

the weekly Standard

JUNE 26, 2017

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A TALE OF TWO CUBAS

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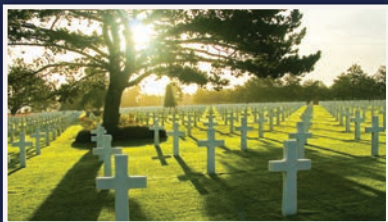
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It Was a Dark and Stormy Night . . .

There are many pressures in reporting a breaking news story—getting the facts and getting them out before the next guy perhaps paramount among them. But THE SCRAPBOOK thinks that those pressures notwithstanding, a fine publication such as the *New York Times* could find time to avoid the hoariest of clichés, especially when the cliché in question misreports the facts.

The cliché we're talking about appeared in the *Times*'s main story about the gunman who attacked baseball-playing Republicans last week, "Steve Scalise Among 5 Shot at Baseball Field; Suspect Is Dead." Here's how the paper describes the wounding of the House majority whip: "Standing at second base, Mr. Scalise was struck in the hip, according to witnesses, and collapsed as the shots rang out." *Shots rang out*. It is one of those trite, lazy expressions that one expects (and gets) from local TV news reporters winging it at the scene. But one expects better of the *Times*, even when they are racing to get a story up online. What one doesn't expect is for the

Times to use the same pulpism twice in one article, but that's just what the paper does: Later in its story the *Times* reports it was 7:09 A.M. "when the first shots rang out."



It's such a tired phrase that E. L. Callihan, in his mid-fifties *Grammar for Journalists*, banished it along with such shopworn journalese as "caught red-handed," "shrouded in mystery," "miraculous escape," and "hail of bullets." (That last one, by the way, also made it into the *Times* story.)

But as for gunfire ringing, the *Times*'s own reporting put the lie to that description. A nearby resident,

for example, "was finishing his coffee when he heard the 'pop, pop.'" The *Times* quotes congressman Mike Bishop: "There was so much gunfire, you couldn't get up and run," the Michigan Republican said. "Pop, pop, pop, pop—it's a sound I'll never forget."

Other papers collected accounts of the popping sound made by the gunman's weapon. Here's how Arizona senator Jeff Flake described the events: "We were doing batting practice near the end of the practice," he said, "and all of a sudden, we heard just a very loud pop, and it sounded like gunfire." A woman in the nearby dog park heard "very, very loud popping sounds." Some heard bullets "whiz" by.

We suspect that the "shots rang out" cliché got its start back in the days when guns crackled with a noise that might plausibly have been described as "ringing." But it's silly to say shots ring when talking of the discrete report of a modern, military-style rifle.

Then again, for all its aural accuracy, "shots popped out" does sound a little lacking in gravity. ♦

NBC's Fake News Show

When is the *Nightly News* the *Nightly News*? When ratings are lousy.

You might be forgiven for thinking NBC has but one flagship evening newscast, the *NBC Nightly News*, honchoed by Lester Holt. But the network has another show, one that looks for all intents and purposes just like its *Nightly News*, but titled instead the *NBC Nitely News*. What—has the network left it to the interns to enter the show's name in the Chyron machine?

No, it seems that the misspelling is reserved solely for filing logs with ratings tabulator Nielsen. The *Nightly News* is in a battle with ABC's *World News Tonight* (hmmm, or is that

World News Tonight?). On some nites when its news program gets low ratings, NBC has been labeling its show for the Nielsen folks as the *Nitely News*. On nights when a sufficient number of viewers show up, the program is reported as the *Nightly News*. By weeding out the bad nites, NBC overcounts, for its ratings scorecard, the percentage of nights with winning performances.

This news comes by way of the indefatigable Lisa de Moraes at *Deadline Hollywood*, whose coverage of the TV biz is must-reading. She notes that other networks have played the same game, with CBS retitling *Face the Nation* on occasion in 2016 and



ABC renaming *Good Morning America* for a week in 2011. As for the current titling shenanigans, NBC explained to de Moraes that sports preemptions necessitated the name changes—even on some nites when there were no sports preemptions.

Speaking of sports: How many baseball players would like to have their batting averages calculated in a similar fashion? The Nationals' Ryan Zimmerman may be leading

ABOVE: TWS ART / FIGURE, BIGSTOCK

the majors (as *THE SCRAPBOOK* writes) with a .367 average. But just imagine the numbers he could be putting up if his strikeouts were attributed to some Zimmermann guy. ♦

NPR Talks Smack

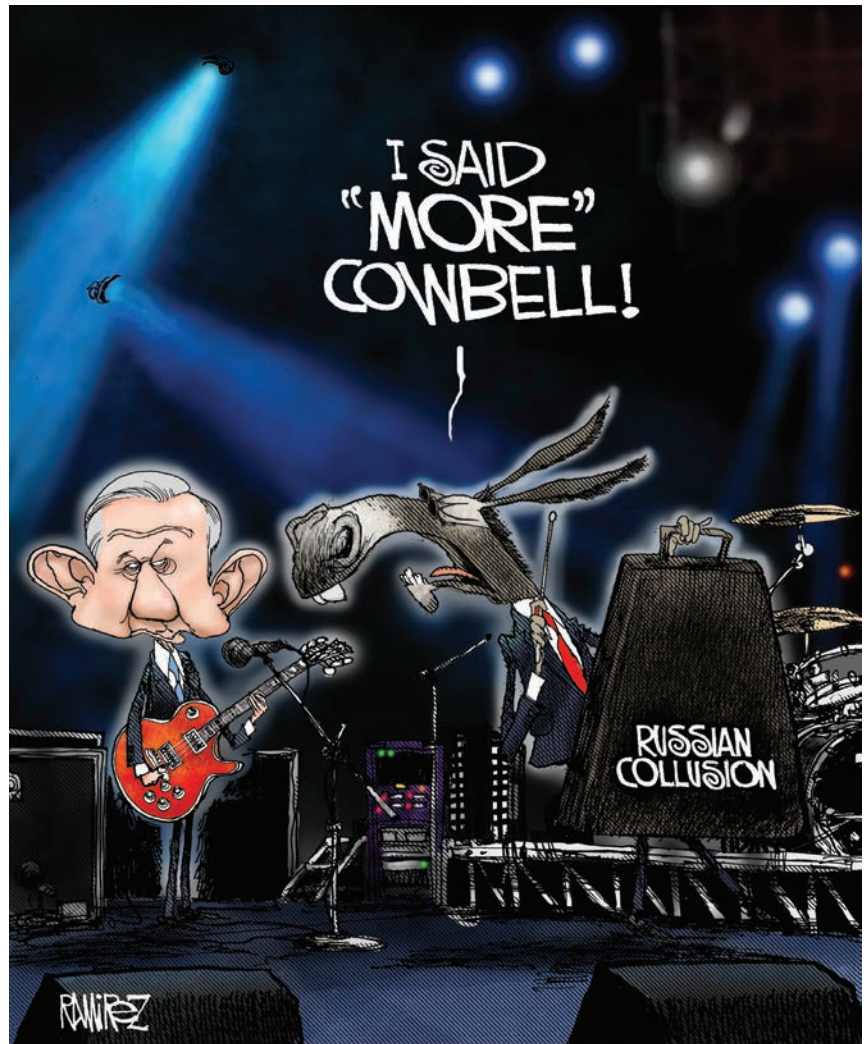
Public radio doesn't quite know what it wants us to think about the anti-addiction medicine Vivitrol.

At the beginning of the month *Marketplace* was touting Vivitrol as the "drug that heroin-proofs your brain," a sort of magic bullet for shooting the old monkey off one's back. The drug is essential, we were told, in keeping junkies out of jail. An addiction specialist raved that Vivitrol acts like "a kind of a force field around the part of your brain that likes heroin." The medicine is regularly given to inmates upon release from prison, so they can stay clean: It works "really, really well," said the addiction expert. "We wish we had medications like this for hypertension or diabetes or depression, but we don't."

So what's the problem with this miracle cure? Just that "despite campaign promises by President Trump," Republicans aren't supporting the health care spending that would pay the "sky-high prices" of this amazing drug.

That was the same theme June 11, when *Weekend Edition* complained of Republican stinginess in a feature titled "GOP's Proposed Cuts to Medicaid Threaten Treatment for Opioid Addiction." If Republicans get their way, what will become of the addicts who need their monthly Vivitrol shot? Addicts such as Charlene Yurgaitis: "The medication blocks receptors in her brain so she can't get high off opioids but also costs about a thousand dollars a dose."

"If funding is reduced," warns a doctor, "more people would die from overdoses, and hepatitis C and HIV infections would rise because of dirty needles." Well, by all means then, find the money to buy all the Vivitrol we need—and what's wrong with you Republicans anyway?



SESSIONS

At least that's what we thought until the very next day, June 12, when *All Things Considered* unleashed an outraged exposé of the company that produces Vivitrol, "A Drugmaker Tries to Cash In on The Opioid Epidemic, One State Law at a Time." The company has been marketing the heck out of Vivitrol, pushing for it to be favored legislatively, even though, according to NPR's investigation, cheaper alternatives such as methadone may be the better choice. Vivitrol is "expensive, and to use it, patients must first go

through a painful detox," said reporter Jake Harper. "Policies favoring Vivitrol can hurt people who need the other drugs."

So, let's see if we can get this straight: According to public radio, nasty Republicans are hurting poor, helpless addicts by denying them an essential medication that has been overhyped and overpriced by a greedy corporation corrupting state lawmakers. It may not be coherent, but as a thesis it at least has the benefit, for NPR, of all the right villains. ♦



High Court Ruling

Free speech may have become a vanishingly rare thing on university campuses, but it turns out that at least one variety of free speech is still protected: T-shirt marijuana advocacy.

On June 13, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled that Iowa State University officials had infringed the rights of a student group by preventing them from using university logos on T-shirts promoting marijuana legalization.

Iowa State University had treated the campus chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws like any of the other 800 some student groups at the school. But then, in 2012, the head of the club went and praised the school's administration to the *Des Moines Register*, which reported "his group has gotten nothing but support from the university." As proof of the school's groovy attitude, the *Register* offered the example of the club's T-shirts, which featured the university's mascot, Cy the Cardinal, the NORML acronym, and a cannabis leaf.

The university's Trademark Office, keepers of how school logos and mascot images can be used, had indeed given its stamp of approval to the T-shirt design—a rubber-stamp sort that had never been meant as any

kind of endorsement. But that's not how the *Register* presented it, nor how it was perceived. Iowa State's administrators were not amused when people started pestering them with questions about why the university was promoting marijuana (especially when those people were from the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy).

University officials sought to clear the air, if you will, by changing the rules under which student groups are allowed to use school logos. The new rules just happened, in effect, to proscribe student weedvocates from putting Cy the Cardinal and a marijuana leaf on the same T-shirt.

This being America, the students sued, arguing the school was infringing on their right to free speech. After a few years of legal wrangling, the appeals court affirmed the ruling that Iowa State had "discriminated against that group on the basis of the group's viewpoint."

Any victory for free speech on campus is welcome, which may explain the odd assortment of conservative groups who weighed in along the way. Amicus briefs supporting the marijuana crowd were filed by such non-beatnik types as Students for Life of America, Ratio Christi, the Christian Legal Society, and the Young America's Foundation. It seems that marijuana has to be at issue to keep campus free speech from going to pot. ♦



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Subscriptions: 1-800-274-7293

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, first week in July, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$5.99. Back issues, \$5.99 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Copyright 2017, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



The Old Brawl Game

More than eight years after they finished the new Yankee Stadium, I still get confused when I climb out of the subway at 161st and River Ave. Whoa—where did it go? The lot that used to hold the ballpark is empty. The stadium, I forget every time I visit the Bronx, is across the street. It's like a mirror image held up to the past that leads into an alternate universe where everything is different.

In the new world, Yankees fans no longer fight with their Boston counterparts. Baseball's most famous rivalry is not what it used to be. It feels a little strange. Maybe that's why it took 45 minutes to get into the stadium when I visited recently for a Yanks-Sox game. I thought it was just for extra security, but perhaps the authorities were swapping out the bodies of human fans for peaceful aliens dressed in Mattingly and Munson and Judge jerseys and Red Sox caps. Inside the ballpark, they sit next to each other. They talk to each other. Sure, they argue sometimes, even scream at each other, but it's like a pantomime that always ends happily.

"Hey," some Yankees fan sipping a tall one calls out to a guy wearing a Pedroia jersey—"the Sox are terrible." "Oh yeah," says the Beantowner, "the Yankees are awful."

They throw some salty language around, but not if there are kids in the section. And then they start laughing with each other. Maybe there's a war on somewhere that has brought Yanks and Sox fans together in a unified front—against Vladimir Putin or the Houston Astros. Or maybe they've just come to their senses.

I was there in the Bronx that May evening in 1976 when Mickey Rivers and Graig Nettles ganged up on Boston's Bill Lee and broke his arm. It was a terrible night for baseball and

baseball fans. An athlete's career was endangered by other ballplayers, and the fans in the Bronx crowded about it for years like it was a passage out of Homer. Someone next to me threw an apple at Red Sox Hall of Fame catcher Carlton Fisk. It wasn't passion—it was thuggery.

All those great games between the Yankees and Red Sox I saw in the old Yankee Stadium over the years were marred by violence and criminality. I once saw the Yankees come back from an eight-run deficit to beat Sox



ace and future Yankees star Roger Clemens. What I remember most is a brawl in the section below me between Yanks and Sox fans fueled by beer and marijuana.

There was fighting even at Dave Righetti's 1983 no-hitter. I was there—July 4, the late Yankees owner George Steinbrenner's 53rd birthday, and Righetti struck out soon-to-be Yankees legend Wade Boggs for the final out in the first Yankees no-hitter since Don Larsen's 1956 perfect game. The Bronx erupted in joy—and a gang of Yankees fans celebrated the left-hander's performance by exchanging blows with Bostonians.

There was plenty of violence at

Fenway, too, like the fight in the 2003 American League Championship Series when Yankees bench coach Don Zimmer charged at Boston's star pitcher Pedro Martinez. Even one of the Sox groundskeepers wanted in on the action and had to be restrained from taking on the entire Yankees bullpen.

The next year was the Sox *annus mirabilis*—down three games in the American League Championship Series to the Yankees, they won four straight and went on to win the World Series for the first time since 1918. And I think that's how the nature of the rivalry changed—winning. The Sox finally won and then won again in 2007 and 2013.

Sure, for all the concern that younger fans are losing interest in baseball, going to a game is more family friendly than ever—even if it costs more than ever to bring a family, or even a date, to the ballpark. But there's something specific to the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry—historical and geographic and social, involving various patterns of immigration to the Northeast, all factors that made the games so intense.

Crowds, like individuals, have distinct personalities colored by emotions. Those emotions, however, are more raw, more vivid, cruder than an individual's since they serve as points of connection, common denominators, for a mass of people. What Boston fans call Red Sox Nation really is in some ways a nation, a group of people with common interests, shared loves and hates. Boston's long dry spell and its rival's dynastic success created a terrible dynamic—resentment, arrogance, contempt, self-pity, and violence, on the field and off.

Boston's three World Series victories in ten years changed the dynamic. Winning has balanced out the two clubs and their fans. That's why the rivalry is now more about baseball than brawling. At least I hope so. In the meantime—Go Yanks. Go Sox.

LEE SMITH

Rising to the Occasion

Journals like this one exist, generally speaking, not to praise politicians but to chastise, to upbraid, or at least to criticize them. And so, after hearing about the terrible shootings at the Alexandria baseball field the morning of June 14; after making the mistake of sampling the incivility and stupidity that some of our fellow Americans from across the political spectrum were spewing on television and on Twitter; after thinking of all the ways our public officials might fail to say what should be said—we feared the worst. But our fears were unwarranted.

The speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, reminded us that the decent and eloquent expression of sound sentiment has not departed our public life:



'We are united in our shock; we are united in our anguish.'

My colleagues: There are strong emotions throughout this House today. We are all horrified by this dreadful attack on our friends and colleagues, and those who serve and protect this Capitol. We are all praying for those who were attacked and their families: Steve Scalise, Zachary Barth, Matt Mika, Special Agent David Bailey, Special Agent Crystal Griner.

We are all giving our thoughts to those currently being treated for their injuries at this moment. And we are united. We are united in our shock; we are united in our anguish. An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us.

I know we want to give our thanks to the first responders and the Alexandria Police Department, who were on the scene in minutes. And I know this House wants to state unequivocally that we are, as ever, awed by the tremendous bravery of the Capitol Police. . . .

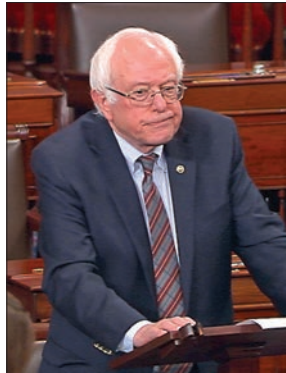
My colleagues, there are many memories from this day we will want to forget, and many images we will not want to see again. But there is one image in particular that this House should keep. And that is a photo I saw of our Democratic colleagues gathered in prayer this morning after hearing the news.

You know, every day, we come here to test and challenge each other. We feel so deeply about the things we fight for and believe in. At times, our emotions can get the best of us. We are all imperfect. But we do not shed our humanity when we enter this chamber.

For all the noise and fury, we are one family. These were our brothers and sisters in the line of fire. These were our brothers and sisters who ran into danger and saved countless lives.

So before this House returns to its business, I want us to slow down and reflect, to think about how we are being tested right now. Because we are. I ask each of you to join me in resolving to come together . . . to lift each other up . . . and to show the country—show the world—that we are one House. The people's House—united in our humanity.

It is that humanity which will win the day. It always will.



The shooter turned out to be an ardent follower, after a fashion, of Senator Bernie Sanders. When Senator Sanders discovered that fact, he delivered a strong and fitting statement on the Senate floor:

I have just been informed that the alleged shooter at the Republican baseball practice is someone who apparently volunteered on my presidential

campaign. I am sickened by this despicable act. Let me be as clear as I can be: Violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society, and I condemn this action in the strongest possible terms. Real change can only come about through nonviolent action, and anything else runs against our most deeply held American values.

My hopes and prayers are that Representative Scalise, congressional staff, and the Capitol Police officers who were wounded make a quick and full recovery.

I also want to thank the Capitol Police for their heroic actions to prevent further harm.

The officeholder whose words receive the closest attention is always the president. This president hasn't always chosen his words with the greatest care or consideration. He doesn't always say the right thing. But he did on Wednesday morning, just a few hours after the shooting, speaking with compassion and dignity:

As you all know, shortly after 7:00 A.M. this morning, a gunman opened fire on members of Congress and their staffs as they were practicing for tomorrow's annual charity

HOUSE TELEVISION / AP; SENATE TELEVISION / AP

baseball game. . . . Many lives would have been lost if not for the heroic actions of the two Capitol Police officers who took down the gunman despite sustaining gunshot wounds during a very, very brutal assault. . . .

Congressman Scalise, . . . I want you to know that you have the prayers not only of the entire city behind you, but of an entire nation and, frankly, the entire world. America is praying for you and America is praying for all of the victims of this terrible shooting. . . .

I have also spoken with Chief Matthew Verderosa . . . of the Capitol Police to express our sympathies for his wounded officers and to express my admiration for their courage. Our brave Capitol Police perform a challenging job with incredible skill, and their sacrifice makes democracy possible.

We also commend the brave first responders from Alexandria Police, Fire and Rescue who rushed to the scene. Everyone on that field is a public servant—our courageous police, our congressional aides who work so tirelessly behind the scenes with enormous devotion, and our

dedicated members of Congress who represent our people.

We may have our differences, but we do well, in times like these, to remember that everyone who serves in our nation's capital is here because, above all, they love our country.

We can all agree that we are blessed to be Americans, that our children deserve to grow up in a nation of safety and peace, and that we are strongest when we are unified and when we work together for the common good.

Please take a moment today to cherish those you love, and always remember those who serve and keep us safe. God bless them all, God bless you, and God bless America.

We normally speak for ourselves in our editorials. We often speak critically. Not here, and

not now. On this day and on this occasion, Speaker Paul Ryan, Senator Bernie Sanders, and President Donald Trump speak for us.

—The Editors



'Everyone on that field is a public servant.'

Businesses Lead Solutions to Workforce Challenges

THOMAS J. DONOHUE
PRESIDENT AND CEO
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

President Trump spent much of last week drawing attention to a major problem facing our nation: the lack of properly trained workers to fill open jobs. His efforts came on the heels of government data released earlier this month showing that the number of job openings rose to a record high of 6 million in April, yet the pace of hiring slipped to a one-year low—evidence that the economy is running out of qualified people to fill vacant positions. This so-called skills gap is a drag on our entire economy, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is helping lead and coordinate the business community's efforts to address it.

We know that businesses cannot succeed without well-trained workers ready to hit the ground running on day one of employment. But exactly how wide is the skills gap? How many businesses are impacted?

A recent survey released by the Chamber—*The USG & U.S. Chamber Commercial Construction Index*—gives us a glimpse of how it impacts just one industry. Sixty-one percent of commercial construction firms reported difficulty finding enough properly trained workers.

The skills gap also significantly impedes small business growth, as the Chamber discovered during our recent Let's Grow Tour. We traveled around the country asking businesses what Washington could do to better help them grow. And addressing the talent shortage was one of the most frequent requests. We were pleased to be able to say that the Chamber is already working on solutions.

The U.S. Chamber Foundation Center for Education and Workforce has been researching, building, and testing a signature workforce development initiative called Talent Pipeline Management (TPM). It empowers businesses to communicate their needs to education providers

and cooperate with institutions that are doing the best job of meeting the demand for skilled labor. It's designed to put the business community in the driver's seat of education and workplace partnerships.

In addition, the Foundation is rolling out a localized consumer information tool called Launch My Career, which helps identify hot jobs in a state, the skills necessary for those jobs, and the programs and institutions that can offer those skills.

The Chamber applauds President Trump for his efforts to strengthen workforce training, and we stand ready to support effective federal policy solutions to close the skills gap. Through TPM, Launch My Career, and other strategic partnerships, businesses are also taking action into their own hands to support a highly trained workforce. This is critical to growing our economy.



Learn more at
uschamber.com/abovethefold.

The Kiss-Up That Wasn't

The media have a bad case of the Trumps.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

So there I am Tuesday morning, wheezing away on my exercise bike, trying to stay alert to tell-tale signs of the inevitable coronary thrombosis, when, for the first time in many, many years, I switch on the TV to watch *Morning Joe*.

And what am I greeted with? Not Morning Joe's handsome mug (I think it was Don Imus who first noticed Morning Joe's eerie resemblance to the banjo-playing boy in *Deliverance*). Not Mika's permafrost hairdo or that come-hither body language.

No. Instead I am greeted by a video of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, and White House chief of staff Reince Priebus. They were shown at a cabinet meeting with President Trump the day before. Each of them, in brief remarks, was saying nice things about the boss. Really nice things, right in front of him.

Chao explained that when Trump visited her eyesore of an office building the week before, "hundreds and hundreds of people were just so thrilled." Mnuchin said, "It was a great honor traveling with you . . . the last year and an even greater honor to be here serving in your cabinet." Priebus laid it on with a trowel: "We thank you for the opportunity and the blessing . . . to serve your agenda."

After this the camera went to Morning Joe and Mika back in the studio, sitting in what we were to take as stunned silence.

"Whoa," said Morning Joe. "That was some sad stuff."

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



MSNBC's 'Morning Joe' Scarborough

"That was sick," said Mika. "Am I allowed to say that?"

Yes, you are, Mika. Listen to Morning Joe again: "That is the most sick, shameful, pathetic, un-American, autocratic display." One of Joe's on-set sycophant-sidekicks said that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had also embarrassed himself at the cabinet session, even though Tillerson had once been a titan of business. Another sidekick said the cabinet members were reading from prepared scripts in lavish praise on Trump. *Morning Joe* is

a news show, I think, so I assumed this person was telling us a fact. I didn't catch his name but he wears glasses and sits next to Mika if that's any clue.

It was left to Morning Joe to spot the silver lining to this sick, un-American display. He evidently found the only cabinet secretary who hadn't prostrated himself before the president.

"General [James] Mattis stood alone," said Morning Joe, as if he were giving himself goose bumps, "in doing what you are supposed to do if you served this country and get a paycheck from the American people. He talked about *others*. Serving *others*, and not himself."

On the way to work I tuned in to NPR. "[This] is a story filled with praise," said the announcer, introducing a news item about the cabinet meeting. He was being jokey, the way those NPR guys are a lot of the time. Next a reporter told listeners that President Trump had chosen "to bathe in the adulation of department heads." Then the reporter played a mashup of cabinet secretaries saying how honored they were ("an honor to be on the team . . . deeply honored . . . what an incredible honor . . .").

The sequence climaxed with Vice President Mike Pence, who, the reporter said, "went first and set the tone." And sure enough, in that megachurch preacher's voice, smooth as Brylcreem, Pence said: "It's the greatest privilege of my life to serve as a vice president to a president who is keeping his word to the American people and assembling a team that's bringing real change, real prosperity, real strength back to our nation." This being NPR, the reporter found a scholar to comment on "the display." "That's a more common occurrence in nondemocratic regimes," the scholar said, "which are trying to portray themselves as being popular."

At the end, the reporter quoted Priebus: "On behalf of the . . . senior staff, . . . we thank you for the opportunity and the blessing you've given us to serve your agenda and the American people."

But! "Not every cabinet secretary praised President Trump yesterday,"

THOMAS FLUHARTY

she said. Then, like Morning Joe, she quoted General Mattis. Reporters really seem to like General Mattis.

I got to my office. Everywhere I looked it was the same story: Trump used his cabinet meeting to humiliate his cabinet members by forcing them to heap praise on him as the cameras rolled, and they willingly complied.

I read the *New York Times*: “One by one, they praised President Trump, taking turns complimenting his integrity, his message, his strength, his policies. Their leader sat smiling, nodding his approval.” Later in the story I read: “One by one, they said their names and—as if working to outdo one another—paid homage to Mr. Trump, describing how honored they were to serve in his administration.” Which is pretty much identical to the previous sentence. The paper must have lost a lot of editors in those newsroom cutbacks.

I went to the CNN website, where the headline read: “Trump Just Held the Weirdest Cabinet Meeting Ever.”

“Trump planned to have every Cabinet member speak,” wrote the breathless CNN reporter. “And when I say ‘speak’ what I really mean is ‘praise Trump for his accomplishments, his foresight, his just being awesome.’ You think I am exaggerating. I am not. Here’s what White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said about Trump: ‘We thank you for the opportunity and blessing to serve your agenda.’”

The meeting did sound truly appalling, utterly icky. But then I started to think . . . wait a minute. If the story was that every cabinet member was puckering up for Trump in public, why did the CNN reporter illustrate the point with a quote from Priebus, the chief of staff, who’s not a cabinet member? And I thought some more. Most of these cabinet secretaries are pretty self-possessed people, proud of their achievements in life, and cravenly kissing up to a boss, even when he’s president of the United States, doesn’t fit the profile.

And so I did what I, as a proud consumer of the mainstream liberal press, am not supposed to do. I second-guessed the mainstream liberal press. I watched the video of the cabinet meeting, all twenty-damn-five minutes of it, and I discovered that every story I had read or heard or seen that morning about the cabinet meeting was, as a whole, wrong or misleading,

Most of these cabinet secretaries are pretty self-possessed people, proud of their achievements in life, and cravenly kissing up to a boss, even when he’s president of the United States, doesn’t fit the profile.



Donald Trump at his first cabinet meeting, June 12

and in many particulars, just wrong.

For instance: Nobody showed signs of reading from a script. Priebus’s comment was made explicitly on behalf of the “senior staff,” not the whole cabinet, as CNN implied. The *Times* to the contrary, no one praised Trump’s “integrity.” Neither Priebus’s sycophancy nor Pence’s set the tone of the meeting. General Mattis did not “stand alone”; the sentiment he expressed was expressed by most of his colleagues. And so on and so on and so on.

Here’s what did happen. The meeting Monday was the first time that Donald Trump’s entire cabinet had been in one room, owing to delays in a couple of confirmations. (Democrats’ fault, said Trump.) The president gave an opening statement exaggerating

his administration’s accomplishments. He mentioned initiatives begun by several of the cabinet members. Then, to “celebrate this group,” as Attorney General Jeff Sessions put it, Trump suggested they all introduce themselves, the way you do at a business conference or a group therapy session (so I hear).

“We’ll start with Mike,” Trump said, “and just go around and [give] your name and position, and then we’ll ask these folks [the press pool] to go back and have a nice day, and we’re going to discuss our various reports,” which is one of the nicest—meaning, most un-Trumpian—ways he could have told the press to scram.

There was no hint from Trump that the members should praise him. The most plausible explanation for all the self-introductions was that Trump,

knowing the meeting was going out live on cable TV, wanted the public to get a load of the greatest cabinet in the history of the entire solar system—and a lot of other solar systems too, some people are saying.

Pence, who seems most himself when servile, started the praise unprompted. But he didn’t “set the tone,” as the news reports said—his obsequiousness didn’t really catch on at all. In fact, by my count, 11 of the 23 members (counting

Pence) didn’t mention Trump at all. The comment from Education Secretary Betsy DeVos was typical: “It’s a privilege to serve, to serve the students of this country, and to work to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to get a great education, and therefore a great future.”

In a large majority of cases, when cabinet members did mention Trump, the “adulation” was all in the fevered imaginations of reporters. Tillerson: “Thank you for the honor to serve the country. It’s a great privilege you’ve given me.” (Reporter scribbles in her notebook: *Suck-up!*) Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, a financial adviser worth \$2.5 billion: “Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to help fix the trade deficit and . . . have

a chance to help you live up to your campaign promises.” (*Billionaire kiss-ass.*) Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats: “It’s a joy to be working with the people that I have inherited, and we are going to continue to provide you with the very best intelligence we can, so you can formulate policies to deal with these issues.” (*Boot-licking toady!*)

“Their leader sat smiling, nodding his approval,” wrote the *Times*, but he didn’t. The footage was ill-lit, but Trump’s expression seemed to be the usual jut-jawed, slightly simian expression we’re all trying to get used to. Trump did say “thank you” a lot, as he should have, considering that nearly all of the secretaries said it was an “honor to serve”—not him, but the country, or some public or government constituency. (That’s where the NPR mashup came from, and it’s why it was thoroughly misleading. When a cabinet member says she *isn’t* honored to serve the public, NPR will have a genuine story.) If even a bare majority of the cabinet secretaries had adopted the tone of Priebus and Pence and Mnuchin, the cabinet meeting would indeed have resembled the Maoist reeducation session the press made it out to be. But they didn’t.

This small episode, this miniature, wholly unnecessary bit of dissembling or incompetence by the press, is a nice example of what Nicole Hemmer, a political scientist at the University of Virginia, has called “Trump Exceptionalism.” It is a disease that strikes journalists above all. In the eyes of the bright young things who work in the White House press corps, with their faulty educations and unearned world-weariness, everything Trump does must be nefarious, and if not nefarious, at least vulgar and unprecedented. It just has to be. So it is. Even when it’s not.

Trump, all by himself, is menacing enough. The press doesn’t help when it sets off undue alarms. After all, wrote Hemmer in *Politico*, “there’s a cost to getting this wrong. Cry wolf too many times, and readers are less likely to listen when the real dangers appear.” ♦

Impatient for Impeachment

How will Trump deal with a stacked deck?

BY FRED BARNES



James Comey, left, and Barack Obama applaud outgoing FBI director Robert Mueller, right, June 21, 2013.

Is the deck being stacked against President Trump? It’s beginning to look that way since a special counsel was appointed a few weeks ago to investigate possible ties between Trump—or any breathing body in his campaign last year—and the Russians.

At the very least, the president will be on defense for months to come. He will be under scrutiny or attack by special counsel Robert Mueller, Senate and House committees, mobs of protesters, and the elite media. All the while the sword of impeachment will be hanging over him.

In theory, the appointment of Mueller as special counsel should be reassuring that the probe will be fair, objective, and nonpartisan. In his years

as FBI director and as a Justice Department official, Mueller gained a reputation for honesty, integrity, and being a “straight-shooter.”

But already there are troubling signs. For openers, the history of such counsels—formerly known as special prosecutors—is not encouraging. Yet Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein reacted to the first bit of pressure—chiefly from Democrats—and appointed Mueller. And this without much evidence of a crime to justify it.

The problem is that special counsels tend to expand their investigations beyond any underlying crime (if there is one) and keep going until they find someone to indict. This is what Patrick Fitzgerald did during the second Bush administration, finally settling for a flimsy charge of perjury against Scooter Libby, Vice President

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Dick Cheney's chief of staff. Fitzgerald declined to prosecute anyone for the supposed crime he was investigating, the outing of a CIA agent.

Mueller has already broadened the scope of his investigation to include whether Trump attempted to obstruct justice in his dealings with then-FBI director James Comey, Trump's leading antagonist. Possible financial crimes by Trump associates are also to be examined, according to leaks by "officials."

Mueller's sterling character has eased concerns about the fact that he and Comey are longtime friends. But some of the investigators and advisers he's hired have had the opposite effect. Paul Mirengoff, a Washington lawyer and contributor to the *Power Line* blog, looked into the political backgrounds of some of them and found a left-winger, donors to Hillary Clinton's campaign, and a lawyer named Jeannie Rhee who "provided legal services for the Clinton Foundation."

Rhee also donated \$5,400 to Hillary Clinton's campaign PAC. Mirengoff writes: "As bitter as the Clintonistas are about losing the election (or rather having it 'stolen' by the Russians), it seems unconscionable that Rhee would be on a team that will decide whether to prosecute President Trump at the end of a 'Russian interference' election." Indeed, it does.

In politics, there's a saying that no politician can survive a frisk. The Mueller probe hasn't gotten to that point. But it appears to be headed in that direction.

On Capitol Hill, Republicans have unleashed seemingly endless hearings about possible collusion between Trump associates and Russians. The FBI has been investigating this since last summer and found no evidence. But Democrats are convinced acts of collusion will be found somewhere if they keep looking for them long enough. If Republicans balk, they'll be accused of a coverup.

Nor has the media given up on the collusion narrative. In all those media stories about Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, the implication was he might be part of the plot. But what was cited as possible evidence were

Kushner contacts with Russians *after* the election.

A writer for the *Washington Post* defended the paper's coverage of Trump as unbalanced but fair. It's Trump's fault the coverage is wall-to-wall. He refuses to share the spotlight. But fair? The mainstream press, with a few exceptions, has long since abandoned fairness toward Trump. There's even a new word for its anti-Trump posture. They're "oppositional," similar to Democrats and the left.

The impact of investigations, hearings, leaks, and a press corps eager for Trump's ouster is pretty clear. They make impeachment more likely. That

Trump is on defense (and should be) is on the daily news agenda.

The Democratic base is clamoring for impeachment. Their party needs a pickup of 24 seats in 2018 to gain control of the House and take up impeachment. A gain of that size would be less than historic. Democrats won 30 seats in 2006 when they were upset about the Iraq war and didn't like President George W. Bush. Today, their intensity is far greater.

How will Trump react to a deck increasingly stacked against him? His inclination is to counterpunch when attacked. His base will probably stick with him. The result won't be pretty. ♦

Closing Options for Adoptions

Laws foster an unwelcoming atmosphere.

BY NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY

Fostering kids is not an easy thing to do," Christi Dreier of Round Rock, Texas, recently told the *Wall Street Journal*. Dreier and her partner have fostered several children and adopted three of them. Complaining about a bill that recently passed the Texas house of representatives, she explained, "You treat them like your own, and you have the risk of losing them. Now on top of that, you're going to tell me I can't do it because I'm in a same-sex relationship? That doesn't make sense."

Dreier is right. That doesn't make sense. But Texas lawmakers who want to allow adoption agencies that receive state money to turn down prospective parents based on religious beliefs are not trying to prevent Dreier and her partner from adopting. They are trying

to keep stable and perhaps increase the number of organizations that can help Texans adopt.

Gay adoption is legal in all 50 states, and thanks to the proliferation of gay couples fostering children, thousands of children who might not otherwise have loving homes have found them. Unfortunately, the nationwide legalization of gay marriage combined with nondiscrimination statutes in state law is driving some adoption agencies out of business.

Many will remember that more than 10 years ago, after Massachusetts legalized gay marriage, Catholic Charities was forced to end its adoption services in the state because it would not place children with gay couples. In recent years, California, Illinois, and the District of Columbia have also lost religiously affiliated adoption agencies as a result of similar rules.

Some states have started to push back. In March South Dakota passed a law that would exempt religious

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organizations from these nondiscrimination statutes. Five other states allow agencies to keep faith-based restrictions on adoptions in place, but not if they receive public dollars.

There are currently about 400,000 children in the foster care system in the United States. About a quarter of those children are eligible for adoption—that is, they have had their parental rights severed. As a result in part of the opioid crisis, the number of children in foster care has been on the rise, and systems in states like Ohio and California have been overwhelmed. In West Virginia, the number of children in foster care went up 24 percent between 2012 and 2016.

For years, proponents of gay marriage argued that even if you didn't really approve of same-sex partnerships, in the realm of adoption, pragmatic concerns should take precedence over moral qualms. In other words, children would be better off with a gay couple than languishing in foster homes. And they were right. The statistics for children who age out of the foster care system and reach adulthood without being adopted are particularly grim. According to the research organization Child Trends, "38 percent had emotional problems, 50 percent had used illegal drugs, and 25 percent were involved with the legal system. . . . Only 48 percent of foster youth who had 'aged out' of the system had graduated from high school at the time of discharge." They were also more likely to be homeless,

Knowing how important it is for these children to find permanent homes, one might think proponents of gay adoption would be willing to allow religious agencies to continue to work to place children, even if they don't subscribe to the same beliefs.

incarcerated, unemployed, and to have experienced an early pregnancy.

But knowing how important it is for these children to find permanent homes, one might think proponents of gay adoption would be willing on the same pragmatic grounds to allow religious agencies to continue to work to place children, even if they don't subscribe to the same beliefs.

Robin Fretwell Wilson, director of the program in family law and policy at the University of Illinois College of Law, has been advising various states on how to handle this issue. She says that religious providers of adoption service typically make up a fraction of the total number of providers but it's not an insignificant one and, she argues, they shouldn't have to shut down. In Texas, about a quarter of the providers have a religious affiliation. In Georgia, they make up about 10 percent.

While some have suggested that secular providers will fill the gap, that has not happened. Catholic

Charities in Massachusetts, says Wilson, was among the most adept at finding permanent homes for children with special needs. "You can't just develop that skill set overnight," says Wilson. Moreover, in some states religiously affiliated adoption agencies are concentrated in particular regions, and if they shut down there may be large areas without any agencies to serve the people there. This would mean that fewer at-risk children would be able to find permanent homes.

Wilson warns that legislators shouldn't go out of their way to pick fights with adoption agencies over their religious convictions. Not every state is threatening these agencies, but when municipalities or state bureaucracies put rules into effect that restrict the agencies' ability to function, they may not really have the interests of the foster population in mind.

The Department of Children and Family Services in Illinois, for instance, just issued new departmental procedures whereby if children or adolescents "explore/express a sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or a gender identity that is different from the child/youth's sex assigned at birth," DCFS "staff, providers, and foster parents" must "support" and "respect" the child's exploration "without any effort to direct or guide them to any specific outcome for their exploration."

There are plenty of foster parents and foster-adoption agencies that would find such rules misguided or immoral. Surely we can find room for loving parents who don't believe that gender is a social construct. The goal, after all, is finding stable homes, not hiring faculty for a sociology department.

There are certainly possible compromises: Religious adoption agencies could be required to refer people to other organizations if they won't serve them. Wilson suggests that states could try to ensure that there is an agency that will serve gay couples within a reasonable driving distance.

But ultimately there is something more important at stake. Says Wilson, "The only relevant question is how do you get every kid into a family." ♦

The Acid Test of Dissent in Russia

Alexei Navalny, leader of the opposition.

BY BENJAMIN PARKER

Huge demonstrations once again swept through Russia on June 12, as thousands took to the streets in over 160 cities to protest the corruption and authoritarianism of Vladimir Putin's regime. This followed street protests by Russia's emerging opposition in February and March that were the biggest in years.

What makes these latest protests especially potent is that they may have what the Russian opposition has long lacked: a leader. Dissident and anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny planned the protests for Russia Day, a national holiday analogous to July 4.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, riot police arrested more than a thousand protesters. More were arrested in other Russian cities, from Kazan in the south to Vladivostok in the Far East. Chants of "Russia without Putin!" and "Putin is a thief!" were heard across the country.

The main protest in Moscow was originally approved for an area away from the Kremlin and the city center. The day before the protests, Navalny announced to his followers that he was unilaterally moving the location to Tverskaya Street, a large boulevard that terminates at Red Square. He asserted that government officials had leaned on audio-visual vendors not to contract with him or his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK).

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Authorities then announced that anyone caught displaying a political banner or sign or shouting a political slogan on Tverskaya Street would be arrested. Scores of riot police and National Guard enforced the threat



Russian police detain a participant at an unauthorized anti-corruption rally in St. Petersburg, June 12.

as the protests began, seemingly picking out random members of the crowd—mostly teens and young adults—for arrest.

One arrest, however, was anything but random. Navalny himself was picked up just outside his apartment building on his way to the rally. His wife, Yulia Navalnaya, posted on Twitter through the account of the Atlantic Council's Ben Nimmo: "Hi, Yulia Navalnaya here. Happy holiday. They arrested Aleksey in a raid. He asked me to pass on: the plans haven't changed. Tverskaya." She posted a similar message in Russian via her husband's Twitter account. At the same time, electricity and Internet services to FBK's offices were severed.

Witnesses say it was hard to estimate how many people joined the

protests: The streets were already crowded with families enjoying the holiday, which featured demonstrations and reenactments of Russian military victories. Some reenactors joined in the protests. Moscow police say 5,000 people participated in the Tverskaya protests—the real number is likely higher.

Navalny has emerged as the preeminent face of the Russian opposition since he and others led large-scale protests in 2011-12. Those protests were met with more widespread brutality from police than Monday's demonstrations were. Navalny was arrested at the time along with other leaders, including former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov, a committed reformer, who was murdered outside the Kremlin in 2014.

Unlike Nemtsov, Navalny doesn't have a sterling liberal reputation. He's made comments about Chechens at a "Stop Feeding the Caucasus" rally that implied all members of the Muslim minority were religious radicals or gangsters. He's also made insulting remarks about Georgians, for which he apologized. Most notably, he's taken part in an annual Russian March, which unites nationalists and racial supremacists of all stripes.

His prominence and clear disfavor with the Kremlin has exposed him to danger. Navalny is still recovering from an attack with antiseptic dye known as "brilliant green" (*zelyonka*). The first time someone threw the chemical at his face in March, he dismissed it as no big deal. The second attack in April required hospital treatment, and Navalny says he's lost about 80 percent of the sight in his right eye. Doctors say the dye was mixed with some other, caustic chemical and may cause permanent damage. After Monday's protests, he was sentenced to 30 days in jail, where he is unlikely to receive medical attention for his eye.

The second attack came not long after a Moscow court banned him

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from running in next year's presidential elections. In February, an appeals court upheld his conviction for embezzlement, which would preclude his candidacy under Russian law. The European Court of Human Rights had overturned the ruling, but their word carries no weight in Russian courts. To needle the government, Navalny sat in court as the judge read out his affirmed conviction, tweeting images of the original ruling to underline that the new opinion was a verbatim copy of the old one.

No matter if his name isn't on any ballots, he decided to run anyway as a write-in candidate. And in any event, he's more focused on building a durable, grassroots political network than wasting time and effort on rigged elections.

Physical safety aside, he has every reason to run for office. Earlier this year, he made a documentary exposing massive corruption perpetrated by Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev and some of the country's influential oligarchs. The video went viral in Russia, spawning the tens-of-thousands-strong February and March protests. To date, the video has over 22 million views. Medvedev's popularity plummeted, as Navalny's name recognition soared.

Navalny was in front of the cameras again in May, this time in a courtroom. One of Russia's most prominent oligarchs, Alisher Usmanov, sued Navalny over his accusations against Medvedev, which implicated the billionaire. Navalny petitioned the court to open up property records and to put Medvedev on the stand: If his accusations were true, he could hardly be held liable. (Probably. Russian courts can be funny that way.)

The court refused the petition, but Navalny seemed, yet again, undeterred. He took selfies with the opposing counsel, Genrikh Padva, who once defended oligarch-cum-dissident

Mikhail Khodorkovsky. He also took to his blog, which first elevated him to prominence, pointing out that his April attacker has been identified based on video that appeared on news broadcasts and has since been disseminated online. Although the assailant's face is blurred, amateur sleuths think they have a positive ID.

Navalny agrees with his online allies: The perpetrator was likely a member of the South East Radical Bloc (SERB) named Alexandr Petrunko. Other SERB members, including the group's leader, Igor Beketov, and a man who appears unblurred in the same video, Alexei Kulakov, claim the group



Protesters in central Moscow, June 12

had nothing to do with the attack.

The local police have opened an investigation but have yet to interview any witnesses or make any headway. Investigations into Nemtsov's 2014 murder and two failed poisonings of persistent Kremlin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza have also produced nothing.

Navalny has little chance of winning next year, and not just because he's a write-in candidate in a country whose last free and fair elections were in 2000. Despite Putin's famously high approval rating, less than half of respondents in a recent poll said they'd vote for him if elections were tomorrow. As Natalia Antonova of Open Democracy Russia describes it, Putin's platform in 2012 was all about stability—a prized commodity in topsy-turvy Russia. But his

most recent term has been plagued by the Ukraine crisis, sanctions, painful inflation, and a sharp rise in poverty. That doesn't mean unhappy voters would go for Navalny: The same poll indicates he'd get just 1 percent, way behind the Communists and right-wing nationalists.

Russian politics has been known to change overnight, though. According to Mark Galeotti of the European Council of Foreign Relations and the Institute of International Relations Prague, there are three different forms of opposition movement in Russia. Blue-collar Russians may be Navalny's most natural allies: The rickety and slow economy has caused massive labor

unrest, which helped propel the demonstrations in 2011-12 despite very loose organization and little leadership. The Communist party is the only group that has the nationwide machinery to organize such a large group of people, but for now its leadership is complacent. And Navalny's movement is centered around him, with a diverse array of supporters who unite on an anti-corruption message, but not necessarily much else.

This might make Navalny seem like a Soviet-era dissident, standing athwart the regime, proud but powerless. But there are key differences. Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, and Sharansky couldn't organize a movement the way Navalny has. As Galeotti also points out: "The dissident movement was born out of hopelessness. This movement is born of long-term hope."

Navalny wants to be prepared in case the polls are wrong, and he wants to win supporters in case they're right. When he's not in court or lockup, he spends a lot of time out in public, surrounded by crowds, which opens him up to another attack. No problem: "The more of these incidents there are, the more [people] send us money." And if the impossible happens? "Then Russia will have a president with a stylish white eye." ◆

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A Tale of Two Cubas



Havana Harbor

What, if anything, has the opening achieved?

RONALD RADOSH & ALLIS RADOSH

American tourists are flocking to Cuba, making them the largest contingent to visit the island after Canadians. Demand has been growing ever since President Barack Obama loosened travel restrictions last year. The airlines jumped in too quickly. Cuba didn't have the infrastructure to handle the crowds—not enough hotel rooms or the amenities Americans are used to. With too many empty seats, they had to cut back their number of flights. Benefiting from the situation are the cruise ships. One can visit the country and return to comfortable quarters at night. According to *Bloomberg Businessweek*, at least nine cruise lines will be sailing to Cuba this year.

We decided to join the tourist influx to find out what effect—if any—Obama's 2014 opening to Cuba has had on

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the country. Obama's policy called for restoring diplomatic relations and reopening the U.S. embassy in Havana, as well as easing trade and travel restrictions. Those who favored the opening argued that the new exchanges between Americans and Cubans would enable the Cuban people to begin a slow movement towards democracy and would loosen the totalitarian control of the Communist party. The opposition, largely conservative, argued that since Obama did not set preconditions, Raúl Castro would use the opening only to benefit his near-bankrupt regime without making the hoped-for political changes.

The typical tourist of today certainly differs from those in the heyday of Castroism—from the '60s through the '80s—when Americans going to Cuba were all part of pro-Castro organizations that ran trips there to promote solidarity with the revolution. These were trips, to use the term made popular by the scholar Paul Hollander, of "political pilgrims," leftists who went to see societies that they thought offered alternatives to the corrupt, bourgeois one in which they lived. The late Saul Landau, perhaps the single biggest apologist for Fidel Castro in the United States, wrote that "Cuba is the first purposeful society that we have had in the Western Hemisphere . . . where human beings are treated as human beings, where men have a

ADALBERTO ROQUE / AFP / GETTY

certain dignity, and where this is guaranteed to them.” As for Fidel Castro, Landau explained he was “a man who has been steeped in democracy . . . a humble man.” He described Castro as a Jeffersonian and a Leninist. (The *Nation*, by the way, is still sticking to this narrative, offering tours that will be “an exciting journey” along “the trail of the Cuban Revolution.”)

After the revolution, and especially once the U.S. economic embargo was imposed in 1962, it was difficult but not impossible for Americans to visit Cuba. They had to join a Canadian tour group or go through countries like Mexico and Spain. To protect them, Cuban customs would not stamp their passports. Obama’s opening now allows Americans to travel to Cuba if they verify that they are going for reasons deemed by the Treasury Department not to violate the U.S. embargo. There are 12 approved reasons, including “educational activities,” “public performances,” “support for the Cuban people,” “humanitarian projects,” and the like. You are required to account for your time in Cuba either by going on an official tour or documenting your activities in a diary. We checked “journalistic activity,” which is precisely what we engaged in.

The cruise lines and tour companies sponsor approved itineraries, with stops to explore Cuba’s vibrant art and music scene and government-sponsored projects such as a new “farm-to-table” restaurant. There are de rigueur visits to Ernest Hemingway’s house outside of Havana, the bars he frequented, a rum factory and museum, and a cigar factory where Cubans still roll the tobacco by hand, with a reader on a tall chair reading a book or a newspaper to the workers below.

Most tours include a trip to Havana’s Revolution Square, where Fidel Castro would lecture for hours on end to thousands of Cubans shipped in to listen. Without an event taking place, all one sees now are other tourists taking pictures and gazing at the visage of Che Guevara outlined in bronze on the wall of the Interior Ministry building. At one end is a giant tower—a memorial to José Martí, the liberator of Cuba. Tourists are usually not informed that the structure was erected not by Fidel and Raúl but by Fulgencio Batista, whom Castro overthrew. Batista also built the newer sections of the famed Malecón, Havana’s picturesque waterfront. With Cuba’s dismal economy, the regime has never had the resources to do much in the way of public building, nor have they solved Cuba’s chronic and severe housing shortage. Housing construction has fallen for 10 straight years. Indeed, on June 1 Cuba’s official statistics office reported that 22,106 properties were built last year, the lowest figure since 2006, when 111,000 homes were constructed.

The dismal economy is by now an old story. Strapped for cash after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which put an

end to decades of subsidies from Moscow, Fidel referred to the 1990s as a “special period,” a euphemism for increased deprivation. Subsidies in the form of cheap oil from Hugo Chávez’s Venezuela helped for a time, but Venezuela’s own economic woes ended that aid. Cuba’s government has increasingly turned to tourism to make up for the lost revenue. Tourists must therefore be embraced and made to feel comfortable, for they are an important economic lifeline. No longer will they encounter the ubiquitous signs of the past extolling the revolution and Fidel, though there are still a few rotting signs proclaiming, “Socialism or death,” and the occasional iconic portrait of Che.

POTEMKIN HAVANA

The average tourist may come away with the opposite impression of Cuba’s economy: that it’s booming. The area where most visitors spend their time is in the reconstructed Old Havana, a virtual Potemkin village. It is truly beautiful. The buildings have been restored to their former grandeur. It reminds one of walking through the Left Bank in Paris, only the buildings are bathed in cheerful Caribbean colors. Old Havana’s streets are paved in cobblestone, and one passes an array of attractive cafés and restaurants. To gain relief from the heat, we stopped at one, The Chocolate Museum, for a delicious cold chocolate drink. Even in this tourist area, however, economic reality peeks through. You will find toilets without seats, since plastic is valuable and cannot be given even to a fancy establishment. Neither will toilet paper be provided. Tourists are advised to carry their own.

The guidebooks note that Old Havana has been designated a UNESCO world heritage site, with baroque and neoclassical buildings that make it “easy to imagine what life in Cuba was like 200 years ago.” The area includes the San Cristóbal cathedral, completed in 1777. Hemingway fans can go to one of his favorite watering holes, El Floridita, where they can sit by a statue of the writer and order a daiquiri. At the center of the reconstructed area is the Plaza Vieja, where you can view the Casa del Conde de Jaruco, with its famous stained-glass windows and camera obscura, a device that shows 360-degree views of the surrounding area projected from a 35-meter tower via mirrors and lenses. This particular plaza, which earlier served as an underground car park, was restored by the government in anticipation that Cuba could become a tourist destination. They were prescient; the government is now busily restoring the decaying buildings surrounding the area.

Viewing these sites, it’s easy to see why growing numbers of Americans are anxious to visit. Some, of course, are old lefties who still believe in Castro’s revolution. But most of the people we encountered said they wanted to see the once-forbidden island “before it changes.” One couple sitting near

us at a restaurant in Old Havana described it as “like entering a time warp. I want to see it before they fix it up,” the woman said; her husband, a car enthusiast, said, “I want to ride in the old American cars before they disappear.”

If they don’t wander off the reservation, tourists can get the impression that the whole country is about to be made over in the same way as Old Havana is being transformed. But if they take the time to walk even a block or two through any side street, they will be shocked to see how average Cubans live today. Once-beautiful buildings are in advanced stages of decay. Many seem bound to collapse, and some regularly do. When he took over, Fidel promised Cubans housing. The housing they are being crowded into 50 years later is clearly not what they anticipated. We saw giant piles of garbage that had been rotting for days. Sadly, we saw more than one elderly man or woman picking through the piles in the hope of finding something of value, perhaps some leftover food.

This reality will intrude on a few tourists, as two of the finest restaurants are located in the worst part of Havana, on blocks where every building is black and decaying. One of them is the San Cristóbal *paladar*, the restaurant where both Obama and Beyoncé dined while in Cuba. The other, La Guarida, is where we met with a dissident for dinner one night. La Guarida is in a mansion made famous by the Academy Award-nominated 1993 film *Strawberry & Chocolate*. Back then, tenants filled the collapsing building. After the film came out, the state paid some of them to move, allowing the top floor to be turned into a four-star restaurant. To reach it, one has to walk up several flights of crumbling stairs, and hold on to a railing that in parts sways and feels as if it is about to give way if you lean too hard. Needless to say, the restaurant was filled with tourists. The tab for three of us was \$110 without the tip, a bargain by Western standards but five times what typical Cubans make in a month.

LEFT BEHIND

It is hard to be an average Cuban. When Raúl Castro took over from his ailing brother Fidel a decade ago, he promised reforms. One was to open up the state-run economy to allow for small privately owned businesses. Some progress has been made and now nearly a quarter of the working population, some 500,000 Cubans, participate in this sector, which is still tightly controlled by Cuba’s powerful bureaucracy. The vast majority, though, still work for government-owned enterprises, which provide a monthly food ration that covers about two weeks. They have to rely on the black market for essentials like milk and eggs. But in doing so they are breaking the law.

You have to be ingenious to make do on \$26 a month and Cubans certainly are, but it takes up enormous amounts of energy. They spend a lot of time finding parts for and fixing worn-out things from cars to lighters. They spend hours waiting in lines for their rations and for transportation to jobs. Dealing with the vast bureaucracy means more waiting. Much of what Cubans do is wait. We were told they had succeeded if they got one chore done a day. The extended family is an essential resource that functions like a mutual aid society. Someone will know someone who knows someone and will be there to help if needed. The lucky ones with relatives in the United States receive remittances and goods like TVs and even refrigerators when the relatives come to visit members of their family still living in Cuba.



The new Old Havana

No wonder, then, that many Cubans are not convinced tourism has helped them. A comment about this was recently made on the Generation Y website, founded by the dissident blogger Yoani Sánchez. On May 29, Marta Requeiro posted an entry titled “They deceived us with Tourism.” She answers the query that anyone seeing the crumbling façades asks—why aren’t they repaired?

Today a citizen struggles to get some bricks or some cement to repair their crumbling house and, even more painful, foreign companies are hired to carry out the construction of tourist hotels. . . . We were deceived and it is time to stop believing that the profits that the tourism leaves will trickle down to the people and the most needy.

The government has signed contracts with more and more foreign chains to take over older properties, fix them up, and run them as luxury hotels. The Starwood group will soon manage one or two properties in Havana (unless President Donald Trump reverses the policy instituted by Obama). On June 7, central Havana saw the reopening of a gorgeous old building restored as a super luxury property

COURTESY OF RONALD RADOSH

called the Gran Hotel Manzana, developed by the Kempinski group in collaboration with the Cuban military, which owns the property.

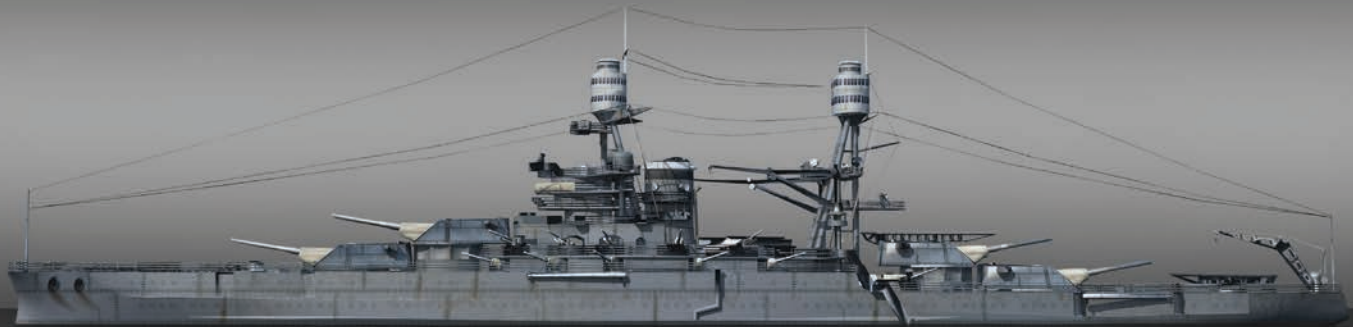
The Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski stands in front of the Parque Central and the Havana Gran Teatro, where major dance recitals and theatrical events take place. The Communist youth newspaper *Juventud Rebelde* explained that the hotel “forms part of a strategy that will allow Cuba to attract a high quality market.” Indeed. The least expensive rooms start at \$440 per night and the highest, the presidential suite, charges \$2,485. Visiting celebrities and presidents will no longer have to stay in one of the Meliá group properties on the outskirts of the city, or in the older Hotel Nacional in the Vedado area, which charges only \$200 a night or so.

True, unlike in the past, Cuban citizens can now set foot in these establishments; but no average Cuban could dream of affording a room. To add insult to injury, the Kempinski group did not trust Cuban workers to do a good job and used Spanish and Indian workers in the restoration work. These laborers received 1,500 euros a month, 10 times what their Cuban counterparts earn. However, it should be noted that Cubans who are fortunate enough to work in the hotels earn tips that greatly improve their family’s finances.

On the first floor of the hotel there is a luxury mall, Manzana de Gómez, as fancy as any in North America. A shop girl who sells makeup earns \$20 a month, while the face cream she sells goes for \$162.40 an ounce. At the next shop you can buy a Bulgari watch for \$10,200 or a Canon professional camera for \$7,542. A few blocks away sit the broken-down buildings regular Cubans live in. “This hurts because I can’t buy anything,” Rodolfo Hernandez Torres, a retired electrical mechanic, told the Associated Press. Hernandez draws a monthly pension of \$12.50.

To maximize its profits from tourism, the regime issues a two-tier currency, which creates one economy for foreigners and the Cuban elite and another for the majority of the people. Cubans are paid in pesos, equal to about four cents. Tourists, on the other hand, must change their dollars or euros into what are called CUCs, which are pegged to the dollar. A cab ride down the Malecón for a Cuban costs around 4 pesos. A tourist pays \$10 to \$15 for the same ride in CUCs. Near the Habana Libre hotel, built in the ’50s by Hilton, sits the famed ice cream parlor Copelia. There is always a long, long line of Cubans who wait for over an hour to buy a dish of ice cream for one peso. Foreigners pay \$5 for the same dish but are served immediately via a separate entrance.

IN THE LAST CENTURY, IRON AND STEEL MADE NATIONS STRONG.



The Cuban government owns the majority of shares in every hotel built; they receive the bulk of the money spent by tourists as well. Even if one stays in an Airbnb (the online rental agency now operates in Cuba) or an individual room or apartment in someone's home, called a *particular*, the owner must fork over to the government a high percentage of the payment received. Similarly, owners of *paladares*, the independently run and owned restaurants, must pay a large tax. Both types of enterprise are highly regulated by the government, and hence the regime receives most of the profits from the private individuals' efforts. Even though they are highly regulated and taxed, Cubans have rushed to take advantage of the opportunities to turn their homes into money-making ventures, which far surpass a regular government wage.

THE CHANGE THEY'RE STILL WAITING FOR

So what have Raúl Castro's promised reforms produced? That was the question we put to dissidents and to Cubans without any political affiliation. Even those who nominally support their government are dismayed and discouraged—waiting and waiting for changes that never seem to come.

Asserting his position as his brother's heir, Raúl made a

famous speech in 2007 in which he promised more dialogue with the Cuban people. He admitted that salaries were too low and called for a critical and constructive debate on how “to rid Cuba's 90 percent state-owned economy of bureaucratic inefficiencies.” He understood that Cubans' pay was not sufficient to cover their needs. Therefore, he wanted to allow more foreign investment and open Cuba to tourism. Then he turned to bread and butter issues and said that it was everyone's right to drink milk and now they could. Those words later disappeared from the record, after his experts informed Raúl that there was not, in fact, enough milk available for every family.

We wanted to speak discreetly with someone working independently in the service and tourist industry who would not risk being fired from a government job. So we booked a two-and-a-half-hour cab ride around Havana with a young man in his 20s, who works for a small tour company and serves as a guide. To protect his identity, we will call him simply Roberto.

Roberto is a college-educated computer engineer who learned English on his own because, he told us, “all the computer manuals are in English.” Like others in the tourist business, he acknowledged that he could earn far more than anyone employed by the government, since he

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can accept and keep tips. Roberto at first stuck closely to the approved government line; i.e., “your country may be richer, but all our education is free and the poorest person gets excellent and free medical care.” There are chinks in that assertion, but we let it pass. In fact, the regular doctor’s offices and hospitals in Cuba are so short of medical supplies that even aspirin is rationed. Those needing medicine must buy it on the black market. Hospitals are crowded, unsanitary, and ill-equipped for major surgery. The main hospital in Havana that serves tourists and regime apparatchiks is superb and anything but typical.

As time passed, Roberto gradually opened up, telling us he had tried to obtain a visa to America but had been turned down; he’d heard the United States offers only 2,500 a year. He said it was impossible to live in Cuba and that young people see no future there and want to leave. He hated that it was so difficult to access news. The Internet is expensive and you must buy online access, at very slow speeds, from the government. Near the end of our long drive, he told us: “This system isn’t working. Something’s got to change. I don’t know if it’s the economy, the government, or both, but it’s near collapse. It can’t go on much longer.”

A similar comment may be found on an excellent YouTube video tour of Cuba, made by photographer Michael Melendy. He filmed from inside a shiny old American car that he used as a taxi. With the camera showing only the back of the driver’s head, Melendy asks: “How is Cuba?” The answer:

I am going to tell you something. . . . The true reality is one this government never says. . . . While there’s no change to the system it will continue to be the fraud and thievery like it’s been to this day. If you take a good look at my country, I’m ashamed to say if we continue to have the presidents we have today spreading lies to the world you will see ruins. In Cuba, it looks like there is war—everything falling apart, everything destroyed. The destruction we see has nothing to do with the blockade. The other countries send us millions of dollars. It never goes to us. I don’t know if they spend it on weapons. While Castro stays in power it will be disastrous. You think you can run a country for 50 years without development? False!

Has the government become less repressive and more open to finding new solutions, as Raúl had promised it would? One afternoon, we sat down for a few hours with a journalist who had taught at the University of Havana and once wrote for one of the official Cuban press organs. Let us call him Ernesto.

Ernesto is among the more than 50 people who write for an online paper called *Havana Times*, which the regime allows to be published. Since most Cubans cannot gain access to the Internet for anything but short emails, the regime is confident that the newspaper will not influence the populace at large. According to Ernesto, the regime doesn’t care very much what is published outside Cuba. Their main concern is controlling the thinking of the Cubans inside. Its stories include tough anti-Castro articles that do not mince words. Recently, they ran an incredible video, based on an American civil rights film of the ’60s that showed the brute force used by Sheriff Bull Connor and his police and dogs in 1960s Birmingham. Their new version uses the same soundtrack, but instead of footage from the civil rights movement, it shows the brutal force used by Cuban security forces against the Ladies in White as they protest in front of a major church one Sunday. One sees the *Damas de Blanco*, whose husbands and relatives are political prisoners, being beaten by security forces, dragged through the street by their hair, and herded into vans to be sent to jail.

A recent issue of *Havana Times* features such headlines as “The Anti-Castro Opposition in Times of Trump,” “Why I Left Cuba; My Life in Costa Rica,” and “Cuba: Socialism, Private Property and Wealth.” That last article discusses

the growing inequality in a two-tier society of those with money and those without. Fidel Castro, as the saying here goes, “created equality by making everyone equally poor.”

A June 7 op-ed by Jancel Moreno takes up the government’s attempt to remind Cubans of U.S. efforts through the years to overthrow the regime. All government videos of past U.S. actions end with the phrase “We remember!” Moreno asks: “Have we forgotten how many Cubans were and are beaten up by government forces? Have we forgotten how many Cubans emigrate and leave everything behind because of repression? Have we forgotten how many Cubans are currently being kicked out of universities because of their political convictions?” He tells the regime: “WE ALSO REMEMBER!”

Ernesto told us how hard it is simply to live. Having lost both his university teaching job and his position as a journalist working for a government agency, he now depends on writing for any publication that will take his columns and notes that *Havana Times* does not pay contributors. Many of the nongovernment publications rely

Gradually, our guide opened up, telling us that young people see no future in Cuba and want to leave. Near the end of our long drive, he told us: ‘This system isn’t working. Something’s got to change. I don’t know if it’s the economy, the government, or both, but it’s near collapse. It can’t go on much longer.’

on donations from supporters. He says that he would not have taken any other course, because he did not become a journalist to tell lies for the regime, and now he is free to write and report as he pleases.

Ernesto also told us he had major differences with the hardline Cuban-American opponents of the regime who demand complete freedom in Cuba before dealing with the government or ending the embargo. They don't understand that "the embargo only helps Raúl Castro," he says, "and as Fidel did, he can blame the government's failures on its existence." But, he adds, if somehow Congress were to end the embargo, "Raúl also wins. He can say this proves their ability to have forced America to do what they want, because of their revolutionary persistence." Ernesto offered no solution for this quandary.

In his eyes, anti-Castro Cuban-Americans who want the embargo maintained and some of measures introduced by the Obama opening pushed back—perhaps making it tougher for Americans to travel to Cuba—are thinking as Americans and not Cubans. "Every Cuban here, on all sides," he claims, "wants the embargo ended. They all believe more trade and tourism from the U.S. will only help regular citizens, not just the regime."

Ernesto thinks that Cubans don't act to change things because they believe they can leave. Therefore, he approves of Obama's ending the "wet foot, dry foot" policy that granted asylum to any fleeing Cuban who reached American shores. Now those fleeing are turned back and returned to Cuba by the U.S. authorities. In his eyes, the policy was working as a safety-net for the Cuban regime. Castro got rid of those who might become dissidents and activists, and people thought they could always get to the United States. Now, he thinks, "being forced to remain in Cuba, they might become active members of an opposition that seeks to change Cuba towards democracy."

A CUBAN GORBACHEV?

Is there room within Cuba to politically challenge the status quo? To explore this, we met with Manuel Cuesta Morúa, the head of an organized opposition party, Arco Progresista, which defines itself as social democratic. Formed from a coalition of left-leaning organizations in July 2008, the party is deemed inconsequential by the regime, so it is allowed to exist and can even hold meetings. Perhaps it is tolerated because the party's statement of purpose makes clear it wants the U.S. embargo ended—a key regime demand—and because it does not overtly challenge the right of the Castro government to hold power.

Cuesta believes that the climate today would allow the formation of progressive but anti-totalitarian groups. Speaking to the press in 2008, he said, "we represent an option and a voice of a social minority that wants to become a political majority." He told us that their "approach is not to challenge them at the top and seek leadership of the country. Rather," he explained, "it was to start from bottom up, and first gain influence in various local municipalities and communities, where we can address the various ways in which the current government has ceased to deal with people's immediate concerns."

Seeking a "critical citizen majority," Cuesta believes that with Fidel Castro's passing, Cuba will begin to open and become more tolerant, despite Raúl Castro's desire to keep power within his own family and the Communist party. In



Probably not a tourist destination: a barbershop in Havana, December 2016

particular, he points out that Raúl has said he is going to step down in 2018 and has promised new electoral rules.

This promise led Arco Progresista to set up what it calls Project 18. The party will start by running candidates in local municipal elections. Until now, such candidates have always been Communists or those backed by the party. Cuesta believes they can use Raúl's words to force the regime to permit them to run their own candidates in local races. "This," Cuesta says, "is a start."

Cuesta was born in Jamaica and learned his flawless English from his mother. He dresses sharply in a sport jacket, slacks, and good shoes, looking like any relaxed businessman out for the night. At the University of Havana, he majored in African history. The turmoil under Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the period of perestroika influenced him tremendously. He and his friends formed a discussion group, where they talked about whether a similar

opening needed to take place in Cuba. When they went public in 1991, he lost his university job as a researcher. His discussion group, he told us, set down the roots of the movement that grew into Arco Progresista.

Cuesta and his party take the position that all the Cuban people want the embargo to end, that greater contact with the United States will increase the welfare of a people deprived of necessities. He acknowledges that those who want it to remain see it as leverage that can be used by the United States to force the regime to make more concessions on human rights. However, he says, if supporters of the embargo were to think first of the welfare of the people in Cuba, they would reconsider their views on the embargo.

He seeks to press the regime for free access at high speeds to the Internet, and notes how far Cuba lags behind the rest of the world in this regard. However, Castro is unyielding. The regime wants continued control of information, to prevent the people from learning on their own what is happening in the world and from hearing arguments opposed to communism. Raúl Castro, he says, is working with both Russia and China to create a firewall that would enable the government to limit Cubans' access to approved sites only. In other words, it would be a heavily censored and unfree version of the Internet.

Is there anyone in the ruling party who could turn out to be a Cuban Gorbachev, who might move the regime to moderate its harsh Stalinist methods of control? "Not yet," he says, "but possibly in the not-distant future." He tells us that a prominent reformer in the party leadership once argued with Fidel Castro that the Internet had to be open and free. Fidel responded, "The Internet is our enemy." A few days later, that person was removed from his prominent leadership post and has not been publicly seen since. Two other top Communist leaders who wanted to move beyond Raúl Castro's limited economic reforms, he told us, also lost their jobs.

ONGOING REPRESSION

Cuesta's desire for a nonviolent and democratic future for Cuba that maintains a working welfare state is but one position in the dissident community. There are other dissidents who strongly support the embargo. If it were lifted, they argue, the regime would attain a major victory without having to lighten its repression. Berta Soler, the brave leader of the Ladies in White, has often spoken on behalf of maintaining the embargo. She obviously believes that the regime cannot and will not change, and that the United States should not abandon its last piece of leverage. When James Kirchick interviewed her two years ago, she told him that the United States has to make demands of Castro, because so far the "American government is receiving nothing." Her argument still has

merit. Repression continues and those the government fears may be gaining strength are still being arrested and some even killed.

In 2011, Oswaldo Payá died in a car crash. He was the leader of the Varela Project, a movement to gather signatures demanding a free national election and other reforms. He was traveling with others to a meeting of his group, the Christian Liberation Movement, when a car assumed to be from the state security services rammed them from the back, killing Payá and an associate.

The government clearly sees the Christian Liberation Movement as a threat. We were told that the movement has been gaining adherents in the area where Fidel and Raúl Castro were born. On May 25, Amnesty International put out an emergency bulletin announcing that a provincial court had upheld a three-year prison sentence against the organization's current leader Eduardo Cardet, who is being held in the prison at Holguín in southeast Cuba. He was arrested on November 30, 2016, five days after Fidel Castro's death. Observers attribute the arrest to his telling Spanish radio that Fidel Castro was "very much hated and rejected by our people." Witnesses told Amnesty International that he was violently pushed off the bicycle he was riding and roughed up by four plainclothes police and one uniformed one. They put him in handcuffs and then beat him up, with citizens watching. He was charged with attacking an official of the state. As Cardet himself put it, "Political activities are passed off as criminal offenses . . . such as contempt of or offenses against the authorities, and the political police use these classifications to lock up dissidents."

The opening, in short, has not ended repression. In the past, dissidents could face 25-year sentences and were regularly tortured in prison and maltreated. Even the American Alan Gross, falsely accused of being a spy, suffered extreme weight loss and lost a number of his teeth in five years behind bars, and was on the verge of dying before he was released. And he was only being used by the Cubans as a bargaining chip to force the release of five Cuban spies who had been convicted and imprisoned in the United States. Sentences for political prisoners these days tend to be shorter than in the past and deployed mainly against leaders the authorities temporarily want out of the way. Amnesty International reports a monthly average of 827 politically motivated detentions in 2016.

We think, based on observation and the reports of those we spoke to, that the Cuban dissidents who favor unilaterally lifting the embargo have the weakest argument. If the regime were to ease the repression and allow independent media to publicly function, some reciprocal moves by the United States would make sense. But advocates of the embargo are correct when they note that it is the Castro regime that gets the money coming in from trade and

tourism. Real benefits have not flowed to the Cuban people.

Moreover, Cuba's economy has been on the verge of collapsing for decades. The latest crisis is the tailspin of Nicolás Maduro's Cuba-friendly regime in Venezuela, which itself is on the brink of collapse. Recently, Raúl Castro called for solidarity with Maduro and offered all Cuban support necessary against the Venezuelan people, described of course as "fascist" mobs seeking the overthrow of a revolutionary government. One didn't see—as one might have seen under similar circumstances in the '70s and '80s—Cuban people marching in the streets with solidarity banners in support of the Venezuelan leader and his thugs. In making his plea, Raúl seems to be doing what he feels he is supposed to do in a perfunctory fashion, as if he knows the Fidelista era is passing, that he is not his brother and has not an ounce of charisma, and that his words more and more fall on deaf ears. He is repeating old themes, and knows that no one is listening.

As blogger Yoani Sánchez wrote last December, even the government now acknowledges the negative numbers when reviewing economic growth. "Cuba is not growing; production is not recovering, and the so-called Raúlism reforms have not given citizens a better life," she wrote. "The island is heading toward the abyss of defaults, cuts in vital sectors of the economy, and continued stagnation." And yet it still stages military parades on Revolution Square that cost hundreds of thousands of pesos. All this, she writes, when the GDP fell 0.9 percent in the previous year. The people see this and realize this is money that could have been used to fix roads or to repair their decaying homes and apartments.

Sánchez is correct. Raúl and his government issue report after report on how the economy must improve. Yet they cannot bring themselves to embrace a system of open and free markets. They cling to a system based on tight state control and regulation, and to the myth that they can maintain a planned centralized economy. Even with the success of the *paladares*, these small-business owners are not allowed to enter partnerships or to reinvest profits in their enterprises. The government dictates the number of seats allowed in a restaurant; it began at 12 and has been allowed to rise only to 50.

Worse, if a restaurant seems too successful, its owners are accused of profiteering and not acting in a socialist manner. Just this week, the government accused two successful *paladar* owners of "money laundering." The properties—Lungo Mare and El Litoral—were seized and their owners arrested. The owners' homes were raided, ostensibly in a

search for hidden funds. The raid is a warning to other *paladar* owners that they had better not make too much money or be too successful, and a reminder that they are beholden to the Communist regime.

THE VIEW FROM PADURA

All of these impressions were confirmed by the man many people consider to be the greatest living Latin American novelist after the passing of Gabriel García Márquez, Leonardo Padura. He is perhaps best known for *The Man Who Loved Dogs*, a novel that deals with Ramon Mercader, Leon Trotsky's assassin,



The Ladies in White: Their husbands and sons are still political prisoners.

Cuba, the Spanish Civil War, and the Soviet Union, and was widely acclaimed a masterpiece. His current novel, *Heretics*, deals with the Jewish exile from Spain, the life of Cuba's Jewish community, the Jewish diaspora of World War II, and the mystery of a lost Rembrandt painting. Americans might know him from his detective series, *Four Seasons in Havana*, on Netflix.

He kindly agreed to meet us at an ice cream and pastry parlor he likes to frequent. We got in a taxi and were driven around for an hour and a half. It became apparent that the driver had no knowledge of Havana neighborhoods, streets, or how to get from one place to another. Evidently anyone who has access to a car can become a cabbie, and one is at his mercy. We never got to meet Padura.

Fortunately, he gave an interview to the former Sandinista editor Carlos Fernando Chamorro, which appeared on June 7 in *Confidencial*, a Nicaraguan weekly. Chamorro asked many of the same questions we would have. Padura is a controversial character; Miami Cuban exiles do not like or trust him, because he chooses to stay and write in Cuba,

living in the same house he grew up in. He tells everyone that he cannot write unless he lives and breathes as a Cuban, and although he fully understands the regime's pitfalls, he feels he must stay a Cuban and suffer the life of his countrymen. Padura notes that although his novel won many major literary prizes, in Cuba it was only published in a small limited edition, without any publicity or reviews. Padura, a man who makes political judgments very care-



Havana's once-beautiful buildings are in a state of advanced decay.

fully, finds himself discouraged at present. Chamorro asks him whether the reforms have produced better economic results or opened things up politically. He answers:

It's like living with a large question mark, and we have little information beyond knowing that in February of 2018 Raúl's period as president of the country ends. However, it seems that his term as First Party Secretary doesn't end, which means he's going to continue playing a fundamental political role. In the Cuba that begins in those moments, several different names are being floated as the possible future president of Cuba, including current First Vice President Miguel Díaz Canel. But—what's really going to happen? How is it going to play out? The government is planning for a process of continuity, and I believe there will be continuity, but it's going to have to be layered with changes that go much deeper than those that have occurred up until now.

Padura acknowledges “there've been small economic openings,” but thinks “there has to be a greater deepening, above all in this economic opening. Last year Cuba was in recession, the Gross National Product decreased; this year it's going to increase very little, and an economic debt is being accumulated, an aging infrastructure that requires a major economic action to better the life of Cubans.”

Chamorro replies that he has recently been in Cuba, and

young people he talked to told him they feel they are only “spectators” to reform, since “others make the decisions and set the direction of the country.” Young people feel that they have “no future in their country.” Padura answers that “there's been a major drain of young Cuban capital, because many of those young people who leave had the best education: computer engineers, doctors, physicists, etc. . . . If the principal problem that we have is of an economic character, then that intelligence is of the greatest importance.”

Acknowledging the scores of new Internet publications, Padura notes that in the past, they “would have been unimaginable in Cuba. Today they exist.” The problem, he says, is the same one we noted with the *Havana Times*: “They're read more outside of Cuba than inside, precisely because of the very limited access to the Internet that Cubans have.” Still, they help add to the “diversification of opinion” and open “spaces for debate.” Padura bemoans that there isn't any political opening. In fact, he sees things getting worse. His last words in the interview are shocking: “Even in the area of culture,” he says, “I feel that there were spaces that were much more open five or six years ago but that now are much more controlled, much more closed. So I don't believe that there's any will for an immediate political opening.”

If this is the case, as it indeed it seems to be, then the Trump administration may be right in saying, as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson did in Senate hearings on June 13, that since tourist travel brings money only to the rulers “and not to the people of Cuba,” then steps have to be taken to “pressure the regime to change.” Tillerson said that with rapprochement, “we think we have achieved very little in terms of changing the behavior of the regime in Cuba and its treatment of its people.” He asked whether the United States was only giving money to the regime that enables it to survive. If so, he argued, it means they have “little incentive . . . to change,” and hence human rights in Cuba will not get any better.

On the other hand, the regime has not responded to economic pressure since the embargo was consolidated in 1962, three years after Fidel Castro seized power. It still tightly controls the lives of its citizens and holds them in poverty. Wishing only the best for Cuba's long-suffering people, we are ourselves ambivalent on the question of tourism. The right of U.S. citizens to travel where they want is a consideration certainly deserving of weight. And against the fact that it would deny money to a repressive regime, one has to weigh the fact that restricting tourism would also deprive Cubans of a chance to make Americans hear their cries for change. It would also deprive many Cubans of the opportunity to use their own initiative to gain a better living than the meager wage paid them by the state. With Cuba, there are never easy answers. ♦

SARAH L. VOISIN / WASHINGTON POST / GETTY

One Tory's Story

'Like a duck hit on the head'

BY TED R. BROMUND

York, England

After one of his many unfortunate generals sustained a particularly abject defeat, Abraham Lincoln remarked that the man was “confused and stunned like a duck hit on the head.” Such is the state of the Conservative party after the U.K. general election of June 8, an election the party felt sure it would win overwhelmingly but in which it somehow contrived to lose seats. Though technically a victory, in that the Tories remain the largest and governing party, it was in every other sense—and especially as judged against expectations—a profound and confusing defeat.

There will be many postmortems, but sometimes the reasons for failure can be more easily perceived at the ant's level than by a view from on high. Fortunately, for the past five weeks, I've been an ant. Throughout the election, I was in the beautiful city of York, embedded in the campaign of Ed Young, Conservative candidate, published author, former speechwriter for David Cameron, brilliant and compulsively energetic redhead, and a friend and former student of mine.

It wasn't surprising when Young lost: On polling day, we both agreed defeat was likely, while nursing a hope that he might squeak through. Local party leaders agreed. On the night of the poll, a campaign insider told Young that he'd win by 100 votes. Yet in the end, he lost by 18,000, a more than two to one margin. Young did increase the Tory vote—no small feat in an election that saw a national swing against the Conservatives. But the dynamic had changed since the last election, with both the Greens and UKIP deciding not to compete in York. That helped the Labour candidate increase her totals from two years earlier, and by far more.

I can honestly say that I didn't see this coming. I reviewed the daily canvassing returns, which—after Young and his team had spoken with 10 percent of York's electorate—had him ahead of Labour by about a percentage point.

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Yes, the national polls were gloomy, but the feeling on the doorsteps, particularly over the final few days, was so good that it was easy to discount the pollsters. As York hasn't had a Tory MP for 25 years, Young followed the locally controversial—but correct—strategy of seeking out marginal Labour voters: There simply aren't enough true-blue Tories in York to win with Conservative votes alone. Raised in York and buoyantly proud of the city, Young was relentlessly positive, arguing that a member of Parliament needs to do more than lead protest marches, the stock-in-trade of the sour Labour incumbent, Rachael Maskell. His devoted campaign staff slogged their feet off—one walked over 30 miles on the last day of the campaign alone, as did Young himself. If effort, ability, and honesty were enough, Young would have won.

Obviously, they weren't. Young needed about a 7-point swing—that is, for 7 percent of those who voted Labour in the 2015 election to vote Tory this time—to draw level. With the Tories nationally seeing a swing against them of over 1 percent, Young had no chance. That, really, is the fundamental fact: In a marginal constituency, a good local campaign can make the difference between success and failure, but the context for any local campaign is set at the national level. But if that is the only lesson the Conservative party takes away from this fiasco it will be missing the point, because the experience of being on the ground and behind the scenes convinced me that its apparatus for fighting and winning elections at the local level is broken. True, there is no substitute for policy and political competence at the national level. But the party's failures at Westminster find their reflection in the failures of the Conservatives as a local campaigning organization.

The struggle on the ground between Labour and the Tories is a study in competitive strategies. Labour is long on union activists, so it uses bodies, not brains. Its strategy is to fight hard, not smart. In York, Young usually had fewer canvassers on the ground—rarely more than 20 at a time—than his opposition had canvassing teams. He wasn't outspent, or if he was, it wasn't by much. And on an individual level, he wasn't outworked. But he was definitely outmaneuvered by the unions. As one Tory activist put it to me, “there's no way to fight a tidal wave of shit.” Officially, of course, that's not what the party believes. The Conservative answer, its strategy, is to rely on data, and in particular a computerized tool called VoteSource, which collects hundreds if not thousands

of pieces of information on every voter in an effort to identify those who already vote Tory, and those most likely to be persuaded to do so.

VoteSource is not all bad, and it's certainly better than its predecessor, Merlin, which was notorious for producing a magically large number of system crashes. In York, VoteSource wasn't infallible at picking out possible Tory votes, but it did often send Young to parts of the city that insiders said were hopeless, but where he nevertheless got a good reception. Admittedly, it also sent him to places that turned out to be just as hopeless as local opinion held them to be. But as a tool to track canvassing results, and as a mechanism for breaking down preconceptions, it does have advantages.

The problem at the local level for the Tories isn't VoteSource. It's the interface between man and machine, and the assumptions behind that interface. A minor but telling example: VoteSource assumes that everyone lives in a house with a front door. It has no way to track addresses in apartment towers to which canvassers can't get access. As perhaps 10 percent of addresses in York are inaccessible to outsiders, this was a major headache and a serious waste of time. Canvassers were repeatedly dispatched to addresses that proved impossible to reach. The maps VoteSource generates are useless, another headache. Worse, and more fundamentally, the Tory canvassing strategy, though undoubtedly perfect in the lab, appeared to have been designed by a marketing research team that has never worked with any actual campaign volunteers, or ever ventured outside Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ).

The essence of the strategy, as recommended by CCHQ and as intended by VoteSource, is to try to figure out not just what party voters support, but how intensely they feel about it. The theory is that most people who tell a canvasser they're undecided have leanings one way or the other, but won't tell you about them out of politeness. Marking them down as merely undecided confuses the issue and encourages candidates to waste valuable time on voters whose minds are already made up. So to reveal the hidden intensities, in each doorstep encounter with a voter, the canvasser is supposed to follow a script that yields a 1 through 10 response. This is a genuine problem: Young's campaign canvassed hundreds of undecided voters who turned out not to be undecided after all.

But the script is so terrible, so robotic, so obviously fake, so unreadable, and so off-putting that no volunteer I tested it on could get through the first paragraph without laughing or cringing. Not a single volunteer could be prevailed upon to read the script, and though I had more sympathy with the party's data-driven approach than most of Young's volunteers, I don't blame them. I have no doubt that the data the script would collect—if it didn't provoke

a fight-or-flight response—would be better than the canvassing results Young's team gathered, which turned out to be totally misleading. But a brilliant tool that no one will use because they can't stop laughing isn't all that brilliant. By leaving local campaigns trapped between a system that they don't trust and won't use, and the inadequacies of traditional but undermanned canvassing, the party is doing real harm to its chances.

And on the local level, that sums up the problem: The system was designed in the lab, not for real life. Over the past decade, the Tories have followed a strategy of relentless centralization. For example, all local literature has to be approved by CCHQ and created on a system called BluePrint from standardized templates, which invariably include a lot of centrally dictated text. The templates are inflexible and often allow no concessions to local circumstances: Young's "get out the vote" (GOTV) cards, for instance, proclaimed the election was being held "today," which made it necessary to deliver them at 6 A.M. on polling day. (Labour's cards named the polling day, which allowed them to be distributed ahead of time.) The party produces no literature that can be used as a window poster, which meant the Young team had to try to distribute posters individually, a nearly hopeless task that, like the distribution of the GOTV cards, consumed manpower Young's campaign didn't have. BluePrint stalls and crashes when overtaxed, which during an election is almost all the time, and it takes four or five business days to deliver anything: One of Young's volunteers was stunned to be told that the party's (centralized) printers didn't work on weekends, even during an election.

All this centralization makes the party's local campaigning strategy deeply incoherent. Young, like all candidates for parliament, was legally allowed to spend only a little more than £12,000 (just over \$15,000) in a constituency of about 74,000 voters—a fact that makes any comparison between U.S. and British campaigns irrelevant, if not silly. He thus had to rely on centrally produced literature (which didn't count against his spending allowance, but which wasn't local), on his BluePrint literature (which allowed only a dash of local content, if that), or on personal contact with voters (guided by the trembling hand of VoteSource). The party, in other words, wants to use data and standardized literature to compensate for its shortage of volunteers, and to prevent them from screwing things up—but in the end, it needs those volunteers to collect canvassing data, distribute literature, and persuade voters. It wants to fight smart and from the center, but those campaign spending limits, and the emphasis that Britain places on contact between candidates and voters, mean it has to get on the ground and get local if it wants to win marginal seats.

For that, it needs volunteers, of which there aren't enough. And to the extent it does have them, they don't like its literature or its script. Nor do many of them see any value in collecting data—I lost count of the number of arguments I witnessed between believers in leafletting (described as “showing the flag”) and advocates of a data-driven approach. The former regarded the latter as politically naïve and could never grasp that data collection does have the potential to improve targeting over time, while the latter regarded the former as doing nothing more than contributing to York's paper recycling efforts. Of course, you need both literature and data. But if the Tories can't loosen their centralized stranglehold on literature, can't improve the way they ask volunteers to collect data and convince them that this effort has some value, and don't invest more time and energy in building up local parties, they will be completely at the mercy of national trends, and will keep on losing marginal seats that might be winnable, or might over time be made winnable.

York, it turned out, wasn't marginal at all. But when the campaign started, it was thought to be marginal, so it was a Tory target. The local party organization was a good deal better than many I have seen, but it could have been better still: Over the past seven years, they'd canvassed about as many voters as the 8,000 that Young and his team talked with in under five weeks. Young's reward for his energy was to have the regional help he'd been promised—under the party's mutual aid system, whereby candidates in winnable seats are assisted by volunteers from neighboring ones—taken away from him by CCHQ, on the grounds that he didn't need it. More fundamentally, the party's strategy of centralization, of fighting elections only at election time, and of targeting only winnable seats means it doesn't invest much outside election season in building up local party organizations anywhere—but especially in seats that aren't currently winnable. And that means the circle of potentially winnable seats tends to shrink over time, because the party does nothing to expand it. York, for example, is unlikely to be a Tory target in the next election.

In essence, the party has adopted a centralized strategy that neglects the local party organizations on which it still reluctantly relies, and that aims not to increase the number of winnable seats between elections but to win those that are winnable when an election rolls around. It is an approach of doing just enough, and it is highly vulnerable to falling just short. From every point of view, this Conservative campaign reflected that centralized strategy, from its robotic emphasis

on a “strong and stable” government, to its deification of Theresa May (who was the focus of the entire campaign to an extent that might have made North Korea's Kim Jong-un envious), to its tedious literature (called “generics” in the office, for good reason), to the way it controlled and directed volunteers, even down to the words it wanted Young's team to say.

Obviously, the sources of this Tory defeat run deeper than its approach to local campaigning. But the way the party campaigns locally is symptomatic of the broader problems that led to the defeat. It has become a top-



Candidate Ed Young with Conservative party chairman Sir Patrick McLoughlin

down party that distrusts and alienates the volunteers it needs to be competitive, and tries to fight presidential-style campaigns in a nation that doesn't have a president and instinctively resists efforts to impose one. It does not understand Labour voters (with whom it has made no headway since the 2010 election), the pro-Brexit UKIP supporters (if it did, most of them would never have joined UKIP in the first place), or true blue Tories (whom it evidently disdains), and it made no effort to win, or even fight, a battle of ideas.

It is increasingly, like today's Labour party, a reflection of the concerns of cosmopolitan London and the political class, yet it can only win by appealing to voters who retain a sense of place. It remains a better choice than Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party, and, rightly, the British people made it the largest party in Parliament. But as everyone on the Young team recognized, it fought an incoherent and incompetent campaign, one that reflected its isolation as both a political and a governing party. Yes, Labour won the election. But, fundamentally, it was the Tories that lost it. ♦

COURTESY OF TED R. BROWNING



Mia Farrow, Robert Redford in 'The Great Gatsby' (1974)

Trails of the Jazz Age

F. Scott Fitzgerald, social critic? BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

Do we need another biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald? Since Arthur Mizener's inaugural one of 1951, there have been a number of successors including Andrew Turnbull's (1962) and, most commandingly, Matthew Bruccoli's "standard" one of 1981. This new one by David S. Brown concentrates, as the blurb tells us, on the "historical rather than the literary imagination of its subject." (Brown is a professor of history.)

If this strikes one as a curious approach—what do we care about in Fitzgerald *except* his literary imagi-

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Paradise Lost
A Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald
by David S. Brown
Harvard, 424 pp., \$29.95

nation?—it may be justified if one believes, as Brown does, that Fitzgerald was an unusually perceptive social critic of American life between the world wars. His first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, was published in 1920; 20 years later he succumbed to a heart attack, leaving as his legacy four novels (a fifth incomplete) and scores of short stories. The most famous of his books, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), is now required reading for most college and pre-college courses in literature;

the other works elicit a good deal less attention. Brown would have us measure Fitzgerald's importance not so much by aesthetic standards as by his "critical appraisal . . . of timeworn Victorian certainties," a sociological-cultural explanation.

The biographer takes us capably through well-worn territory, as the young subject, five-foot-six and 130 pounds, fresh from Minnesota, comes east to the Newman School in New Jersey, then to Princeton. Fitzgerald would speak to this moment in one of his most attractive early stories, "Winter Dreams," in which Dexter Green reaches out for "the precarious advantage of attending an older and more famous university in the East, where he was bothered by his scanty

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

funds.” Brown describes the reaching-out to Princeton on Fitzgerald’s part as taking the school “only partly on its own terms the more self-conscious intellectual grind of a Harvard or Yale, romanticizing its gothic façade into a sentimental education distinct from the more intellectual Harvard and Yale.” *This Side of Paradise* pays tribute to his Princeton experience in glowing, nostalgic terms a reader may have trouble rising to: “‘You know,’ whispered Tom, ‘what we feel now is the sense of all the gorgeous youth that has rioted through here in two hundred years.’”

In the stories and novels to come, Fitzgerald, in Brown’s terms, would divide the sexes into “female realism” and “male romance,” as in his early love for the wealthy Ginevra King, and the less rich but more flirtatious southern woman he would (after some difficulty) marry, Zelda Sayre. One might wonder how any woman could begin to live up to the intensity of Fitzgerald’s male romance: certainly not Judy Jones, who, in “Winter Dreams,” is the dream that fades away from Dexter Green’s eyes, as any woman character of Fitzgerald’s must inevitably do. Rereading “Winter Dreams,” a story that once meant a lot to this male reader, I encounter sentences that used to resonate to me:

There was a fish jumping and a star shining and the lights around the lake were gleaming. Over on a dark peninsula a piano was playing the songs of last summer and of summers before that.

As Judy Jones will soon be, the star and the songs are present only in the hero’s poignant memory.

“Winter Dreams” was published in 1922, three years before *The Great Gatsby*. Brown calls it a “fine” story, but has little to say about what makes it fine. He quotes and comments on the “reaching out” to Princeton, yet the reason the story is attractive, even powerful, must have to do with its stylistic appeal. What to say about sentences that describe Dexter’s anticipation of Judy’s kiss, in which he faces “the unpredictable compound that would form mysteriously from the elements of their lips,” in

which he experiences “kisses that were not a promise but a fulfillment.”

In a word, the spell of romance—and as Hugh Kenner noted years ago, Fitzgerald’s only subject was not just romance but Romance. Nick Carraway in *Gatsby* is prey to a similar enchantment with Daisy the first time he meets her: “A stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words.” Surely it’s Fitzgerald who is imagining these words and the thrill they convey. Can we begin to experience that thrill?



Fitzgerald in 1920

But matters of tone, nuance, and manner matter less to Professor Brown than presumably larger matters such as the novelist’s relation to historical phenomena like Victorianism. With reference to the first world war that Fitzgerald never saw up close, Brown writes: “His knowing and critical appraisal of the timeworn Victorian certainties that many people blamed for provoking the conflict—its self-consciously refined sensibilities, its stifling moralism, and its unreflective confidence in science and technology—reaches for a kind of higher interpretive truth.” We are invited to consider the novelist as a chronicler of American civilization “in flux, one whose stuffy Victorianism he lampooned.” Or he is a “‘radical’ writer, eager to attack an anti-

quoted Victorianism.” I know we should look down on “Victorianism,” but I have never thought about it as a major concern of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s art.

Brown is eager to ramp up that art by connecting it with big names in literary circles. He tells us that Fitzgerald’s second (and feeble) novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), “might plausibly be paired with the politically tinted poetry of contemporaries T.S. Eliot and Allen Tate, or the slightly more distant observations of Henrys James and Adams”—comparisons that seem quite implausible to me. When, in discussing the “conspicuous consumption” instanced in *Gatsby*’s extraordinary house and clothes (“a fantasy moment of romantic promise,” writes Brown), he has recourse to Thorstein Veblen’s *Theory of the Leisure Class* even though, he notes, Fitzgerald almost certainly never read Veblen. I, too, who have successfully avoided dealing with the forbidding Norwegian-American economist, remain unwilling to see him in any way linked with Fitzgerald’s extraordinary novel.

Reread, *The Great Gatsby* proves irresistible as ever, and much of its distinction is the product of Nick Carraway’s reflections, on the verge of the pretentious as they sometimes are. But the solidity of specification is everywhere, from the names of the guests at *Gatsby*’s parties, to his colorful shirts that tumble out and make Daisy speechless, to the abandoned grass roller Nick sits on as he watches *Gatsby* watching the stars. In Lionel Trilling’s fine, short appreciation of Fitzgerald in *The Liberal Imagination*, he finds “a tone and pitch to the sentences which suggest [Fitzgerald’s] warmth and tenderness . . . his gentleness without softness.” Brown usefully points out Fitzgerald’s desire, stated a year before he began *Gatsby*, to be an American Joseph Conrad: It was Conrad’s *Nostromo* that Fitzgerald particularly admired, but the Conrad novel that seems to me closest in tone to *Gatsby* is *Victory*, with the doomed Axel Heyst—the last of Conrad’s great books, and one with some of the warmth and tenderness Trilling found in Fitzgerald.

But *Gatsby* could be done only once, and when Fitzgerald finally

published *Tender Is the Night* nine years afterwards, there is a great falling-off. Unlike *Gatsby*, *Tender* has a narrator who is nowhere and everywhere, without the immediacy and “personal” concern that characterizes Nick Carraway. It is too long a novel for its subject, and whether you go with the version into which Malcolm Cowley rearranged it or not, there is the lack of a coherent core of feeling. Fitzgerald thought it his best novel, and Brown calls it a “masterwork,” but there is nothing in his commentary that convinces us of its masterliness. Overall, its awkward effort to make the different stories, characters, and places jell is evident.

The six years after *Tender Is the Night* that ended with Fitzgerald’s death in Hollywood are depressing to read about. As others before him, Brown makes a case for the promise of the final, uncompleted novel *The Last Tycoon* (1941), and he provides a sympathetic portrait of Sheilah Graham, the woman who seems to have understood the man and writer she took in hand and learned from. Fitzgerald kept churning out stories—the “Pat Hobby” sequence and short autobiographical pieces—but they take up only a few pages in Matthew Bruccoli’s nearly 800 page selection of the stories.

As I consider his literary legacy, diminished from the enormous place it once occupied in my reading life, I thought of Willa Cather, whose novel *The Professor’s House* appeared the year of *Gatsby*, as well as *A Lost Lady*, which Fitzgerald read but only after *Gatsby* was completed. How much more sustaining and impressive Cather now seems, put next to Fitzgerald and, maybe, next to Ernest Hemingway as well. What remains uniquely Fitzgerald’s is what Lionel Trilling found in *The Great Gatsby* and called (perhaps too grandly) “the ideal voice of the novelist . . . characteristically modest yet . . . without . . . self-consciousness a largeness, even a stateliness.” Perhaps no critical account can find the right words for that central voice, but it is not likely to emerge through well-intentioned efforts to treat F. Scott Fitzgerald as a cultural historian. ♦



Cover Your Acts

What, precisely, is the key to congressional reform?

BY SAIKRISHNA BANGALORE PRAKASH

In *DC Confidential*, New York Law School professor David Schoenbrod describes how Congress degenerated from a responsible legislature, one that took responsibility for difficult decisions, to a body continually looking to dodge blame. The book is an absolute delight. Schoenbrod begins with an arresting story about, of all things, the federal Highway Trust fund. In 2014, the Fund was headed towards depletion, raising the prospect that federal highway construction would grind to a halt. No one wanted that. Besides the delays in repairing and constructing new highways, the road industry would lose a driver of profits and thousands of workers would be unemployed. Members of Congress had to be worried that labor, management, and the public would punish them.

Happily, Congress found \$10.8 billion to replenish the fund. This sounds like a success story, one in which virtuous legislators “rolled up their sleeves” and advanced the public interest. But in truth, Congress used a clever cheat, pulling an ace from up its sleeve.

Congress had honest options. It might have raised the gasoline tax, but that would have angered those forced to pay more at the pump. Congress might have issued more debt to refill the fund, but doing so would have generated an increase in the deficit, something legislators are typically (but not always) loath to do. Congress’s

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DC Confidential
Inside the Five Tricks of Washington
by David Schoenbrod
Encounter, 256 pp., \$25.99

actual solution exhibited ingenuity worthy of a genius inventor and a guile that would have made the most adept grifters blush: It allowed firms to contribute less to the pension funds they administer on behalf of their employees. This sleight of hand raised overall corporate tax receipts, funds that were used to replenish the highway fund. No tax increase, no deficit increase, just more federal revenue.

How did authorizing firms to deposit less money into their employee pensions increase tax revenue? When companies happily exercised their newfound authority to put fewer funds into their employees’ pensions, that move decreased their expenses and thereby yielded higher taxable profits, which, in turn, generated greater tax revenue. So, by permitting companies to decrease their current expenses, Congress “grew” corporate tax revenues.

Was everybody a winner? No. Though their taxes didn’t go up immediately, taxpayers were the clear losers. The government guarantees private pensions through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). The latter charges premiums to companies for the insurance it provides. But private pensions were (and are) underfunded, and the PBGC undercharges for its pension insurance. Hence the Highway Trust Fund fix solved one problem only by exacerbating another. When private companies go bust (as many inevitably will) there will be fewer funds in their

pension plans—meaning that taxpayers, as guarantors, will have to pony up the funds. Welcome to the beltway of smoke and mirrors.

These sorts of shenanigans are the targets of *DC Confidential*, and it hits the bull’s-eye every time.

Schoenbrod identifies five “tricks.”

The “money trick” involves supplying goodies to today’s electorate and slyly handing the bill to posterity. When Congress gives us tax cuts or spending increases, some members of the public feel as if they are getting something for nothing. But there is no free lunch. The “debt guarantee trick” involves the federal government guaranteeing the debts of entities, but not charging enough to cover the costs of insurance. The trick results in inflated profits for corporations, with taxpayers making up the inevitable shortfalls. The “mandate trick” consists of forcing states to handle federal tasks without supplying funds to cover the expenses. The “regulation trick” entails passing statutes that announce impressive goals, but leave the difficult details to the alphabet soup of federal agencies. That way, Congress gets the credit for, say, halting pollution while evading blame for the costs associated with that lofty objective.

The final scheme is the “war trick.” Congress takes credit for successful wars, with members marching in parades and basking in reflected military glory. But members successfully deflect blame when wars go sideways, reproaching the president for his adventures. Victories have 535 parents; the president has sole custody of defeats.

Schoenbrod’s solution: America needs an Honest Deal Act.

■ First, Congress would have to deliver a biennial letter to the American people about the deficit and the debt. The letter would draw attention to the proverbial mountain of debt.

■ Second, a debt guarantee commission would consider whether to continue existing debt guarantees and the rates the government ought to charge for them. Congress would be forced to vote on whether to end debt guarantees and raise premiums.



Congressmen Matthew Lyon (Vt.) and Roger Griswold (Conn.) debating with fire tongs (1798)

■ Third, legislators could raise “points of order” when Congress attempts to impose unfunded mandates on the states, making it more difficult to impose such commands.

■ Fourth, Congress would be forced to vote on major (\$100 million-plus) rulemakings. Agencies could propose these rules, but Congress would have to pass them if they were to become effective.

■ Fifth, the act would automatically halt funding for wars started by a president unless Congress subsequently authorized those wars. The president would have a free hand for short conflicts, while longer wars would necessitate congressional buy-in.

A theme is obvious: Congress must act, rather than delegating difficult choices to bureaucrats. This is in keeping with an earlier volume by Schoenbrod, *Power Without Responsibility: How Congress Abuses the People Through Delegation* (1993), a learned treatment of congressional delegation to agencies. One thread linking both these books is that when Congress delegates significant power, it shirks its duties and evades blame for the inevitable tradeoffs. Schoenbrod’s fixes are meant to ensure that Congress, and not the agencies, makes the tough decisions.

Still there are differences across these solutions. Schoenbrod’s fix for

the money trick does not attempt to solve the debt and deficit dilemmas. It merely requires disclosure of facts. The thought must be that if the people are made aware of the money trick, they will no longer permit Congress to borrow from their children and grandchildren. Yet we live in an age of disclosure and are drowning in boilerplate. Anyone applying for a credit card, purchasing software, or visiting the office kitchen is bombarded with info about fees, terms, and labor rights. Will a form letter with some fiscal figures cause voters to question fiscal policy?

Count me a skeptic. Recent research by professors Omri Ben-Shahar and Carl E. Schneider—*More Than You Wanted to Know: The Failure of Mandated Disclosure* (2014)—casts doubt on the utility of disclosure: Sometimes we can know the good, and yet not pursue it. This might especially be true for debt. I’m reminded of J. Wellington Wimpy’s refrain, often uttered to Pop-eye: “I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.”

Contrast Schoenbrod’s disclosure solution for the money trick with the different solutions for debt guarantees and regulations. For the latter tricks, Schoenbrod harnesses expertise to propose solutions. Experts outside Congress may recommend disestablishing debt guarantees, raising insurance

premiums, and enacting regulations, with Congress making the ultimate decisions. Why not similarly establish a commission for the deficit? It could cull the budget for wasteful spending and ask Congress to eliminate those items. Admittedly, Congress does not want to take these votes. But if Congress established a Deficit Closing Commission it might feel pressured, under the right circumstances, to consider the commission's proposals on an up-or-down basis.

As terrific as *DC Confidential* is, there will be some who question its focus. For instance, the unfunded mandate trick seems the least objectionable of the five tricks. Indeed, one might say that the real trick of fiscal federalism involves the states keeping their taxes low. States impose relatively small tax burdens, but because the federal government funnels billions to the states, the states actually spend quite a bit more money than their tax revenues suggest.

Shouldn't states raise their own taxes to fund their own budgets? Moreover, if Congress is to share revenue, why not have an honest redistribution? Stop funding the rich states. Channel money directly to the poor states and avoid the layer of bureaucracy that extracts funds as it administers a host of "cooperative federalism" programs. To be clear, federalism is a bedrock constitutional principle, and the states play a vital checking function. Yet federalism is enervated when states become fat at the federal trough for the states become akin to federal dependencies. In any event, the general point is that there are more significant instances of federal overreach than unfunded mandates.

There are notable omissions as well. Those on the left will be disappointed that Schoenbrod suggests no solution to what they might label the "representation trick," in which members of Congress claim to represent the people but, in fact, further the interests of the moneyed class. Those on the right may wonder about another unfunded mandate: the concentrated burdens of regulations. Essentially, the government imposes regulations, some of

which are justified on a cost-benefit basis. But the winners (the general public) do not compensate the losers (the regulated parties). In the case of private real property, we require compensation when that property is taken. If a regulation imposes \$150 million on private enterprise and benefits the public by \$350 million, the public

ought to compensate the firms bearing the costs.

Of course, no book can be eminently readable *and* propose solutions to all that afflicts our federal government. David Schoenbrod must be lauded for revealing various tricks of the governmental trade. It is now up to us to end the confidence game. ♦

BCA

Crimson Tidings

The primordial color gets its due.

BY ELIZABETH POWERS

It is now hard to imagine, but before the mid-1960s most books, and not only on art historical subjects, appeared without a speck of color. It was not as if color printing technology was unavailable, but we had been conditioned by the circulation of millions of black-and-white photographic images, starting in the middle of the 19th century, to what the French historian Michel Pastoureau calls a "black-and-white reality." Cinema extended this domination into the mid-20th century. Who can imagine Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* in color?

Pastoureau traces the hegemony of black and white to 19th-century Protestant capitalists in whose hands were the great industrial and financial enterprises. Even when the chemical industry could produce any color desired, the first objects of mass production—household appliances, telephones, fountain pens, automobiles—were in black, gray, or brown. Henry Ford is supposed to have rejected any color but black for his Model T. This moralizing of color, as we learn here, has a long history. The changing status of red tells much about the development of a particularly Western sensibility.

Red represents the fourth install-

Elizabeth Powers is a writer in New York.

Red

The History of a Color
by Michel Pastoureau
translated by Jody Gladding
Princeton, 216 pp., \$39.95

ment of a series that began in 2001 with *Blue* and continued with *Black* and *Green*, each bearing the same subtitle. (The next volume in the series, also to be published by Princeton, will consider yellow.) Pastoureau does not analyze the subjective effects of specific colors on humans—as did, for instance, Goethe in his quarrel with Newton over the spectrum. Whether blue, for instance, is a "cold" color or evokes "distance," as Goethe believed, is not his remit. Instead, these gorgeous books are part of a magisterial project on which Pastoureau has labored for a half-century illustrating, by way of color, the evolution of Western social codes.

Red is "the first color," the most primordial and symbolic, for thousands of years in the West "the only color worthy of that name." It is the basic color of all ancient peoples (and still the color preferred by children the world over). It appears in the earliest artistic representations, the cave paintings of hunter-gatherers 30,000-plus years ago. Blood and fire were always and everywhere represented by the color red.

Both were felt to be sources of magical power, and both played a role in human communication with gods through bloody sacrifices. Humans also painted their bodies red, and shells and bones painted red are found in abundance in burials from 15,000 years ago.

Like painting, dyeing was achieved in ranges of red, as can be seen in the earliest surviving cloth from the third millennium B.C. But how did Neolithic humans get the idea of digging underground for madder root, then removing the skin, harvesting the red center, crushing it, and using it as dyestuff? Somewhere along the way, Phoenicians, Etruscans, and Greeks gathered up bits of such expertise and passed it along to the Romans. By the time of Augustus, certain regions of the Roman Empire were true industrial centers of the dyeing craft, principally in red.

Pastoureau reminds us that ancient Greek and Roman towns were not sites of white marble architecture (a misperception of our earlier “black-and-white reality”). Red was prominent on houses and in towns, on movable objects, on fabrics and clothing. Despite its high price and toxicity, cinnabar (extracted from mines in Spain) was present throughout Pompeii in wall painting. In civilized Rome, it played a central role in rituals, evoking power, danger, strength, and chaos, always more strongly symbolic than any other color. Lexicons of ancient languages indicate red’s dominance, followed by black and white.

A new symbolic color system arose with Christianity but, until the 18th century, red remained the color with the most powerful poetic and aesthetic associations, both beneficent and malefic. Roman Catholic cardinals were devoted to red, as were emperors, symbolically linking themselves to the imperial Roman tradition; but the church fathers added colors to words that in the Bible simply indicated spiritual qualities. Red was the color of the flames of hell and also of disreputable and evil figures (Judas, the dragon of the Apocalypse, the Devil and his demons) yet could also mark the intervention of God (as in the column of fire guiding the Hebrews from Egypt). Menstruation

could be seen as continuing God’s punishment for Eve’s sin, but as in Christ’s blood, red was fertile and beneficial, signifying the blood of martyrs and appearing on the banners of Crusaders. Associated with wars and tournaments and the hunt, red flourished on coats of arms, and in the High Middle Ages, as Pastoureau writes, it was “the color of love, radiance, and beauty”—as on the cheeks of fair maidens—but also the color of the clothing of the condemned and their executioners.

In the 13th century, great chromatic changes began to occur, producing what



Portrait of Pope Innocent X
by Diego Velázquez (ca. 1650)

Pastoureau calls a profound upheaval in the relationships between all colors and displacing the red-white-black triad that had been the focal point of Western color systems since antiquity. It was at this time that blues and blacks became major competitors to red in the West.

Blue, interestingly, is seemingly absent in the consciousness of the earliest humans, with a meager presence in the ancient world (Egypt excepted), poorly adapted to transmitting ideas or evoking emotional or aesthetic responses. Again, ancient lexicons provide evidence, lacking the distinctions that we now take for granted. The Latin terms, *blavus* and *azureus*, were imported from the Germanic languages and Arabic. Blue, the color of the eyes of the Germanic peoples, had negative connotations. Likewise their red hair.

The “silence of blue” continued in Christian worship until the creation of blue stained glass in the 12th century, when it began to achieve lexical and artistic existence. The Virgin, in earlier centuries portrayed in dark colors, now became the first person in the West to be clothed in blue, if still in tones indicating mourning. The sky appeared as blue in illuminated manuscripts. The French king Saint Louis, who died in 1270, adopted the unprecedented custom of wearing blue, and was quickly imitated by his entourage.

While painters of the late Middle Ages left works remarkable for the range of reds, “chromophobia” now entered the consciousness of Western Europe. A “veritable dogmatic and chromatic confrontation” was the Cluniac-Cistercian controversy (1124-46) regarding church luxury. In the reconstruction of Saint-Denis, the great abbot Suger of Cluny used every means at his disposal—painting, stained glass, enamels, gems, metalwork—to transform the basilica into a “temple of light and color” and “to evoke the splendor of creation.” The Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux was of a different mind, waxing hostile to the fantastical color and decoration of Romanesque churches. As Pastoureau writes, color for Bernard was “an envelope, a mask, a *vanitas* that men should do without and that must be banished from the church.”

The chromophobic discourse reached its height in the Reformation, which declared war on color, with red the principal target, representing no longer Christ’s blood but the folly of humanity. For Martin Luther it was emblematic of papist Rome, “decorated in red like the infamous Whore of Babylon.” Churches became as bare as synagogues as Protestants cleared the interiors of paintings and statues (their polychromy suggested idols). The Roman Catholic “theater of color” was abolished, including the church’s code of liturgical colors, and replaced with white, black, and gray.

The advent of printing in the 1450s assisted the Reformers’ cause and inadvertently generated “a black-and-white culture and sensibility.” Throughout Reformed Europe there

would be a rejection of red, with Rembrandt's "color asceticism" illustrating the divergence of the Protestant palette from the Catholic one. Chromophobia was most strongly felt in clothing, which itself was a sign of sin and shame: Clothes should not draw attention to the body. As the "Protestant style" made black and white distinct from other colors, blue emerged as the only color "worthy of a good Christian." The great Reformers set an example by appearing in dark colors in portraits, sometimes against a background of blue evoking the heaven to which they all aspired.

This "ethical dimension of black" had already found expression in sumptuary laws regarding dress following the plague years of 1346-50. These laws, aiming to prevent ostentatious luxury and debt, created a segregation of classes by dress that likewise affected the status of red. Perhaps from a "sincere desire for greater austerity and virtue," urban patricians and officeholders in Italy began to adopt black dress while the luxurious black of princes and kings originated in the Burgundian court, from where it was transmitted to the Spanish Habsburgs. This trend prolonged the rage for black, making it the most popular color in men's clothing between the 15th and 19th centuries, especially for the sober Protestant business class. The legacy today: dark suits, tuxedos, mourning clothes, even blue jeans and uniforms.

The 17th century, a very dark one, was also a period of research into the measurement of light. Newton's discovery of the spectrum upended the ancient and medieval color hierarchy in which red had occupied the dominant position. In the spectrum, the colors appeared in a continuum, always in the same order: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red. As "colorimetry" invaded the arts and sciences, colors lost much of their mystery in being mastered. They were no longer felt to be rebellious or uncontrollable. For Newton, colors were "objective" phenomena.

The 18th century, a "light-filled interlude" between the darkness of the 17th and 19th centuries, marks a high point in red's status. Paris was the

city most luminous and unrestrained in colors until the revolution. Red for lips and cheeks became "almost obligatory in court circles," even for men; but it began to retreat in daily life. Pink, already developed by Venetian dyers in the 15th century, emerged and assumed a kind of autonomy, suggesting delicacy and mystery.

It was the century of blue's ascendance, in fabrics and as the favorite color of European society. Indigo from New World plantations filled the Habsburgs' coffers, while the cheap slave labor that produced it expanded its use in dyeing fabrics, along with a newly discovered artificial pigment, Prussian blue. The Romantic movement contributed to blue's prominence. Its deepest poetic reach was found in Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Rilke.

In the 19th century, red experienced the last stage of its symbolic power, serving for over a century as the ideological color par excellence. Red flags were adopted by workers, union movements, and socialist parties. The Soviet regime made it official, China went on to inundate the world with its *Little*

Red Book, and in 1968, protest movements carried red flags. Red is not placid—thus, the Khmer Rouge and the Red Army Faction—but today the legacy of such ancient social codes is restricted to denoting things forbidden or dangerous: "Red warns, prescribes, prohibits, condemns, and punishes." Fire extinguishers are often the only red objects in office buildings.

Red and blue can be regarded as bookends, and their reversal in prestige from the Paleolithic era to the present suggests a pacification of Western sensibilities. In everyday life and private space, blue outdistances red and has become associated with peace and tolerance. In Pastoureau's telling, blue is the color of consensus, of moderation and centrism. It does not shock, offend, disgust, or make waves; even stating a preference for black, red, or green is a declaration of some sort. It invites reverie, but anaesthetizes thinking. Even white has more symbolic potential. What a shock the electoral map must have been to those Americans of blue sensibility on the morning of November 9, 2016. ♦

BCA

Culture Clash

The slavery debate and our evolving Constitution.

BY RICHARD STRINER

Timothy S. Huebner has produced a valuable study of American constitutionalism, a study that could do enormous good if people read it. Gracefully written, it is also lengthy and scholarly, which means that readers must possess two qualities—patience and intellectual candor—to appreciate the magnitude of Huebner's achievement.

Liberty and Union is remarkable

Richard Striner, professor of history at Washington College, is the author of Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery.

Liberty and Union
The Civil War Era
and American Constitutionalism
by Timothy S. Huebner
Kansas, 544 pp., \$34.95

for several reasons. It explores a wide range of themes in American history pertaining to the Civil War era, and it does so with a comprehensiveness that is almost encyclopedic. In the hands of a less capable author, this account might digress into meandering side trips. But that never happens here: Huebner's mastery of the material and

his synthesizing mind keep the book on track from start to finish.

The general theme is the way our constitutionalism evolved in accordance with the underlying struggle over slavery. Two opposite constitutional *cultures* were at war: a pro-slavery culture that extracted from the Constitution a set of principles protecting the right to own slaves, and a countervailing culture that construed the Constitution in ways that upheld the principle of freedom—*freedom for all*. Huebner calls the outcome of this long-term struggle, an outcome largely determined on the battlefield, a “constitutional revolution.” The preliminary achievement of that revolution was the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, overturned the *Dred Scott* decision, and made the Constitution an anti-slavery document. The revolution continued during Radical Reconstruction when Republicans drafted the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to elevate the status of former slaves.

One of the most important issues raised by *Liberty and Union* is its challenge to key suppositions in the doctrine of “originalism.” The story Huebner tells about the nature of American constitutionalism is the story of a vigorous power struggle that validates some originalist notions while vitiating others. Our constitutional text was full of ambiguities from the beginning: It was, in many ways, a messy affair resulting from compromises whose coherence will always be open to challenge. And the draftsmanship of the Bill of Rights—composed by James Madison and introduced in the First Federal Congress—led to insoluble arguments regarding application.

It is telling to observe that the very same words in Madison’s Fifth Amendment were invoked later by partisans on both sides of the slavery debate: employed on the one hand by people like John C. Calhoun and Roger Taney to defend the extension of slavery into federal territories, and on the other by people like Salmon P. Chase to oppose such extensions of slavery. When constitutional text is as ambiguous as that (or as manipulable) how

can anyone believe that a perfect rendition of such text is floating just over the conceptual horizon in some realm of pristine and crystal-clear Ideas? Perhaps there is a good deal of sense in the wistful old Tory idea that we might, after all, be better off with an openly “organic” constitution of the sort that evolved in Great Britain than we are with a single, much-amended document whose words can be endlessly construed this way and that, according to whatever ideology dominates the Supreme Court.

Certainly the invocation of original intent will be relevant and cogent at times, but only *power* will deliver the results. In his 1860 Cooper Union speech, Abraham Lincoln developed

a persuasive argument that the *Dred Scott* decision was laughable in light of the words and deeds of the Founders. But it was only the *power* of the Civil War Republicans to change the size and composition of the Supreme Court (along with the power to eventually push through the Thirteenth Amendment) that kept Chief Justice Taney’s constitutionalism from corrupting our republic. And, of course, the power of Lincoln and his friends to win battlefield victories was handy as well.

In any case, if more jurists found the time to read books like *Liberty and Union* a great deal of posturing in jurisprudence might be avoided. And our disputes would be far more candid. ♦

BCA

Victory (?) at Sea

The Great War and modern naval conflict.

BY JOSEPH F. CALLO

The Battle of Jutland reverberates powerfully in the history of naval combat, and it does so with a resonance that equals or exceeds that of such history-shaping sea struggles as Salamis in 480 B.C., Lepanto in 1571, Trafalgar in 1805, and Leyte Gulf in 1944. Now, in *Jutland*, Nicholas Jellicoe gives us a timely perspective on the events of May 31–June 1, 1916, in the North Sea—with copious detail and an opportunity to think about its present relevance.

The happenings at Jutland were the epicenter of the violent transition from the wind-powered naval combat of the Age of Sail to industrialized warfare at sea. In addition, the battle was the culmination of an Anglo-German naval building race, a competition that threatened the British naval dominance established by Lord Nelson with his decisive victory over the combined French-

Joseph F. Callo is the author, most recently, of The Sea Was Always There.

Jutland

The Unfinished Battle

by Nicholas Jellicoe

Naval Institute, 352 pp., \$35.95

Spanish fleet at Trafalgar. The German historian Michael Epkenhans helps set the stage in an insightful foreword:

this battle was a showdown between the most highly developed battle technologies, with what were essentially state-of-the-art weapons that had been the achievements of domestic industrial ability and had been developed and produced over many years and at great expense. . . . [Jellicoe] not only describes the battle’s origins, he also gives the reader a view from both above and below deck and a sense of the ordeal of naval action.

Along with the radical modernization of combat at sea, the 20th century also introduced broad, more sophisticated and more complex ideas about

the geostrategic role of sea power. These new concepts had emerged from the writings of turn-of-the-century sea-power visionaries led by Alfred Thayer Mahan in America and Julian Corbett in Great Britain. These new ideas, along with new technology, elevated sea power from a narrowly defined military significance to more sweeping global, geostrategic importance.

The specifics of the new ways of war at sea on display at Jutland included iron and steel ship construction, armor plating, steam propulsion, lethal torpedoes, and breach-loading, turret-mounted guns of large caliber that hurled explosive shells with accuracy for many thousands of yards. Adjuncts to new battleships included wireless communication, more sophisticated mine warfare—and, particularly for Germany, submarines.

The symbol of this transition to the manufacturing of death and destruction at sea was the “dreadnought,” a quantum jump in naval lethality and the centerpiece at Jutland. Jellicoe gets beyond the tactical features of the new ship type when he writes about the namesake of its kind, Britain’s HMS *Dreadnought*: “She was . . . a double-edged sword because overnight she rendered all other fleets obsolete, including a significant proportion of the Royal Navy’s strength.”

Jellicoe also introduces the important geopolitical realities leading up to World War I and Jutland:

The century that followed Trafalgar was one in which no other nation came close to challenging British sea power until Kaiser Wilhelm II, emboldened by a deep jealousy and hatred of his British birthright, set Germany on a course that inevitably would lead to war.

Jellicoe also cites specific British actions, along with deeply embedded German attitudes that were leading to the approaching cataclysm at sea. Those actions and attitudes included Britain’s impressive naval reviews, which Jellicoe sees as “an awesome and premeditated display of imperial maritime power,” and Germany’s steady progress towards “*Der Tag*, its day of reckoning.” Statistics reinforce

Jutland’s significance: It extended over two days, involved 250 ships and 100,000 sailors, and spanned five separate phases. Combined British-German deaths exceeded 8,000.

Not surprisingly, Nicholas Jellicoe, as grandson of the senior Royal Navy commander directly involved at Jutland, shows a strong interest in the personalities of the commander of Britain’s Grand Fleet at Jutland, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, as well as the commander of Britain’s Battle



Admiral Sir John Jellicoe

Squadrons at the fight, Admiral Sir David Beatty. He identifies the two as “a contradiction, not a team.” Jellicoe was “calm, deliberate, and realistic,” while Beatty was “highly strung, impatient for action, and supremely confident of his superiority over his enemy.” These differences became a significant part of the controversy that extended beyond the actual battle—a subject still argued in places like the bar of London’s Royal Naval Club!

Here, appropriate attention also is devoted to the senior German naval leadership on the scene: Vice Admirals Reinhardt Scheer and Franz Hipper. The two admirals are called “men from the same mould,” and, in contrast to their British counterparts, are tagged in more positive terms, with Scheer being characterized as “popu-

lar, quick-witted, and handsome,” and Hipper described as “the most instinctive” of the four leaders, as well as “a natural leader of men.”

Against this complex background of differing personalities and geopolitics in flux, Jellicoe provides a detailed description of the major actions during the two days of extended combat between Britain’s Grand Fleet and Germany’s High Seas Fleet. And along with tactical details, he manages to work in vivid examples of the horrors of industrialized warfare at sea, combat vignettes that serve as vivid reminders of the human suffering behind the statistics and after-action analyses.

Germany’s main objective was to break out of its home ports and operate freely in the Atlantic and beyond. Britain’s primary objective was to maintain its longstanding sea control and protect its ocean commerce. To a significant degree, Britain was attempting to maintain the global status quo in the broad terms of sea power; Germany was attempting to shatter that status quo. When the smell of cordite cleared at Jutland, Germany was the most successful tactically, in that its forces sank more British ships than the number of German ships sunk by the Royal Navy. (The actual count was 14 British ships sunk against 11 German ships sunk; the disparity in tonnage was even more strongly in favor of Germany.)

On the other hand, the British were the more successful strategically since they preserved the operational capabilities of their main fleet and their overall dominance at sea. Careful analysis might lead one to say that the event was, when viewed from a distance, a draw; unfortunately, from the British perspective, there was no such balanced view. The Royal Navy and the British public were still in the thrall of Trafalgar, and nothing less than an unequivocal victory would suffice. As a result, for the British, the lack of an overwhelming, unarguable victory was, in fact, a defeat.

Much of the subsequent recrimination focused on tactics, and that mindset led to a never-ending blame game among the Royal Navy’s leadership, its

political leaders, and the British press and public. Moreover, the focus of analyses on combat tactics precluded attention to other important matters. There was, for example, the subject of “combat doctrine,” defined as the overall attitude a leader brings to battle, something that takes over during the mind-numbing carnage of combat. Ever since Nelson’s victory at Trafalgar, his combat doctrine (described in a letter to Lady Emma Hamilton as “the boldest measures are the safest”) was a popular subject in Whitehall, at the Admiralty, and with the public—at least until Jutland.

This narrow focus on tactics might

explain why Jellicoe refers to Jutland as the “unfinished battle.” Perhaps we are missing a major, perhaps *the* major, lesson of Jutland: It was not just a really big battle but, in a more thoughtful context, a shift in the very idea of naval warfare.

We might even extend our thinking to consider that, as we enter the era of cyber warfare, we are once again approaching a transition that will change everything we think we know about war in general, and naval combat in particular. The tempo and degree of destruction we can anticipate in cyber warfare at sea is almost beyond imagination. But imagine it we must. ♦



The Other Tom

The world’s oldest 35-year-old remains in action.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

So, *The Mummy*. The question that bedevils me as I begin this review is how I can get to the end of it. Like Lucy in *Peanuts*, I am now counting words to see how quickly I can get to 700, which fills my slot here at THE WEEKLY STANDARD. That was 53 words. I’m 8 percent of the way there. Can I make it?

If this were Twitter, I’d put up a poll. On the one hand, there’s the fact that I have nothing to say about this movie except that it’s dreadful, so maybe I should just give up. On the other hand, there’s the fact that I have three kids in private school and the monthly tuition bill is due and I need the money from this review to help pay it. Will mercenary concerns win out over a complete lack of creative inspiration? Vote now!

If you’re reading this, and I have no idea as I write these very words whether my old friends at THE WEEKLY STANDARD—who are not only very fine people but owe me something because

The Mummy

Directed by Alex Kurtzman



I helped create the magazine 22 years ago—will allow you to, that means mercenary concerns won out over creative inspiration. Hey, look, 206 words. I’m getting there.

Tom Cruise is in *The Mummy*. Tom Cruise is two years younger than I am and has the body of a 25-year-old. I have the body of the Pillsbury Doughboy with a torn meniscus and sleep apnea. So perhaps you will think I am speaking out of envy when I say that while Tom Cruise’s six-pack is very impressive, his acting is so dreadfully bad in this movie you will wonder whether he ever was good. The answer is yes, he was; in fact, only three years ago, he was wonderful in *Edge of Tomorrow*.

But at some point this person is going to have to act his age. His fellow Tom—Mr. Hanks—became a star in the same twelvemonth Cruise did.

He’s only six years older than Cruise. He will play a man his age, as he did in *Sully*. He has allowed himself to be a real person rather than someone on the verge of being a waxwork figure. He’s also not a Scientologist, but maybe I shouldn’t go there, even though I could really use that independent clause in this sentence to keep the word count going. (In case you were wondering—408.)

Cruise also used to pick better material. His vanity allowed him to take the role of Jack Reacher, who is 6’5” tall in Lee Child’s novels and perpetually around 35 years old. Cruise wants to be perpetually around 35 years old. The only person who was ever perpetually 35 was Dick Clark—and when Dick Clark got old he got old so fast it was like someone sold the portrait of Dorian Gray at a yard sale.

Cruise did *The Mummy* in order to front a new cinematic “Dark Universe” for Universal, which is trying to resuscitate its ancient studio’s ancient horror-movie monster characters in a series of interlocking pictures. There will be a *Bride of Frankenstein*, for example, who I assume will be an empowered heroine for our time, a kind of Wonder Monstress.

In *The Mummy*, Russell Crowe (who makes me look skinny) plays Dr. Jekyll, who of course has a lot to do with mummies because . . . no, it makes no sense that he’s in this movie except that he’s going to be in all the “Dark Universe” movies, I guess. And it’s hard to remember that Crowe was once a really great actor because he’s so awful here he makes Cruise’s horrendous performance seem like the risen Olivier.

There’s a plot. Cruise is an antiquity thief. He gets possessed or controlled or dominated, or something, by a female mummy who was a sorceress in Egypt. Dr. Jekyll is trying to save the world from eeeeeeeevil. In the end, Cruise turns into some kind of good-guy monster after saying “we’re not going to happen, and it’s not me, it’s you” to the Mummy chick. Yes, someone wrote that line. Maybe he needed to get to 700 words.

I just have. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD’s movie critic.

—JonathanTurley.org, June 5, 2017

A STATEMENT by the AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY
on the "Einstein Controversy"

June 22, 1939

We, the undersigned, acknowledge, respect, and honor the feelings of the students at Princeton who demand that the university sever all ties with Dr. Albert Einstein over his racist, sexist, classist, heteronormative, and cis-gendered theories about the nature of the universe. Further, we endorse and second those demands by the students, who have been so harmed by Dr. Einstein's theories.

We further concur with the students' demand that Princeton prohibit Dr. Einstein from future appearances on the university grounds, where he might inflict further violence on students' psyches and bodies alike by expounding upon his theories of general and special relativity.

We categorically reject Dr. Einstein's bigoted notions as they relate to time, space, gravity, and the fundamental nature of the universe, which theories rely on discredited Enlightenment notions, coded as "reason," "fact," and "truth," that dichotomize binarities to silence People of Color, gender-nonconforming, and other Oppressed Peoples. It is well known by all that marginalized peoples endured great oppression during the Enlightenment. As such, no valid system of thought can be its progeny.

We emphatically condemn the brutal and exploitative concepts Dr. Einstein has promulgated for their oppression-enabling hegemonization, viz., that the physical universe is not only essentialist in nature but exists independent of our apprehension of it, and that it is subject to impartial "laws" that may be divined through "objective" study and experimentation, which only contributes to the privileging of str8, white, male, and Eurocentric modes of thought and expression over others and the denigration and delegitimicization of others as less than equally valid.

We unconditionally denounce Dr. Einstein for his failure to incorporate into his work the perspectives of other peoples (including but not limited to Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, and LGBTQOKFGVMNZP), disciplines (including but not limited to Gender Studies, Queer Studies, and Critical Race Theory), and heuristics (including but not limited to autoethnography, journaling, and interpretive dance).

Finally, we unequivocally demand that Princeton establish a Board of Scientific Review to interrogate new research from a socially conscious perspective and ensure its alignment with social-justice ideals; institute a system of mandatory social-justice training in the science disciplines; and mandate systems of pedagogy that seek to recognize students as autonomous, deeply feeling creatures of agency, rather than as passive vessels for the reception of some mythical intellectual "truth."