weekly
Standard

IN PURSUIT OF E.B. WHITE
ANDREW FERGUSON

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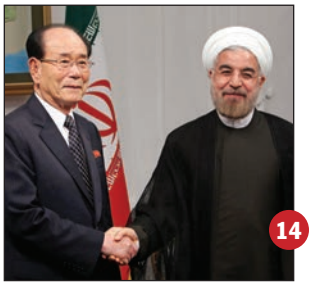
A BEATING IN BERKELEY

MATT LABASH on antifa mayhem and malice

A photographer being attacked by masked demonstrators, August 27

Contents

September 11, 2017 • Volume 23, Number 1


14

HELENA ZEMANEK
18


42

Articles

Features

Books & Arts

COVER: STEPHEN LAM / REUTERS / NEWSCOM

Tragical Herstory Tour

Hillary Clinton is hitting the road (or more likely the chartered skies) to promote her new memoir, due out September 12. It's a book whose title might have better captured the author's state of mind if it had included a question mark: *What Happened*.

In a bold prediction, her publisher says of the upcoming book tour, "She'll connect with audiences" with "a story that's personal, raw, detailed, and surprisingly funny." Indeed, the tour's title, "Hillary Clinton: Live," makes it sound like a foray into late-night comedy.

Or better yet, a folk artist on a comeback tour: Clinton is hitting at least 15 concert halls in the United States and Canada, places such as the Riverside Theater, Kimmel Center Academy of Music, and, appropriately, Hill Auditorium. (She might have thought about visiting those particular places last fall instead of this one: They're in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, respectively.)

These are not exactly arena-rocker venues. Typical is Jackson Hall on the campus of the University of California, Davis, a place with just 1,801 seats. As we go to press, three of the American dates had gone on sale: those in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Fort Lauderdale. Those first two sold out quickly. But as of this writing, some half the seats for the Sunshine State performance remain empty. It's a book tour as electoral map.

The prices for tickets vary. None of them will leave the featured speaker dead broke. The cheap seats in Florida start at $50. But that bargain price isn't really the Clinton style. More in keeping with Bill and Hillary's money-making habits are the "VIP Platinum Tickets" available for the Canadian shows, tickets that include: "Front Row Seating, Admission for Two, Back Stage Meet and Greet with photo and signed Book." All for a mere $3,000 (Canadian).

The woman who lost to Trump promises she's ready to let it all hang out: "In the past, for reasons I try to explain, I've often felt I had to be careful in public, like I was up on a wire without a net," Hillary laments. "Now I'm letting my guard down." That's doubtless easier for her to do with no blue wall to defend. ♦

In a Handbasket Dept.

Actor Ed Skrein (don't worry if you've never heard of him, The Scrapbook hadn't either) was recently hired for a supporting role in a new movie adaptation of the *Hellboy* comic book franchise. He was to play a military man named Major Ben Daimio. Unbeknownst to the hapless young Skrein, however, in the original comic books, Daimio is an Asian character. A Twitter mob descended on the actor, who is not Asian, accusing him of being an accessory to the crime of "whitewashing."

Knowing what was good for him, Skrein skedaddled. He announced he was leaving the production: "It is clear that representing this character in a culturally accurate way holds significance for people, and that to neglect this responsibility would continue a worrying tendency to obscure ethnic minority stories and voices in the Arts."

David Harbour, the actor chosen to play the lead in the movie, applauded the mob: "Hey internet. Thank you for your voices," he tweeted. "An injustice was done and will be corrected."

Overlooked in the controversy were social media posts from various demons angry that the prime role in *Hellboy* has once again been awarded to a living, terrestrial human—Harbour—rather than an honest-to-goodness denizen of the Inferno. "Bloody typical," Malacoda, an activist in the Eighth Circle of Hell, posted on Facebook. "It's a measure of prejudice against demons that Hollywood takes a white actor and paints him a ridiculous shade of red, when any number of infernal actors of natural cochineal hue would kill—well, at least eternally torment—to get that role. And they wouldn't even need CGI batwings."

On Twitter, an outraged goblin named Farfarello added, "Just like

TOP: SEATS, CTBTO PREP. COMMISSION; FIGURE, BIGSTOCK. BELOW: DEMON, BIGSTOCK

Potter series—goblins played by non-goblins in ludicrous makeup. SAD!"

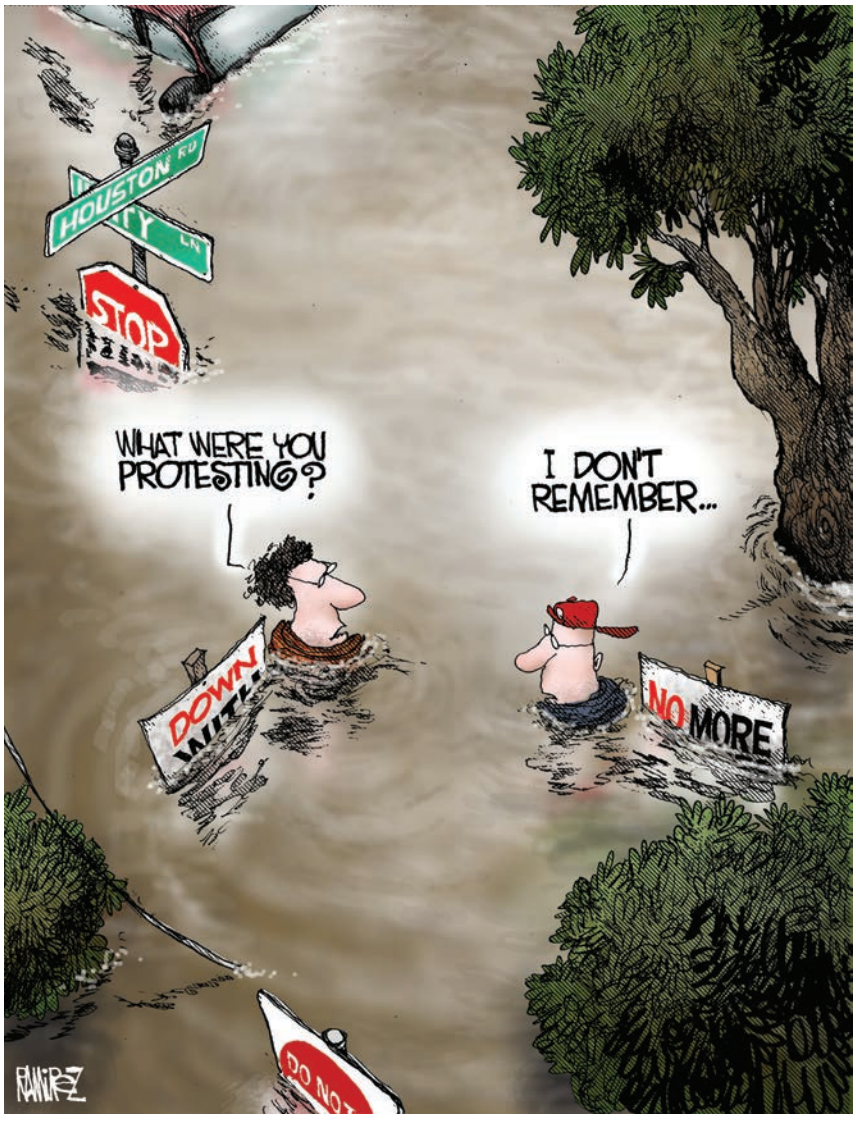
The Malebranche branch of Actors' Equity is joining forces with organizers in the Lowerarchy, notably a "senior tempter" named Screwtape. "Mine has been one of the truly authentic voices in the underworld," he said in a statement issued by his spokesman, Toadpipe. "And yet time and again when my words have been adapted, the actors hired have been sinners, yes—some of them admirably robust sinners—but not real demons. For shame." ♦

Book 'Em, Danno!

American cities are discovering a new public health threat. But don't worry: They are passing laws against it—and will soon start collecting fines that go into city coffers.

The scourge in question is "distracted walking." It turns out that many pedestrians crossing streets are so glued to their smartphones that they fail to pay attention to traffic signals and passing cars. In their wisdom, cities are concluding that if the prospect of being flattened by a speeding vehicle doesn't encourage phone addicts from watching where they walk, perhaps a small fine will.

In July, Honolulu became the first city in the country to pass such an ordinance. It bans "texting or anything else requiring the pedestrian to look at the device, including using laptop computers, video gaming devices and pagers, while crossing a city street or highway,"



according to the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*. Fines start at $15. Stamford, Conn., is considering a similar law.

We at The Scrapbook are no experts on Charles Darwin, but if memory serves, we believe *On the Origin of Species* contains an extended section on the adaptation habits of cell phone addicts who cross busy intersections. It's between the chapters on the woolly mammoth and the dodo.

In fairness, pedestrian traffic deaths are on the rise. But that increase could just as easily spring from distracted drivers as from distracted walkers. We'll be sure to look up the relevant statistics while driving home this evening.

That said, the whole issue brings to mind the old joke: Why did the chicken cross the road? It can't remember—it was too busy posting a selfie on Instagram. ♦

Do Do That Voodoo That You Do So Well

How's this for irony: Dawn Bennett, who used to host a radio show called "Financial *Myth Busting*" (italics ours), allegedly attempted to use a voodoo curse to hobble investigators who were pursuing her on allegations of running a Ponzi scheme.

Reuters reports that prosecutors "disclosed the discovery in an

TRUCK AND FIGURE, BIGSTOCK

Aug. 2 search of Bennett's penthouse in Chevy Chase, Maryland, of two freezers containing sealed Mason jars bearing the initials of U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission lawyers, on whom Bennett may have hoped to cast a 'hoodoo spell.'" (Though no

doubt there are experts who make some distinction between the two, The Scrapbook feels safe in equating *hoodoo* with *voodoo*.) We have no way of judging Bennett's skill at double-entry bookkeeping, but given that, happily, the SEC folks are in fine fettle, her hoodoo skills clearly do not impress. That's not to say she wasn't methodical. Her apartment is said to have contained detailed instructions for various curses, including the "Beef Tongue Shut Up Hoodoo Spell."

Perhaps the problem wasn't the practice, but the practitioner. Last week *Washingtonian* magazine profiled Sally Quinn, the legendary D.C. society hostess who was married to the late *Washington Post* grandee Ben Bradlee. Quinn is also known for the religion column she penned for the *Post* for many years. And now she has a new book out that, among other things, extols occult practices.

VOODOO DOLL, BIGSTOCK

Washingtonian reports that Quinn "reveals that, in her less mellow days, she put hexes on three people who promptly wound up having their lives ruined, or ended."

So maybe voodoo does work after all—it just depends on the voodooista. Two-bit con-artist radio hosts? Nah. But exalted longtime religion columnists for one of the nation's leading newspapers? Now there's a woman with the magic touch! ♦

Theme Park Bards

One might think of Orlando as gateway to the land of amusement parks, but one would be wrong. The city's heart beats with a more profound purpose. Its citizens yearn for Art. Their souls demand Poetry.

But it's not enough for poets to write poems. No, there has to be official governmental recognition if the verse is to really count. What is art without a politician's approval?

And so Orlando is looking for its first poet laureate. A contest is under way, to be judged by professors at local universities, with a final decision made by no less than Mayor Buddy Dyer himself.

We have to admit that this tremendous honor is so desirable that The Scrapbook couldn't help but humbly submit a couple of lines from our own "Love Song of D. Fauntleroy Duck."

In the line the women go and halt
Talking of the Mouse of Walt. ♦

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BPA WORLDWIDE

Shabby Chic

A friend sent me an article, accompanied by several photographs, from the July 5 *Daily Mail* about the celebration of the playwright Tom Stoppard's 80th birthday. The photographs, chiefly of English actors whom I've watched with much admiration on PBS and in the movies over the years, confirmed my view that we are living in one of the unhappiest periods for human dress in memory, the age of shabby chic.

But for the occasion of Tom Stoppard's birthday, this afternoon party might as easily have been billed as a Worst-Dressed Man and Woman contest. Assuming it was such a contest, allow me to announce the winners. The envelopes, please.

Worst Shoes worn by a middle-age performer: Iain Glen of *Game of Thrones* for his leather flip-flops.

Most Overly Denimed, Jacket and Jeans: Ralph Fiennes.

Greatest Wife-Beater Undershirt Exposure: Jude Law.

Least Makeup Worn to Less Than Good Effect: Dame Maggie Smith.

Most Makeup Worn to Sadly Overdone Effect: Joanna Lumley.

In the Ugliest Shirt Untucked in Trousers category: Damien Lewis.

General Rumpledness: Michael Kitchen.

Most Impressive Pot Belly Hanging over Jeans: Sir Tim Rice.

Least Ironed Chambray Workshirt: the birthday guy himself, T. Stoppard.

The coveted Gabby Hayes General Fuzziness Award: Michael Gambon.

What, one might ask, is going on here? Why are these moderately but genuinely famous people all so badly got up? At the bottom of invitations in an earlier day, a note sometimes appeared, Dress: Casual, which meant not formal. Might the invitations to Tom Stoppard's party have read, Dress: Slovenly, which in this case seems to have meant out of the dirty-laundry bag? In the days of the Hollywood studios no actor or actress would be permitted in public in other than elegant or glamorous attire. Presumably no one wishes the return of the tyrannical reign of the studios. Yet need the pendulum have swung so far to the other side?

The general populace once followed, or at least attempted to follow, the movie stars of the day in the matter of dress. No man could bring off the sartorial suavity of Cary Grant or Fred Astaire, or woman the refined elegance of wardrobe of Deborah Kerr or Audrey Hepburn, but these and other actors did provide models of sorts. Now, if the crowd at Tom Stoppard's party is any example, actors are imitating the population in its general schlepperosity.

DAVID CLARK

When did this schlepperosity set in? Some people blame it on California, the home of the open-collared shirt for men, Betty Grable shorts for women. Others lay the blame on the tumultuous years of the 1960s, when student protest brought on the militantly unkempt look. (When I began teaching at a university in the early 1970s, I had the choice of doing so in tie and jacket or T-shirt and jeans; I went for the former, in the hope of convincing my students that should my teaching not work out, I might be able to get a job selling shoes.) In the business world, casual Friday became casual everyday, and successful CEOs took to being photographed for the business pages of the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*—just regular guys, earning serious seven-figure salaries—tieless. Today men and women in their 50s, 60s, 70s walk about in crowded urban areas in outfits most of our parents wouldn't have worn to take out the garbage.

The baseball cap, the cargo shorts, the gym shoes, the inevitable jeans—such, for men, is the uniform of the day. Many women wear it, too, should the mood strike them. Along with being close to androgynous, this outfit is certainly ageless. Achieving agelessness is one of the leading desiderata of the day. Sitting in a favorite restaurant recently, at an interval of 10 or so minutes, I saw two men with gray ponytails go by on walkers. Tom Wolfe, I believe it was, said that contemporary Americans seem to be going from juvenility directly to senility, with no stops in between; their wardrobes are helping to get them there.

Capitalism, never caught napping, has long been producing expensive shabby-chic wear. One can acquire Prada pre-washed jeans for a mere $365 (pre-torn jeans may cost more), an Yves Saint Laurent workshirt for $900, fatigue jackets for upwards of $1,000.

Clothes once expressed personality; they could be cosmopolitan, garish, serious, puritanical, witty even. The effect of shabby chic, with its eschewing of style and letting-down of adult standards that it brings with it, is to divest the world of the pleasures of clothes. Under shabby chic, they are covering merely. Clothes make the man and woman, haberdashers and designers once held, which of course clothes don't. But they do make, or at least once did, life richer, more charming. The reign of shabby chic is soon enough likely to put an end to that.

Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

The Law Is King

"We're a nation of laws, not of men." Politicians use this line so often that it has begun to sound like a cliché. It's a loose rendering of a phrase John Adams put into the Massachusetts constitution in 1780, but the idea is a much older one. It was given its most distinct and memorable expression in 1644 with the title of Samuel Rutherford's legal treatise: *Lex, Rex*. The law is king.

The principle is ancient, but in recent times it has begun to seem outdated. Elements on both the right and the left find ready justification to defenestrate the law when some political outcome looks desirable.

Pardon me: Joe Arpaio with his benefactor

On the right, Donald Trump's most reliable supporters—Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham chief among them—either cheered or made jokes when the president pardoned Joe Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Ariz. Arpaio had been convicted of criminal contempt of court for racial profiling. He and his deputies were notorious for their aggressive targeting of anyone with brown skin and dark hair. The sheriff was ordered by a federal judge to halt his office's practice of workplace raids and targeted roundups. He refused, and in consequence he was indicted for contempt.

But that was only a part, and a small part, of the abuses and gross mismanagement for which the lawman is known. His office neglected hundreds of sex crimes, burned down a home in a botched raid, and misspent tens of millions of dollars in public money. Arpaio harassed political adversaries with trumped-up charges, ordered journalists arrested, fabricated an assassination attempt on himself, and once sent a deputy to Honolulu to find Barack Obama's birth certificate ("It's one deputy, so what?"). Arpaio felt he was above the law. "Nobody is higher than me," he once said to an inmate who questioned his authority (the words were caught on camera). "I am the elected official, elected by the people. I don't serve any governor or any president."

The president's power to pardon is a necessary and defensible one, but it is also a dangerous temptation. The Arpaio pardon was neither necessary nor defensible. He was a badged hooligan who openly flouted federal law. The U.S. government has generally failed to enforce its own immigration laws along the Mexican border, but that doesn't exempt local authorities from the obligation to follow them. When Donald Trump on August 22 asked a Phoenix crowd if Arpaio was "convicted for doing his job" and the crowd cheered its affirmative answer, you heard an ascendant populist right that no longer views the law as an impediment to anything that outrages its political enemies.

You will hear the same unthinking assent on the left whenever the subject is that confederation of hoodlums known as "antifa." The group considers itself a modern manifestation of leftist resistance to German, Italian, and Spanish fascists in the 1930s—or, maybe, the leather-clad ruffians who fought neo-Nazi skinheads at punk rock concerts in the 1980s. The group now consists largely of anarchists who oppose police and corporations and who feel entirely free to disrupt any event and assault any group it deems "fascist," the term applying to any organization it finds insufficiently disapproving the presidency of Donald Trump.

Antifa engages in vandalism and intimidation, but seems to specialize in physical assaults on small peaceful crowds that pose no threat to anyone. The movement is a hellish combination of malice and self-righteousness, as Matt Labash chronicles elsewhere in these pages.

Anarchists and anti-capitalist troublemakers are nothing new, of course. What makes Antifa's nihilistic violence genuinely dismaying is the fact that most of the nation's elite liberal politicos can't bring themselves to condemn it. Apart from House minority leader Nancy Pelosi, who on August 29 condemned Antifa by name after masked toughs attacked a small and peaceful rally in Berkeley, Calif., the vast majority of prominent elected Democrats have either kept silent or avoided outright condemnation. When Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren was asked

NEWSCOM

if she condemned Antifa and its tactics, she sidestepped the question by censuring Donald Trump for failing to condemn neo-Nazis in Charlottesville two weeks before. She sounded for all the world like one of those right-wingers who can't muster any criticism of Donald Trump because "the left" is so awful and they started it anyway.

But the left's problem with lawlessness is not confined to Antifa thugs. It is just one of several groups engaging in threats against and assaults on conservative and right-leaning speakers invited onto university campuses. In the worst of these disruptions, at Middlebury College in Vermont in March, the scholar Charles Murray was shouted down and literally chased off campus; his liberal interviewer, Allison Stanger, was attacked, sustaining a neck injury and a concussion from which she is still recovering months later. Condoleezza Rice, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and Ann Coulter, among others, have all been disinvited from our institutions of higher learning as a result of student protests and threats.

A not insignificant number of influential progressives either defend or make light of these tactics. Dartmouth professor Mark Bray, for instance, openly justified the group's attacks on the grounds that "fascism cannot be defeated by speech." The college's president, Philip J. Hanlon, quickly dismissed Bray's statement: "The endorsement of violence in any form is contrary to Dartmouth values." And, as of August 29, more than 100 faculty members had signed a letter of condemnation—of Hanlon for rejecting Bray's praise of violence. When white nationalist Richard Spencer was punched in the head by an Antifa bruiser in January, Twitter and Facebook were alight with expressions of glee from liberal academics and journalists.

In all these cases, an abhorrence of political foes has grown unchecked and encouraged otherwise decent people to excuse acts of lawlessness they would rightly denounce in every other circumstance. Hypocrisy and double standards are ever-present in democratic politics. They are nothing new. But the cynical intellectual stance that's lately begun to trivialize criminality or condone it by jokes or silence—this is something new.

We will not lecture the public officials and academics and journalists perpetrating this affliction. They wouldn't listen anyway, so emotionally invested are they in their perverted judgments. Instead we will only remind our readers—and ourselves—that the health of our republic demands that we assess each problem against a fixed set of principles, not according to the political implications or what our antagonists did or said yesterday. To make excuses for villainy may feel right, but it leads to a kind of regicide. The law, remember, is king. ♦

Protesters in New York City, January 14

It Can't Happen Here

Trump and fascism.

BY BARTON SWAIM

For several days in mid-August, Donald Trump found himself ensnared in a bizarre controversy over the "very fine people" marching alongside neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Va. It was a stupid thing to say—he said it several times, of course—and he was roundly criticized for his failure to condemn Nazi-sympathizing troublemakers. It brought to mind, once again, all those panicky predictions of an impending fascist insurgency in the wake of Trump's victory.

Before and especially after last November's presidential election, many liberals and progressives openly assigned the words "fascist" and "Nazi" to Donald Trump and "brownshirts" to his supporters. Sales of *It Can't Happen Here*, Sinclair Lewis's 1935 novel about the rise of fascism in America, increased dramatically, as did those of George Orwell's dystopian masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (though the latter targeted Marxist communism rather than fascism).

Many liberals and progressives could see only one thing in Trump's rise: the return of fascism. Several lefty entertainers used the term early and without nuance. "The guy is Hitler," wrote the comedian Louis C.K. in an email to his fans. "And by that I mean that we are being Germany in the '30s." In an interview, the actor George Clooney called Trump "a fascist; a xenophobic fascist."

A number of accomplished journalists said largely the same, though with a little more sophistication. Carl Bernstein, for instance, suggested in March 2016 that we think of Trump as a "neo-fascist." "It's a peculiarly American kind of fascism," he said on CNN. "Fascism is about a maximum leader, who is contemptuous of real democracy, of real democratic institutions, contemptuous of the press and a free press, who extols torture and violence, who incites hatreds." Bernstein also recommended Lewis's novel. "Well, maybe it *could* happen here."

Michael Kinsley began a column in the *Washington Post* in December by stating flatly: "Donald Trump is a fascist." The word gets thrown around a lot, Kinsley explained, but Trump has many of the characteristics of fascists in the 1920s and '30s. "Not in the sense of an all-purpose bad guy, but in the sense of somebody who sincerely believes that the toxic combination of strong government and strong corporations should run the nation and the world."

Robert Kuttner, editor of the *American Prospect*, similarly needed no convincing that America had elected its first fascist president. "Fascism, classically, includes a charismatic strongman who speaks directly to the mystical People, over the heads of the squabbling politicians who ruined the Nation. Or as Donald Trump put it at the Republican National Convention, 'I am your voice. . . . I alone can fix it.' Check. Fascism scapegoats some demonized other, or sets of others. Check." And so on.

Timothy Snyder, a professor of history at Yale, is certain that we're witnessing the onset of a fascist government. A week after Trump was elected, he posted on his Facebook page 20 "lessons" drawn from his study of Nazism and Stalinism. He wasn't arguing that Trump was a fascist; he was assuming it, and counseling Americans to respond well. "Do not obey in advance," he began imperiously. "Much of the power of authoritarianism is freely given. In times like these, individuals think ahead about what a more repressive government will want, and then start to do it without being asked. You've already done this, haven't you? Stop."

After his Facebook post went viral, Snyder turned it into a slim book, *On Tyranny*, in which he warned readers to

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MICHAEL NIGRO / PACIFIC PRESS / LIGHTROCKET / GETTY

watch out for some version of a Reichstag fire—a reference to the 1933 attack on Germany's parliament building, falsely blamed by the Nazis on Communist insurrectionists and employed as a pretext for gaining the emergency police powers that Hitler's government used to crush its opponents. "Watch for the Reichstag fire" has become a common refrain among liberal academics and journalists on social media.

More recently, in an essay in the *New York Review of Books*, Snyder considered the possibility of the Trump administration faking a terrorist disaster: "If we face again a terrorist attack—or what seems to be a terrorist attack, or what the government calls a terrorist attack—we must hold the Trump administration responsible for our security." Asked by an interviewer at *Salon* if in fact a fascist is now in charge of the U.S. government, Snyder said, in essence, yes. "Whether he realizes it or not is a different question, but that's what fascists did. They said, 'Don't worry about the facts; don't worry about logic. Think instead in terms of mystical unities and direct connections between the mystical leader and the people.' That's fascism. Whether we see it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we forget, that is fascism."

Philadelphia, January 26

For a dismaying number of preeminent liberal commentators, fascism is everywhere—almost as communism was for John Birchers in the 1960s. "Let's call things by their proper names here," wrote Paul Krugman in his August 28 *New York Times* column on the subject of President Trump's pardon of Joe Arpaio. "What Arpaio brought to Maricopa, and what the president of the United States has just endorsed, was fascism, American style."

Whether these critics are interpreting Donald Trump correctly is a question worth debating. Trump is a bully and a demagogue. He is a nationalist who appears to regard all other nations as vaguely despicable. He loves the adoration of the masses. And, of course, he feels little obligation to verify what he says before saying it.

On the other hand, Trump lacks any kind of internally coherent ideology. Occasional outbursts aside, he seems less inclined to remake America into some new order than to return it to what it used to be (make America great *again*). Unlike a fascist dictator, he is inclined to defer to his subordinates: His military advisers have talked him into reversing his entire approach to Afghanistan and his secretary of state persuaded him to okay the recertification of the Iran nuclear deal. Progressives are convinced that Trump makes a scapegoat of an entire ethnicity, namely Mexicans, the way fascists did. But there is a vast difference between common bigotry—the kind of bigotry that exists in any society anywhere—and the sort of visceral loathing that grew into a worldview and led to the Final Solution.

The trouble with the belief that Trump is a fascist, however, isn't so much that it gets Trump right or wrong. The trouble with it is that it gets America itself wrong. The accusation is based on a gross misinterpretation of America and its political culture. The United States might generate many evils, but fascism is not one of them.

Consider as evidence the events in Charlottesville in mid-August. There is no official estimate of the crowd's size, but the Associated Press estimated 500 people in the white nationalist or "alt right" group and 1,000 in the counter-protesting group. Jason Kessler, a white nationalist and sometime University of Virginia student, spent weeks organizing this "Unite the Right" rally on Facebook and various alt-right websites; the famed former Klansman David Duke was advertising the event on social media in early June. Yet with all this planning and the boost in confidence the movement has supposedly received from the election of an allegedly sympathetic president, the white nationalists could only muster half the number of people who showed up to protest it.

Consider, too, the nature of fascism itself. The term *fascism* is notoriously difficult to define—George Orwell memorably complained that the word "has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable'"—but its most crucial characteristic, the thing without which it's not fascism, is the tendency to dominate every part of life from the center: economic activity, intellectual debate, religion, art, music, language.

Fascism failed in America for the same reason communism did. Both systems assume a political worldview in which power is held by a rational elite at the center. The American governmental system, despite centripetal tendencies in the first half of the 20th century, has an essentially centrifugal quality—a quality reflected in America's politics no less than its culture. That quality manifests itself sometimes as independent-mindedness and sometimes as anti-intellectualism, and perhaps the two are not always distinct attitudes, but they amount to the same thing: Americans as a rule don't like to be told what to think by people who purport to be smarter than they are.

The case was vastly different in continental Europe 90 years ago. For fascist parties to conquer Italy and Germany, the movement's functionaries and propagandists had to persuade a great many intellectuals and cultural arbiters to go along with it—and they succeeded. The list of intellectuals and artists and scientists who either acceded to fascist ideology or enthusiastically contributed to it is a long and depressing one. Even taking the worst possible interpretation of the Trump movement, does anyone seriously think it could produce such a list?

American liberal intellectuals think of this nation as the sort of centripetal society that once allowed real fascism to flourish and dominate. They don't understand the country they're paid to interpret—thank God. ♦

CHARLES MOSTOLLER / BLOOMBERG / GETTY

The Merit System

What America can learn from Canada's immigration policies. BY CANDICE MALCOLM

In 2012, Fareed Zakaria dedicated an episode of his CNN show *GPS* to exploring Canada's skills-based immigration system, discussing why such a program accords with the modern economy. On Twitter, Zakaria proclaimed that "Canada has the most successful set of immigration policies in the world." His praise continued in the pages of *Time*, where he stated America "is losing the best and brightest" to countries, like Canada, with an "immigration advantage."

As recently as this March, Zakaria focused CNN airtime on what the United States could learn from its northern neighbor. He noted that Donald Trump applauded Canada's immigration program in the president's speech to Congress. "You have a really innovative reform system," Zakaria said of Canada's point system, which prioritizes immigration applicants based on education, work experience, and language skills.

Viewers of CNN could be forgiven, therefore, if they were confused by the network's frenzied response to Trump's endorsement of the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) Act, sponsored by Republican senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue. CNN reporter Jim Acosta placed himself at the center of this debate as the liberal ideological opponent to a merit-based system. In a bitter exchange, Acosta provided an emotional appeal for low-skill immigration while White House senior adviser Stephen Miller impatiently explained the rationale behind the reforms.

It was curious to see a CNN reporter so vehemently defend the same policies the network's immigration expert lampooned as dysfunctional. As drafted, the RAISE Act would take the country in the Canadian direction. RAISE proposes to cut legal immigration by half over the next decade by reducing green cards for family members of U.S. citizens and allotting the remaining spaces based on skills and merit. It also seeks to end the green card lottery, known officially as the Diversity Immigrant Visa, and cap the annual intake of refugees offered permanent status at 50,000.

They've got skills: A family becomes Canadian, August 27, 2014.

While the RAISE Act is not perfect, it does address a fundamental disconnect between immigration selection and economic suitability. RAISE attempts to help focus the selection criteria to produce a better immigration experience, for both migrants and Americans, by emulating a model championed by level-headed analysts: the skills-based Canadian system.

Canada's immigration system is successful for three key reasons: It's designed to maximize economic growth; the system is fair, selecting newcomers based upon merit; and it works to achieve social integration, which in turn promotes broader trust in the immigration system.

The first factor to consider is the economic impact of immigration. Despite a misconception popularized by activists, immigration programs are not intended to serve as a global charity. Western democracies facilitate immigration not from benevolence, to paraphrase Adam Smith, but from regard to their own interest. Welcoming young and motivated workers helps boost innovation and entrepreneurship. Newcomers start businesses, file patents, and spark economic renewal.

Immigration, when managed carefully, can work as a countervailing force to an aging population and retiring workforce. Young immigrant families help reverse the falling birth rates and help with population growth; about two-thirds of current Canadian population growth is the result of immigration.

In Canada, immigration is divided into three categories: economic immigration (63 percent), family reunification (24 percent), and refugees (13 percent), and there are stark differences in the productivity of each stream. It's worth noting that the economic stream itself is divided into principal applicants (45 percent) and immediate family members (55 percent), making the true number of economic immigrants closer to 28 percent of the total annual intake—still more than double the comparable ratio in the United States (13 percent).

Canada selects its economic immigrants using a merit-based points system. Objective and easily measurable criteria for selection include an applicant's education, work experience, language skills, as well as age and adaptability. The point system allows for a neutral and unbiased assessment of the elements that are empirically proven to lead to more successful outcomes.

ROBERTO MACHADO NOA / LIGHTROCKET / GETTY

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When a migrant is selected to come to Canada, the assumption is that he or she will begin work on day one. The government has devised criteria that lead to productive, self-sufficient, and successful migrants. Research from the Canadian government finds that "highly educated immigrants are more likely to generate a net positive fiscal balance over the longer run, paying more taxes and using less government benefits than their less-skilled counterparts."

The second factor to consider is that of fairness. A common criticism of RAISE is that it unfairly punishes those wishing to bring extended family members into the country. The National Immigration Law Center, for instance, issued a statement saying the bill would "devastate families, eliminating the traditional and long-accepted means by which family members such as grandparents, mothers, fathers and siblings are able to reunite with their families."

To these activists, the privilege of U.S. citizenship has morphed into the right to bring extended families into the country, in a phenomenon known as chain migration. The obvious problem with an immigration program dominated by family reunification is that economic and social considerations are not weighed, and therefore many newcomers arrive without the skills or training needed to be successful in America.

There is also a moral problem. America's current immigration program gives individuals with family ties preferential treatment over those applying based on their own capabilities. In America, nepotism and family connections have never been considered superior to hard work and merit. Rather than being "cruel, anti-family and un-American," as the Anti-Defamation League claims, RAISE places limits upon secondary family sponsorship, following the example of the Canadian system.

Advocates of the family reunification program may be surprised to learn that it has its origins in racism. The program was designed specifically to restrict non-European migration. In his seminal book *The Ethics of Immigration*, Joseph H. Carens explains:

> From the 1920s to the 1960s American immigration policy had a "national origins" quota, which tied the number of spaces available for immigrants from other countries to the proportion of people from those countries already in the United States. This was explicitly intended to restrict the flow of immigrants from outside Europe and to maintain the ethnic, racial, and religious composition of the United States as it was. It was indeed an unjust policy.

Third, it's important to consider the social impact of immigration, both in terms of how well newcomers integrate in the host society and how the public views immigration. A host of studies find that knowledge of the local language is the number-one indicator of economic, and therefore social, integration and success in a new country.

Canada has an obsession with protecting languages and promoting knowledge of its official languages, French and English. This impulse affects immigration selection. In 2015, 76 percent of all permanent residents self-identified as having a proficiency in English, French, or both. That number jumped to 96 percent for principal applicants in the economic immigration stream. By contrast, a 2012 U.S. census study found that only 44 percent of immigrants who have arrived since 2000 report the ability to speak English.

Inability to speak English creates a social divide, isolating newcomers in their own cultural silos and increasing divisions between newcomers and the host population. Sponsoring elderly family members into these isolated communities only increases the social divide and produces more hostility toward and mistrust in the immigration system. Canada's solution is, once again, more economic immigration focused on selecting high-skilled applicants. A 2016 government report stated that "the high educational and skill level of immigrants and their children may be partly responsible for the relatively . . . positive social integration of immigrants and the high level of acceptance of immigrants in Canada." Canadians trust that the government is welcoming newcomers who will strive to integrate and achieve economic independence.

Despite what critics of the RAISE Act say, Canada's focus on skills-based economic immigration is neither racist nor a veiled policy of race-based nationalism. Jim Acosta, for instance, implied the RAISE Act was racist and that Republicans were "trying to engineer the racial and ethnic flow of people into this country." He asked Stephen Miller, "are we just going to bring in people from Great Britain and Australia?" Facts, however, show that a focus on skills-based immigration increases racial diversity. The top source countries of immigration to Canada in recent years have been the Philippines, China, and India. Meanwhile, Canada's foreign-born population is now 20 percent, compared with the United States' 13 percent.

The RAISE Act has borrowed its core tenets from Canada's skills-based program. Despite the hysteria pushed by Jim Acosta and others, CNN's own Fareed Zakaria, the network's most knowledgeable immigration expert, declared last year that in this arena, "Canada should be a role model."

Canada has struck a successful balance with its skills-based immigration system, and the numbers back it up. Immigrants welcomed to Canada through the economic stream collected social assistance at half the rate of the native-born population. In 2005, only 2 percent of Canada's economic immigrants used social assistance. In the U.S., welfare use for immigrant households is over 50 percent.

At a time when populist backlashes against mass, unchecked migration have erupted across the Western world, it's common sense to focus immigration selection on economic skills and readiness for success. The RAISE Act seeks to put U.S. immigration on just such a path. ♦

Evangelist to the Press Corps

Michael Cromartie, 1950-2017.

BY FRED BARNES

Michael Cromartie, by his wits and his Christian faith, created something out of nothing, what investor Peter Thiel calls going from 0 to 1. And he became an important and influential figure in Washington, though that wasn't his aim.

It's an unlikely story: a scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center who focused on evangelical Christians and other religious matters and became a teacher and friend of the press corps. Scores of reporters and columnists would learn from him how to talk and write knowledgeably about religion.

But let's back up a bit. In the 1990s, Cromartie started getting phone calls at his think tank from befuddled media folks. The rise of the Christian right had aroused interest in evangelicals. Journalists knew practically nothing about the subject and called him. Cromartie, an evangelical himself, knew everything. More important, he was happy to help.

The result was Faith Angle Forum, twice-yearly gatherings in which 20 journalists would spend two days with religious scholars, theologians, preachers, and historians—from the right and left and not just Christians. Cromartie organized the whole thing, got the funding, lined up the speakers, invited the needy journalists, and got them to come to Key West and later Miami (that was the easy part). The sessions, which he moderated, continued until this year.

Mike died last week at 67. If you check the Internet, newspapers, or TV news, you'll find eulogies from the platoons of journalists who knew and loved him and from many others. Mike didn't push them to convert to Christianity but the power of his presence and joyfulness in his faith affected them. I suspect some did accept Christ as Savior under Mike's influence, but I'm only guessing.

Mike was memorable like no one I've ever met. I knew him for more than 30 years. His wife Jenny teaches at Rivendell, a wonderful Christian school in Arlington, Virginia, not far from their home. She's the favorite teacher of my grandchildren, who attend the school.

Michael Cromartie, right, with Tom Brokaw in October 2014

Mike was a great storyteller and loved basketball. (He was multifaceted.) These were not an insignificant part of his life. He told humorous stories about those early calls from journalists curious about evangelical Christians. The forums took up other religious subjects as well, from Mormons to Muslims.

He once spent an hour talking about evangelicals to a skeptical political writer. "Let's cut to the real issue," the writer said. "These people are sexually repressed, aren't they?"

Mike's response was as gentle as possible. As he later told Steve Hayward of *Powerline*: "I said they all have six kids. . . . The best-selling books in the evangelical Protestant community right now are books on sexuality in marriage and how to have a good fulfilling marriage . . . sexually. . . . I was hoping in the piece he'd quote me on that, but he didn't."

Another inquiry came from a reporter who asked about a discussion at the Southern Baptist convention involving men, women, and marriage. Mike began by referring to the book of Ephesians, only to be interrupted. What's that book? Who's the author? Who's the publisher?

"Oh, I'm sorry," Mike said. "It's a letter from a man named the apostle Paul. It's a letter to the Ephesians. It's in a book called the New Testament, which follows the Old Testament." Conversations like that sparked the creation of the forums.

Basketball is another story. Mike was a backup point guard at Covenant College in Georgia. After graduation he learned the Philadelphia 76ers were looking for a mascot. Mike assured them that "I can run around and I can dance." He got the job.

But there was a problem. The Sixers often played on Tuesdays, when Mike also had a graduate-school class at American University in Washington. So he spilled the beans to his professor, who was sympathetic. "That's a great excuse," he told Mike. "We'll get you the notes."

Mike made the games dressed as what he described to Hayward as "a chicken/roadrunner type of character."

Pickup basketball games with men half his age were a temptation Mike couldn't resist. He got knee surgery in hopes it would help his game. He also bought a basket that tossed the ball back after the shot. He put it in his driveway. He liked it so much he became the regional distributor for the device.

In an interview last year, Mike and Hayward discussed all the players on the great Sixers teams when Mike was the mascot. Mike knew all of them. When Hayward mentioned Lloyd Free, Mike, always looking to be helpful, corrected him.

"Lloyd *B.* Free," he said. ♦

WASHINGTON POST / GETTY

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at The Weekly Standard.

Pyongyang's Playbook

Tehran has studied it well.

BY ANTHONY RUGGIERO

The crisis between the United States and North Korea shows no signs of abating. Indeed, Pyongyang escalated its provocations last week, firing a missile over Japan on August 29. Critics of the president cite his brash approach to Pyongyang as a factor behind North Korea's belligerency. Some also link Trump's tough talk about the Iran nuclear deal. Why, they ask, would North Korea want to cooperate with a White House that insists on revisiting a nuclear deal the United States struck with Iran just two years ago?

What they fail to note is the Kim regime has already violated two nuclear deals with the United States. North Korea, in fact, authored the playbook now being used by Iran to fleece the United States and our allies. And if the United States fails to neutralize the North Korean threat, Iran will notice how the United States buckles in the face of nuclear pressure.

Iran has already learned a number of damaging lessons from North Korea. First, cheating on nuclear deals is permitted. North Korea cheated twice, and we kept coming back for more. President Bill Clinton announced the 1994 Agreed Framework as a deal that would "freeze and then dismantle its nuclear program," but Pyongyang violated the agreement when it started a covert uranium enrichment program.

Anthony Ruggiero, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, was the nonproliferation adviser to the U.S. delegation to the 2005 rounds of the Six-Party Talks and spent more than 17 years in the U.S. government.

Washington tried another nuclear deal with the Kim regime, negotiating the 2005 Joint Statement, but the Kim regime built a nuclear reactor in Syria during the negotiations. The reactor was eventually destroyed by Israel in 2007. Normally that would have ended negotiations, proving that North Korea was not a serious interlocutor. Instead, the Kim regime was rewarded for its nuclear proliferation when the Bush administration removed North Korea from the state sponsors of terrorism list in 2008.

Dupe the Great Satan 101: Iranian president Hassan Rouhani meets with North Korea's Kim Yong-nam in Tehran, August 3, 2013.

ATTA KENARE / AFP / GETTY

Iran's cheating has focused on testing the will of the United States and its partners to hold Tehran to the negotiated limits in the 2015 nuclear deal. During the Obama administration, Tehran twice exceeded the cap on heavy water, and rather than punishing Iran, Washington and Moscow purchased the excess material from Iran. Iran is operating advanced centrifuges in excess of the limit of 10 it agreed to in the deal. And reports suggest the United Kingdom blocked an attempt by Iran to secretly purchase additional natural uranium. German intelligence reports showed that Iran attempted procurement of nuclear-related items, likely in violation of the agreement.

Second, limited nuclear deals can be exploited. The Agreed Framework and Joint Statement merely froze the North Korean nuclear programs (what was known of them), and in both instances Pyongyang was not required to dismantle its programs upfront. The result left North Korea with the infrastructure to produce fissile material (plutonium and highly enriched uranium) for the nuclear weapons that now threaten America's allies and the U.S. homeland.

Tehran adopted this very strategy when it negotiated a nuclear deal that allows it to keep its uranium enrichment program and continue research on advanced centrifuges. Iran can thus comply with the deal and emerge about a decade later with a production-scale enrichment facility and near-zero breakout time to develop nuclear weapons.

Third, you can also push the envelope on military and nonnuclear issues. North Korea tested a space launch vehicle (SLV) only four years after negotiating the 1994 Agreed Framework. Pyongyang has tested additional SLVs five times since 1998, placing satellites in orbit in 2012 and 2016. These SLVs provided key advancements Pyongyang used to improve intercontinental ballistic missiles that the Kim regime can use to deliver a nuclear weapon to the United States. North Korea has also tested the Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile, which can reach Guam, at least five times this year, with a successful test in mid-May and again last week. The international community's failure to respond meaningfully is viewed by North Korea as tacit approval.

Since the 2015 nuclear deal was signed, Tehran has reportedly conducted two SLV launches. It has launched as many as 14 ballistic missiles, many of which are "nuclear

capable," in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which codified the nuclear deal. Iran has undoubtedly noticed the U.N.'s lack of a firm response.

The number of Iranian violations detailed by U.N. Secretary General António Guterres in a recent report is stunning. Two Iranian attempts to procure missile components, aircraft parts, and anti-tank missile components from Ukraine were thwarted over a period of just six months. How many others have gotten through? Iran also continues its shipment of arms to the Houthi rebels in Yemen, in violation of two Security Council resolutions.

Finally, insist that your military sites are off-limits. The first nuclear crisis in the mid-1990s started in part when North Korea refused a request by the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect a waste facility that Pyongyang said was a military site unrelated to its nuclear program. The Kim regime's refusal set off a crisis that almost ended in a military conflict between the United States and North Korea. The crisis was resolved when the Clinton administration negotiated the ill-fated Agreed Framework.

Tehran has learned from the North Korean experience to insist that military facilities are off-limits and hope the issue fades away. Before the 2015 nuclear deal was completed, Iran's supreme leader declared "inspection of our military sites is out of the question and is one of our red lines." Iran's foreign minister boasted that he had maintained the red line in negotiations. Tehran has allowed only a cursory inspection of the Parchin military site where undeclared uranium particles were discovered, and the regime continues to deny more intrusive inspections.

While Iran has learned many lessons from North Korea, Washington should have learned a few, too. The most significant is that flawed, limited nuclear deals do not solve the strategic issues. The Trump administration must internalize this lesson if it is to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, which could in turn set off an arms race in the Middle East. Similarly, with North Korea, the president should insist on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The "echo chamber" supporting the 2015 Iran nuclear deal wants President Trump to believe that North Korea's aggressive nuclear weapons and missile programs somehow demonstrate the need for Washington to remain committed to the agreement. They have it exactly wrong. Pyongyang's path highlights how a limited nuclear deal can lead to a nuclear threat to the U.S. homeland. Another such threat, this time from Iran, could be only a matter of time. ♦

Bringing the Senate to Heel

Many presidents have tried; many have failed.

BY JAY COST

Since the defeat of the Obamacare repeal effort in the Senate, President Donald Trump has seemed to be on the warpath against the upper chamber. He has made negative comments about a number of Republican senators, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Some reports suggest he may strike out on an independent course—which might include promoting primary challengers against senators he does not like. His nice comments about Kelli Ward—who is going after Arizona Republican Jeff Flake in next year's primary—may be a harbinger of intra-party conflicts.

Yet any presidential effort to improve the stock of Republican senators will be incredibly difficult. Trump is not alone in complaining about the Senate, but a number of institutional and personal factors cut heavily against his chances of success.

James Madison extolled the virtues of the Senate in *Federalist* 62 and 63, where he argued that it would be a check "to the impulse of sudden and violent passions" that may arise in the House, by empowering legislators with a "due acquaintance with the objects and principles of legislation" who can bring stability, esteem, and a sense of "national character" to the government. The Senate, Madison proclaimed, would enable the "cool and deliberate sense of the community" to prevail.

That was the public side of the argument, at any rate. Behind closed doors at the Constitutional Convention, Madison fought tooth and nail against the Senate as it was eventually agreed upon. By giving each state two members and allowing the state legislatures to appoint them, the delegates had basically imported the Congress of the Confederation into the new Constitution. Madison and his nationalist allies were deeply concerned that the state governments—which had proven themselves incapable of supplying national leadership in the 1780s—would use the new Senate to hamstring the government. But the small states insisted, and so the actual Senate represents a compromise between the high principles of *Federalist* 62 and 63 and the parochial demands of Delaware and New Jersey.

This is key to understanding the history of the United States Senate. As Madison predicted, it does cool the often hot-tempered initiatives of the House. But it has also proven itself a regular and formidable opponent of proposals that would clearly

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advance the general welfare. Senators have demonstrated a unique talent for leveraging the esteem of the "upper" chamber of Congress for the small-minded interests of their state patrons.

The most colorful critique of the Senate remains Henry Adams's lament in *The Education of Henry Adams*. He reported a conversation with a cabinet secretary, who told him a member of the House "is a hog! You must take a stick and hit him on the snout!" But senators "petrified any executive officer that ever sat a week in his office." The "comic side of their egotism" was beyond belief. Senators like Charles Sumner and Roscoe Conkling "could not be burlesqued; they were more grotesque than ridicule could make them." This description still hits the mark. Sumner and Conkling are long gone, but it is not hard to think of a dozen (or more!) senators whose vanity is comically outsized.

Adams believed that "the most troublesome task of a reform president was that of bringing the Senate back to decency." Troublesome indeed, for the Senate has proven itself time and again resistant to presidential influence. No president had more political capital than Franklin Roosevelt after his smashing reelection in 1936. He chose to spend it, in part, by endeavoring to replace conservative Democrats who had opposed the New Deal and his Court-packing plan. It did not go well. He managed to replace a few House members, but the conservatives in the Senate held firm, and FDR's clout was thereafter diminished.

Ultimately, Barack Obama and Harry Reid were able to get Obamacare through the Senate only by promising a handful of goodies to recalcitrant members—the "Cornhusker Kickback" for Ben Nelson, the "Louisiana Purchase" for Mary Landrieu, etc. On the Republican side, Lisa Murkowski and John McCain voted to repeal Obamacare when Obama was still president and the vote was merely symbolic, but voted against the very narrow repeal bill this summer. In so doing, they halted a repeal effort their party had won multiple elections promising to carry out.

But what can Trump do about it? He faces the same challenges that his predecessors faced in bringing the Senate "back to decency." It is truly an independent branch. Only a handful of Republican senators were on the ballot with Trump in 2016. Most of them would have won regardless of Trump's performance, so what kind of sway does the president have over them? Few Republican senators are on the ballot in 2018, so Trump's options are limited. There will be more in 2020, but Trump then will have to reckon with the challenge of his own reelection.

Wait, is that somebody back there? GOP senators Tom Cotton, John Thune, and Mitch McConnell at the White House, June 27.

WASHINGTON POST / GETTY

Another problem is the ancient compromise hammered out at the Constitutional Convention. By giving each state two senators, the Constitution established permanent political fiefdoms. Those who rise to the rank of senator usually have become masters of their states' politics and can use their position in the upper chamber to sustain that elevated rank. Political elites—be they in the party, the press, the business community, or interest groups—are thus naturally deferential to senators. Presidents, on the other hand, are outsiders to these closed communities, and their interference is often taken as meddling.

Party politics also works to the advantage of senators. A presidential effort to oust an incumbent senator is a high-risk endeavor. The upside is getting rid of a less-than-enthusiastic supporter of the presidential agenda. The downside is the danger of electing an unflappable opponent from the other party.

These challenges confront any president in bringing about Senate reform, and Trump faces two unique problems of his own. First, he is not very popular. The Gallup poll has his approval rating among Republicans at 78 percent. That may seem high, but George W. Bush had greater than 90 percent support from the GOP at the same point in his presidency. It's an easy bet that a portion of that 78 percent support is soft, so many Republicans will not reflexively side with Trump against their senators.

Moreover, Trump is inexperienced in politics and generally has exhibited a lack of follow-through in many initiatives. A sustained effort to oust obstinate members of Congress requires a lot of hard, careful work. Is Trump capable of this? If history is any guide, probably not. He will more likely continue to tweet caustic remarks about this or that senator when the mood strikes.

The Senate is bound to be nettlesome for just about any president. Take the inherent conservatism of the branch, toss in the parochial interests and powers of its members, separate them from the direct influence of the president—and it adds up to an institution that stubbornly makes its own way in our government. Frustrating, no doubt. But it has ever been thus, since the first Senate was gaveled into session back in 1789. There is little Trump can do about this. ♦

Feeding the Crocodile

Remember Kim Jong-un?

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

Readers will recall that just before memories of the Confederacy became an existential threat to national unity, Americans were worried about another—and surely more plausible—menace to the United States. In early August, Kim Jong-un, the North Korean dictator who has been successfully testing ballistic missiles, threatened the American territory of Guam, in the western Pacific, with attack. Kim's nuclear saber-rattling was met with a bellicose response from President Trump, who vowed that any assault on Guam—and by implication, neighboring allies such as Japan and, of course, South Korea—would be met with "fire and fury like the world has never seen."

Kim Jong-un

Indeed, for a worrisome week, the American press felt the nuclear jitters for the first time since the heyday of the freeze movement in the 1980s. And this time not without reason: North Korea is hurtling steadily toward a deliverable nuclear capacity, and Kim is not just unrelentingly hostile toward the United States—which remains technically at war with Pyongyang since the 1953 armistice—but disconcertingly unpredictable. Even North Korea's strategic ally and chief trading partner, China, seemed incapable of restraining Kim Jong-un.

At which point, in the parlance of another nuclear standoff, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Kim blinked. He retreated publicly from his threat to attack Guam, and Trump's brinkmanship appeared to be vindicated. Or so his partisans argued: Unlike his predecessors, who had been grappling diplomatically with North Korea's nuclear ambitions since the 1990s, Trump called Kim's bluff with public resolve and a credible threat. And that was that—no more apocalypse, and on to Charlottesville—until last week, when North Korea successfully fired a ballistic missile over Japanese airspace, the first since 2009, and once again, the security and survival of our Asian allies and Pacific territories (not to mention Honolulu and Seattle) became a question mark.

Even at this juncture, it is unlikely that North Korea will pose a palpable threat anytime soon. But it's clear that its nuclear ambitions are genuine, that American soil may soon lie within Pyongyang's range, and that Kim Jong-un seems unimpressed by diplomacy.

This may explain why American analysts and statesmen, at the moment, seem equipped only to wring their hands—or better yet, complain about Donald Trump—in pondering the dilemma of Kim's bomb. The alternatives are almost equally unwelcome. In the midst of his professionally suicidal interview with the *American Prospect*, the then-White House counselor Stephen Bannon made the obvious point that in the event of a military conflict between North Korea and the United States, "Until somebody . . . shows me that ten million people in Seoul don't die . . . from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about. There's no military solution. They [*sic*] got us." But the fruits of diplomacy, such as they are, have been equally bleak: Since the Clinton administration, the United States has, at best, delayed the progress of North Korea's nuclear program and, at worst, guaranteed that Pyongyang pays no price for recurrent defiance.

There is another word here for diplomacy, of course, and that is appeasement. And the relevant lesson is the same as Winston Churchill's wartime description of appeasement: the hope that if one "feeds the crocodile enough, the crocodile will eat him last." Yet the irony, as Americans must now grasp, is that the instinct to appease, while self-defeating in the long run, is not entirely irrational in the moment. Neville Chamberlain is a foreign-policy folk villain; but when he became prime minister in 1937, memories of the Great War—and 800,000 British military dead, nearly 2 percent of the population—were as fresh as the late 1990s are to us. Contrary to popular myth, Chamberlain and his predecessor Stanley Baldwin had few illusions about the nature of Nazi Germany or Adolf Hitler. But for them, diplomacy/appeasement was a price worth considering to avoid a second, and considerably more destructive, world war.

In that sense, one might argue that our own version of appeasement—it is better to deal with North Korea, directly or indirectly, than to risk a Pacific catastrophe or nuclear conflict—has enjoyed some success: While the problem has festered, it has remained a problem largely in theory, not practice, and bought us time. But Trump's belligerence—or, depending on your viewpoint, resolve—has yielded rewards as well. If dictators respect power and despise weakness, it is possible that Kim Jong-un's aspirations have been effectively checked. Or so we may hope.

The point is that while the Kim regime in Pyongyang strikes Americans as surreal, even comic at times, it is no less lethal—and worst of all, dependably volatile. We have glimpsed the abyss. In 1939, as the Germans crossed the frontier into Poland, the League of Nations was debating the codification of level-crossing signs. Is it smarter to be thinking the unthinkable about the North American continent, or shouting in rage about Robert E. Lee? ♦

AFP / GETTY

Philip Terzian is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

A Beating in Berkeley

Antifa mayhem and malice in Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park

By Matt Labash

Berkeley

As white supremacists go, Joey Gibson makes for a lousy one. For starters, he's half Japanese. "I don't feel like I'm Caucasian at all," he says. Not to be a stickler for the rules, but this kind of talk could get you sent to Master Race remedial school.

And it gets worse. The founder of Patriot Prayer—a Vancouver, Wash.-based operation that sponsors rallies and marches promoting freedom and First Amendment rights along with all-purpose unity—also spews hippie-dippie rhetoric like "moderates have to come together" and "love and peace [are] the only way to heal this country." Joey tends to sound less like an alt-right bully boy than a conflict-resolution facilitator or a Unitarian Sunday school teacher.

For his late August "Liberty Weekend" in the Bay Area, which was to include a free speech rally in San Francisco followed by a "No to Marxism" rally in Berkeley (headed by a local "transsexual patriot"), Joey advertised that "no extremists will be allowed in. No Nazis, Communists, KKK, Antifa, white supremacists . . . or white nationalists." (So much for free speech.) Likewise, the advertised docket of speakers was to include "three blacks, two Hispanics, one Asian, one Samoan, one Muslim, two women, and one white male." If becoming a liberty movement fixture doesn't work out for Gibson, he has a promising future as a UC Berkeley admissions officer.

A masked counterprotester in Berkeley, August 27

Despite all this, you'd have thought from the avalanche of alarmist walk-up stories that Gibson and friends would be dancing in a "Springtime for Hitler" kick line. Donald Trump, of course, who draws frequent Hitler comparisons in some quarters, has already set nerves on edge with his nativist rhetoric, perpetually divisive style, and what's widely perceived as his winks 'n' nods to white nationalists. But in the wake of the recent white supremacist hoedown in Charlottesville—a cesspool of racial hatred that resulted in the death of anti-racism activist Heather Heyer when a Nazi fanboy drove his Dodge Challenger into her and 19 others—opportunistic leftists/Democrats have been on the prowl to paint everyone to the right of Angela Davis as a dangerous racist lunatic.

They seem to have forgotten that the far right hardly has a monopoly on political violence. Just a couple of months before Charlottesville, a Bernie Sanders supporter opened fire on a baseball-field full of Republican congressmen, almost killing Rep. Steve Scalise. And this, of course, has been the year of antifa, the masked anarchists in black ISIS pajamas, who advocate violence while battling "fascists," defined loosely as anyone they don't like (including run-of-the-mill Trump supporters).

Antifa have shown up at one right-leaning gathering after another this year to administer random beat-downs with everything from metal poles to bike locks to bear spray, causing multitudinous injuries and large-scale property damage. Back in February, they literally set fires on the Berkeley campus, smashing windows as they rampaged through the city streets, to prevent Milo Yiannopoulos from appearing, even though the professional provocateur frequently speaks about his penchant for sex with black men, which used to count as a social-justice twofer during less polarized times.

But when it came to Joey Gibson's Liberty Weekend, enter Nancy Pelosi, who seems to be pining for girlhood activism days, as she's billed this "Resistance Summer."

IMAGES: HELENA ZEMANEK

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Gibson secured a permit for his free speech rally to be held at Crissy Field, a former Army airfield next to the Golden Gate Bridge. But Pelosi loudly suggested the permit be pulled, saying the National Park Service should reflect on its "capacity to protect the public during such a toxic" event, which she termed a "white supremacist rally." The fact that over two-thirds of the event's scheduled speakers were minorities, that race wasn't being discussed, and that the event was billed a "day of freedom, spirituality, unity, peace, and patriotism" didn't seem to cut much ice with her.

No matter, Pelosi had lots of company. Sen. Dianne Feinstein wrote a letter to the Park Service, expressing her dismay that Crissy Field "will be used as a venue for Patriot Prayer's incitement, hate and intimidation." The mayors of San Francisco and Berkeley denounced the group, too. Conservative news outlets subsequently revealed that Berkeley's mayor, Jesse Arreguin, was a Facebook member of BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), one of the antifa affinity groups that had helped trash his own city during the Milo riots. Yet this didn't stop him from announcing that the city had printed up 20,000 "Berkeley Stands United Against Hate" posters for its citizens, not in anticipation of antifa's next vandalizing, sucker-punching Viking raid, but to put everyone on notice about the Patriot Prayer rally. Perhaps Arreguin was worried antifa would unfriend him on Facebook.

Properly whipped into an anti-racism frenzy, the Bay Area did what the Bay Area loves doing most. Or second most, after driving low-income minorities out of hopelessly expensive neighborhoods so that tech millionaires can live in them. They planned counterprotests! Lots of them. The events list ran to multiple pages.

There would be "empathy tents" and "mobile dance" counter rallies. They slated candlelight vigils and Michael Franti concerts, "anti-hate" marches and "Flowers Against Fascism." One event was titled "Calling All Clowns"—a "call for anti-racist, anti-fascist clowns to descend upon Crissy Field to mercilessly ridicule any neo-nazis, white supremacists, or alt-right trolls who dare show their face." Then there was the invitation for concerned citizens to deposit "your dog poop on Crissy Field" in order to "leave a gift for our alt-right friends." A *Guardian* headline-writer billed this the "Turd Reich."

Joey, for his part, wasn't worried about menacing clowns or dog droppings. He was worried that his rallies would come to resemble Altamont, a hellscape of dark and eruptive violence. Since rally-goers would likely be outnumbered by hecklers and antifa ninjas by about 10-to-1 in one of the most aggressively liberal enclaves in the world, Joey was growing increasingly uneasy with the security arrangements, or lack thereof, by Park Service and law-enforcement officials.

Convinced the security situation would resemble an antifa turkey shoot for his attendees, Joey canceled Liberty Weekend. I heard the news on TV during my flight. But when I landed, he told me there was no need to board a return flight home. He was still going to pop up around town, and "there will be craziness—they will still come after me." He wasn't kidding.

'Tiny,' left, and Joey, center, at a Patriot Prayer march in Portland, June 30

JOEY AND 'TINY'

I meet up with Joey and his ever-present sidekick, Tusitala "Tiny" Toese, in front of their budget hotel on San Francisco's Lombard Street. Joey doesn't look so much half-Japanese as like a Latino gang-banger, in head-to-toe black (including his Patriot Prayer T-shirt), with generous arm ink. Tiny, you might have guessed, is named ironically. He's a 6′6″, 345-lb. Samoan. His favorite food, he says, "is food." Grabbing a bear-paw's worth of his own flesh, he says, "I ain't fat, I'm stab-resistant."

We pack into a compact rental Toyota so small that the steering wheel crushes Tiny's crotch. Joey always buys the full-insurance package, since antifa has done everything from slash his tires to douse his car in degreaser to strip the paint job. He has been punched, pepper-sprayed, hit in the head with silly-string cans, and choked ("he looked like a dolphin," Tiny mocks, making limp flipper motions with his hands). Tiny shows me a slash wound on his arm, courtesy of an earlier antifa encounter at one of their rallies, and a gnarled bruise on the bridge of his nose, where he caught an axe-handle from a nominal ally who thought Tiny was antifa and whacked him by mistake.

All of this sounds like the Crips versus the Bloods for white people (or for Japanese and Samoans, as the case may be). Joey is fully aware of the ridiculousness. Never particularly political—he detests labels, but allows that he's a moderate libertarian with a strong taste for freedom—Joey came to activism through anger, as most people do these days. "I'm surrounded by anger all the time, and I really struggle with that," he says of the often unsavory people he crosses paths with, both on his side and the other. Joey himself, though, rarely loses his cool, and even in high-pressure situations appears as calm as a Zen monk.

A Washington state house-flipper who has also spent the past decade coaching high school football (he was a starting high school quarterback himself), Joey counted himself a vague Trump supporter. Like many people, he enjoyed watching someone upset the establishment. But he was radicalized after watching online the aftermath of the June 2, 2016, Trump rally in San Jose, where departing rally-goers were hunted down, egged, and beaten like dogs in the street by vicious mobs. For those who thought Trump rallies got violent—and they occasionally did, with hecklers getting decked and candidate Trump sometimes rooting on the deckers—there are hours and hours of online footage of Trump supporters catching sustained abuse from "liberals," assuming that term any longer applies.

Blaming Patriot Prayer for provoking antifa into attacking them at their own events is a bit like blaming black marchers for provoking racist Alabama policemen into creasing their skulls with billy clubs for traversing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It's both a denial of basic human freedoms and victim-blaming of the highest order.

Joey believed that a person should be able to attend the political rally of his choice in America, or to wear a MAGA hat in a place like Portland, Ore., without worrying about getting hit in the face. So he started Patriot Prayer in 2016—it has no employees, and he takes no money from it. He began throwing rallies and marches in liberal cities on the West Coast. In the early days, his rallies had overtly pro-Trump themes. These days, mentions of Trump have mostly been scrubbed from his own rhetoric, as he knows even invoking the name can be alienating. (Plenty of those who show up at his events are ardent Trumpers, with whom he maintains an easy rapport.) Instead, his emphasis is on freedom and unity. When I ask him to distill his message, he says, "Unity, peace, love, truth—these simple things," sounding not at all like your average Trumpkin. "People get mad when I say that, because they say that's not good enough. They want more specifics, like 'What's your view on abortion?' They want all these political messages."

But politics, as the last several years have evidenced, are by definition divisive. They have both amped up and divided us as a people. "We have to focus on the division, first," Joey says. "The division is allowing extremists to be involved." He learned that lesson the hard way earlier this year when Jeremy Christian showed up in the crowd at one of his rallies in Portland, spewing hatred and Nazi talk. Joey and his cohorts were wigged out by him and showed him the door. A month later, Christian stabbed three people on a Portland commuter train, killing two of them, after they came to the defense of two girls at whom Christian was barking anti-Muslim slurs. Proving that people are never simple—especially insane ones—Christian was largely portrayed as a Trumpkin/far-right tool, although he'd written on his Facebook page: "Bernie Sanders was the President I wanted."

Tiny, 21, also came to politics through anger. Convinced all Trumpkins were racists, "I'd drive around and beat them up," he says nonchalantly. When he couldn't find any to sass him back in street encounters after he'd provoked them, he'd go home and watch other Trump supporters get pounded online. "It made me happy. F—in' racists getting beaten up," he said. While looking for more anti-Trumpkin-violence to enjoy, he clicked one day on video from one of Joey's rallies. "He gave a speech" about love and unity, says Tiny. "Everything he said made me confused. I thought all these f—ers were violent and racist. So I kind of had a change of heart and reached out to Joey. If I had found out about antifa before finding out about him, I'd have been antifa, too."

Here, Joey chants a favorite antifa chant: "No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA!"

EVERYONE'S REDEEMABLE

Together, Joey and Tiny represent a sort of yin and yang of antifa foes. Joey doesn't begrudge any of his comrades defending themselves if they're attacked, which plenty, along with Tiny, lustily do. For instance, there's Kyle "Based Stickman" Chapman. Stickman gained Internet folk-hero status, along with his nickname, by breaking a wooden signpost over some antifa ninja's head after they'd invaded a Trump rally in March in one of this year's Battles of Berkeley. We head over to Stickman's house just south of San Francisco for a strategy session and then again later to watch the Mayweather/McGregor fight.

Providing Krispy Kremes and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer as he chain-smokes American Spirits, Stickman, a squared-off salvage diver who looks like the fifth Baldwin brother, tells me that he faces eight years in the pen for some of his *Braveheart* exploits—all captured on YouTube, of course. Perhaps even worse, the judge said he's not allowed to go anywhere near sticks, putting a crimp in the trademark. While Stickman admits he's a "Western chauvinist" (his antifa adversaries love to portray him as a supremacist), he's called the participants in Charlottesville "racist alt-right f—in' Nazis." His Asian wife and child appear while I'm there, once again complicating assumed narratives.

Tiny, a former youth pastor and now a strip-club bouncer, will proudly show you Internet footage of himself dropping an antifa combatant like a sack of wet cement when he foolishly chopped at the mighty Samoan. But he says Joey never, ever fights back. While Joey's years on the gridiron suggest he can both take a hit and deliver one, Tiny says his strategy seems to be "making people feel badly about beating him up." He's never seen Joey throw a punch, no matter how much he's assaulted. For the sometimes-violent racket that he's in, it's a very Gandhi/Jesus approach. I point out to the 33-year-old that he's the same age J.C. was when He died. It seems to bother Joey for a second. "Well, my birthday is in November," the married father of two says.

Joey admits he's not some perfectly pure-of-heart missionary, that he's also a bit of a provocateur. Though how provocative should it be, he wonders, to attend your own free-speech rallies in liberal enclaves in a free country without wishing to be physically attacked? Media types frequently charge that violence follows his rallies, and indeed it does. Precisely because antifa brings it. Blaming Patriot Prayer for provoking antifa into attacking them at their own events is a bit like blaming black marchers for provoking racist Alabama policemen into creasing their skulls with billy clubs for traversing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It's both a denial of basic human freedoms and victim-blaming of the highest order.

When Joey draws antifa out to show themselves, it's not really conservatives he's trying to reach. Conservatives already loathe antifa, he says. Rather, Joey's interested in appealing to good, honest middle-of-the-road liberals. He likes them and believes there are plenty of them still out there. They're just not terribly vocal at the moment when it comes to suppressing their own extremists, who seem hellbent on suppressing everyone else. As with some of the rancid elements of the right, when the moderates are quiet, extremist voices become amplified. "I'm also trying to help conservatives understand that they have a warped perception of liberals, because the good liberals are keeping quiet." Joey says. "You go on YouTube and see thousands of videos of social justice warriors acting like crazy Batman because that's what gets the views. You're not going to see a video of a normal liberal making sense, you know?"

Above: At Crissy Field, the originally scheduled Patriot Prayer rally site, a counterprotester, left, argues with a Patriot Prayer supporter, at right, August 26; below, two counterprotesters in masks cross Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park to join an antifa mob.

IMAGES: HELENA ZEMANEK

Joey holds the door open for liberals in his freedom-loving unity movement, and some, including liberals of color, have joined. One African-American liberal I meet, Ryoga Vee, signed on after having an antifa member call him a Nazi and then try to set him on fire with a road flare when Vee attempted to attend Milo's Berkeley speech out

of curiosity. “I don’t care who you vote for,” Joey says, so long as you’re pro-freedom.

When Joey first started protesting, and was still operating with a lot of anger, he headed to Cleveland for the Republican National Convention. He saw an “anarchist and his stupid little buddy” holding a “f— the police” sign. Joey snapped, and ripped the sign in half. “His buddy came up to the other guy and said, ‘You need to tell the police!’” (Presumably, not the same police referred to in the sign.) “But I felt bad,” he says. “People just need to express what they believe. You think if I tear his sign in half, all of the sudden he’s gonna be like, ‘Oh, you’re right. I shouldn’t say f— the police’? So I gave him 20 bucks for his sign. He was just shocked. He thought I was going to beat them up. He was like, ‘Do you want change?’ I said no. He said, ‘Thanks, man, I appreciate that.’”

It’s a lesson he has to learn over and over again: Treat people like they’re human, and they’ll cease merely to be one-dimensional objects of scorn. Joey tells me he used to be a bad person. After high school, he had a wild, self-destructive streak. He dropped out for a time, willingly going homeless, though he came from a decent, stable family. He tramped around for three years, backpacking everywhere from Hawaii to Mexico, camping in the woods and sponging off girlfriends. He used people. He used a lot of drugs, whatever was available. He even did a short stint in jail for breaking into a restaurant and “stealing 1,200 bucks just for the fun of it.”

But Joey came back. People helped him. He remembered who he was and got his heart straight again. Maybe because of his own time in darkness, he thinks everyone’s redeemable and anyone can be helped, including those we think are bad guys who don’t even know they need it. This is a truth that he thinks we’ve all but forgotten.

DODGING ANTIFA

With Patriot Prayer’s rallies canceled at the last minute, the Patriots who made it to town anyway decide to have a press conference. They slate it for Alamo Square, across from San Francisco’s Painted Ladies. But the cops, still fearing violence, fence it off before they can get there. Unable to find a secure indoor venue, the Patriots notify some reporters, tell them not to announce the particulars so that antifa doesn’t disrupt them, and have a hurried presser in a pasture at a far-flung community center down the peninsula in Pacifica.

An ethnically diverse group of Patriots address the assembled reporters. One of them, Will Johnson, announces

that he is a black American and a Christian. "This is not a neo-Nazi, white supremacist rally," he says. "I don't know where they got that from. I actually called Nancy Pelosi's office and asked her to change that. There's no way I am a white supremacist." Looking at this black man with dreads, reporters laugh, but press on anyway with skeptical questions about the Patriots being potentially violent, forgetting that the entire reason we're in this out-of-the-way place is to stay one step ahead of antifa, whose stated goal is shutting down "white supremacists" like an African-American man saying "we've got to stop this fighting in America."

When a cop informs the Patriots that their whereabouts have leaked on social media, the press conference is hastily concluded, and Joey, Tiny, and I beat it back to the Toyota. With many of the counterprotests proceeding despite Liberty Weekend being canceled, Joey wants to pop up all over the city anyway in order to have "dialogues," reasoning that if people can just talk to him, some of their anger and fear will recede. It does and doesn't.

We hit Crissy Field, the originally scheduled rally site. There are just a few protesters, scattered antifa, and an overwhelming police presence. Everyone is still nervous violence will go off. Whatever dialogue could occur is mostly drowned out by a screaming woman in a shirt that reads "F— you, f— you, f— you, f— you, have a nice day." Further dialogue is obscured by an antifa member holding two eardrum-shattering horn sirens. The cops hustle us off, suggesting we have to leave, as though the Patriots are the disturbers of the peace. On the way out of the park, another group of Patriots get their car stoned by antifa.

We stop by a restaurant, where I see a multi-generational family sitting. They are clearly protesters, as one has a "Stop Trump/Pence Fascist Regime" sign sticking out of a stroller. Another wears a Cuban revolutionary hat. Two have "Indivisible" T-shirts on. A gray-haired woman literally has flowers in her hair. I walk over to their table and ask if they'd like to meet the man they are protesting, who is sitting at the bar, nursing a Patrón while Tiny has a Sprite. Their faces grow pinched. They look uneasy. "No, thank you," one of them says sternly. "Have a nice day."

Afterwards, we walk down to Civic Center, where an all-day protest wrapped up about 30 minutes earlier. Joey's presence there causes an immediate stir among the stragglers. A panicked woman in a "Resist" shirt closes a security gate, as though he might crash the stage and boost the sound system. She films him with her iPhone, as though Joey's a dangerous wild animal she spotted on safari.

Others end up forming a circle around him, with

spirited exchanges taking place as bike cops press in on all sides. A demented Indian guy wants Joey to reclaim the symbol of the swastika, which the Nazis appropriated from his people. "That's your battle," Joey says. There's a Black Panther who wants to kick Stickman's ass for allegedly pepper-spraying him at a rally, and he's hoping Joey will give him his address. Joey won't, but the Panther says he respects him anyway for coming down and facing the people. There's a huffy white beardo in a rainbow "Orlando" shirt who keeps interrupting Joey accusatorily, while trying to give the floor to people of color, who he deems worthy of listening to. A masked-up antifa blasts a horn siren a foot away from Joey's ear for a good 10 minutes, while a man dressed in a Super Girl costume, complete with red boots and cape, yells at him to stop.

A forceful black surgical nurse who calls herself a liberal ends up fiercely defending Joey and Tiny against all comers, turning the tables on liberal hypocrisy. "They're so progressive, but they go home in their BMWs back to Glen Park, where they don't have to walk through Tenderloin shit." She shames people for slandering these black men as white supremacists when "we're missing one vital element, which is whiteness." Joey sheepishly points out that he's not black, he's Japanese. "You're a person of color," the woman barks. "I'll take that," he says.

The exchanges last for an hour. Though Joey stays serene throughout, the conversation rages around him like a whirlwind. It is raucous and rude but occasionally affirming and generous. It's untidy, but there's something beautiful about it, as there often is when people just stand in front of each other and interact, instead of regarding each other from a distance with mutual suspicion. Close your eyes and shut off the antifa horn siren, and free speech can sound a lot like music.

MAYHEM IN THE PARK

The next day in Berkeley, a different tune is played. A small band of Patriots decide to visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, where the "No to Marxism" rally was to be held. It has now been appropriated by thousands of impromptu protesters. The Patriots will make a stand for free speech, without actually expecting to be able to talk. I ask Joey what the objective is today. "Not dying," he says.

From the jump, it's a goat rodeo. Our four-car caravan gets separated coming out of the hotel parking lot. When the Patriots try to rendezvous, their radios aren't working. "Why do we need radios?" wonders Joey. "Couldn't we just use phones like everyone else? The veterans like to have their fun." When we get to Berkeley, nobody can find parking near each other, while staying 10 or so blocks away from the action in order to protect the cars. As the ex-military types among them seem to take a half an hour to kit up (pads, tear-gas goggles, GoPro cameras, etc.), Joey and I both have to take a leak. We do so stealthily in a nearby park. Joey doesn't want to get caught on camera literally pissing on Berkeley. Bad optics.

While the preparations continue, I grow impatient. "Let's go! This is Berkeley, not Somalia," I say. Joey agrees and isn't sure it's wise to come in with a large contingent anyway. It makes it look like you're spoiling for combat, and fighting is not his intention. So he stalks off towards the demonstration with me, Tiny (now in goggles and football shoulder pads), and a political rapper who plays Patriots events named Pete V, aka Political Muscle. Pete looks like a pirate with a stars'n'stripes do-rag, which in these parts doubles as a bull's-eye on your head.

A hundred or so masked-up antifa ninjas and affiliated protesters seem to simultaneously turn. It looks like we've interrupted al Qaeda tryouts. Joey, Tiny, and Pete all raise their hands high in the air, and flash peace signs, a conciliatory gesture. But nobody here wants peace.

On the walk up to the square, Joey's several paces ahead, seemingly in another zone, not even noticing the protester in the "Nasty Woman" shirt who starts filming him, as though she's doing surveillance. After all the hype, he is now so infamous in Berkeley his face is instantly recognizable, and people act like it's Jesse James walking into a bank. They elbow each other, scandalized.

From the moment we hit the square, the "Nazi" catcalls start. Whatever's happening on the stage seems to cease to exist, and the energy around us turns very dark, very fast. Joey, Tiny, and Pete start walking with greater purpose, on the balls of their feet, almost like fighters entering a ring or Christians entering the Coliseum, except instead of facing one lion, they're facing thousands. As the chants rain down ("Nazis are here! . . . F— you! . . . F—ing fascists!"), we near the stage thinking we might find some kind of buffer zone, since the police knew that some of Joey's original rally-goers would show up. But there isn't one. Our progress is halted when we run up into a small clearing snug up against a barrier. And behind that barrier, near the park's "Peace Wall," is a wall of human blackness.

A hundred or so masked-up antifa ninjas and affiliated protesters seem to simultaneously turn. It looks like we've interrupted al Qaeda tryouts. Joey, Tiny, and Pete all raise

their hands high in the air, and flash peace signs, a conciliatory gesture. But nobody here wants peace. Not with fascists on the scene. As Joey nears the barrier, one of the ninjas swings and misses. Then the barrier topples, and they pour over, chanting, "Fascists go home!"

As I'm reading the action into my recorder, antifa slides around me on all sides, nearly carrying me off like a breaking wave. The boys are about 20 yards off and walk backwards. Pete catches a shot right on his stars'n'stripes dome from a two-by-four and goes down, blacking out for a second. Tiny, trying to protect everybody, pulls him up with his massive Samoan hand and pushes him out of the scrum. The mob ignores Pete, as he's just an appetizer. Joey is the entree.

First he catches a slap in the head, then someone gashes him with something in his ribs. He keeps his hands up, as though that will save him, while he keeps getting dragged backwards by his shirt, Tiny trying to pull him away from the bloodthirsty ninjas. Someone crashes a flagpole smack on Joey's head, which will leave a welt so big that Tiny later calls him "the Unicorn." Not wishing to turn his back on the crowd, a half-speed backwards chase ensues, as Joey and Tiny are blasted with shots of bear spray and pepper spray. They hurdle a jersey barrier, crossing Martin Luther King Jr. Way while antifa continue throwing bottles at them. The mob stalks Joey and Tiny all the way to an Alameda County police line, which the two bull their way through, though the cops initially look like they're going to play Red Rover and keep them out. No arrests are made. Except for Joey and Tiny, who are cuffed.

A crack reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* will later write that they were arrested for charging the police, which couldn't be less true. A Berkeley cop tells me they were arrested for their own safety (and weren't charged). When I catch up and reach the police line, the cops won't let me past to follow my subjects. My reportorial dispassion has worn thin. I yell at the police for doing nothing, for standing by while two men could've been killed. One cop tells me there's a thin line between solving one problem and being the cause of more, as though they're afraid to offend antifa. I am sick at what I just witnessed. Angry, even. I wheel around on some protesters, asking them if they think it's right to beat people down in the street. "Hell yeah," says one. I ask them to cite anything Joey has said that offends them, as though being offended justifies this. A coward in a black mask says: "They're f—ing Nazis. There's nothing they have to say to offend us."

All around me, good non-antifa liberals go about their business, pretending none of this has happened, carrying "Stand Against Hate" signs. There's the sound truck with preachers in clerical garb, leading a "Whose streets/our streets" chant. There's the gray-haired interdenominational "Choral Majority" singing peace songs: "There's no hatred in my land / Where I'm bound." I want to vomit on the Berkeley Peace Wall.

I'm made even more sick when I look down the road and see a punching, kicking mob form a circle around a new victim. By the time I roll up on them, an older man in camo-wear spits out from the maelstrom. As he runs to safety, an antifa thug runs up behind him, sucker-punching him as hard as he can in the back. I will go home that night and watch several more cold-blooded beatdowns on YouTube that I didn't personally witness.

Above: Pete V, a Patriot Prayer supporter, passes in front of masked and black-clad antifa ranks in Berkeley, moments before they attack him; below, the attackers pepper-spray rally organizer Joey Gibson as Tiny Toese pulls him away.

A squad car rolls up on the mob, but the black masks block it. The cop throws his car into slow reverse, inching backwards, as if to say "please don't hurt me," while an antifa member yells "F— you, pig!" Finally, I start hearing whistling smoke grenades fired by the otherwise useless

TOP, ELIJAH NOUVELAGE / GETTY; BELOW, AMY OSBORNE / AFP / GETTY

Above, masked counterprotesters kick and punch a Hispanic man in Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, August 27; at right, Tiny and Joey, post-release.

police, dispersing the crowd. I watch antifa retreat in every direction, some jumping fences and cutting through residential yards. As I run down the street, getting out of range, I'm joined by a middle-aged man I saw witnessing what I just witnessed, filming it on his phone.

His name is Bobby Hutton, or at least that's the name he gives me. He's not antifa. He looks and talks like a surfer dude, with long hair and aviator shades, and identifies himself as a political activist. He's smiling, seemingly entertained by the spectacle. I ask him how he can smile, as if what we've just witnessed is all okay. "It's politics," he says, shrugging. "Politics is in the street. Always has been, and always will be." I tell him I'm profiling Joey. "Oh, that's fun," he says. I add that I haven't heard one disturbing, racist thing come out of Joey's mouth. "I'm familiar with Joey's presence," Hutton says. "And you're right that he stays on this side of white supremacy. But he's a shit disturber. And if you wanna disturb shit, Berkeley's always been a good place for that. There aren't a lot of places in America where you can get this kind of opposition, and Joey knows that. Which is why Joey's here."

Hutton claims antifa has "legitimate political beliefs." I tell him beating people down in the street to suppress their speech doesn't sound very legitimate or American to me, and that eventually, if this nonsense continues, somebody's going to get killed, just as someone was in Charlottesville. Violence, he says, still smiling, is "as American as apple pie. Berkeley pie."

"You can't like this," I tell him.

"If you like the horseshoe theory of American politics," he rejoins, "the far right and the far left are closer than either believe."

'WE CAN'T JUST SHUT UP'

My phone rings, showing Joey's number, but it's Tiny, telling me Joey's been taken to the hospital. Tiny's about to be released from police custody. He'll pick me up on a side street behind the station, so as not to attract more antifa attention. When I get into the Toyota, I suggest that Tiny maybe ought to change out of his American flag shirt if he wants to be stealthy. A red-white-and-blue 6′6″ Samoan doesn't exactly whisper, "Ignore me." But Tiny is obstinate: "They wanna rip off this shirt? Kill me. Because it ain't comin' off."

We head to the hospital. Joey is discharged, wearing doctor scrubs and socks, holding his clothes and shoes in a plastic bag, completely saturated with bear and pepper spray. They had to scrub him down in the shower for an hour to get it off, his skin burning all the while. I've taken the wheel of the Toyota, with Tiny sleeping in the cramped back seat after injuring his ribs. He insists they're not broken, but his forehead is clammy, and he's cold sweating.

I tell my battle-weary subjects I'll treat them to dinner and drinks after their ordeal, but we're getting the hell out of Berkeley, as I honestly don't trust that they won't be attacked again, here in the cradle of the Free Speech Movement, if somebody spots them. As we drive over the San Mateo Bridge, I ask Joey how he feels about what happened today. "I'm starting to love this town," he deadpans. "It's starting to be my playground."

Then he gets serious. "We can't just shut up, just be quiet, and let this evil continue. The darkness continues to get bigger and bigger in our country, and it will be gone. The country will burn, I'm telling you, if we don't do things to stand up against it. We all take it for granted. We take for granted everything that we have. That's why we have to wake up and understand. Goddamn, we have too much to lose." His eyes well as he takes a long pause, looking out on the shimmering San Francisco Bay. "We can't stand by, we've gotta stand up. And we've got to do it together, or it's gonna be gone." ♦

IMAGES: HELENA ZEMANEK

Regulatory Rollback

Paging the attorney general: the administrative state won't deconstruct itself

By Adam J. White

When the new Congress convened in January, its immediate focus was the administrative state. After passing the Midnight Rules Relief Act to accelerate the process for nullifying the Obama administration's major regulations, the House promptly passed the REINS Act—the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act—which prohibits agencies from imposing costly new regulations without Congress's express approval. Days later, the House passed the Regulatory Accountability Act, to subject agencies' rulemaking efforts to new procedural requirements and heightened judicial review.

Much of this had a familiar ring to it. The House had passed the REINS Act and Regulatory Accountability Act before—repeatedly. Versions of the bills passed the House in 2011, 2013, and 2015, only to die in the Senate each time. Not that the bills didn't have fans in the Senate. In late 2010, a dozen senators cosponsored the REINS Act. Among them was Alabama's Senator Jeff Sessions, who painted the state of American governance in bleak terms:

> We've witnessed a dramatic expansion of the use of administrative rulemaking to set national policy on major issues. There is an appropriate role for administrative rules, but it is a dereliction of congressional duty to allow the executive branch to fill in important details of legislation after it is passed, and it is an executive overreach to use the rulemaking process to circumvent the will of the people. This problem is exacerbated by the trend of appointing unelected czars that are not subject to Senate confirmation or the scrutiny of congressional oversight. This legislation would implement important changes in the rulemaking process to limit the scope of rulemaking authority, and to ensure that Congress passes judgment on major rules that could affect our economy.

Senator Sessions's plea fell on deaf ears; upon its introduction, that year's version of the REINS Act was referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, never to return.

But seven years later, Sessions has the opportunity to play a much more significant role in securing enactment of legislative reforms that he has long advocated. Now, as attorney general, Sessions can focus national attention on these issues. To borrow a favorite phrase from a predecessor, Eric Holder, the Justice Department can convene a "national conversation" on the modern administrative state.

Indeed, if the attorney general fails to shine a spotlight on this issue, then it risks languishing once again in the Senate. Even with a bipartisan coalition of senators now promoting regulatory reforms, there remains significant risk that this year's regulatory reform bills will ultimately share the same sad fate as previous years' versions. The attorney general and the Justice Department are uniquely well-suited to inform this national debate and energize the reform effort—just as their predecessors did seven decades ago, at the dawn of the modern administrative state.

When former White House adviser Steve Bannon told the audience at the 2017 Conservative Political Action Conference that the new administration was committed to "deconstruction of the administrative state," the CPAC crowd burst into applause. Bannon and the Trump administration were preaching to the choir. Conservatives have long clamored for thorough reform of modern administrative governance. Year after year, the House has passed significant legislation to reform, modernize, and restrain the agencies. In recent years, conservatives drew additional intellectual energy from the judicial opinions of Justice Clarence Thomas and several federal judges (including Neil Gorsuch), and from books like Philip Hamburger's *Is Administrative Law Unlawful?* And the reformist mood only intensified as the Obama administration grew increasingly aggressive and creative in asserting administrative power, unilaterally setting national policies on health care, energy markets, immigration, and even the Internet, either in lieu of statutory authorization or in outright defiance of Congress's statutes.

But while recent efforts to reform regulatory agencies have been led by conservative Republicans, they have found

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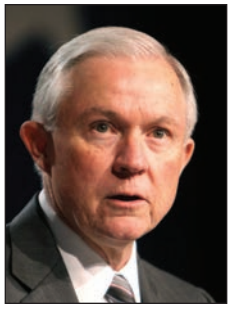
support among some Democrats, too—especially Senators Heidi Heitkamp, Joe Manchin, Claire McCaskill, and others.

Such bipartisan interest might surprise contemporary observers, but it is hardly unprecedented. In his speech accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in 1976, Jimmy Carter insisted that "Democrats believe that competition is better than regulation, and we intend to combine strong safeguards for consumers with minimal intrusion of government in our free economic system." In the four years that followed, the Carter administration set precedents for some of the Reagan administration's most important regulatory reforms; Carter's Executive Order 12044, for example, asserted significant White House oversight of the scattered agencies' rulemaking efforts. In the 1980s, Senator Dale Bumpers pressed unsuccessfully for legislation intensifying judicial review of agency actions.



It's no time to go wobbly, Jeff.

And after the Reagan-Bush years, President Clinton continued his predecessors' practice of overseeing administrative agencies. "The American people deserve a regulatory system that works for them, not against them," he announced in Executive Order 12866: "a regulatory system that protects and improves their health, safety, environment, and well-being and improves the performance of the economy without imposing unacceptable or unreasonable costs on society" and "regulatory policies that recognize that the private sector and private markets are the best engine for economic growth."

Today, that spirit of good-government reform among progressives is carried on first and foremost by North Dakota's Heitkamp and West Virginia's Manchin. Heitkamp, a former state attorney general and state tax commissioner, worked to reduce the regulatory burden in North Dakota. She recounted this experience in a 2016 address to a Federalist Society conference: "With the right kind of scalpel, with the right kind of innovation, with the right kind of direction," she said, "we can in fact pare down this morass of regulations that we have." Heitkamp is no libertarian; in her Federalist Society talk, she reiterated the basic need for government to use smart regulation to set reliable ground rules to protect the public and undergird functioning markets. This requires government to strike a balance: "It's a tricky balance in regulation; it's a tricky balance in trying to figure out at what point [you] do not try and regulate a perfect world, but at what point do you walk away and say, 'buyer beware'?"

To that end, Senator Heitkamp has sought common ground with Senate Republicans. At a September 2016 hearing, she observed that Democrats skeptical of regulatory reform in the Obama years might come to appreciate the need for greater agency accountability under a different president. Regulatory reform "should not be controversial," she said, "because I just keep asking my colleagues, you could have a president that is not a Democrat. What oversight, what accountability do you want for the decisions that are going to be made in that case?" And so she stressed the need for bipartisan cooperation on regulatory reform. "When we can sit down," she told one witness called by the Republican majority, "and you and I nod our heads in total agreement about kind of where we are, recognizing that we may not agree on everything as a matter of politics, we know that we have some fertile ground here to actually get something done."

One particularly fertile piece of ground for bipartisan reform is the modernization of the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946. That 70-year-old piece of legislation remains the most important body of law governing federal agencies' regulatory actions. At the time of its enactment, it was a realistic, practical set of laws that reflected the daily work of administrative agencies. Seven decades later, however, the APA reflects a world that no longer exists—a "lost world of administrative law," as two professors recently put it. Administrative agencies long ago learned how to sidestep or minimize the APA's septuagenarian standards. When the APA's breezy process for "informal rulemaking"—that is, notice-and-comment rulemaking—can be used to impose far-reaching and disruptive national policies ranging from the EPA's Clean Power Plan to the FCC's Open Internet Order on broadband Internet services, it is clear that the APA and other parts of administrative law are due for reform and modernization, to better reflect the realities of today's overweening administrative state.

The House has repeatedly passed legislation to bulk up the APA's procedural requirements and judicial-review standards, in a bill known as the Regulatory Accountability Act. This spring, Senators Heitkamp and Manchin joined Republican colleagues Rob Portman and Orrin Hatch in cosponsoring a Senate version of the bill. Because it is bipartisan, it reflects some moderation of the House's bill. But it remains a significant improvement upon the status quo.

At least it would be an improvement, if the Senate and House were to pass it and the president were to sign it.

President Trump already has signed many documents to reform and improve the modern administrative process. But to date they all have been executive orders, not legislation, and thus they stand little chance of outlasting the inauguration of the next Democratic president. President Trump has ordered executive agencies to rescind two old regulations for every new one and to cap the

GAGE SKIDMORE/

total costs imposed by regulations. He has ordered agencies to review and reduce regulatory burdens upon the development of U.S. energy resources. He has issued orders directing agencies to reform their regulation of private lands, financial markets, education, and other subjects. And to carry out these executive orders and Congress's statutes, President Trump has appointed a number of cabinet secretaries and officials, including EPA administrator Scott Pruitt, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, and White House "regulatory czar" Neomi Rao, who bring a reform-minded approach to their offices.

These are all welcome achievements. But long-lasting reform requires legislation. And that may not happen without the aforementioned Jeff Sessions.

Attorney General Sessions already has reiterated President Trump's calls for regulatory reform. Pursuant to Executive Order 13777, Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda, the Justice Department has established a task force for identifying regulations to be repealed or reformed, and in late June the department issued a request for public comment on "specific regulatory actions previously taken by the Department that should be repealed, replaced, or modified, consistent with applicable law."

But the attorney general can go much further. The Justice Department is uniquely positioned to inform and help to lead the legislative effort to reform and modernize administrative law. The Justice Department litigates regulatory cases every day, defending administrative agencies' actions in the federal courts and even in the Supreme Court. No one knows better than the Justice Department the fault lines and leverage points of administrative law, and thus no one in government can speak more credibly on the best ways to improve administrative law than Justice officials.

This is not a task that can be accomplished within litigation itself. While in theory the Justice Department can forswear reliance upon judicial doctrines that tilt too far in favor of the agencies, in practice lawyers cannot simply refuse to invoke precedents and statutes in their favor. But if the Justice Department cannot change the rules in the middle of a particular game, the department can ask Congress to level the playing field for everyone going forward.

Indeed, this is precisely the role that the Justice Department played in the years leading to the development of the Administrative Procedure Act in the 1940s. For the first part of the 20th century, the nascent field of administrative law spurred intense debate among lawyers, scholars, and government officials. Eventually, in 1939, Attorney General Frank Murphy (a future Supreme Court justice) appointed a special committee to study the law of federal administration and propose reforms. In appointing the committee, Murphy observed that rapid expansion of the New Deal-era administrative state had "centered the attention of the Bar and of the public at large upon the vital role played by the administrative process." Given the criticisms that "have from time to time been directed at certain features of administrative procedure," he concluded that it "would tend toward a clarity of thinking to ascertain in a thorough and comprehensive manner to what extent, if any, these criticisms are well founded and to suggest improvements if any are found advisable." To aid his special committee in its work, Attorney General Murphy created an advisory committee with representatives from all federal agencies, to contribute their own expertise.

Murphy recognized that this work fell squarely in the Justice Department's wheelhouse. "The Department of Justice has played a vital part in the recent reform of Federal civil procedure," he recalled. "It owes a duty to render similar service in respect to administrative procedure."

In the years that followed, the Justice Department did not shrink from that duty. In 1941, under Attorney General Robert Jackson, the Justice Department's committee produced a landmark report on the need to reform administrative law. And in 1947, a year after President Truman signed the Administrative Procedure Act into law, the Justice Department (then led by Tom Clark) issued a final report explaining the new law's standards. This work proved to be so influential and credible that the Supreme Court and other courts continue to turn to it deferentially, to better understand how the APA's terms should be construed and applied.

That is the best possible service that the Justice Department could possibly render now toward the goal of reforming the administrative state and modernizing administrative law. The Regulatory Accountability Act, the REINS Act, and other bills pending in the House and Senate would be immense improvements on our outdated administrative statutes. But if these measures get stuck in the gridlock of health care and tax reforms, then the Justice Department can seize the opportunity to expand upon Congress's work.

Indeed, the Justice Department could convene a much broader national conversation, bringing together the state attorneys general who, led by Texas's Ken Paxton, recently sent the White House a letter offering further suggestions for structural regulatory reform. Such an effort by Sessions would echo the legacy of his predecessors—such as Attorney General Ed Meese, who led the Reagan-era project of returning American constitutionalism to its proper roots in the Constitution's text. And it would echo the legacies of attorneys general Frank Murphy and Robert Jackson, who dedicated years to the project of understanding the administrative state and proposing legislative reforms, an effort that produced invaluable benefits to the legislative process then and in the decades that followed.

Attorney General Sessions should follow their example and assert the legislative role for which the Justice Department is singularly well suited. ♦

Writer's Seat

A walk through the home that inspired E. B. White's essays and stories. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

A friend sent me news that E.B. White's saltwater farm on the coast of Maine is up for sale, and my mind leapt back nearly 20 years—an impressive leap for a mind in my condition—to a visit I'd made there to mark the 100th anniversary of White's birth in 1899. I was on assignment for a magazine, a staggeringly profitable magazine that offered its writers expense accounts that can only be described as bottomless. (Yes, kids, there really was such a magazine. Lots of them, in fact.) White had died 14 years before, in 1985. My job was to call on the current owners of the house and nose around and come back with some kind of publishable tribute.

Everyone who pushes words around a screen for a living has a special writer or two whose influence is so deeply grooved in him that he can never quite get over it. These are not the profoundest writers in the scribbler's experience, necessarily, but they are the most congenial in temperament, and they often arrive at a tender time, when the mind and spirit are most impressionable. White was this writer for me, and I can still remember the sensation of reading the first of his essays that put me instantly in thrall to him and permanently in his debt. (Unlike most readers, who find White through *Charlotte's Web* or one of his other children's books, I backed into him, starting with his many books of essays.) As the years passed, I saw the inevitable unevenness in his stuff. But when a writer grabs you young, he usually grabs you for good.

I was thrilled and moved by the prospect of seeing his house, and the barn out back where Charlotte wove her web, and the meadow behind the house that led down to the little waterside boathouse where White, in fair weather, pecked away at his typewriter. I had tried to worm my way in there before. Sometime in the early '80s, White had graciously answered a fan letter I'd sent him, and his warm response, I saw at once, established a special intimacy between us. I didn't learn till much later that he would type out a dozen or more such letters a day. Answering fan mail was the chief occupation of his declining years, and one he didn't much like.

Anyway, a year or two after our exchange I found myself out of work, footloose, and broke. I reasoned that White, an octogenarian widower living alone and in poor health, would appreciate a visit of unknown duration from a young stranger with lots of time on his hands and no visible means of support. As a courtesy I dropped my friend a line letting him know I was planning to come see him in Maine—although *planning* was a deceptive word. At the time I couldn't plan a trip to the grocery store.

This was years before email, and I had no idea the postal service could operate so quickly. Within four days an envelope was in my mailbox, with elegant pale blue lettering showing the return address in the upper left hand corner. "Dear Mr. Ferguson," the letter read. "Thank you for your letter about the possibility of a visit." After this uplifting sentence, the tone went brittle. He mentioned a couple of his stubborn ailments, including his failing eyesight. And then: "So here I am, one eye gone, half my wits gone, and you want to come and view the ruins. Figure it out. There's one of me, at most, and there are ten thousand of you. Please don't come. Sincerely, E.B. White."

A couple years later, White's death made the front page of the *New York Times*. And then, still later, came this assignment: airfare to Bangor, a high-end rental car, a generous amount of walking-around money, and three nights at the Blue Hill Inn, the famously quaint bed and breakfast down the road from White's farm. A friend gave me the phone number of Roger Angell, like White a celebrated writer for the *New Yorker*, and also White's stepson. It took me a while to work up the nerve to call him.

When I did manage it, I told him the story of my ill-fated correspondence with his stepfather, and he laughed. "That sounds about right," he said. Angell apologized that he wouldn't be at his own place in Maine while I was there, otherwise he could show me around himself. Instead he gave me the numbers of several locals who had been great friends of White, and of the couple from South Carolina who had bought White's farm after his death and used it now as a summer getaway.

From the Bangor airport, an hour away, I drove a wandering route to Blue Hill. When I hit the outskirts of town—it's a very short-skirted town—I passed a sign for the fairgrounds. I hit the brakes, threw the car in reverse (I hadn't seen another car for 20 minutes), and turned onto the dusty drive through the open metal gates. I'd never been there, of course, but the grounds looked just like I remembered them. Later, after I'd unpacked at the inn, I pulled *Charlotte's Web* from the canvas bag I'd brought, full of White's books.

When they pulled into the Fair Grounds, they could hear music and

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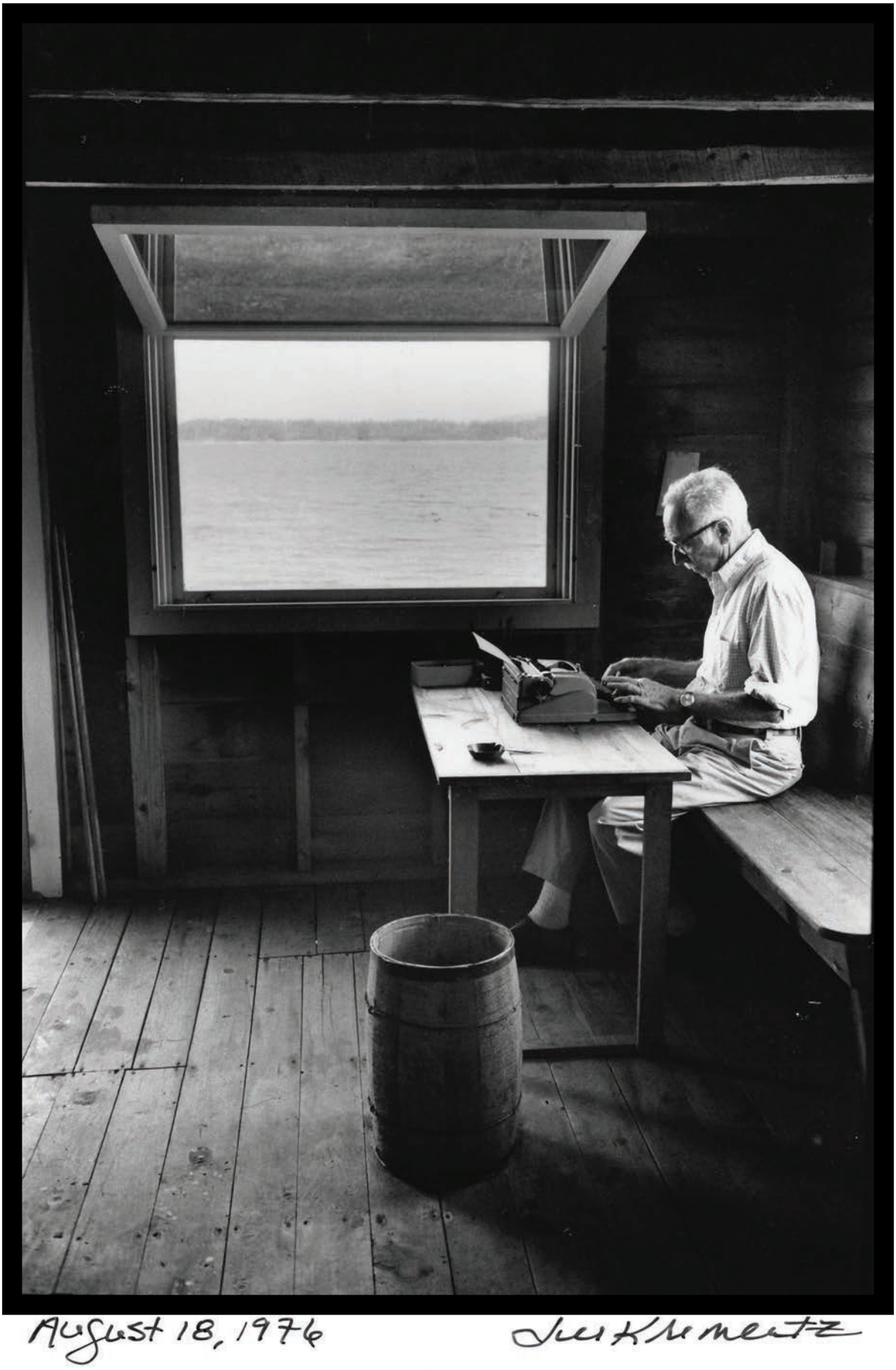

E. B. White photographed by Jill Krementz in his boathouse in Maine

> see the Ferris wheel turning in the sky. They could smell the dust of the race track where the sprinkling cart had moistened it; and they could smell hamburgers frying and see balloons aloft. They could hear sheep blatting in their pens.

At the fairgrounds there were no hamburgers frying, no balloons aloft, not a sheep within earshot; the fair wouldn't kick off for another month. But the pens were here—they were the same pens where Wilbur the pig won his medal at the fair, the pens where Charlotte the spider laid her eggs before she breathed her last, thereby prompting from readers, young and old, the largest disgorgement of tears since the death of Little Nell. When I got back to my car it was silted with a coating of fairground dust.

This feeling recurred as I moved about the neighborhood. I was seeing things I remembered seeing though I'd never seen them. A lifelong immersion in a writer's work can do that to a reader, especially when the work is as vivid and particular as White's. One morning I stopped at the general store in the crossroads town of Brooklin, near the post office where White used to pick up his mail every day, using a basket to carry home the bundles of unsolicited gifts and the stacks of fan letters, including, nearly 20 years before, those two breathless letters of mine.

When I crossed the stoop to the store I remembered the scene in an early essay in *One Man's Meat*, White's account of farm life in the years leading up to the Second World War. Having moved there from Manhattan a few months before, and regarded suspiciously by neighbors as a city slicker, White had been trying to befriend a local he'd hired as a farmhand. The youngster finally cracked through his Maine quietness and reserve, that carapace of reticence installed around every Mainer at birth. White took the moment as a small victory. It happened right here on this stoop, as the two men sat in the sun. It's not a major event in the essay or the book, just a hint about the Mainers he was coming to know, and the stoop—and the store—looked just as I knew they would.

I spoke to the long, thin fellow manning the giant brass cash register, vintage 19th century, and he told me I could likely find the store's former proprietor, who had known White for decades, across the road at the library. The library was built with funds raised by White's wife Katharine, a celebrated editor herself, and there was a long shelf with copies of each of White's books, signed by the author. I found the old fellow reading newspapers, and we sat on the porch to talk. I took out my pen and reporter's notebook, a stupid move.

E. B. White's jealousy for his privacy was legendary. He thought about this tension a great deal—between the essayist who invites readers in and the private man who insists they mind their own business.

This Mainer's carapace showed no signs of having ever been breached; it shone unblemished as an egg. "Mr. White always left town on his birthday," he said, "because that's when all the reporters would show up, bothering him." He glanced down at my notebook. "He'd tell us at the store where he was going, but nobody else. He always went to the same place to hide out."

Where was that? I asked.

"We always kept mum about it to the reporters," he said.

Was the place close by?

"Oh, I couldn't tell you that."

Why not? I asked. After all, I said, Mr. White is—well, dead.

He straightened up, offended.

"Sir," he said, "I told Mr. White I wouldn't tell anybody. And I'm not going to."

And he didn't.

Every night I ate dinner in the dining room at the inn, where the fish was fresh and simply prepared. In the middle of dinner one night, the host—and, from what I could tell, the owner and chef—hustled over to my table.

"Mr. Angell is on the line from New York and would like to talk to you," he said.

He took me back to the kitchen where the phone was, and I picked up the receiver amid the clatter of dishes and the chatter of kitchen help.

"How did you know where to find me?" I asked Angell.

"Well, where else would you be?"

He had a couple more phone numbers he'd forgotten to give me, including the number of Henry Allen, who'd worked full-time for White for nearly 40 years as manager of the farm. Allen figured often in White's writing as a stalwart of Yankee knowhow and savvy. I had assumed he was no longer alive—a mythic figure beyond reach. Angell had a few other pointers about things to see, by way of making me feel at home, even if he could only do so by long distance. I took his friendliness and generosity to mean that he was as eager as I was to see that White's centenary didn't go unnoticed.

When I returned to my table, the host asked if I was writing about White. "He would come here for dinner several times a week, after his wife died," he said. "Always alone. This was his table right here." He gestured to the table next to mine. It was a table for two, up against a large window, on the other side of which was a riot of foxglove and asters. Had he been there, eating plump scallops gathered from the bay down the hill, I hoped I would have had the courage not to bother him.

The jealousy for his privacy became legendary. When he wrote from his farm in dispatches for the *New Yorker*, he was fuzzy about where he was. The dateline was always "Allen Cove," a nautical designation known only to sailors. Of course, diligent admirers could always find it. Angell cleared the way for me to see Russell Wiggins, an old friend of White's and a fellow escapee from the city life, and a lifelong newspaperman

who had bought the local paper to run in his dotage. He used to stop by White's house on his way home from work for a martini "or two or three," he said.

"People would be coming by all the time," Wiggins told me in his office. "Perfect strangers, parking in the driveway, just walking right up to the front door and knock-knock-knock." The impertinence still shocked him. Usually, he said, White wouldn't answer the door, though he might call his housekeeper to shoo them away. Unless . . .

"He could look out the window and see who was on the drive," Wiggins said. "And if it was a pretty girl, well, you bet the door was flung wide open. She was welcome to have a martini too."

The privacy was selectively enforced. He was after all a man who made a large part of his living writing about his own life—a master of the personal essay who over a long career gave only a handful of interviews, refused to appear on television or talk on the radio, and vanished whenever a neighbor spotted someone with a reporter's notebook. The paradox is all the more noticeable nowadays, when an essayist in these confessional times is liable to expose his innards until readers recoil or beg for mercy. White had better manners, but he thought about this tension a great deal, between the essayist who invites readers in and the private man who insists they mind their own business.

"Only a person who is congenitally self-centered has the effrontery and the stamina to write essays," he wrote, in an introduction to his collected essays. "I have always been aware that I am by nature self-absorbed and egoistical; to write of myself to the extent I have done indicates a too great attention to my own life, not enough to the lives of others." In the end it was a means of freezing his readers in place: Stay right where you are, this far and no farther.

If he sounds waspish, the man that White left on the page was unfailingly companionable. In his essays he is modest, self-aware, wry, generous, a bit jittery, well-meaning, and never more than a beat or two from uncorking a joke. That man is why, on any given day, you can find one book or another of White's lying open somewhere around my house. It may go undisturbed for weeks or months, but I like to know he's there. As I went around Brooklin, I was relieved to hear from his friends that the White they knew was roughly compatible with the one I had met through the books. But no one claimed to know him well. And that was as far as they wanted to go. "We're private people," one of his neighbors told me. "We respect the privacy of others. And we're always rather surprised when someone else does not."

After the third or fourth such encounter I began to get a creepy feeling. I wondered if it was the same feeling a stalker gets.

White's will stipulated that the house remain in private hands after his death—it was not to be turned over to a foundation and made a shrine or a museum or a writer's retreat. White's son Joel, who survived his father by only a decade, waved off a couple of offers coming from that direction before finding a suitable private buyer. But the desire to enshrine the house as something other than a home lives on. When word of the impending sale made the news last month, the president of PETA sent a letter to the realtor asking that "the owners convert the home into an empathy museum for pigs, complete with a vegan café offering veggie sausages, vegan BLTs, and more."

PETA, so far as I know, got no response from the owners, Robert and Mary Gallant, who bought the house from Joel and have used it as a summer house ever since. When Joel White met the Gallants, a few months after his father's death, he saw they satisfied all his criteria: They loved Maine, they loved Brooklin and Blue Hill, and they wanted the house to be a place for a large extended family, where children and grandchildren and cousins could gather.

When I phoned them they said they were happy to cooperate with anything that would honor Mr. White on his birthday. The house was a couple miles south of Blue Hill on another two-lane state road. I told myself I didn't need directions, and I didn't: When I got there I knew the place, a handsome clapboard colonial of stately proportions, set back from the road behind a rail fence. After I pulled into the drive I saw the cupola on the barn out back, and I recalled from *One Man's Meat* that White was putting the final touches on the weathervane when he heard the news that Germany had invaded Poland. (The contrast between the banality of the chore and the enormity of the event was not lost on him; the carrying on of domestic duties amid the calamitous news from Europe is one of the themes of the book.)

Off to the side stood an ancient elm, presumably the "coon tree" of the essay of the same name, where a family of raccoons made their home in its hollow right outside White's bedroom window. I parked and went around to the back of the house, as Mr. Gallant had instructed me, along the lane where the two geese, one old, one in the bloom of youth, had conducted their epic battle in "The Geese," the last great essay White wrote. It's about regeneration and old age—a kind of *memento mori* in prose.

And so it went as Mr. Gallant showed me around. I remembered sights I'd never seen. Mr. Gallant was tall and imposing but his voice was soft with a South Carolina lilt. First he took me to the barn, which had not been used as a barn for many years; it was swept clean, and the sea breezes had long ago blown away whatever remained of the barn smells. The inside was awash in light from the windows the Gallants had installed. The plank floor was spotless, gleaming from polish. It wasn't a barn but a showcase of a barn. A spider web, even one woven by Charlotte, wouldn't have lasted a half-hour here.

The Gallants, a sociable couple, liked to string lights along the walls, slide open the big doors, and throw parties. But still there was the basement pen that Wilbur called home, the workbench with White's tools, and a bizarre contraption dangling from the ceiling. Mr. Gallant explained what it was, though I already knew. "My doctor has ordered me to put my head in

The barn and "the best swing in the county" as they look in 2017

traction," White wrote, in an essay from 1956. "I have rigged a delightful traction center in the barn, using a canvas halter, a length of clothesline, two galvanized pulleys, a twelve-pound boat anchor, a milking stool, and a barn swallow." Like many writers, he suffered horribly from the disease hypochondria. This ingenious contraption was material testimony to its incurable nature.

Beyond the traction pulleys I saw the rope swing from *Charlotte's Web*: "Mr. Zuckerman had the best swing in the county. It was a single long piece of heavy rope tied to the beam over the north doorway." Mrs. Gallant occasionally entertained grade-school groups here "to do the whole Charlotte deal," as she put it. She'd arrange hay bales in a semicircle for the kids to sit on and play a recording of White reading from the book. Best of all, she let them take turns on the rope swing, an item that could only survive from a long-gone era: A child gets access to it by jumping from a loft, with no guard rails, no foam floor, no halters or strings to prevent a scraped knee or sprained ankle. I think this is the way White wanted it. "Mothers for miles around worried about Zuckerman's swing," we read in *Charlotte's Web*. "They feared some child would fall off. But no child ever did. Children almost always hang onto things tighter than their parents think they will."

Now that the mothers have won, aided by liability lawyers in cushioning their kids from every imagined danger and hint of trouble, I was happy that the Gallants were on the side of children who simply hang on tight—White's side too.

"Try it out," Mrs. Gallant said. I remembered a photo of White by the great portraitist Jill Krementz, taken when he was nearly 80: White on the swing holding tight to the rope, passing through the doorway from the dark barn into the brilliant sunshine. His family had chosen it for the cover of the program for his memorial service. "I'll pass," I said.

Mr. Gallant took me into the house through the back. Nobody in Maine uses a front door, he said. The Gallants had a keen sense of the house's importance to people like me, and he said he hoped the changes they made were done with the appropriate tact—the woodshed attached to the house became a sunroom, the chicken coop became an artist's studio, the pasture where White's sheep once grazed bloomed with wildflowers. The Whites' old icebox sat by the kitchen, but as a decorative antique, not a functioning appliance. The wood-burning stove was still there—"I like the cold," White wrote in "The Winter of the Great Snows," "I like snow. I like the descent to the dark, cold kitchen at six in the morning, to put a fire in the wood stove and listen to weather from Boston"—but it showed no sign of having been used. In fact, none of the many fireplaces showed signs of use; it was a summer house now.

The magazine had sprung for a local photographer to tag along and take pictures for the article. (I was told it could be no longer than 700 words, amounting to a single magazine page; still, no expense was spared. The good times . . .) Carl, the photographer, was energetic and full of ideas. He disappeared outside with Mrs. Gallant so she could show him her vast and beautiful flower beds. Mr. Gallant took me into the old living room, where the Whites had waited out the hurricane in "The Eye of Edna." Like the enlarged kitchen, it was immaculate, a page out of *House Beautiful*, a Martha Stewart dream. No doubt the Gallants had straightened up for the reporter and photographer who were coming to visit, but the whole house had the immobility of a museum exhibit—a museum dedicated to flawless taste in home decoration.

Mr. Gallant gave me to understand that it hadn't always been like this. The house they bought, he said, was a house that a single family had lived in for 40 years, and an old widower for another 10, and it showed. Now it had been turned into an ideal of a Maine farmhouse by the sea, a picture that White's essays had helped form in the public imagination. "Suburbanized," one Mainer sniffed at me when I mentioned how spruced up the house was.

We went down the hall to White's office, across the hall from his wife's. The walls were still papered over with

MARK FLEMING / YANKEE MAGAZINE

nautical maps, as they had been when he worked there—by the end, mostly answering letters like mine. The creepy feeling, the feeling of doing something a bit unseemly, returned and intensified as we climbed the stairs into the private rooms of the house.

"The Whites had separate bedrooms," Mr. Gallant said. "And a room for the night nurse. After his wife died he didn't want to be alone." The bathrooms had been renovated to contemporary tastes, though I had no desire to look. Mr. Gallant turned and pushed on a door reverently. "And this is Mr. White's bedroom." Its window faced north. I could see the coon tree. Mr. Gallant opened the closet and showed me a rope ladder that had been rigged there, ready to toss out the window. "In case of fire," he said. "I guess he was terrified of fire." (From "Home-Coming": "The fact that my chimney was on fire did not greatly surprise or depress me, as . . . I have learned to be ready for anything at any hour.")

"Toward the end he was in bed most of the day. Joel would come and read to him—mostly from his own books and essays." Hearing the words he had written long before, Mr. Gallant said, had a calming effect on the old man. Suddenly I thought this was the saddest piece of information I'd ever heard. "He died in here." I turned and made for the staircase.

Outside we found Carl on the lawn, cajoling Mrs. Gallant into acrobatic poses, flowers in hand. She seemed reluctant but Carl was insistent. "Come on," Mr. Gallant said to me. "One last thing to show you." He led me down through the woods to the water—past the spot where White buried the pig from his essay "Death of a Pig." (Don't tell PETA.) A weathered boathouse stood on the shore. This was where he liked to work, weather permitting. Jill Krementz—one of the pretty women who made it past the driveway—took a much-reproduced photo of White in his boathouse, sitting before a typewriter at the desk he had made for himself, with the cove showing through the open window. The Gallants took care to keep the boathouse much as he left it. They had even found the little wooden barrel he kept for waste paper.

Carl joined us, clicking madly. I ducked into the boathouse. A breeze came off the bay and into the room, where at last there was a smell of age and living, a place beyond the devitalizing hand of Martha Stewart and home decor. Carl took a picture of the Gallants at the doorway and then turned to me. "There," he said, pointing. "Have a seat." He meant the same bench where White had sat for Krementz, in the fullness of age, at the close of an honorable career, bent over his typewriter with the light bouncing off the bay.

"I don't think so," I said. "No typewriter." No typewriter, and no good reason to be imitating E. B. White. "Go on," Carl said. "Maybe the magazine can use it on the contributors page." I sat on the bench and instantly regretted it. I popped up, thinking, "Nope, too much, too much." I might have even said it aloud.

The magazine paid for lunch at a local fish joint, and then I said goodbye to the Gallants and to Carl. I still had the number Angell had given me for Henry Allen, the caretaker, but I didn't call him. That night at the inn, since it was my last dinner, the host suggested I might like to sit in "Mr. White's seat." I told him I'd pass and took a table across the room.

After dinner I worked out a draft of my 700 words. I got into it nothing of what I was feeling, as a reader, as an admirer, as an intruder. It was fine but false—lacquered newsmagazine prose and utterly artificial. I got up early the next morning and checked out and almost forgot the canvas bag that contained every book that I owned by E. B. White. I found it and threw it into the back of the rental car. In there, right in the bag, was all I needed to know of him, or was entitled to know. ♦

B&A

Mutiny and Identity

A forgotten episode that rocked American politics.

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

No one who spends time in the archives of the first quarter-century of the American republic can avoid references to one Jonathan Robbins. Probably in reality the Irish tar Thomas Nash, the pseudonymous Robbins scarcely ranks up there with other major figures of the period. But then why is his name braided so thickly through the last years of the presidency of John Adams and the first of Thomas Jefferson and even invoked later in the nation's history? Why is Robbins widely mentioned in congressional debates and in contemporary newspapers and correspondence?

Those are the questions that provoke Roger Ekirch's lively book *American Sanctuary*. Unintimidated by the shelves already teeming with volumes on the sulfurous politics of the 1790s, the complex election of 1800, and the Jeffersonian aftermath of both, Ekirch manages to add much to our understanding of this formative period of

American Sanctuary
Mutiny, Martyrdom, and National Identity in the Age of Revolution
by A. Roger Ekirch
Pantheon, 320 pp., $30

James M. Banner Jr.'s second edition of The Elements of Teaching, *coauthored with the late Harold C. Cannon, has just been published by Yale.*

American history by posing questions never before ventured. And he does so with a clarity and flair that will draw in not only readers of history but all readers who enjoy a good adventure tale.

The story begins in 1797, when, in a world gone topsy-turvy in the wake of American independence, the French Revolution, and unrest in Great Britain's maritime ranks and adjacent Ireland, the British experienced the most violent naval mutiny in their history. In a bloody rampage, crew members

The former HMS Hermione*—handed over by her mutineers to the Spanish, who renamed her* Santa Cecilia*—was recaptured by the Royal Navy in 1799, the action depicted in this Nicholas Pocock painting.*

of HMS *Hermione* took over their frigate off Puerto Rico's coast, murdered its officers, and eventually sailed it into safe harbor in a Spanish port in what's now Venezuela. From there they scattered to the winds.

No navy can tolerate mutiny or piracy; no military force can tolerate insurrection. And Britons' pride in their navy and anxiety about their island nation's security were in those years heightened by the threat that revolutionary fervor and democratic demands were posing to their highly stratified society. Rebellion and sedition inside the realm were considered menaces as great as military attack from outside it. So after *Hermione*'s crew members tried to lose themselves on land and at sea, the Royal Navy wasted no time in going on the hunt, with the aim of making examples of the mutineers. That's how, in 1799, the United States became involved.

By provision of the treaty of 1795 with Britain—popularly known as the Jay Treaty, after its principal American negotiator, John Jay—the pact's signatories were each obliged to extradite to the other upon request "all persons, who, being charged with murder or forgery, committed within the jurisdiction of either, shall seek an asylum within any of the countries of the other." From the moment the treaty's terms were announced, it had been unpopular in the young nation. While it seemed to secure peace with the former mother country, some Francophile critics believed it was too generous to the British. And it did not end the hated British practice of forcibly seizing ("impressing") seamen deemed to be British subjects from American ships on the high seas. That missing treaty provision deeply rankled Americans.

Two years after the *Hermione* mutiny, Robbins was apprehended and jailed at the request of the British consul in Charleston, South Carolina. The British, who believed he was actually Thomas Nash, one of the ringleaders among the mutineers, wanted him handed over—a request for extradition that Britain had earlier lodged with American authorities regarding other mutineers held in American jails. Some of those earlier requests had been refused. That option also presented itself in this case. Claiming that he was actually a Connecticut-born American who had been impressed into service in the Royal Navy, Robbins was in an American jail. But even if, as was alleged, he had participated in the *Hermione* mutiny, had he mutinied in British jurisdiction—which would mean, under the Jay Treaty, that he would have to be extradited—or, as many Americans argued, on the high seas, where territorial jurisdictions were more fluid?

American law and practice granted leeway to federal judges on whose dockets cases like this one ended up. If President John Adams, a Federalist, had not been distracted by other matters and under political attack, he and his administration might have found a way to forestall Robbins's transfer to British authorities or facilitate his release under some pretext. Instead, badly advised by Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, Adams pressured the local federal judge to hand over Robbins to the British.

At first, the judge resisted doing so over questions about Robbins's citizenship. Was he the Irish Thomas Nash or the American Jonathan Robbins? But given Pickering's determination not to anger the British, as well as the poor representation of their client by Robbins's defense attorneys, the judge acceded to the British application for Robbins's person. Turned over to the British, Robbins was hanged in the summer of 1799. Now, in addition to political opposition and the unanswered legal questions about Robbins's surrender, the United States had created a martyr to British impressment.

Thomas Jefferson—who was Adams's vice president but was also, as the foremost of the Democratic-Republicans, his chief rival for national leadership—saw right away what had happened. "I think no one circumstance since the

establishment of our government has affected the popular mind more" than the Robbins affair, he wrote in late 1799. That is to say, Jefferson believed the Robbins matter was more politically significant than even the controversy over the notorious Alien and Sedition Acts (a judgment that historians have never shared). Once again revealing the boneheadedness to which Adams and the Federalists were often susceptible, they failed to see what was at stake in turning Robbins over to the British.

In Ekirch's view, that failure created "daunting" political obstacles for the Federalists: "A purported American, who had been impressed by the Royal Navy, surrendered by the federal government in the absence of probable cause for committing a crime that enjoyed widespread support in the United States." In his book's principal contribution to historical understanding, Ekirch makes a plausible, even convincing, case that the uproar over Robbins's extradition and execution played strongly enough into the hands of the Democratic-Republican opponents of John Adams that the affair was a major factor in the election of 1800.

Adams's political opponents excoriated him for interfering with the judiciary. Even moderate Federalists threatened to abandon him. The public outcry was tremendous. This gave Jefferson's political troops the ammunition to move for the president's censure—the effort that, Ekirch argues, kicked off the election campaign of 1800. Why the Federalists failed to see what was at stake for them has never been entirely clear. No doubt everyone's sheer inexperience with organized partisan politics played a role, and the Democratic-Republicans had the advantage of being on the offensive. Also, Federalists were blinkered, failing to see that at least the next few years, if not the whole future, favored the loosening of elitist political apron strings in favor of greater public participation in debates and campaigns. But the equally blind stupidity of British naval leaders in provoking the latent nationalist loyalties of American citizens by continuing to search for *Hermione*'s mutinous survivors and impressing American seamen in the process also meant Adams paid heavily for actions for which he was not altogether responsible.

"If the Robbins affair did not render the election's outcome inevitable, it is also difficult, in its absence, to imagine the Republicans' razor-thin triumph," Ekirch writes. Jefferson's victory led to the establishment by the Democratic-Republicans of the nation's first majority party. It was that party that held the presidency, with only modest interruptions, for the next 60 years. And, as we now understand all too clearly, Jefferson's election and his party's ensuing dominance of the presidency and Congress allowed the slaveholding South to keep a stranglehold on American politics until the Civil War. If Ekirch is right in his assessment, the Robbins case, previously overlooked by historians, lay behind one of the major political turning points in American history.

If Ekirch is right in his assessment, the Robbins case, previously overlooked by historians, lay behind Jefferson's victory in the election of 1800—one of the major political turning points in American history.

Beyond politics, the affair's consequences were "profound and lasting." As soon as Congress fell under the control of the Democratic-Republicans, they restored to five the number of years required for the naturalization of alien immigrants, a number that the Alien Act had raised to 14. More significant was the boost the Robbins affair gave to Americans' sense of national identity and of the rights of Americans. Ekirch demonstrates how the partisan brouhaha, the debates about individual rights under law, and the tension between Robbins's debated American citizenship or British subjecthood all contributed to fresh views of American national identity. The declaration of war against Britain by Congress in 1812 is inconceivable without this awakening of nationalism. With more mixed results, the Robbins affair also contributed to the growing American sense of exceptionalism.

Of course, what Ekirch terms "national self-consciousness" could work in many ways, as it has ever since. Immigrants seeking the protection of the American flag came to be seen in a more favorable light than that which anti-immigration Federalists had thrown upon them. But both law and culture also began, more than before, to feel the pressures of immigrant origins, numbers, and claims to rights that law and culture had not previously had to sustain. Those issues remained long after Robbins went to the gallows, as could be seen by political references to the Robbins affair well into the 19th century. They unsettle the nation still.

Ekirch's book will please and enlighten all who read it. The work of a master historian who is also a superb prose colorist, it is an example of what can result from historians' endless search for additional understanding. In this case, the material is ideal for narrative treatment, and Ekirch treats it rip-snortingly. Until now, few had noticed that the case of Jonathan Robbins might have had profound consequences for early American politics and diplomacy and the larger history of American self-consciousness. Didn't we already have the story of the Adams and Jefferson administrations—the Alien and Sedition Acts, naval battles with French and British forces, Jefferson's election, the Embargo Act of 1807—pretty much straight? Well, yes, but not straight enough. Along comes Ekirch, a historian who says, *Hold on! Here's something you haven't noticed.*

And thus it always is: New minds, new sensibilities, new approaches to the past open up new routes to new understanding. In the line of historians who engage in a never-ending quest for deeper knowledge, Ekirch now takes an honored place. ♦

Paper, Plastic—or prime?

The past and future of the American supermarket. BY VICTORINO MATUS

Last week, Amazon acquired Whole Foods Market in a merger valued at $13.7 billion. And while consumers are already seeing lower prices at the organic chain (often referred to as Whole Paycheck), there's much concern over the deal's impact on jobs. As a Bloomberg headline put it, "Amazon Robots Poised to Revamp How Whole Foods Runs Warehouses." At least the human cashiers will be spared—for now.

But the way we shop at the supermarket will change. As Joshua Rothman observes in the *New Yorker*, "Already, we spend less time shopping in the physical world. Now the disappearance of bookstores seems to be extending to retail stores more generally. Grocery stores, too, will soon be thinner on the ground."

Grocery
The Buying and Selling of Food in America
by Michael Ruhlman
Abrams Press, 320 pp., $28

And the interiors of those thinned-out grocery stores may come to resemble Amazon Go, a convenience-store concept in Seattle, which features what the company calls "Just Walk Out" technology—a combination of systems that bill customers for what they take from the shelves, so they can shop and just leave without having to wait at a cash register.

If this is the supermarket of the near future, my mother, who still withdraws cash from a bank teller, is going to be in a lot of trouble.

But as food writer Michael Ruhlman points out in *Grocery: The Buying and Selling of Food in America*, the story of American supermarkets has been one of constant evolution. The first major national supermarket chain traced its origins back to 1869, just after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, when George Gilman formed the Great Atlantic &

H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS / RETROFILE / GETTY IMAGES

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Pacific Tea Company. "Among the first of Gilman's ingenious ideas," writes Ruhlman, "was to offer an exclusive branded tea, a black tea with a green tea flavor called Thea-Nectar." Green tea flavor? *Plus ça change . . .*

In time, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company broadened the kinds of goods that it sold, becoming a sort of general store, and expanded its roster of locations from New York to Chicago and beyond. But it was the inventions of the cardboard box and the cheap tin can that truly revolutionized the business. "These two innovations, which happened at roughly the same time," says Ruhlman, "paved the way for the modern grocery store as we know it today, filled with brand names such as Campbell's soup and Kellogg's cereal."

At first, "patrons of grocery stores were serviced by clerks; the customer read off a list of items and amounts and the grocer weighed them out and set them on the counter." But in 1916 a new type of grocery store opened in Memphis, Tenn., called Piggly Wiggly, which introduced the concept of self-service. Customers could now do the shopping for themselves. (A few years ago I went to a pharmacy in Germany that still used the clerk system. My attempt to get toothpaste on my own was deeply frowned upon.)

By 1925, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, which shortened its name to A&P, boasted sales exceeding $350 million—larger than any other retailer in the world at the time. It had more than 10,000 locations. It was, as Ruhlman suggests, the Walmart of its era. Its rivals included Grand Union (founded in 1872 as the Jones Brothers Tea Company) and Kroger (a Cincinnati-based chain started by grocer Barney Kroger in 1883). The largest supermarket chains, which could consolidate distribution out of centralized warehouses, had the clear advantage. The small family-owned grocery was ultimately doomed.

Larger outfits could also afford to offer more products, with the goal of creating one-stop shopping: The chains "are driven to do so because they want to appeal to everyone and be considered a place where you can get everything you need for daily living," Ruhlman writes. Grocer Jeff Heinen of the Cleveland-based Heinen's chain concedes the absurdity of having to carry each of the dozen varieties of Cheerios—but if his stores don't carry them, "he knows . . . the shopper will go to a store that does."

The result is an arms race: In 1975, supermarkets had fewer than 9,000 different items on the shelves. Today they carry between 40,000 and 50,000 products. Ruhlman lists the dizzying array of items he came across while bagging for a few days at Heinen's: "Earth Balance Vegan Buttery Sticks, Organic Valley ghee, . . . Southwestern-style Egg Beaters, Silk cashew milk, Chameleon cold-brewed black coffee, flax milk, . . . bottles of probiotics that cost thirty dollars and up, some for oddly specific purposes . . . five different Temple Turmeric juices, Melissa's Hollandaise Sauce in a microwavable pouch," and on and on.

Ruhlman's book is no mere history of the supermarket. Rather, he insists, it is "an expression of my own love, anger, opinions, and concerns over what is in them, how it got there, and what it all means."

Anyone familiar with Michael Ruhlman, his popular books, and his blog is fully aware he is never lacking in love, anger, opinions, and concerns. Here he is explaining the illogic of certain low-fat products: "You can bet abundant sugar is the reason my Quaker low-fat granola bar was every bit as sweet and chewy as a Milky Way bar." The granola bar has 7 grams of sugar, meaning: "The bar itself weighs 24 grams, so it's nearly one-third sugar and two-thirds carbohydrates (17 grams according to the label)."

And this glorious rant regarding fat:

> I say unto you: Fat is good! Fat is necessary. Ask any chef. Fat does not make you fat—eating too much makes you fat. We aren't filling our bodies with sodium because of the box of kosher salt we use to season our food, we're doing it with all the processed food that's loaded with hidden salt (case in point: those same granola bars). American cooks and American diners need to understand the differences between food we cook ourselves and food that's manufactured for the grocery store shelf.

Here's Ruhlman on the unbalanced diet:

> If all you ate was lettuce, you would eventually become very ill, so I would like to caution you about the hidden hazards of lettuce. Consider yourself warned. But if you eat a variety of natural foods, including plenty of vegetables, and avoid foods that come in a box or bag or are in some way processed, you should be able to salt your food to pleasing levels.

Ruhlman defends pork cracklings, "composed almost entirely of protein, typically undergirded by a layer of fat. When these strips of pig skin are fried, the fat is rendered out and the connective tissue puffs, resulting in a delectable, crunchy, salty crackling. I therefore recommend them to you as a go-to 'protein snack' during your busy day." Despite the popularity of flaxseed, an equally nutritious yet cheaper alternative is Planters Cocktail Peanuts. He's skeptical about fish-oil pills—a $731 million industry. And don't even get him started on SnackWell's.

The recurring themes are those Ruhlman has stressed in his previous writings: Think for yourself. Apply common sense. Don't let the government or the sugar lobby or the latest dieting fads dictate your eating habits. Have a balanced diet and cook more for yourself.

You can see where the author is headed—from a grocer's point of view, the customer is always right, even if that customer wants SnackWell's or Dora the Explorer fruit snacks. So if customers made better food choices, the supermarkets would, in turn, reflect that.

Indeed, there are a few glimmers of hope. Ruhlman quotes a cattle rancher who told food writer Michael Pollan the following for a 2002 *New York Times Magazine* article: "I'd love to give up hormones. . . . If the consumer said, 'We don't want hormones,' we'd stop in a second. The cattle could get along better without them. But the market signal's not there, and as long as my competitor is doing it, I've got to do it,

too." But the market began to change: Consumers (at least those who could afford it) started demanding things like grassfed beef free of hormones and antibiotics. The change happened so quickly that by the time Pollan adapted his article for his 2006 book *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, he decided not to include the cattleman's quotation.

But there are also signs pointing the other direction. Sure, flaxseed and kale chips are trendy—and Kombucha is, in fact, the Next Big Thing—but people are cooking less. The trend started after World War II, with more women joining the workforce. Who has the time?

To wit, how many people buy whole chickens anymore as opposed to conveniently packaged chicken parts? Or take heads of lettuce: According to Ruhlman, "sales in 2015 at Heinen's for iceberg lettuce totaled $697,624; sales for bagged salads totaled $9,722,524." The fastest-growing section of the supermarket is prepared foods. It's a money loser but again, Ruhlman writes, "once a customer wants it, you've got to get it for them or risk losing all their business to a store that *will* carry the item."

As it is, supermarkets are already losing business to Walmart. Annual sales for groceries alone for the Arkansas-based company and its Sam's Club division come to over $200 billion. As Ruhlman points out, "the nation's largest supermarket chain, Kroger, with its 2,600-odd stores, is a distant second with sales of roughly $110 billion." Put in perspective, Walmart's revenue just from groceries beats the total revenue of giant companies from other industries, like General Motors and AT&T. And to counter Amazon's takeover of Whole Foods, Walmart has announced it is joining forces with Google—its products will now be available on the Internet giant's website.

Meanwhile, even as some of the biggest names from a century ago have recently disappeared—the few remaining Grand Union and A&P locations were sold or rebranded during the last five years—other players have eagerly entered the arena. The German supermarket chain Aldi is planning a massive expansion across America, growing an audience with its steep discounts. The company is now working with Instacart to test delivery of groceries ordered online in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Atlanta. And an Aldi corporate cousin, the Trader Joe's chain, continues to expand its own base with direct-from-suppliers, low-cost products that are much loved by its customers.

With these new competitors, plus Walmart and Amazon and technology-enabled services, the future for today's U.S. grocery chains is unclear. But one possibility is that supermarkets will stop being super. If people choose to have a large fraction of their groceries delivered to their homes, stores may contract in size. That's what Jeff Heinen predicts—that grocery stores will offer "prepared food and specialty products" but "everything else will be so commoditized that we won't be able to compete from a price perspective." From the consumer point of view, it would be like going "back to the old days, where it's all specialty stores." Your great-grandparents' routine of visiting a separate butcher, baker, and greengrocer may seem quaint to you but might look familiar to your great-grandkids. ♦

B&A

Terror & Slow Justice

Dragging Libya to court for a deadly 1989 hijacking.

BY ANN MARLOWE

Few Americans noticed, but this past June, Muammar Qaddafi's longtime spy chief Abdullah Senussi was apparently released from prison in Tripoli, where he had been sentenced to death in July 2015 for decades of officially sanctioned murders of his fellow Libyans. If Senussi was not released—everything is murky in Libya—he was at least seen at a festive meal at a Tripoli hotel.

Justice has been a long time coming to Senussi, one of six Libyans convicted in a French court in 1999 for the murder of 170 people on UTA Flight 772, the "forgotten flight" of the title of Stuart Newberger's book. The DC-10 had left Brazzaville, Congo, on September 19, 1989, and reached its first stop, N'Djamena, Chad. It took off from N'Djamena for its final stop, Paris, but 45 minutes after takeoff a bomb exploded and the plane broke into four sections that plunged from the sky, some of the passengers likely still conscious when they smashed into the Niger desert.

The Forgotten Flight
Terrorism, Diplomacy and the Pursuit of Justice
by Stuart H. Newberger
Oneworld, 320 pp., $30

Newberger, a lawyer who represented the seven Americans killed on Flight 772, writes that it is unlikely Senussi will leave Libya alive. But his own narration of decades of terror by Qaddafi and others, and decades of appeasing international responses, should make us wonder. One condition of the release of the American hostages from Iran in 1981 was that they could not sue Iran. Many laws have been passed since to assist victims of terror in seeking redress in civil lawsuits in the United States, but as Newberger's UTA 772 case shows, legal judgments can always be overtaken by political events. The results are rarely fair to the victims of terrorism and their loved ones.

Newberger is most engrossing in

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describing the work supervised by France's Jean-Louis Bruguière, an 11th-generation investigating magistrate, which he calls with some justice "one of the greatest detective stories of all time." The plane's debris—and the passengers' remains—were scattered over a 50-by-5-mile area of remote desert in an era before GPS, mobile phones, Google Earth, and many other contemporary tools. Remarkably, within four weeks the remains of a suitcase were found; it tested positive for plastic-explosive residue.

Bruguière leveraged France's good connections in Congo, where it turned out the bomb entered the UTA plane in a suitcase carried by a Congolese, Apollinaire Mangatany. His small group of revolutionaries aimed to overthrow Mobutu, the dictator of neighboring Zaire, and they accepted assistance from Libya's Brazzaville embassy. In revenge for France's support of Chad in the recently ended Libya-Chad war, Mangatany's Libyan handlers supplied him with a suitcase containing explosives, telling him it was intended to blow up the French plane when it sat on the runway in N'Djamena. Mangatany may not have been killed in the explosion: His remains, along with those of over 60 of the other passengers, were never identified, and it's possible he got off the plane in Chad and disappeared.

By June 1990, physical evidence surfaced indicating Libya's involvement. Newberger details the patient police work that tied a tiny piece of green plastic circuit board found at the crash site to the German middleman who sold 100 Taiwanese-made timers to one of Abdullah Senussi's subordinates in the Libyan Mukhabarat (intelligence service). The Germans apparently had thought they were providing timers for battery-operated runway lights on remote desert airstrips in Libya.

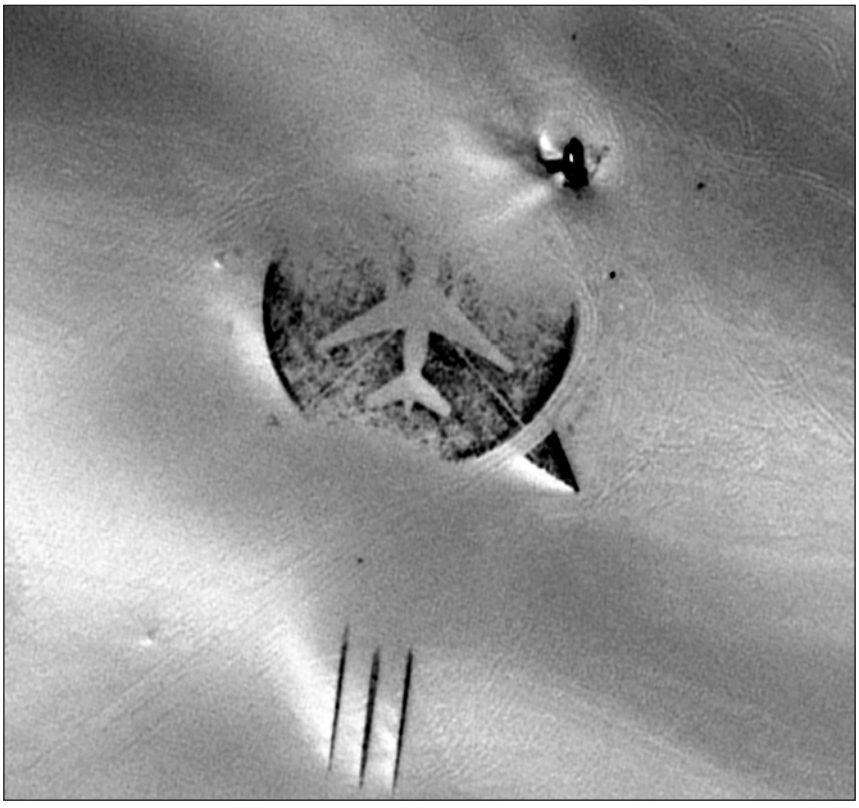
In October 1991, Bruguière issued international arrest warrants for four Libyans—including Senussi. But none was extradited: Libya doesn't allow its citizens to be tried for crimes outside the country, and Libya's lawyers pointed out at the time that France doesn't either. Eventually Bruguière charged Senussi and five other Libyans with destroying UTA 772; they were convicted in absentia in 1999.

Meanwhile, in November 1991 a Scottish prosecutor had indicted Abdelbaset al-Megrahi and Lamin Khalifah Fhimah, apparent Libyan Mukhabarat agents, for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988, which resulted in the deaths of 259 passengers and crew, as well as another 11 people on the ground. The majority of victims aboard that flight were American and the crash site was easy to reach, so it received much more media attention than UTA 772. Yet even for Pan Am 103 it would take until 2003 for a compensation deal to come together, and it was not finalized until 2008.

Newberger entered the story in April 2002 when he was contacted by Douglas Matthews, the billionaire owner of the DC-10 leased to UTA. Matthews wanted to bring a civil suit against Libya for the destruction of his $40 million aircraft, and his lawyer knew of Newberger.

Newberger had become famous in 2000 for winning $40 million in compensatory damages for newsman Terry Anderson, held hostage for seven years by Iran. This lawsuit was only made possible by the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and by 1996 amendments to the 1976 Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. These measures, enacted in response to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, allowed for the waiving of sovereign immunity to bring lawsuits against states that sponsored terrorism, and allowed commercial assets of these countries to be seized in the United States. It took the passage of still another law for Anderson to collect his judgment from $400 million in Iranian government funds frozen in the United States.

The UTA 772 suit was filed in 2003 and took its name, *Pugh* v. *Socialist*



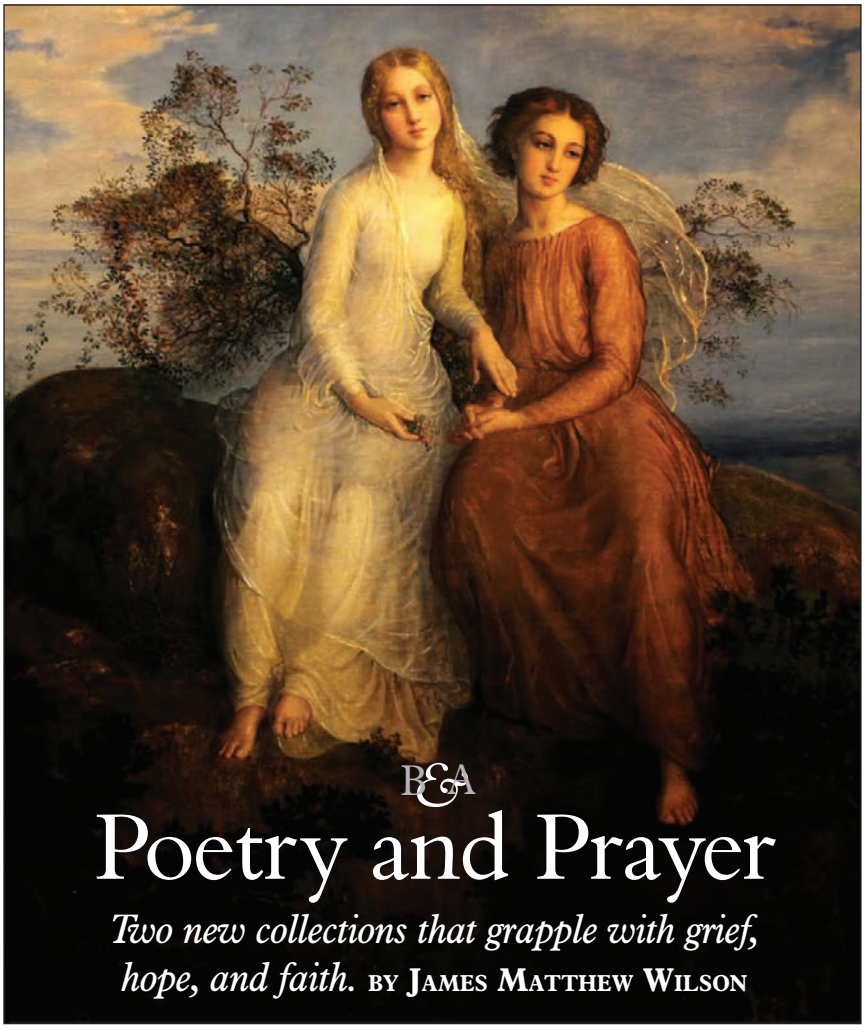
In 2007, nearly two decades after UTA 772 was brought down by a terrorist bombing, families of the victims gathered in the Niger desert to construct a haunting memorial, here shown in a satellite image. Thousands of black rocks form a silhouette the shape and size of a DC-10, slowly obscured over time by the shifting sands.

DIGITALGLOBE / GETTY IMAGES

People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from Robert L. Pugh, a diplomat who survived the U.S. embassy attack in Beirut in 1983 and was ambassador to Chad in 1989. His wife Bonnie had been one of the seven Americans killed on UTA 772. It took until 2008, with Libya delaying every step of the way, but *Pugh* resulted in a massive judgment of around $6 billion in favor of the American plaintiffs. Here is where Newberger and the families involved in his case find out that "politics was more powerful than law"—because (spoiler alert) a political agreement ended up having a large effect on the settlement. The relatives who participated in the *Pugh* suit were each eligible to receive $10 million, just a tenth of what they would have received under the court judgment against Libya, had it been allowed to stand.

Newberger's book is at its best—clear and fast-paced—when discussing the details of policework. The book would have benefited, however, from an editor who could have steered the author away from some formulaic descriptions and clichés. Also, it would have been compelling to hear the voices of the *Pugh* plaintiffs that Newberger represented, were they willing be interviewed and quoted. And, given the complicated nature of the story Newberger is telling, the absence of a timeline is keenly felt.

In the years since the *Pugh* case was decided, the struggle to use our legal system to bring terrorists and their supporters to justice has continued. A law passed in 2016—the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which was enacted in the only override of a presidential veto in the Obama years—allows federal courts to exercise jurisdiction over foreign states charged with supporting terrorism, regardless of whether the state is designated a sponsor of terrorism. This change in the law made it possible, earlier this year, for many of the families of the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to sue Saudi Arabia in civil court. This is a welcome development, but if there is any lesson to be found in Newberger's book, it is that expectations should be tempered, since justice can be very slow in coming. ♦



B&A

Poetry and Prayer

Two new collections that grapple with grief, hope, and faith. BY JAMES MATTHEW WILSON

Le Poème de l'âme 15: Un Soir. The Poem of the Soul *is a series of 34 works by French neoclassicist Louis Janmot. Influenced by his Catholic faith, Janmot incorporated religious themes throughout the 1835-55 series.* Un Soir *is a midpoint of the set and shows simple, faithful souls in harmony with nature.*

To read the second and final stanza of Catherine Chandler's "Chasubles"—"Summer's a smiling charlatan / camouflaged in green / where violet truths lie mantled in / the seen and the unseen"—one might think American religious poetry is now much as it was in Emily Dickinson's day. The reclusive maid of Amherst wrote hundreds of strange poems in variations of the ballad measure, many of them exploring the feeling one has of God lurking somewhere in nature, always a mystery, never allowing himself to be seen straight, but only "slant." Chandler's stanza engages in just Dickinson's sort of play; nature is a "charlatan," because her "green" is less lasting

The Frangible Hour
by Catherine Chandler
University of Evansville, 81 pp., $15

Devotions
by Timothy Murphy
North Dakota State, 158 pp., $24.95

James Matthew Wilson teaches humanities at Villanova. His most recent book is The Vision of the Soul: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Western Tradition.

than it appears to be on a summer afternoon, and yet nature is also more than it appears, a "mantle" hiding, in the words of the Nicene Creed, "the seen and the unseen."

Chandler, like Dickinson, is a poet of divine mystery, but the similarity ends there. Whereas Dickinson's poetry remains a frontier eccentricity in our tradition precisely because of its odd cramming of intellectual profundity into the quaint form and cute imagery of the folk ballad, Chandler is a demonstrated master of poetic technique who, in *The Frangible Hour*, attempts some fantastic feats of ingenuity to make stanzaic forms adequate to her meaning, especially in her variations on the conventional sonnet.

The tension between form and feeling in Dickinson seems in retrospect essential to her New England Protestantism, for which nature was at once a sign of God's determinations and a wild emblem of the devil's temptations. Chandler's poems, in contrast, suggest the complementarity of nature and grace, of faith and reason, proper to Catholicism. In one poem, for instance, a swing out in the family's backyard becomes simultaneously an example of the laws of physics governing nature, an expression of God's providential order amid apparent chaos, and an instrument of childhood magic that charms her father home from work.

Her poems begin in the particulars of her mature life in Montreal and her Catholic childhood in rural Pennsylvania, digging into them to discover the significance they conceal. A combination of technical power and intellectual depth shows in her poems named after Pennsylvania wildflowers, in which Chandler's wit draws the botanical and the biographical together in surprising ways. Even more impressive are the three groups of poems that conclude the collection, consisting of elegies for her mother and father, and "Almost," which records the almost insufferable vigil at her daughter Caitlin's bedside, after she has suffered a cerebral aneurysm. In each instance, present grief is reckoned with and overcome by remembrance of the past and a sense that suffering belongs to the divine mystery. In one elegy for her mother, she writes,

> Gone is the golden mountain of our youth;
> gone is its rarefied reality.
> Still, there lies an element of truth
> amid this crushing verticality.
> Down. Down in history we go:
> past anthracite, the color of all woe.

Every journey to the underworld is followed by a return to this world with new knowledge. So the poems for her mother conclude with one in which she finds, in the now-empty house, "a faded ribbon-festooned box":

> Inside, my fairy-stolen baby teeth
> and first-shorn locks
> acknowledge, in an elegant goodbye,
> that I was once the apple of your eye.

The most appealing poems in Chandler's volume are the sketches of midcentury America found in the sonnet sequence "One-way Street." They remind me of E. A. Robinson's affectionate but unsparing and precisely imagined poems of rural Maine.

In her sustained attention to the regional, in her mastery of form, and also in her Catholic faith, Chandler has much in common with the North Dakota poet Timothy Murphy. Murphy has published three previous books of poetry and a memoir treating of farm and hunting life in his home terrain, all of which have received critical praise for their taut, restrained metrical forms and their honest treatment of daily life on the Dakota prairie. Much of his work proceeds like a kind of log book, recounting in rhyme battles with alcoholism and sin, the incidentals of a life passed between duck hunts and daily Mass at the local parish. The results have been massive in quantity though uneven in quality, for the same attentiveness to the particular that makes Murphy's best poems so memorable is sometimes left to carry on about the inconsequential.

Murphy returned to the Catholic faith nearly a dozen years ago and *Devotions* is his first attempt to gather his poems about the hard pilgrimage toward holiness, undertaken late in life even as one's dearest friends and family have begun to die. Appropriately, many of the poems are prayers or about prayer, and the way Murphy captures the spiritual life's immersion in the everyday can be fascinating. "Hunting on Thanksgiving" is dedicated to the friend described in these opening lines of prayer:

> Thanks for my tall, Norwegian hunting buddy.
> I love him best when his right hand is bloody
> from gutting birds.

It ends with thanks for two other "friends" on whom Murphy has depended, his hunting dog and Christ himself:

> Thanks for the bird I missed, for Feeney's flush,
> the faint thunder of wings breaking the hush
> of mass conducted in the open air.
> Thanks for pulling me back from the despair
> that might have lost me eighteen hundred days
> I have devoted to my Maker's praise.

Elsewhere, he remarks, "The prairie is a poem rarely read," and once more prays, "grant me more time to understand, / more years to walk and memorize this land."

In his youth, Murphy studied at Yale with Robert Penn Warren, "lost in a whiskey haze / with Milton on my mind." In 1972, he returned home to farm and work as a private investor but continued to struggle with drink. In his waywardness and late devotion we rightly detect an echo of St. Augustine, and so it is unsurprising that the best single poem in this new volume is a translation of a psalm from the saint's *Confessions*:

> I thirsted, hungered, yearned.
> You touched me, and I burned.
> How late I came to you,
> Beauty ever ancient, ever new.
> How late I came to you. ♦

The Questionable Timing of Trump' ×

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The Questionable Timing of Trump's Texas Visit

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD AUG. 30, 2017

357

Jim Watson / AFP / Getty Images

President Donald Trump chose to play politics by flying down to Corpus Christi, Texas, on Air Force One—an estimated carbon footprint of 0.65 metric tons, not counting the environmental cost of plastic soda bottles and hamburgers with irradiated beef from cattle injected with hormones and antibiotics while kept in overcrowded feedlots. We at the Times are compelled to ask why. Why, Mr. President, did you feel the need to be at the epicenter of this natural disaster?

As usual, we know the answer to our own question: The president came to the Lone Star State, so-called, in order to shamelessly grandstand and glad-hand during this climate-change catastrophe. Mr. Trump's efforts to suppress climate science—indeed, his willingness to ignore this Inconvenient Truth—have resulted in a Category 4 hurricane that serves as a clever distraction from his other problems. How convenient. You should've remained in Washington, Mr. President. We didn't need to see you or your wife in her "costume" (see Vanessa Friedman's column) expressing concerns directly with the local populace while mugging for the camera. What president has ever done this? Not one, we are certain.

Of course, it's true that had you remained ensconced in the White House, we would have demanded to know why you weren't in Texas giving direct aid and comfort to the people, whether you were afraid a little rain might ruin your oversized Brioni suit, why you weren't there to inspire the suffering, who are looking for hope.

Either way, we had an editorial ready!

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