially Thorpe in his tweed suits, who never testified—looked seedy and off-putting. The dog was certainly the only character in the whole saga worthy of sympathy; Norman Scott, although another intended victim, somewhat less so.

In fact, as John Preston makes clear, you could not in a million years find a less auspicious person to consort with than Norman Scott, a handsome young man when Thorpe first met him, who felt periodically victimized and needed an outlet for an unabating sense of injury. The Liberal party leader found this out the hard way: "For the last five years as you probably know, Jeremy and I have had a 'homosexual' relationship," Scott wrote Ursula Thorpe, the leader's mother, in 1965. "[T]hrough my meeting with Jeremy . . . I gave birth to this vice that lies latent in every man." Well, no—old Ursula really *didn't* know, not about anything. And as for "this vice," the practice thereof was actually illegal in the Britain of 1965. So you can imagine Thorpe's reaction when his mother called and he realized that his former lover was of an epistolary bent.

Three years later—by which time Thorpe, with an eye to his political future, had married Caroline Allpass, a nice young lady who didn't ask questions—an aggrieved Scott (also newly married, his wife expecting) telephoned the Thorpe residence. It was Caroline Allpass Thorpe who answered, and she was greeted by Norman Scott with the news that (a) the Liberal leader most likely had Scott's National Insurance card in his possession, and (b) Scott was certain Thorpe had his card because "he was my employer. We were lovers. You have a baby and you know what it must be like for my wife with no money."

About a year later, Caroline died in a crash, her car having veered from one lane into another where it hit a truck head-on. When I interviewed Norman Scott, he said he'd always felt guilty about that terrible phone call, wondering if, somehow, Caroline was dwelling on his revelations about her husband's secret past when the accident occurred. Whatever the truth of the matter, Thorpe became convinced that his ex-lover's volatile nature was, indeed, the cause of his wife's death, and—neither for the first nor the last time—he talked to his good friend Peter Bessell about what he periodically called "the ultimate solution." Translated, Thorpe explained, this meant that Scott should be lured to the United States, somehow or other, and there either be shot, poisoned, or beaten to death with a shovel. After which, Thorpe concluded, Scott's body should be dumped in a Florida swamp.

But here's the even more interesting part: For six years thereafter, right up to the jammed-gun moment, the Liberal leader was relentless in his insistence that Scott should share Rinka's sad fate. Bessell, or another of Thorpe's close friends, could hardly step into his parliamentary offices without being assailed by some elaborate homicidal plot—one Thorpe also liked to call "the Scottish Matter"—which he wanted carried out by surrogates hired by these same friends. "Peter, it's no worse than shooting a sick dog," was how Thorpe characterized his plan to Bessell in an amazingly clairvoyant moment.

Of course, you can see how frustrating it must have been for a wannabe prime minister, a man whose party garnered six million votes (nearly 20 percent of the total) in 1974, to learn that a former flame possesses copies of old letters, some of which the ex had either handed over to the police on occasion or, alternatively, shared with friends and, in one instance, a physician. Especially since one of these letters—presumably referencing Scott's desire to work abroad—ended with this memorable last line: "Bunnies can (and will) go to France. . . . I miss you."

So it was inevitable that certain top-ranking members of Edward Heath's government passed details of the affair on to MI5 where, as the author cleverly discovers, "they joined an already bulging file on Jeremy Thorpe." It was probably predictable, as well, that Heath's rival, Labor's Harold Wilson, considered leaking details of the Thorpe file to the press (but did not). And you can see why Britain's leaders didn't go all out in their efforts to destroy Thorpe's ambitions: Any party leader whose first campaign slogan was "Faith, Hope and Jeremy" and whose second (1974) was "One

More Heave!" probably didn't need a downhill push. That was the year that Thorpe lost more than 4,000 votes in his North Devon constituency—and within two years, he was ousted as party leader. Two years after that, just around the time of his trial, Thorpe lost his seat in the House of Commons.

I wish I had known about MI5's bulging file on Thorpe at the time of his trial because the entirety of that 45-day spectacle—known at the time, perhaps inevitably, as "The Trial of the Century"—seemed to take place in an inviolate vacuum. The judge in the case, Sir Joseph Cantley, his face always bright crimson after lunch breaks, was, even by Old Bailey standards, startlingly dim. His summing-up to the jury was a scandal: Scott was (in his view) "a crook . . . a fraud . . . a sponger . . . a whiner"; the case against Thorpe was "almost entirely circumstantial," when, in fact, it was not circumstantial at all; the alleged gunman was "a buffoon"; and Scott's claim that the two were lovers "was the kind of story people are so ready to believe these days even if it wasn't true."

Small wonder, then, that the jury bit and Jeremy Thorpe was acquitted. For that matter, everyone on trial was acquitted, the gunman included. Norman Scott, who during testimony had told the judge "I didn't think this court would ever sit, I can assure you. I thought the establishment would cover it up," was basically half-correct in his earlier supposition. The court sat, but the cover-up continued and lasted until mid-June 1979. But the thing of it was this: Practically everyone who counted in Britain—meaning the establishment that protected Thorpe for so long—knew for a fact that, despite the verdict, Thorpe was guilty. After the trial Thorpe was free—he wasn't incarcerated—but no one wanted to have much to do with him, and he died, still in disgrace, in 2014.

Whenever Mr. Justice Cantley took his long lunch breaks I made it my business to spend time with the elegant writer Sybille Bedford, who was also covering the trial, and with the *Private Eye* columnist Auberon Waugh (son of Evelyn), who was doing the same but in an entirely different manner. It was Waugh who informed me that his own brief plunge into politics—he was determined to represent something he called the Dog Lovers' party in Thorpe's own constituency of North Devon—had been unfairly thwarted, in classic British style. The thwarter in question? The barrister George Carman, Thorpe's very effective trial attorney. Carman had gotten an injunction preventing Waugh from publishing his campaign manifesto for prospective voters because, Carman said, it might prejudice the Thorpe trial. Try it, he told Waugh, and Waugh would be sued for libel—"and of course," as Waugh explained to me in a thoughtful tone, "over here a libel lawsuit is the average Englishman's way of earning a second income."

"Well," I said to Waugh, with a nudge, "you can tell *me*. What, exactly, was your censored campaign slogan? What did it say?"

"Rinka is *not* forgotten. Rinka lives. Woof woof. Vote Waugh. "

"Not really a terrific slogan," I told him.

"Better than 'One More Heave,'" Waugh replied. ♦

B&A

Thirst Cruncher

There's more to craft brewing than craft.

BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

If we're going to create more manufacturing jobs in our country, we ought to look at businesses that have successfully created jobs that don't involve silicon or staring at a screen all day. America's craft brewers provide a constructive example, since breweries are manufacturers whose products are locally made, require a lot of labor, and have jobs that can't be outsourced.

Craft breweries, according to the Brewers Association, now have 12 percent of the American market. The largest craft brewer, by far, is Boston Beer, makers of the Samuel Adams brand. Boston Beer is not only the fifth-largest brewer in the United States, with two substantial breweries in Cincinnati and Breinigsville, Pa., and a smaller one in Boston, but is also the only one of the top five American breweries that was founded in the 20th century. Jim Koch isn't as wealthy as the barons of Silicon Valley, but he has, by all accounts, cofounded a company that made him a billionaire. Moreover, he's created over a thousand jobs, substantially more than most tech-based entrepreneurs, whose enterprises tend to employ relatively few people. Anyone interested in strengthening American industry should study Koch's career closely.

Quench Your Own Thirst
Business Lessons Learned Over a Beer or Two
by Jim Koch
Flatiron, 272 pp., $27.99

Koch came to brewing from management consulting. He went to Harvard for both undergraduate and graduate work, and acquired a law degree and an MBA. In the early 1980s, Koch was working for Boston Consulting Group, where his colleagues included, at various times, Mitt Romney and Benjamin Netanyahu. But Koch's family were brewers, and Koch inherited a recipe that his great-great-grandfather had used to make lager in the 19th century. So, in 1984, he decided to start his own company. He took with him to be cofounder Rhonda Kallman, a Boston

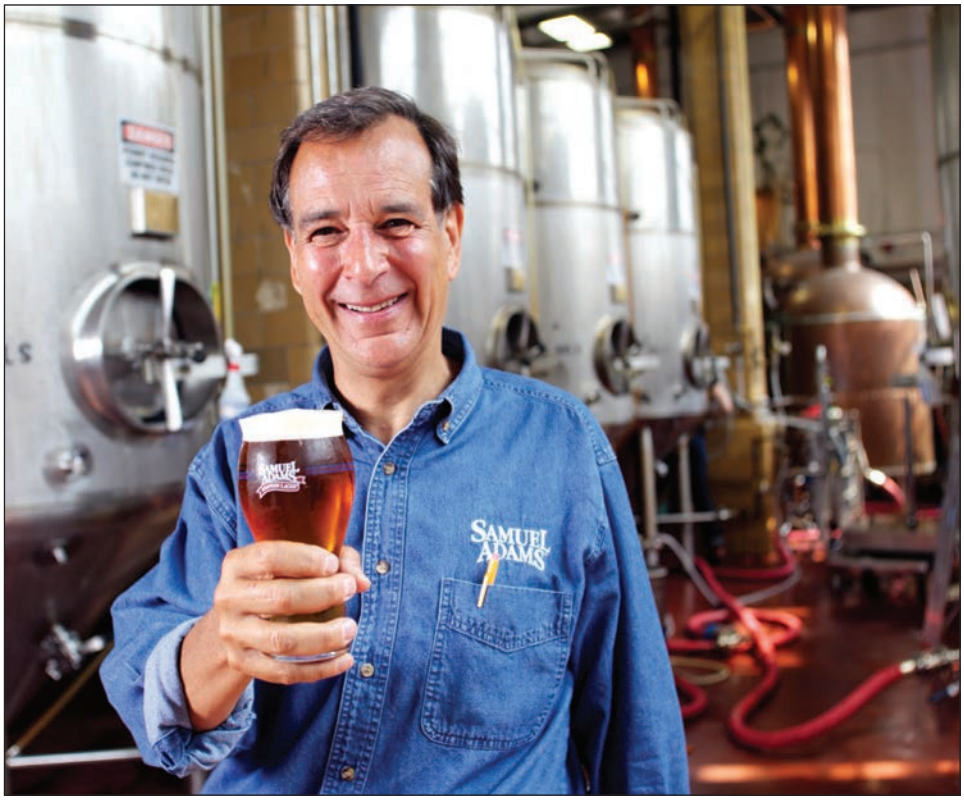
Martin Morse Wooster writes for Mid-Atlantic Brewing News *and* American Brewer.

Consulting Group administrative assistant who was brilliant at promotion and marketing. (Kallman left Boston Beer in 1998 after not being chosen to succeed Koch as CEO.)

Craft brewing in the United States began in 1965, when Fritz Maytag bought failing Anchor Brewing and modernized it. A few other craft breweries, most notably Sierra Nevada, had begun operations by the mid-1980s, but were largely based on the West Coast. The primary competitors to Anheuser-Busch, Miller, and Coors remained regional breweries, many with fading brands, aging plants, and excess capacity.

Jim Koch's great insight was to realize that he could make his beer by making deals with older breweries to let him make his beers in their facilities. This process, known as "contract brewing," is now commonplace but had never really been done in America until Koch made his deals with Pittsburgh Brewing and Cincinnati's Hudepohl-Schoenling. The alliance was a virtuous cycle: The older breweries got a new income stream, and Koch could make his beers without having to sink scarce capital into equipment.

Contract brewing enabled Boston Beer to grow. Koch, with the assistance of renowned brewer Joseph Owades—who, among his achievements, created the first light beer—refined and adapted his family's beer recipe. But what would his beer be called? Ad agencies pitched many names, including Sacred Cod Beer and New World Lager, but Koch decided to name his beer after the 18th-century patriot Samuel Adams, both as an indirect way of stressing heritage and because Adams had some connection with the brewing industry (by most accounts, he malted grain but did not actually make beer). Koch commissioned Gail Hutchinson to design the label and another artist (whom Koch does not name) to paint a portrait of Samuel Adams in the style of John Singleton Copley.



Jim Koch (2010)

BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

So Koch had a brand—Samuel Adams Boston Lager—and a beer. But his next task was getting bars to stock it. He had never taken any courses on selling at Harvard Business School and found only one volume in the school's bookstore on the subject, Tom Hopkins's *How to Master the Art of Selling.* Koch believes Hopkins's book is quite valuable.

Look at salesmen in the movies, Koch argues, and you'll see sleazy boiler rooms as in *The Wolf of Wall Street* or amoral con men such as the characters in *Glengarry Glen Ross*. But selling, Koch reminds us, is an honorable profession that deserves our respect. Koch and Kallman successfully sold Samuel Adams Boston Lager, first to Boston bars, then nationally. By the mid-1990s Koch was worth nine figures and Boston Beer began to buy breweries, ultimately acquiring Hudepohl-Schoenling and a Pennsylvania plant built by long-defunct Schaefer Brewing in 1972 that had gone through five owners between Schaefer's collapse and Boston Beer's purchase.

As Boston Beer grew, however, it went through three major crises. The first came in 1996, when Anheuser-Busch charged that Samuel Adams was deceiving the consumer by not telling them other brewers made their product under contract. Anheuser-Busch bought full-page ads in Massachusetts newspapers accusing Boston Beer of being deceptive and substantially assisted a *Dateline NBC* segment where, Koch recalls, the producers "put me in a darkened room and shined a spotlight on my face from below so that on camera I looked pretty evil." Boston Beer appealed to the Better Business Bureau, who ruled that Anheuser-Busch's claims were misleading and dishonest. And the company survived smaller crises: a massive recall involving traces of glass in a defective shipment of bottles, as well as a regrettable stunt on the Opie and Anthony radio show that convinced Koch that avoiding radio "shock jocks" was a good idea. In the past decade, Boston Beer has had steady, sustainable growth.

Koch candidly provides several lessons from his experience. He shows

that American companies can successfully compete if they offer products that are better made and longer lasting than those offered by overseas rivals. American craft brewers are steadily increasing their market share because the beers they make are fresher and use higher-quality hops and malt than their larger domestic competitors or export-oriented European and Mexican companies.

Koch's views on corporate philanthropy are worth noting as well. He recalls that, in 2007, employees at his firm's Boston headquarters spent a day painting a nearby community center. But the day didn't seem a productive one: "We had probably spent $10,000 worth of good management time to do $2,000 worth of mediocre painting. We could do better." He didn't think Boston Beer's donating to charities was worthwhile because he was taking "someone else's money—our shareholders—and giving it to a charity that we deemed worthy. I was better off just giving back the money to shareholders and letting them decide how to spend it."

Instead of charity, Boston Beer promotes entrepreneurship by offering candidates capital and access to company employees who can offer expertise. In seven years, the Brewing the American Dream program has extended $7 million in credit to companies that created or retained 2,700 jobs. "Happily," Koch writes, "more than 98 percent of the loans we made were repaid." Koch concludes: "Done right, business is a noble pursuit well worth our energy and passion." ♦

B&A

The Lion in Autumn

Orson Welles's protracted second act.

BY DEAN A. HOFFMAN

Few tasks have proven more intractable for the show business biographer than constructing a viable, comprehensive, and, above all, convincing life of Orson Welles (1915-1985), a cultural iconoclast whose sheer range of entertainment media personae—actor, director, master of ceremonies, broadcaster, traveler, raconteur, shill—does more to distort than clarify his identity for posterity. And if the mettlesome post-1970s attempts of Charles Higham, Barbara Leaming, Frank Brady, and David Thomson remain frustratingly unbalanced by their own subjective engagements with Welles's seductive mythology, it is a tendency that has shown few signs of abating throughout the last decade and more.

The British journalist Clinton Heylin offered little more than puerile stylistics in his *Despite the System* (2005); Joseph McBride became far too preoccupied in *What Ever Happened to Orson Welles?* (2006), with forgettable exchanges between an increasingly insufferable crowd of hangers-on surrounding his subject; and the director's unsung cinematographer Gary Graver provided charming anecdotes but few revelations about his mentor in a posthumous memoir published in 2008. Far more encouraging was the arrival last year of two eminently readable treatments, Patrick McGilligan's comprehensive *Young Orson* and *Orson Welles's Last Movie* by Josh Karp—both admirably detailed and straightforward in approach, however limited in their focus.

Orson Welles
One-Man Band
by Simon Callow
Viking, 496 pp., $40

But a discernible standard was established in 1995 with the publication of *Orson Welles*: *The Road to Xanadu* by the intrepid British actor and memoirist Simon Callow. What made Callow's detailing of Welles's life from birth through the premiere of *Citizen Kane* (1941) so convincing was his atomizing of his subject's colorful, self-serving exaggerations, of his home life, his formative years at the Todd School, and his incipient literary and theatrical activity. But if these red herrings proved too much for more gullible biographers, Callow's critical perspective made these pretenses all the more fascinating for the insight they provided into Welles's histrionic nature.

As a formidable actor himself, Callow easily saw through the disingenuousness of Welles's perverse statement to Richard France that the apron stage demands greater voice and gesture than the proscenium arch, noting Welles's love for obiter dicta; the radical cutting of the play text in Welles's WPA production of *Doctor Faustus* (1937) is viewed by Callow as a proto-screenplay that anticipates camera moves and edits; and he notes with approval François Truffaut's observation that Welles's approach to acting reveals "the fragility of the great authority," an ambivalent quality that allowed him simultaneously to personify and critique powerful figures throughout his career.

Aided by critical comparisons between his own research and accounts by Higham and Leaming, Callow revealed Welles's near-primal recourse to self-drama, particularly his need to engage with a mundane or tragic turn of events through reinvention, which became absolutely necessary following the deterioration of his post-*Kane* reputation.

This respectful skepticism resulted in further discernment in Callow's second volume, *Hello Americans* (2006). Noting that Welles's penchant for expedient improvisation would characterize not only the out-of-control omnibus *It's All True* (1942)—an oddity born of Welles's co-employment by the State Department's Office for

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Inter-American Affairs—but also most of his future work, Callow astutely observed that this intoxicant was "an elusive commodity in a studio" such as RKO, the scene of a power shift that would consign Welles to a limbo of erratic creativity for the rest of his career.

But most important for the future of Welles studies, Callow's latest historiography, *One-Man Band*, explores two decades that saw Welles's voluntary exile from his home country, an ill-fated return to Hollywood, and yet another departure for foreign shores—a period of ostensible commercial failure that witnessed the creation of arguably his most characteristic and challenging films. In this third attempt to "restore the texture of real life to the Welles myth," Callow demonstrates, once again, that he is likely to emerge as Welles's definitive chronicler.

Welles's growth as a director is first glimpsed inauspiciously in 1947 as he impulsively snatches a brief shot of the Zoeppè Circus acrobats near the Scalera studio in Rome, an indication of his "sketchpad" approach to gathering compelling cinematic moments regardless of whether any contexts for them might materialize, building visual texture "shard by shard." Although Callow perceives a dramatic flaw in Welles's hallucinatory treatment of the character-driven scenario in *Othello* (1951), this much-maligned film signals the true beginning of this pointillism—his fascination with subtext through post-dubbing and editing from a wealth of experimental shots.

As in his earlier treatments, Callow details Welles's failures to play to his strengths and to harness his own formidable talent into something approximating professional discipline in his unwise returns to the stage during this period. *Moby Dick—Rehearsed* (1955), a retrograde paean to the actor-manager, anticipates the regional ensemble playing that would later characterize the British theater of the 1960s but is upstaged by the new works of Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, and John Osborne. The so-called wheelchair *Lear* (1953) becomes an almost surreal logistical and artistic failure that virtually bankrupts City Center of New York and puts paid to any theatrical future for Welles.

Yet there is undeniable poignancy in Callow's descriptions of Welles's unpardonable rages at hapless colleagues while doing piecework acting amid film projects. Enduring the slow poison of *Kane*'s aftermath, Welles is convincingly portrayed here as "a man in hell," impotent with fury that his artistry as a director is considered unmarketable by the industry. Particularly insightful is Callow's suggestion that for all his preoccupation with powerful central figures in his films, Welles himself lacked the political savvy and bloody-mindedness of such colleagues as Charlie Chaplin or Laurence Olivier, tending to wound himself rather than the competition by his outbursts: "Olivier was a titan, Welles the *Titanic*."

Mr. and Mrs. Orson Welles in Genoa (1958)

But this disparity would only become more pronounced in the ensuing years, for after the completion and re-editing of the troubled 1955 production *Mr. Arkadin*—which ultimately will claim no fewer than seven versions—Welles yearns for a return to Hollywood, a trajectory that would be marked by the prophetic self-sabotaging of several television documentary efforts where he would display both his intuitive grasp of camera filters and setups and his utter lack of accountability regarding network budgets or deadlines.

When Universal Studios disallows location filming for *Touch of Evil* (1958) at the Mexican border, Welles's love for blighted cities (in David Thomson's phrase) leads him to the tawdry oil derricks and faux Mediterranean architectural remnants of the nearby community of Venice, California, where he convincingly creates the fictional Los Robles. But this latter-day creative economy would vanish with Welles's hapless, adversarial relationship with the studio head Edward Muhl, compounded by his brusqueness with star Charlton Heston's agent on the eve of the film's release, as he uncannily reenacts the aftermath of *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1946) by fleeing south of the border to indulge his artistic whims (in this case, his never-finished *Don Quixote* project) while the baffled studio, smarting from cost and schedule overages, hacks it down to manageable size and consigns it to B-feature oblivion.

Yet Callow argues that Welles's "private, quirky, bizarre" approach to his subject would have guaranteed *Touch of Evil*'s commercial failure, an assessment borne out by its 2000 DVD restoration in which we witness a visual style so breathtaking that it undermines narrative coherence. As Callow remarks, Welles "summon[s] up a definitive world" in the film, "integrating an expressionist vocabulary

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of low and skewed angles and distorting lenses," correctly concluding that "every frame of *Touch of Evil* celebrates the art of film"—a virtual synthesis of Welles's directorial method throughout this segment of his career.

Similarly, Callow finds that *The Trial* (1962) suffers from Welles's co-opting of Franz Kafka's novel into an antistatist fable, with its questionable portrayal of an unflappable, careerist Josef K. Yet his subversive reinvention of a Kafkaesque world remains visually overwhelming, a setting where disparate baroque and modern European locations coalesce into a nightmarish neverland of suspended time and place, one that clearly reflected Welles's tendency to view this author through the prism of the Holocaust and nuclear annihilation.

Finally, *Chimes at Midnight* (1965)—the ne plus ultra of Welles's under-resourced yet masterful Shakespeare adaptations—appears as Welles's definitive expression of lost innocence, with its autobiographical echoes of real and surrogate fathers in the figures surrounding the future Henry V, particularly Welles's guardian, the manipulative Dr. Maurice Bernstein, who dies on the eve of the production. Here, Callow perfectly articulates Welles's magician ethos not only in his heartfelt performance as the betrayed Falstaff, or in his multifaceted editing of the Battle of Shrewsbury, but also in his descriptions of the frenzied setups ("Follow me, I'm looking for a shot"), extemporized costuming, "trapezoidal" camera angles, and eleventh-hour captures of natural light in a work that may be viewed with hindsight as Welles's most accomplished film.

As with *Othello*, *Touch of Evil*, and *The Trial*, the improvised sets and expedient locations of *Chimes at Midnight* take on a visual integrity through a combination of lens filtering, set dressing, and camera placement that discovers unexpected geometrics in ordinary elements and found settings. With his final completed Shakespeare film, Welles reveals the poetic in virtually every shot, however minimalist its composition, culminating in total, unforeseen stylistic coherence.

Joseph Cotten, Anne Baxter, Tim Holt in 'The Magnificient Ambersons' (1942)

Throughout *One-Man Band*, Simon Callow's own aesthetic remains as riveting as in his first two volumes, his thespian flamboyance held in check by concrete details and an unerring focus on his subject. Callow properly seizes on Welles's unmistakable affinity with Walt Whitman in his reading of *A Song of Myself* for the BBC ("I am large, I contain multitudes"). Welles's direct address to the camera in another British broadcast is described as a moment of near-perfect frisson, linking the artist with the moving image. And two cryptic allusions to Welles's fateful encounter during this period with future life partner and executor Oja Kodar—a woman less than half his age whose statuesque beauty was equally matched by her managerial shrewdness and creative affinity with Welles himself—offer an indelible segue to Callow's anticipated fourth and final volume detailing the consummation of a career that must now be recognized as a true artistic collaboration.

Just as he previously delineated Welles's newfound identity as an independent filmmaker who would work free of both studio interference and budgets, Callow foreshadows the peripatetic post-Hollywood Welles who, faced yet again with the compromising re-edit of a would-be comeback feature and the public dismissal of an ambitious and profoundly personal effort, chooses to delve even deeper into the modernist fragmentation of narrative that characterized *Citizen Kane*. Exotic paramour at his side, portable editing machine in hand, the massive, black-caped Welles would gallivant about Europe following this period compiling a grab-bag of shots, sequences, and still lifes that would cohere into the mind-boggling mosaics of *F for Fake* (1973), *Don Quixote* (1992), and his intermittently glimpsed *The Other Side of the Wind*—a purported *chef-d'oeuvre* that has been interminably delayed through a farcical creative and bureaucratic progress and which is currently, almost comically, the subject of a grass-roots campaign of fan-based public fundraising for its completion.

Callow has provided the missing element in much of the biographical canon: Despite Welles's antic recourse throughout this period to theater, radio, or television, his preeminent identity is that of a truly auteurist director of films—an artist who consistently understood, on an almost visceral level, that the world presented through the lens must have a unique integrity that is discerned and articulated solely by the individual who wields the camera. ♦

B&A

Westward, Oh

What was lost when the West was won.

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

Historians have to make strategic decisions before they even pick up their pens. The most freighted of them is whether to tell a story or advance an argument. The two can be done simultaneously, as Edward Gibbon long ago proved, but it's hard to pull off. Academic historians have preferred argument over narrative; writers of history have felt more comfortable with tale-telling alone. Both need to come part-way toward the others. But contrary to a widespread view that academics are obtuse in adhering to a clotted style at the risk of losing readers, writers of history are the ones who most often refuse to bow to at least some of the strengths of the academics—such as putting forth an argument or adopting a particular vantage to organize and understand the swarm of facts that make up the past. A book like this one is often the result.

Cozzens is a gifted writer and his subject—the Indian wars that covered the Northern and Southern plains (as well as sometimes the Northwest) from the 1860s on—is central to United States history after the Civil War. In fact, it's central to all American history. Anyone who's read or taught widely about the American past knows that the native tribes turn up throughout this hemisphere's record from the moment Europeans got within sight of land and ventured to place feet upon it. And of course, the tribes had their own long history with each other before Europeans encountered and forever altered them. Their presence and agency in the panorama of American history can't be avoided, and Cozzens helps us see why.

The Earth Is Weeping
The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West
by Peter Cozzens
Knopf, 576 pp., $35

The details of his narrative of just about every encounter between Americans and natives are dizzying, and it's often hard to keep them straight. Readers will come across a well-known cast of characters—George Armstrong Custer, Philip Sheridan, William Tecumseh Sherman, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, Cochise, Geronimo—and all the other major figures who've long stood out for their roles in the bloody struggles over control of the western territories. And there are many you haven't heard of before: tribes like the Modoc and figures like Lean Bear, Little Wolf, Dull Knife, and Edward R. S. Canby. The battles they fought—at, among other places, Little Bighorn, Pine Ridge, and Wounded Knee—and the political and military complexities faced by each side take up much of the text.

Among the thousands—Americans (black and white) and natives alike—who fought to control the western American land mass were some who had moral scruples, were wise in military warfare, dampened their ardor for revenge, and managed to work with others in common purpose. But an overwhelming proportion of the Americans involved in trying to "tame the West" seem to have been, at least in Cozzens's telling, fools, incompetents, and men of bad faith. As for the natives, they, too, had their share of hotheads, lone wolves, men of ill judgment, and turncoats. You come away from *The Earth Is Weeping* shaking your head at the misunderstandings, futile efforts at conciliation, and downright brutality on all sides. It may be that all human societies are composed of more flawed characters than whole ones, but the Indian wars seem to have attracted an overabundance of men, especially on the American side, who were obtuse and ill-intentioned.

It's one of the strengths of the book that Cozzens lets none of his cast of characters—Euro-Americans, Native Americans, political figures, military officers, and all the rest—off the hook for responsibility for what happened. Since we know the outcome of the Indian wars, it's difficult to read the story except through the lens of its supposedly inevitable, sad outcome. But Cozzens is too skilled a writer to allow the end of it all to seem foreordained: If it's difficult to imagine the tribes retaining authority over their lands, Cozzens allows us to see why some battles went their way and how, sometimes, their leaders were wiser and more far-seeing than their opponents. Cozzens also keeps before his readers how contingent on particular circumstances was each step of the natives' way from freedom to defeat and virtual imprisonment on reservations.

The question, however, is: How to tell the tale? Cozzens has chosen to be comprehensive and exhaustive. His Indian wars in the West—they stretched from no later than 1861 until 1891 (if we forget, as Cozzens does, earlier conflicts throughout all parts of the vast western territories)—follow each other in close succession. Cozzens leaves out no pertinent detail of causes, leadership, politics, strategy, or battlefield events. No one but the most devoted specialist will want to know more of each of the wars to feel secure in basic knowledge of it.

Yet this way of proceeding is wearying. Yes, we learn of all the great Indian chiefs, American military officers from generals to lieutenants, every failure of American command and Indian warfare. But narrative without theme or argument leaves a reader adrift. Only a single, short

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Battle of the Little Bighorn (1889 lithograph)

CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

chapter—"Warrior and Soldier," comparing the fighters' cultures—breaks into the narrative to provide a moment of calm perspective. It reviews both sides' different concepts of battle, fighting, honor, and the like: "The Indians of the American West," Cozzens comments there, "might have been among the best soldiers man for man in the world, but their tactics, developed over decades of intertribal warfare, were poorly suited to open combat against a disciplined regular army unit." One wishes for more such reflectiveness, and some threading of such themes throughout the book.

Without emphasizing the point, Cozzens brings before us the great cost of settling the continent—and not measured only by lives lost. The Indian wars destroyed the natives' way of life; they deepened Americans' ignorant hatred of people of different ways; they loosed indiscriminate slaughter upon the land. But what did they *mean* for the nation's history? And how does Cozzens believe that we should understand them now? It's one thing to believe, as many Americans do, that Euro-American settlers are to blame for the disasters that befell the tribes, that many Americans had genocidal intent, and that there were other ways to deal with native populations than those failed policies that the United States adopted. But the assignment of blame and the attribution of motives are political and moral matters, not historical ones.

How might a historian view what Cozzens writes about rather than avoid asking historical questions? If, as I think has to be done, one adopts a tragic view of the extermination of the natives and their ways of life, how are we to understand the cold-blooded savagery, the miscomprehension on all sides, and thus the "slow strangulation" (as Cozzens terms it) of tribal life, a result of the Indian wars whose consequences we continue to face? It's difficult not to conclude that tribal and American societies confronted each other over nearly unbridgeable and irreconcilable cultural differences. Americans, for example, were tied to individual land ownership. Indians had no such concept of possession; they wandered the land, with none of the tribes native to the territories they occupied at the time they encountered European settlers. Many Americans knew that their own actions were unconscionable. George Crook, an unusually competent senior military officer, was of that view:

> All tribes tell the same story. They are surrounded on all sides, the game is destroyed or driven away, they are left to starve, and there remains but one thing for them to do—fight while they can. Our treatment of the Indian is an outrage.

The outcome of the confrontation between different cultures couldn't be known in advance, but surely some adaptation of one to the other would be necessary if both were to occupy the same continent. That didn't happen; the original, less populous American cultures had to adapt to the invasive one. But why? That's the historical question, and its answer lies in matters that Cozzens doesn't touch at any length—such as the sheer size of the European population and its comparatively advanced technology. And while he's well aware of the cost of inter-tribal enmities—the Sioux, Pawnees, and Crows, for instance, cooperated with the Americans against the Cheyennes, who themselves bitterly fought the Comanches and Kiowas—he never stands back to ask whether, in the absence of divisions within native culture, a different outcome for the tribes might have been reached.

My pointing out the limitations of *The Earth Is Weeping* is not meant to disparage its strong qualities: Written briskly, it draws you in; its maps are unusually numerous and clear; its comprehensiveness, making it useful to anyone wishing to know the facts of the many, distinct Indian wars, is unlikely to be surpassed. If it possesses some of the unfortunate characteristics of much nonacademic history today, it also reveals some of the best—snappy prose, a strong narrative cadence, and admirable clarity. For those wishing to learn the story of the Indian wars of the American West, this is the book to turn to. ♦

B&A

Worlds in Collision

Life, death, and the failure to communicate.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Arrival
Directed by Denis Villeneuve

Arrival is one of those movies that works very hard (and very cleverly) to convince you it's one thing until it takes an astounding turn in its last third and you realize you've been seeing a story about something else entirely—precisely at the point when it suddenly deepens, enriches itself, and breaks your heart in the best way.

Arrival is nominally a work of science fiction set in the present about how the world would react if alien ships appeared and we had no way to communicate with those on board or judge their intentions. Ordinarily at this point I'd give you some plot description and talk about the characters and such, but I don't want to do that, because it's really best if you go into this movie fresh. Almost anything I'd say would function as a spoiler, because director Denis Villeneuve and screenwriter Eric Heisserer have done such a masterful job of turning what initially seems to be a relatively conventional story into an existential fable that is anything but.

It is also difficult to write properly in any detail about Amy Adams's lead performance. Adams and her character, in a very real sense, are *Arrival*. She's in every scene, in almost every shot. We see everything that happens through her character's eyes. We hear her thoughts. The camera is often placed right by her, or over her shoulder, so that her perspective is our perspective. Throughout much of the film's running time, Adams seems uncomfortable with a part in which this wonderfully exuberant actress is called upon to play a controlled and emotionally shutdown academic linguist.

Amy Adams

But when you realize what is actually going on in *Arrival*, it becomes clear that what Adams has been doing is nothing short of brilliant. Her work here deserves comparison to Mia Farrow's classic performance in *Rosemary's Baby*, which *Arrival* resembles in no way except for how carefully it is constructed to hew to the radically subjective point of view of a single and very unsettled character. Like Rosemary, Louise of *Arrival* finds herself unnerved and off-kilter most of the time, and for reasons she can't possibly imagine.

This is not a lighthearted picture. I'm not sure there's a single joke or a single laugh in it, though there is a terrific moment when Louise is trying to explain to her military handlers how difficult communications can be without common terms of reference. She tells a story about Captain Cook arriving in Australia. He saw a marsupial, and asked what the name of the animal was. Kangaroo, the natives told him. But, Louise says, the word "kangaroo" meant "I don't understand."

She tells the Cook story because she's trying to get her way on something—and she quietly confesses to a colleague that it's not true.

The detail comes from the source material for *Arrival*, an intellectually fascinating 1998 short story by Ted Chiang called "Story of Your Life." And yet, in this instance as elsewhere in the movie, Villeneuve and Heisserer actually improve on Chiang's storytelling—a rare accomplishment matched by relatively few film adaptations. Likely inspired by the French filmmaker Chris Marker's mind-bending 1962 *La Jetée*—probably the greatest short film ever made, remade decently three decades later as the Bruce Willis picture *Twelve Monkeys*—Chiang hit upon a fantastic concept and worked through it intelligently but somewhat bloodlessly. The makers of *Arrival* have taken Chiang's concept and surfaced a deep emotional wellspring that was present in "Story of Your Life" but which Chiang couldn't quite reach.

You're in for a wallop at the film's conclusion, when the puzzle comes together. For once, the wallop is earned. This isn't an M. Night Shyamalan twist but rather the surprisingly adult and morally serious exploration of a fundamental paradox: What does mortality mean? We know we're going to die, and that our loved ones are going to die. What do we do with the time in-between? How do we use our time wisely or meaningfully when we exist with the knowledge of our mortality? That sounds pretentious, I know. But *Arrival* earns it. It's the best American movie so far this year. ♦

JAN THIJS / PARAMOUNT PICTURES

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