

# the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 27, 2017

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## THE WORD MADE MANIFEST

• CHRISTINE ROSEN  
• GRANT WISHARD  
on the Museum  
of the Bible

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# Fashionable Citizenship Prize

Every month, we eagerly anticipate the arrival of our *GQ* magazine. There are few other places where THE SCRAPBOOK can glean instruction on how to wear capri-pants-for-men without our calves looking chunky. This month is no exception. For fresh out on newsstands—assuming there is still such a thing as a newsstand—is *GQ*'s 22nd annual “Man of the Year” issue, in which several men of the year are named, one of whom, in keeping with the times, is a woman. (Gal Gadot, “Wonder Woman of the Year.”)

But the man *di tutti* men is Colin Kaepernick—hero, unemployed NFL quarterback, chronic kneeler, and now *GQ*'s “Citizen of the Year.” While we've yet to receive our issue in the mail, a panting *Yahoo! Sports* writer assures us that in Kaepernick's cover photo, “his afro is resplendent” and “his eyes look sad.” (Not unlike the sadness football fans feel at seeing their sport being turned into a tiresome Ta-Nehisi Coates lecture put on by roid-raging multimillionaires, which may explain the league's cratering ratings.)

The message of the Kaepernick-inspired national-anthem protest has



Colin Kaepernick, cover guy

become a bit muddled over time. Is it about police brutality? General racial injustice? Donald Trump's insensitivity? (By that measure, everyone from Mitch McConnell to Kim Jong-un should be taking a knee, as Trump just implied that the latter is “short and fat.”) Kaepernick, therefore, *GQ* informs us, “wants to reclaim the narrative of his protest,” redirecting the focus from the mixed messages back to

where it belongs: on Colin Kaepernick.

Of course, it's hard work tooting your own horn when you refuse to speak on the record, as Kaepernick did to *GQ*. For Kaepernick has “grown wise to the power of his silence,” the men's fashion bible tells us. (He hasn't been *that* silent. He did tweet that he was honored to be *GQ*'s Citizen of the Year. He re-tweeted out his own *GQ* cover no fewer than 15 times. Tweets, apparently, don't count against the strong, silent types.)

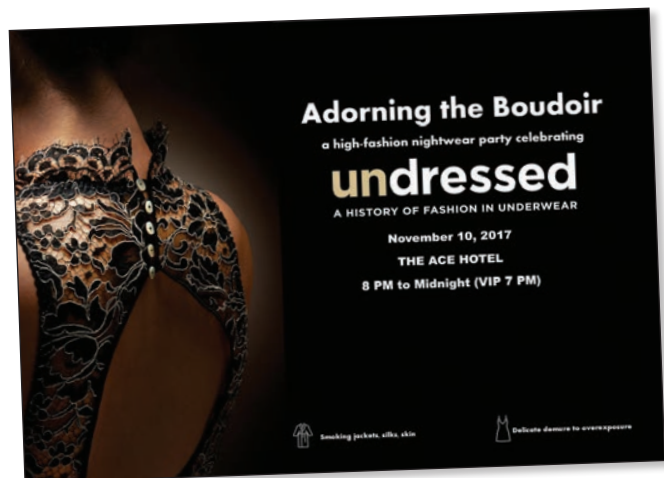
Kaepernick did permit close friends to praise him to *GQ*, giving voice to the voiceless. Filmmaker Ava DuVernay said, “I see what he's done as art.” Activist Linda Sarsour said, “I always tell Colin: You are an American hero. You may not feel like a hero right now.” (Just a guess: We suspect that he does.) For our part, THE SCRAPBOOK can't wait for our hard copy to arrive, so we can clip the photos and tack Kaepernick's sad-eyed mug to our wall right next to our old poster of Shaun Cassidy, who, you'll remember, also took a knee—while singing his smash hit “Teen Dream” to impressionable youth. ♦

## Exhibit Exhibitionism

What won't our loftier cultural institutions do to attract youthful patrons? In an age in which symphony pops concerts feature music from video games, it would seem not much. But the envelope was recently pushed in Pittsburgh.

A few weeks ago, the Frick Pittsburgh museum unveiled an exhibit titled “Undressed: A History of Fashion in Underwear.” Organized by London's Victoria and Albert Museum, the show seems by all accounts to be a perfectly respectable exercise in cultural micro-history. How can one understand the plight of 19th-century women, for example, without understanding the constriction of corsets?

No, the envelope-pushing came with the way the museum chose to promote the exhibit, putting together what was advertised as a “high-fashion nightwear party.” And by nightwear they didn't mean evening dress. Held at Pittsburgh's Ace Hotel, the shindig was called “Adorning the Boudoir” and was meant, as one reporter put it, “to engage and inspire the next generation of museum enthusiasts.” Because nothing inspires museum-going more than a crowd of scantily clad hotties.



Here's your invitation—dress up! Er, or not.

In the age of Weinstein, did anyone stop to think that there could be just the slightest problem, taste-wise, with a big public party

BOTTOM: COURTESY OF THE FRICK MUSEUM

consisting of robe-clad men ogling thong-attired women?

The ogling got going in earnest later in the evening, with a runway lingerie show, provided by a local unmentionables shop, that seems to have had less of a catwalk vibe than a strip-club aesthetic. “Seduction. Teasing. Removing. Writhing. Grinding. Smiling,” the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*’s Kate Benz described the proceedings. “Jaws dropped. Eyes wide. Oh. My. God, they said. Shocked. Enthralled. Appalled. They loved it. They hated it. They had to look away. But they couldn’t stop staring.”

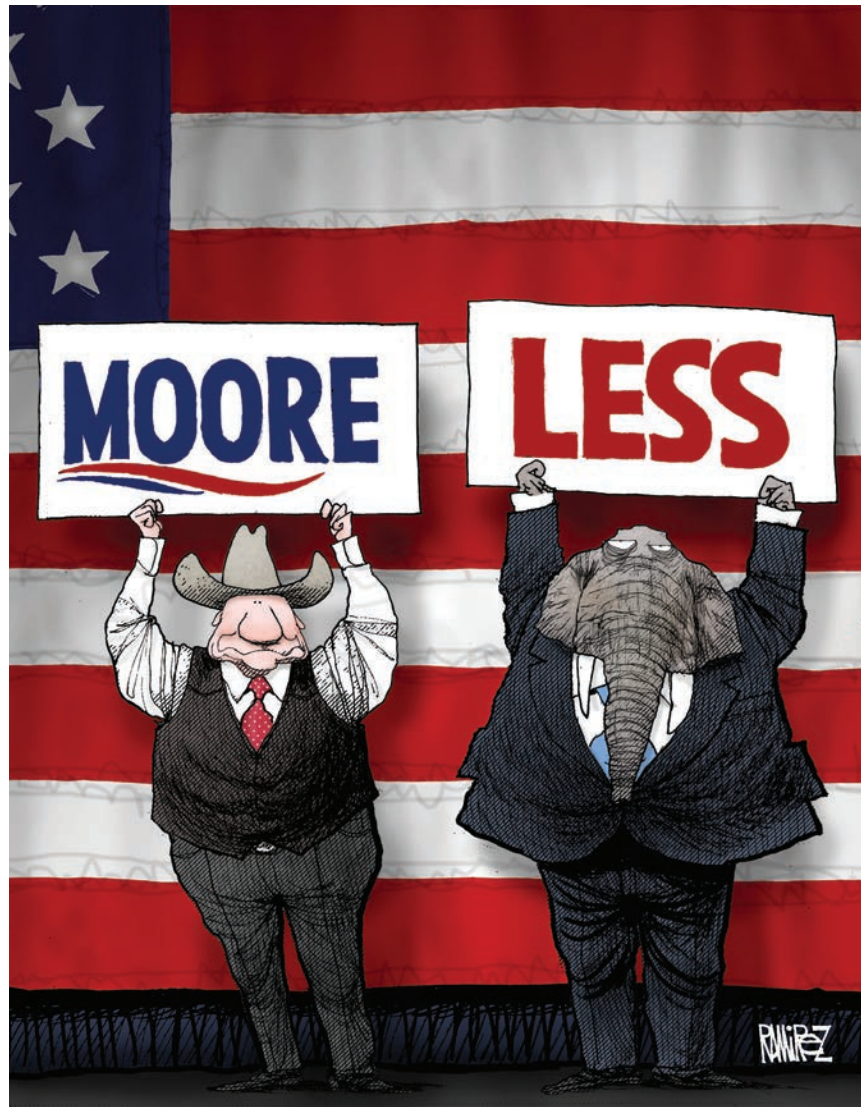
One of the people who hated it was *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* columnist Natalie Bencivenga. The lingerie show devolved into “auditions for the next Ron Jeremy film,” she wrote. “It didn’t elevate, it degraded.” Bencivenga assured her readers she is no prude, but denounced the display as tone-deaf exploitation.

To which THE SCRAPBOOK says, kudos to her for being willing to point out that the emperor is wearing skivvies. Is it too much to ask of the curators of culture that they aspire to something better than burlesque? ♦

## Lowering the Bar

Since Donald Trump became president, Democrats have been engaged in an astonishing display of judicial obstruction. “Senate Democrats have indiscriminately forced the Senate to take 47 cloture votes on judicial and executive nominations since Trump took office,” notes Carrie Severino in *National Review*. “For an idea of how unprecedented this is, consider that there were a total of only six such votes at this point in the previous four presidential administrations combined.” This is so pointlessly egregious, significant numbers of Democrats have gone on to actually vote for nominees whose confirmations the party was holding up.

That’s bad enough, but making matters worse is that the American Bar Association, as per usual, is acting as a wing of the Democratic party and launching gratuitous personal attacks on GOP judicial nominees. The latest



saga involves Leonard Steven Grasz, who was Nebraska’s chief deputy attorney general for 11 years and is now nominated for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

For decades, the ABA had a semi-official role issuing ratings for federal judicial nominees. The ABA’s partisanship became too much to ignore, and the second Bush administration openly rejected the notion the ABA had an advisory capacity. Nonetheless, the ABA continues to rate nominees and recently

declared Grasz “not qualified” for the federal bench, provoking a flurry of unfairly damning headlines.

According to the ABA, Grasz is guilty of “bias and lack of open-

mindedness,” a judgment it reached by conducting anonymous interviews. It also challenged Grasz on such out-of-bounds topics as why he sends his kids to Lutheran schools. But the real issue appears to be that Grasz is pro-life. The ABA has distorted something he wrote in order to conclude that he will ignore judicial precedents



Leonard Steven Grasz

he doesn't like regarding abortion. The ABA fails to mention that in the article it claims is troubling, he states, "Lower federal courts are obliged to follow clear legal precedent regardless of whether it may seem unwise or even morally repugnant to do so."

Grasz does, however, argue that lower courts shouldn't extend Supreme Court rulings on abortion beyond what rights are plainly established. The truth is that it's the ABA, not Grasz, that supports judicial activism. ♦

## Carrie Nation

If you've ever thought that sitting at a bar and watching sports on TV is too boring or that barroom billiards or darts lacks excitement, don't fear—there's a new trend popping up in cities around the country.

Apparently, somebody has decided throwing axes in places that serve or allow alcohol would be a smart idea. In the last two years,



A happy axe-thrower in Chicago

axe-throwing bars have sprouted in cities including Philadelphia and Austin, Texas, and there are plans for others in Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Baltimore. Bad Axe Throwing, which operates axe-throwing venues in 19 North American cities, last month obtained a license to sell beer at its Denver location.

Blame Canada. The "sport" was popularized there. Now, the new bar concept is tapping into a growing segment of Americans who want to channel their inner lumberjacks. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reports

that a business serving beer and wine won zoning approval this month to "begin construction on an ax-throwing area where visitors can safely hurl axes at a wooden target—similar to darts, but with an object that could also kill you."

Co-owner Becky Cooper Clancy told the online publication *OnMilwaukee*: "It's really fun. Ax-throwing has a very manly, bearded-guy stereotype, but as a petite woman, I find burrowing an ax in wood very fulfilling."

That may well be true, but for now, count us among those who will find our fulfillment at establishments that lack large, sharp metal objects hurtling through the air. ♦

## All's Well That Rockwell

Two weeks ago in these pages we wrote about a court drama embroiling the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Mass. The museum is being sued to stop it from selling 40 works of art from its collection. The sale is intended to finance what the museum's board of trustees calls its "New Vision," a plan to modernize the stately institution by installing bright screens and other tacky-tacky tech. Among the works on the block are two paintings by—and donated to the museum by—Norman Rockwell. Those two alone could bring the museum some \$50 million in mad money.

But not so fast. THE SCRAPBOOK is pleased to report that the Massachusetts Appeals Court halted the auction at the eleventh hour. "The balance of the risk of irreparable harm," the court reasoned, "weighs in favor of the petitioner." Once the bidding begins, after all, it will be too late to get the paintings back and they may never be viewed by the public again.

It may only be a temporary reprieve. The sale will go forward if the state's attorney general isn't able to persuade the appeals court to make the injunction permanent. Arguments may happen in December. ♦

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## He Does Not Hug

Poor David Copperfield, to add to the other humiliations of his boyhood, at school is forced, for reasons too elaborate to go into here, to wear a sign that reads, “Take Care of Him. He Bites.” I have been thinking of that sign in connection with a sign I should like to make for myself that reads: “Beware. He Does Not Hug Men!” For I don’t. Not, that is, if I can help it, though sometimes, alas, I cannot. Being hugged by a man, you will have gathered, is not my idea of a swell time.

I don’t know when, exactly, men hugging one another got going in the big-time way it has in recent years, but I suspect its origins can be found, like so many false intimacies of the age, in show business. One easily imagines two burly comedians—Shecky Greene, say, and Don Rickles—hugging on a late-night talk show. Jerry Lewis must have been a hell of a hugger. Contemporary athletes also do lots of hugging after touchdowns, home runs, overtime victories. I have seen victorious professional golfers hug their caddies.

Two famous hugs in modern history are those of Sammy Davis Jr. hugging Richard Nixon and Jesse Jackson’s being hugged—and kissed at no extra charge—by Yasser Arafat. Davis, taking Nixon by surprise, hugged him, surely among the most unhuggable men in history, from behind. The hug of Arafat (Yasser, that’s my baby) must be among the hugs that Jackson would like to have removed from all photo files.

Barack Obama patented, if he did not invent, the combined handshake-hug, in which while shaking hands you lean in for a half hug and lay two quick pats on the other fellow’s back, while he does the same to you. I’ve had it used on me, and it is a slight

improvement over the conventional masculine bear hug, but I could do nicely without it, too. I try to make it plain—in my posture, my facial expression, my general demeanor—that I’m not up for hugs, but that hasn’t stopped a small number of men I’ve known or recently met from putting the clamp on me. If only I had the



*Sammy hugs Dick, August 22, 1972.*

physique to back it up, I’d say to anyone who attempted to do so, “Hug me and I’ll drop you.”

In this, the age of the masculine hug, I have in my mind been compiling a list of unhuggable figures in history—men no man of good sense would ever attempt to hug. I shouldn’t think Aristotle or Maimonides would welcome a hug. Had it ever, I wonder, occurred to another man to hug Stalin or, on a somewhat lower level of monstrosity, Leonid Brezhnev? Woodrow Wilson seems impressively unhuggable; so, too, does Winston Churchill

and in fact every English prime minister in history up to Tony Blair. Perhaps the most unhuggable (unhuggly?) figure of all was Charles de Gaulle, whose hauteur, physical and emotional, seemed to resist any possibility of a male embrace.

Some families are big on hugs, kisses, love-yas. Mine was not among them. My mother and I rarely hugged, and I have to strain to recall our kissing. I don’t have to strain to recall kissing or hugging my father, because I am certain that past the time I reached the age of 3 or 4, we never did either. What I do recall is my father, when I was 5 or 6, upbraiding me for too gentle a handshake. “You call that a handshake, that fish you just put in my hand?” I remember him saying. Yet I loved both my parents, have never felt less than fortunate in being their son, and I haven’t the least doubt that they loved me. We just didn’t see any reason to get physical about it.

The male-on-male hug is supposed to demonstrate warmth, camaraderie, intimacy. An argument can be made that it is a perfectly natural expression of masculine ebullience, the expression of feeling much stronger than a mere handshake can convey. But I’m not buying it. I myself think it is little more than gaudy exhibitionism in a touchy-feely time. In the leaden embrace of such a hug, the grisly bearded or perma-stubbed cheek of another man grazing mine, I have only one feeling: sympathy for women.

The one male-to-male hug of which I thoroughly approved took place roughly 20 years ago when the two wittiest, most intelligent men I knew, Edward Shils and Hilton Kramer, neither among the obviously huggable, embraced affectionately after an evening we three had spent together, so delighted were they in each other’s company. That years before I had originally introduced them pleased me to the point where I almost could have hugged myself.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN

# The Need for Outrage

The urge to vote for the outsider—the dissenter, the maverick, the troublemaker hated by those elites—is a reasonable one. Political parties become stale and predictable, their officeholders self-seeking and cowardly. The ordinary voter, exasperated by his elected leaders' inability or refusal to act on their professed ideals, turns to the outsider in the hope that even if he makes a mess, he'll at least disrupt the system.

Trying to remedy the nation's politics and government by electing such figures brings a certain emotional satisfaction. It can be great fun watching the elite throw tantrums. But electing the outsider brings two serious problems. First, he doesn't know what he's doing and his role as the scourge of elites won't allow him to admit this reality. Second, there's no end to it. Once you get a taste for this sort of candidate, you'll vote for another screwball, then another, and very soon the entire political sphere descends into a madcap brawl over symbols and personalities.

If that's a more or less accurate assessment of the last two years in American politics, we're now in the full-on brawl stage. A plurality of Alabama Republicans nominated Roy Moore, a judge famously removed, twice, from his office as chief justice of the Alabama supreme court, as their candidate in the upcoming election to fill Jeff Sessions's Senate seat. Moore's appeal lay mainly in his promise to offend the sensibilities of the great and the good in Washington. He has a talent for saying things that incense the elite—that “the transgenders don't have rights,” that parts of Illinois and Indiana are under *sharia* law—but he is not otherwise accomplished. He is a small, countrified Trump.

Now Moore faces credible accusations that he preyed on underage girls, and his circumlocutory denials seem to confirm the allegations' truth. They won't end his candidacy, however, because the people who invested most heavily in outsiderism and the benefits of “disruption”

can't bring themselves to believe what everybody else can see clearly: that they've backed a fraud. Thus Fox News host Sean Hannity at first credited Moore's claim that it was all a big lie, then halfheartedly justified the judge's taste for younger ladies, then demanded the truth from Moore, and in the end shrugged the whole thing off on the grounds that “it shouldn't be decided by me”—a claim that is hard to dispute but hard to believe, given the many things he believes should be decided by him.

Washington has long attached too much importance to the willingness to condemn famous people who've said or done reprehensible things—as if one's capacity to condemn were an indication of merit or courage. We understand that.

We understand, too, that there was never any hope of persuading President Trump to disavow his support for Moore.

The president, as he amply proved in his responses to the Charlottesville riots last August, is constitutionally incapable of condemning anyone, no matter how awful, who has praised Donald J. Trump.

But there is no conceivable reason any other public figure associated with conservatism or the Republican party should have any trouble denouncing a candidate for the U.S. Senate who, in addition to everything else, threw himself at underage girls when he was a public official twice their age. And yet lots of such people can't do it. Right-wing talk radio hosts would rather insist that Bill Clinton did worse. The president's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, can't bring himself to withdraw his support for Moore. An encouraging number of Republicans in Congress have issued condemnations of one kind or another, but a few are silent, and the Alabama GOP still supports the man.

This sudden addiction to troublemaking has been called “populism,” and maybe it is. The populisms of the past, however, had content—a set of ideas or ideals, however imperfectly expressed. The new populism looks like



Steve Bannon boosting Roy Moore, September 25

nothing more than a perverse need to outrage the nation's bien pensants.

Alabama Republicans and their enablers have turned an easy win into a likely loss. Such is the wisdom of outsiderism. Rather than concocting zany plans to keep the seat in the "R" column, however, they might consider the importance of fielding competent and grown-up candidates. ♦

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## Sexual Coercion on the Hill

Widespread allegations of sexual harassment have in recent weeks rocked legislatures across Europe and North America. In London, harassment claims have brought down one cabinet minister and are threatening to bring parliamentary business to a standstill. In Brussels, the European parliament has come under intense fire for ignoring credible allegations of sexual harassment. Legislatures in Ottawa, Sacramento, and Edinburgh have been hit with media revelations about rampant harassment.

Now it's come to Capitol Hill. On November 14, two female House members, Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) and Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), alleged the presence of sexual predators in Congress. "In fact," Speier said to the House Administration Committee, "there are two members of Congress, Republican and Democrat, right now, who serve, who have been to review or have not been subject to review, but have engaged in sexual harassment."

Comstock was vivid in her description of one instance. "Somebody who I trust told me the situation," she said, and described a circumstance in which a male lawmaker asked a young female staffer to deliver papers to his home. He answered the door in nothing but a towel, then exposed himself. "She left. And then she quit her job."

The congressman described here, Comstock emphasized, is currently a member of Congress. Neither Speier nor Comstock named names.

The ungovernable libido of powerful men is not new under the sun. One need not excuse the behavior to recognize it as common at all levels of political life. Male politicians, if we may be permitted to generalize, are frequently self-assured and assertive; the word *arrogant* describes a significant proportion of them. Legislating in capitals far from their families, encouraged by sycophants to inflate their own importance, and emboldened by the vulnerable position of young female subordinates, some of those politicians behave with immoral abandon.

In short, we don't doubt these women's stories for a moment.

What we do doubt is the likelihood that mandatory sexual harassment training seminars, as proposed by congressional leaders, will make any sort of change for the better. The problem is not that these men don't know any better; the problem is that they believe they can act in reprehensible ways without consequence. And they face little accountability because it's far easier for their victims to keep quiet than to risk reprisal and public disparagement by speaking openly about what they've experienced.

There is a small way to make a few of these members accountable. Under a law passed in 1995, a special congressional office is tasked with mediating sexual harassment claims on the Hill. If members or congressional staffers settle with their accusers, payment is made—confidentially—from a Treasury fund. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, this fund paid out \$15.2 million between 1997 and 2017 in 235 settlements.

Rather than forcing congressmen and their staffers to undergo pointless "training," a law could force perpetrators to pay these settlements out of their office funds. In cases decided in the plaintiff's favor, moreover, the amounts paid and the nature of the offenses should be made public. Indeed, we would suggest requiring members to pay settlements out of their personal bank accounts (excluding campaign accounts). The settlements tallied by the *Post* average around \$65,000—hardly a devastating sum.

There is no obvious and easy answer to these problems, in Congress and elsewhere. But the public shouldn't have to foot the bill for congressmen's restive appetites, and their precise offenses ought to be matters of public record. Hiding them only encourages the next round of sordid behavior. ♦



Reps. Barbara Comstock and Jackie Speier

# The Clinton Backlash

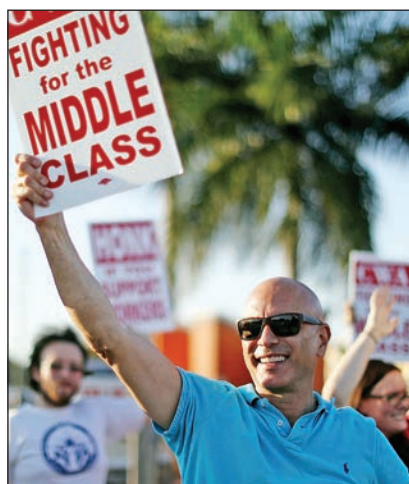
Sandernistas are coming for Dianne Feinstein and Debbie Wasserman Schultz. **BY PETER J. BOYER**

Democratic euphoria over the party's sweeping November 7 election triumph in Virginia lasted, undisturbed, for all of four days—until the airing of that week's installment of *Saturday Night Live* jarringly altered the mood. *SNL*, which, in the Trump era, has seemed like the comedy auxiliary of the Democrats, brutally mocked the party's national leaders as clueless geezers and their post-Virginia giddiness as delusional.

In a parody message from Democratic National Committee proclaiming "The Dems are back!" Alex Moffat as Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer declared, "We haven't felt this confident since the day before Trump won!" The ersatz Democrats promised "fresh new ideas, delivered by fresh new faces," such as Nancy Pelosi (age 77) and Dianne Feinstein (who is 84). A *Washington Post* columnist called the performance a reminder that "the national Democratic Party is still a tomb of old ideas and older leaders."

Dotage is hardly the Democrats' only, or even their biggest, worry as the party tries to gain a majority in the House or, more improbably, the Senate in 2018, and to take the White House two years later. The party's minority status extends beyond Washington to the state and local levels across the country. Lost in the buzz over Ralph Northam's defeat of Republican Ed Gillespie in Virginia was the fact that Democrats right now hold fewer governorships (15) than they did a year ago—owing to a party switch by West Virginia's Jim Justice, whose flip made

him the GOP's 34th governor. Of the 34 states in which one party controls all branches of government, 26 of them are held by Republicans and only 8 (all of them coastal) by Democrats. That's a shallow recruiting pool.



*Tim Canova, once-and-future primary challenger to Debbie Wasserman Schultz, campaigning on May 25, 2016*

Congressional redistricting has, as ever, strengthened incumbents, meaning relatively few House seats are truly in play—Republicans expect to have to defend 40 or so in 2018, and the Democrats need to flip 24 of them to win control. On the Senate side, Democrats will have to defend 10 seats in states that were won by Donald Trump.

But the biggest problem facing Democrats remains the conflict, bared in the 2016 primary, between the party's establishment and its activist base. Resistance to Donald Trump created a temporary unity-of-convenience for Democrats, but the struggle over the party's core identity persists,

quicken by Donna Brazile's recent confirmation that the game had been rigged against Bernie Sanders and his populist revolt.

"It's disgusting," says Alison Hartson, a California activist who volunteered for Sanders in 2016. "I am continually shocked by how blatant the establishment Democrats are in their anti-democracy campaign. They are authoritarian, they are totally anti-democratic. And I just can't stomach it any more."

On November 2, Hartson became the second Sandernista to announce plans to challenge Dianne Feinstein for the California Senate seat that Feinstein first claimed in 1992. On most subjects, Hartson sounds like the amiable former Orange County school teacher she is. But her piercing rhetoric on the topic of the Democratic establishment promises a lively 2018 primary season. And it foretells a progressive roadblock for any establishment Democrat considering a presidential run in 2020.

"We have decided," Hartson says, "to take on these establishment puppets."

Of the Democrats currently in office, perhaps none more thoroughly embodies the Clintonian establishment than the seven-term congresswoman from South Florida, Debbie Wasserman Schultz. She was national co-chair of Hillary's failed 2008 presidential campaign, and her preference for Clinton over Bernie Sanders, revealed in the WikiLeaks email download, precipitated her departure as head of the Democratic National Committee on the eve of the 2016 convention. The ignominy of that humiliating exit followed her into the election and beyond.

"She gets heckled a lot wherever she goes, she gets jeered, she gets asked tough questions that she can't really answer," says Tim Canova, a Sanders supporter who mounted a failed primary challenge to Wasserman Schultz in 2016. Canova, a law professor at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, had never run for office, but an endorsement from Sanders brought instant credibility within the

*Peter J. Boyer is national correspondent at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

populist progressive movement. “The average congressional campaign probably gets 5,000 or 10,000 individual donors,” Canova says. “We got over 100,000 donors. We had 209,000 individual donations.”

Canova announced in June that he plans to take on Wasserman Schultz again next year. Florida’s 23rd District is solidly blue—redistricting works both ways—and its voters have been good to Wasserman Schultz (Canova was her first-ever primary challenger). She has a sizable war chest and is already hiring consultants. But Canova is counting on the discrediting of the Clinton establishment continuing and energy from the populist movement to even his odds. And there’s that list of donors. “I think when we get into 2018, that’s a big list to draw from,” he says. “That’s gonna worry her.”

Canova had been drawn to Sanders because of the Vermont senator’s economic populism—especially his attacks on Wall Street and call to “break up the big banks.” He is a true believer; Canova taught workshops on reforming the Federal Reserve at the Los Angeles encampment of the Occupy movement. He soured on Obama early, when he detected shades of Clintonism in the administration’s economic recovery program. Canova decided to run against Wasserman Schultz largely because she voted to fast-track the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Obama’s signature trade proposal. “The corporate elites, the media elites don’t recognize it, but this has been like a depression for a decade now,” he says. “I think the people are ahead of the political establishment.”

Bill Clinton led the Democratic party out of its last sojourn in the wilderness with his “New Democrat” politics through which he oversaw a balanced budget, championed free trade, and cut regulations. A key calculation of Clintonism, and one with lasting political consequence, was a reorientation of the Democratic party toward Wall Street, where Clinton found his top economic adviser, Robert Rubin, and Rubin’s protégé

Lawrence Summers—both of whom served Clinton as Treasury secretary.

The Street became an important source of money for Democrats, especially, of course, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and the deregulation advocated by Rubin and Summers stoked the Clinton economic boom that Democrats ran on for years. After the bust of 2007-08, though, progressives began to blame that deregulation for the collapse of the financial sector, and the trademark Clinton brand of transactional politics became, to them, anathema.

By the time Hillary Clinton ran for president in 2016, she had abandoned most of her husband’s New Democrat politics in response to the firebrand populism of the Elizabeth Warren wing of the party. Clinton came out against the TPP (which she’d once called “the gold standard” of trade deals) and mimed the populist attacks on the financial sector. The populist base, unconvinced, migrated to Sanders—their suspicions about Clinton confirmed by a WikiLeaks release of a closed-gathering Clinton speech in which she’d confided that she had a private position on issues as well as a position for public consumption, and the two didn’t always jibe. “That statement of hers that she has a private position for her donors and a public position for everyone else, that’s just a confirmation that [for her] this is politics,” says Canova. “It’s just the way politics works in our system, and that’s what’s so unfortunate.”

With the populist base migrating to Sanders, Clinton doubled down on the “rising American electorate” strategy. This is the demography-is-destiny calculation that as working-class whites shrink as a percentage of the population, so does their worth as a constituency meriting attention. This cohort, long the heart of the Democratic party, wasn’t just neglected, it was blithely written off by Clinton (“basket of deplorables”) and her allies. “For every blue-collar Democrat we lose in western Pennsylvania,” Chuck Schumer said, “we will

pick up two moderate Republicans in the suburbs in Philadelphia, and you can repeat that in Ohio and Illinois and Wisconsin.”

Clinton lost the white working class to Bernie Sanders, and then to Donald Trump, costing her the presidency. After the election, Clinton and her allies in the commentariat seemed determined to cement the estrangement of these voters by ascribing to them characteristics meant to disparage rather than persuade—sexism, racism, nativism, and the like.

Both Canova and Hartson believe that a progressive populist in the mold of Bernie Sanders can win them back from Trump. Indeed, both use language when speaking of their movement that could have come from Steve Bannon—references to “the revolution,” “corporate media elites,” and “the corrupt political establishment.”

“Bernie talked about how we’ve got to end this corrupting influence of money in politics, and Trump really talked about the same thing,” Hartson notes. “They both talked about populist messages, about protecting the middle class, about fighting for the middle class, and not letting these gigantic industries continue putting us on a track of turning us into a third-world country. They talked about these things in different ways, but they really were saying the same thing.”

Perhaps. But candidacies like Hartson’s and Canova’s seem likely to push the Democratic party further to the left, just as the party needs to find a way to speak to voters who went for Trump in 2016.

Canova says such reckoning is no longer relevant.

“The progressive populism on the left and right-wing populism have a lot in common,” he says. “We can talk about the differences, and they’re significant, of course. But there’s a lot of intersection there. The real divide is no longer right versus left; what does that even mean anymore, right versus left? There’s very little difference between them on bread and butter issues. The real divide is now inside versus outside.” ♦

# Riyadh Realpolitik

## The Saudis shake up Lebanon.

BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS

What are the Saudis trying to do in Lebanon? They have clearly forced the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri. Do they want to destabilize the country? Destroy its government? Is the new Saudi approach another example of the often-alleged incompetence and overreach of the crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman? Does it show, once again, that he is in over his head?

Not in my view. On the contrary, the new and tougher Saudi approach seems to me more realistic—and (unsurprisingly) in line with the new Israeli approach. And both are not actions but reactions to the reality that Hezbollah is in fact in charge of Lebanon.

First, a bit of history. In the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon, Israel made a sharp distinction between Hezbollah and Lebanon. Israeli attacks decimated Hezbollah targets but did not focus on Lebanon's infrastructure. For example, to put the Beirut airport out of use the Israelis hit the runway, making take-offs and landings impossible. They did zero damage to the terminal and hangars, so that repaving the runway and opening the airport could be done fast when hostilities ended. Similarly, I recall visiting Beirut with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during the conflict and seeing the tall lighthouse in the port. An Israeli missile had gone right through the lighthouse's top and taken out its searchlight. There was no significant damage to the structure, so that all that was needed was a new searchlight for the lighthouse to be operational again. Israel made a special effort to avoid major damage to the Lebanese national infrastructure,

*Elliott Abrams is a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.*

despite claims to the contrary from the Lebanese government.

In May 2008, Hezbollah ended a government crisis over its own powers by using its weapons—allegedly meant only to protect the country from Israel—to seize control of Beirut's streets and effectively of the entire state. The *New York Times* quoted one expert on Hezbollah concluding back then, "This is effectively a coup."



*Mohammed bin Salman*

In the near decade since, Hezbollah's power has grown and so has its domination of Lebanon. During the war in Syria since 2012, Hezbollah has served as Iran's foreign legion and sent thousands of Lebanese Shia across the border to fight. A story in the *New York Times* this August summed up the current situation:

[Hezbollah] has rapidly expanded its realm of operations. It has sent legions of fighters to Syria. It has sent trainers to Iraq. It has backed rebels in Yemen. And it has helped organize a battalion of militants from Afghanistan that can fight almost anywhere. As a result, Hezbollah is not just a power unto itself, but is one of the most important instruments in the drive for regional supremacy by its sponsor: Iran. Hezbollah is involved in nearly every fight that

matters to Iran and, more significantly, has helped recruit, train and arm an array of new militant groups that are also advancing Iran's agenda.

That story concluded that "few checks remain on Hezbollah's domestic power" in Lebanon. And throughout 2017, Israeli officials have been warning that the distinction between Hezbollah and Lebanon can no longer be maintained. Hezbollah is quite simply running the country. While it leaves administrative matters like paying government salaries, paving roads, and collecting garbage to the state, no important decision can be taken without Hezbollah's agreement.

Lebanon's president must constitutionally be a Christian, but today that man is Michel Aoun, an ally of Hezbollah since 2006. That is why he got to be president in 2016. As an analyst at the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel put it, "Hezbollah has been very squarely backing Aoun for president, and this was always the deal between Aoun's party and Hezbollah. Hezbollah has upheld its end of the deal. With this election . . . you can see Hezbollah being consolidated in terms of its political allies as well as its position in Lebanon."

Tony Badran, a research fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies who specializes in Lebanon, concurred: "In terms of the actual balance of power, the actual power on the ground, regardless of the politics, regardless of the cabinets, regardless of the parliamentary majorities: It's Hezbollah."

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), a recipient of U.S. assistance, is increasingly intertwined with Hezbollah. David Schenker of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy described the situation this way:

[I]n April 2017, Hezbollah brought more than a dozen international journalists on a tour of Lebanon's frontier with Israel, breezing through several checkpoints manned by national intelligence organs and LAF units, suggesting a high degree of coordination. The next month, Hezbollah turned over several of its Syria border observation posts to the LAF . . .

FAYEZ NURELDINE / AFP / GETTY



Hezbollah supporters in a southern suburb of the Lebanese capital, Beirut, October 1

Finally, in late June, the LAF sent 150 officer cadets to tour Hezbollah's Mleeta war museum, near Nabatiyah, a shrine to the organization's "resistance" credentials vis-à-vis Israel.

Where does all that leave Lebanon? Last summer Badran, in an article entitled "Lebanon Is Another Name for Hezbollah," concluded, "The Lebanese state . . . is worse than a joke. It's a front."

That is the situation to which Mohammed bin Salman is reacting. The key man in maintaining this façade has been Lebanon's prime minister, who must constitutionally be a Sunni and is Saad Hariri. Hariri is the son of Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister assassinated in 2005 (almost certainly in a joint effort by Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Syria). Mohammed bin Salman looks around the region and sees his own country in danger of being sandwiched between an Iranian-dominated Iraq and an Iranian-dominated Yemen, while Iran—and Hezbollah—increasingly dominate Syria as well as Lebanon. Saad Hariri has always been subject to Saudi pressures, in large part because his family's fortune was made in Saudi Arabia and depends to this day on Saudi largesse. Mohammed bin Salman must have wondered why he was paying to maintain that façade, propping up a Lebanese government that does not govern and instead allows free rein to Hezbollah. Indeed, Hezbollah is part of Hariri's coalition government, and his resignation collapses that coalition.

In addition to pressuring Hariri, the Saudis have several ways of pressuring Lebanon economically. The Saudi deposit of \$860 million in the Lebanese Central Bank, meant to stabilize Lebanon's currency, might be withdrawn. Remittances from Lebanese working outside the country are critical for the country's economy, constituting about 15 percent of Lebanon's GDP, and Lebanese working in Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies provide a significant portion of that; those workers could start to be sent home. Eighty percent of foreign direct investment in Lebanon comes from the Gulf, and it could decline precipitously. Finally, Gulf tourists are a key part of Lebanon's tourism sector both in numbers and per capita spending. "The number of Saudi tourists to Lebanon increased by 86.77 percent in the first seven months of 2017 compared to the same period last year," the *Daily Star* of Beirut reported in August, but now the Saudis and other Gulf nations have told their citizens to leave Lebanon. This will hit the tourism industry hard.

Why punish Lebanon? There is no doubt that such measures can affect every Lebanese—but that is the point. The Saudis are no longer willing to prop up Lebanon while it serves as the base for Hezbollah's military and terrorist activities in league with Iran. They are asking a different question: What will it take for the Lebanese to pressure Hezbollah to cut back on its actions and to allow

the Lebanese state to govern again? Is it possible that as all Lebanese—not just Sunnis, Christians, and Druze but also Shia—pay a higher price for Hezbollah's subservience to Iran, Hezbollah might begin to worry about its own political base in Lebanon? One estimate in *Newsweek* puts Hezbollah's own toll at 2,000-2,500 dead and 7,000 injured in Syria, meaning that every Shia village and most Shia families have suffered some loss. The Shia population is about one million, so about 1 percent has been injured or killed fighting for Iran in Syria, and every casualty of course affects a much larger family group.

It is not Mohammed bin Salman, then, who is bringing danger to Lebanon; it is not the Saudis who are bringing Lebanon into the region's wars; it is not Saudi policy that threatens to collapse Lebanon's coalition politics. It is the actions of Hezbollah, abandoning any national role in order to act as Iran's enforcer and foreign legion. What the Saudis are doing is saying: Enough—let's start describing Lebanese reality instead of burying it. Let's stop financing a situation that allows Hezbollah to feed off the Lebanese state, dominate that state, and use it as a launching pad for terror and aggression in the Middle East, all on Iran's behalf.

There is of course no guarantee that this approach will succeed: The Lebanese may be too terrified of Hezbollah. And success will require action by the United States and its allies, particularly France. If all Lebanon's friends take

ANWAR AMRO / AFP / GETTY

the same approach, demanding that Hezbollah's grip on the country and the state be limited, we may embolden Lebanon's citizens and its politicians to protest Hezbollah's chokehold. Economic assistance to Lebanon and military assistance to its army should be made dependent on pushing back on Hezbollah and regaining Lebanese independence. The price Lebanon pays for Hezbollah should be made far clearer, and the advantages Hezbollah gains from its control of Lebanon should be reduced—and made far more controversial.

Are these outrageous demands? On the contrary, they are in fact required by U.N. Security Council resolution 1701, adopted in August 2006 to end the war between Hezbollah and Israel. It's worth recalling what started that war: an unprovoked attack by Hezbollah into Israel, killing and kidnapping Israeli soldiers. Resolution 1701 includes these provisions:

*Emphasizes* the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory [and] for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon;

*Calls for* . . . the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.

In other words, what the Saudis are demanding is what the U.N. Security Council demanded unanimously over a decade ago—and the Lebanese government accepted days later. Now, Hezbollah is once again thrusting Lebanon into deadly conflicts in the region—including the risk of another war with Israel. These dangers will not be avoided by burying our heads in the sand, nor will Lebanon's sovereignty be restored by ignoring Hezbollah's destruction of that sovereignty. A better way forward is to tell the truth about the situation in Lebanon and use both diplomatic and economic pressure to undermine Hezbollah's iron grip. ♦

# Too Much To Ask?

A little accountability would be nice.

BY WILLIAM KRISTOL

If cleverness has often been a sign of decadence throughout history, the attempt to be too clever by half is an even more reliable marker of cultural decline. And a fondness for complicated rationalization, a proclivity for sophisticated excuse-making, and a tendency toward rushed and forced decision-making aren't signs of civilizational well-being either.

We've seen an awful lot of all these in recent months. So how about some straightforward accountability, some simple responsibility, and some sober deliberation instead?

A member of the House of Representatives has charged that two of her colleagues are guilty of sexual harassment. She should name them, and they should be held accountable. Another has spoken of a congressman summoning a staffer to his residence and exposing himself. She should name him, and he should be held accountable. And it seems that the House has paid millions of dollars to settle sexual harassment lawsuits (see our editorial, "Sexual Coercion on the Hill," on page 8). Which of our elected representatives were bailed out of possible legal trouble by taxpayer dollars? Which of their staff? They should be held accountable. It's our money. They're our representatives. We deserve to know what happened.

Meanwhile, Judge Roy Moore won the Republican nomination to stand in the December 12 special election for Alabama's open seat in the U.S. Senate. He doesn't want to withdraw despite recent revelations about his past behavior, and the Alabama Republican party doesn't want to remove him from the

ballot. So let's stop pleading with him to step down. Let's stop looking for clever gimmicks that would change the date of a duly and legally scheduled election. The voters of Alabama have a choice between Roy Moore and the Democratic candidate, Doug Jones.

There may be an effort to organize a write-in campaign for a third candidate, an attempt which would be entirely legal and proper. But let the election proceed as planned. Let the voters of Alabama choose. Do they face an unfortunate choice between electing a senator who's an embarrassment or reducing the Republican majority in the Senate? Tough. Life occasionally presents tough choices. Or, in this case, one might say it's a choice that is tough only if one rates party affiliation more highly than honesty and character. But let the voters make their choice and take responsibility for it.

Finally: Congress is considering a complex tax bill that would reduce some taxes while increasing the deficit. It would be desirable to have an honest discussion on the Hill and across the nation about it. It would be desirable to allow serious hearings, plenty of time for consideration, and a chance to offer and debate amendments. It would be desirable, since there is no looming deadline for this legislation, if this could be an instance of democratic deliberation rather than partisan mobilization. Is it too much to ask the Senate to rescue the claim that it's the world's greatest deliberative body from being a comedian's punch line? Is it too much to ask Congress to feature candid and substantive debate rather than silly slogan-mongering?

Accountability. Responsibility. Deliberation. Are all these too much to ask in the America of 2017? ♦



Roy Moore

*William Kristol is editor at large of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

# Predicting the Failure of ISIS

On this, Osama bin Laden was prescient.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

The Islamic State's smattering of remaining strongholds in Iraq and Syria are under siege. At the height of the self-declared caliphate's power in mid-2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's men controlled large swaths of both countries. Today, the jihadists hold only a few towns straddling the Iraqi-Syrian border. The U.S. military announced this week that Iraqi forces are advancing on the group's positions in western Anbar Province, where Baghdadi's loyalists are clinging to the rump of their once-expansive "nation." Two competing coalitions—one backed by the United States, the other sponsored by Russia and Iran—have encircled what's left of the gang's forces just across the border in Syria.

Baghdadi's erstwhile grandiose territorial ambitions now look somewhat pathetic. Whereas Baghdadi's subordinates initially claimed to rule over a "remaining and expanding" empire, they now swear that this ongoing war was always predestined—a divinely mandated test of their followers' will to wage jihad. The most ardent believers will not question this change in narrative. But not all of the faithful will be so pliable.

Some jihadist ideologues had predicted from the beginning that the Islamic State's caliphate project was doomed to fail. One of them, in particular, now appears prophetic: Osama bin Laden.

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*Thomas Joscelyn is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

On November 1, the CIA released a massive cache of documents and files taken from bin Laden's Abbottabad compound when the terrorist leader was killed on May 2, 2011. The history of the Iraq war, and al Qaeda's role in it, will have to be



Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, November 8, 2001

rewritten. Before Baghdadi's group mushroomed into an international menace, it was a part of al Qaeda's global network. Many of the files deal with the Islamic State's predecessor organizations, revealing new details about their operations and intentions.

Bin Laden saw the Iraq war as a golden opportunity to expand the jihadists' base. And al Qaeda wanted to build a new nation, governed according to strict Islamic law (*sharia*), on the vestiges of Saddam Hussein's neo-Stalinist state. The al Qaeda founder warned that declaring a caliphate would be premature, however, as the United States remained powerful enough to easily topple any radical, *sharia*-based state. Still, the Abbottabad files make it clear that al Qaeda's senior leaders helped guide the jihad in Iraq years after the 2003 invasion

and create the franchise that eventually blossomed into the Islamic State.

The current Islamic State evolved out of Al Qaeda in Iraq, led by Abu Musab al Zarqawi. One audio file recovered in Abbottabad contains a lengthy biography of Zarqawi, recorded by a jihadist who served alongside him, a man known as Abu Muhammad. Zarqawi set up operations inside Iraq before the war, according to Abu Muhammad's testimony. Shortly after the conflict began, Zarqawi relocated to Mosul, staying in the city for three months before moving on. Mosul would become one of the two most important cities in the Islamic State's so-called caliphate. It was overrun by Baghdadi's men in the summer of 2014 and was not liberated from their clutches until 2017.

Zarqawi and his men faced numerous hurdles from the start. Chief among them: The Americans and their allies sought to divide Al Qaeda in Iraq from other insurgent factions. One newly released memo contains detailed instructions for combating the American plans. It is not clear who wrote the memo or who received it, but it seems to have been written sometime in 2005.

According to U.S. intelligence officials familiar with the document, it foreshadows the creation of the Mujahideen Shura Council (MSC), the union of Al Qaeda in Iraq and five other Iraqi insurgent groups, in early 2006.

The al Qaeda author began by likening the Iraqi insurgent groups to children with "one father" but "many mothers." "The common connection between all of these fighters is that they have refused the infidel occupation," he elaborated. But they have "different opinions, approaches, and visions" for the fight, from those who want to resurrect Iraq's Baathist regime (a "few fighters") to those who "fight to make God's Supreme Word, and make Islam the only religion, and make the Mesopotamia the base that will lead to liberate the rest of the Muslim occupied countries." This latter category

HAMID MIR

included Zarqawi's al Qaeda branch, as well as another al Qaeda-linked group in Iraq, Ansar al-Sunnah.

When the memo was written, presumably in late 2005, the jihadists' enemies were looking to capitalize on their differences. The author had a solution. He endorsed a plan to create "a council" of "leaders and scholars, so they can meet and agree on the fundamental concepts, and find ways to execute them." This "political front" would insulate the jihadists from America's machinations. This is exactly what Al Qaeda in Iraq did in 2006, when it formed the MSC, a coalition that was intended to pool the resources of various insurgents and shield the jihadists from the American divide-and-conquer strategy.

The same memo contains instructions for reforming the "management of the brothers" in Iraq, as they were often unruly. The author lamented that Zarqawi himself "is not able to make much improvement" in this regard, as he was being hunted. Al Qaeda's chief concern was that poor management would lead to additional problems. "If he was able to find experienced brothers in administration, communication, and politics, he would have fixed a lot of these issues," the al Qaeda author wrote of Zarqawi.

The Abbottabad files contain numerous mentions of Zarqawi, who was killed in June 2006. Later that year, the MSC was rebranded the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), the immediate predecessor to the current Islamic State. Al Qaeda apparently did not approve of the decision to announce a state inside Iraq, but bin Laden didn't disown the ISI either. Bin Laden and his men continued to receive reports from Iraq well after Zarqawi's demise. They also continued to support the ISI, both in public and behind the scenes.

In one just-released audio report, an al Qaeda correspondent explained that a new "media campaign" was necessary "to raise morale after the Sunni Awakening and the success of the Americans." The recording was likely made sometime after the beginning of the so-called surge, which reversed the ISI's gains throughout the

country. While the situation was dire, the jihadist predicted that "Iraq will continue to be a fertile field for jihad," which will "spread . . . to surrounding countries because of the chaos, conflicts, etc. . . . even if the ISI collapses." He pointed to the Levant as a particularly promising new battlefield. Indeed, Syria is mentioned throughout the Abbottabad files as the next big theater for jihad—a forecast that has proven to be all too accurate.

Other files contain instructions relayed from al Qaeda's central command to the ISI's leaders. In a March 6, 2008, letter, for instance, Ayman al Zawahiri passed on an order from bin Laden to the ISI's top men. Zawahiri

**Bin Laden and Rahman wrote to their commanders, 'We need to concentrate our jihad efforts in areas where the conditions are ideal for us to fight,' naming Iraq and Afghanistan as 'two good examples.' But al Qaeda's leaders warned that they didn't want 'our jihad' to 'become fruitless.'**

told them to threaten Denmark over the publication, two years prior, of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. (The Abbottabad files show that al Qaeda repeatedly sought to capitalize on the controversy and strike Danish targets.) In his 2008 letter, Zawahiri also informed the ISI's honchos that bin Laden wanted them to establish a "section within the Office of the Affairs of the Mujahedeen in the Islamic State of Iraq" that could collect "detailed questionnaires on each member indicating their age, health status," and "experience" in various areas. The effort was supposed to help the ISI manage its personnel better.

The relationship between al Qaeda's global management team and the ISI was fraught with difficulties. There is some debate within counterterrorism circles over whether

the ISI was really a part of al Qaeda from 2006 onward. When the ISI was announced in 2006, the group's leaders publicly claimed that Al Qaeda in Iraq had been dissolved. But an initial review of the Abbottabad files suggests that bin Laden still considered the ISI to be part of his network at the time of his death.

Regardless, bin Laden never would have approved of the Islamic State's caliphate declaration in 2014. He and his chief lieutenant, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, set forth their thinking in a lengthy missive penned in the fall of 2010. A version of this letter was posted online by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center in 2012, but the CIA release this month includes other copies, some of which are addressed to al Qaeda commanders in Africa and the Middle East.

"Our main goal, and yours, is to resurrect the religion of Islam, and to build a Caliphate-based state in every Muslim country," bin Laden and Rahman wrote to their commanders. "We need to concentrate our jihad efforts in areas where the conditions are ideal for us to fight," they explained, naming Iraq and Afghanistan as "two good examples." But al Qaeda's leaders warned that they didn't want "our jihad" to "become fruitless."

"We need to fight in areas where we can gain points toward the creation of the Caliphate-based state," they continued. Yet "the enemy" could "easily destroy" any state lacking the "essential foundations to function and defend itself." Although al Qaeda viewed the United States as a weakened foe, the world's only superpower was still strong enough to quickly topple Saddam's regime and the Taliban's Islamic Emirate. Bin Laden and Rahman warned that a newly declared caliphate would meet the same fate. "Building a state without proper foundations is like building a house in the middle of a torrential stream," they analogized. "Every time the water destroys the house, we rebuild, then we rebuild until those who help us with the rebuilding give up on us." For this reason, the "impact of losing a state can be devastating,

especially if that state is in its infancy.”

Bin Laden and Rahman made a commonsense observation that resonates across many contexts: The “public does not like losers.” They advised al Qaeda’s regional managers to avoid skipping “any of the stages” necessary for building “public support.” These efforts were to be made in service of “long-term” state-building, as only a strong popular base could withstand America’s onslaught. “A quick work might be fruitful in the short run,” bin Laden and Rahman wrote, “but it is not what we need to do.”

Two years after bin Laden’s death, in mid-2013, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his subordinates defied these commands. Baghdadi reached out to other jihadists to see if they would support his caliphate claim. Baghdadi’s spokesman publicly declared the establishment of a new caliphate the following year. In some ways, Baghdadi’s loyalists showed that there was more of an appetite for an immediate caliphate proclamation than al Qaeda believed. Tens of thousands of jihadists and new recruits were electrified by the June 2014 announcement that a new caliphate had risen nearly a century after the last one was disbanded. Many of them remain inspired. Despite its territorial setbacks, it is too early to pronounce total victory over the Islamic State. As U.S. intelligence officials warned earlier this year, the organization likely retains enough personnel and resources to continue waging guerrilla warfare. And the Islamic State’s fortunes are no longer confined to Iraq and Syria. Its enterprise is global, with representatives everywhere from West Africa to Southeast Asia. Its network in the West will also continue to bedevil European and American counterterrorism officials.

Still, bin Laden warned that the jihadists would not be able to hold onto their territory if they declared a caliphate. He was right. Al Qaeda’s branches in Africa and the Middle East face their own hurdles, but they continue to follow his more patient approach. Time will tell if bin Laden’s longer-term plan for caliphate-building will bear fruit. ♦

# True Blue in Alabama

If Doug Jones were pro-life,  
the race would be over. BY CHRIS DEATON

*Birmingham, Ala.*

**O**n a recent Saturday, Doug Jones addressed a meeting of the Alabama Democrats’ executive committee. The party hasn’t won a major statewide race since 2006 and has been stymied by racial divisions and power struggles. There are more than two-dozen vacancies on the committee, and local leaders attack each other for being directionless.

It was two months from the Democrats’ best shot to win an Alabama Senate seat in 25 years, Jones, their 63-year-old nominee in the race, said it was time to focus and put aside quarrels. He delivered the message to the committee “tactfully” and “selectively,” says state senator Linda Coleman-Madison. “I had to stand up and applaud.”

Jones’s decision to speak about the intraparty quarreling says much about his popularity among Democrats. He leads quietly—“picks his fights,” Coleman-Madison says—and approaches politics constructively. His campaign has centered on topics like job creation and health care. But “the overwhelming issue is having leaders on both sides of the aisle work together, no matter what the substantive issue is,” says Giles Perkins, the former executive director of the Alabama Democrats and one of Jones’s top strategists.

President Clinton appointed Jones U.S. attorney for the northern district of Alabama in 1997. During his four-year tenure, he successfully prosecuted the two remaining Klansmen who hadn’t been tried for the 16th

*Chris Deaton is a deputy online editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*



*Roy Moore opponent Doug Jones*

Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, which killed four African-American girls in 1963.

Jones, who was raised just west of Birmingham, is an appealing candidate for Alabama Democrats—who failed even to field an opponent for Jeff Sessions when he was up for reelection in 2014. Coleman-Madison says Jones “grew up like everybody else, understanding what segregation was all about.” State senator Billy Beasley tells me the nominee is a “person of high integrity and very intelligent.” Rep. Chris England calls him “fair and evenhanded.” Each of these legislators represent different parts of Alabama: Coleman-Madison and England, both African American, represent Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, respectively, while Beasley is a white lawmaker from the rural southeast corner of the state.

The qualities they praise are mostly apolitical. On policy matters, Jones

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runs against the conventional wisdom for an Alabama Democrat. He's a strong advocate of Obamacare. He supports raising the minimum wage. His environmental platform leads with Sierra Club religiosity: "I want to be perfectly clear: I believe in science."

Chris England likes that the party is finally running a more mainstream liberal in a statewide race.

"Honestly, for decades now, we have always approached it from the other perspective: the understanding that this is Alabama, it's a red state, Republican, it's generally conservative," he says. "But I think for the first time in a long time, we're approaching this election from a different perspective, and we're asking: Can a Democrat represent the best interests of Alabama?"

What they leave aside is abortion. Jones is a strongly pro-choice candidate. He told NBC's Chuck Todd he's "not in favor of anything that is going to infringe on a woman's right and her freedom to choose" and opposes a proposed ban on abortions after the 20-week mark in a pregnancy. Alabama is among the country's staunchest pro-life states; according to the Pew Research Center, it ranks behind only Arkansas and Mississippi in the percentage of adults who say abortion should be illegal in most or all cases.

"I've heard from several people that have said that I just can't vote for someone who supports a woman's right to choose," England notes. "And I think that continues to play out. If that issue wasn't on the table, this election would be over. People would be going to Doug Jones in droves. But I think people are willing to stomach so much because of that wedge issue."

The *Real Clear Politics* polling average shows Jones trailing Republican Roy Moore by 3 points. The National Republican Senatorial Committee, which pulled its support of Moore after five women accused him of pursuing them sexually as teenagers, released a poll subsequent to the allegations showing Jones leading Moore by 12 points. A

race that should have been a foregone conclusion in red Alabama is suddenly unpredictable.

"Judge Moore has a strong, strong base, and I don't know," Beasley tells me, pausing. "My gut says they'll stay with him. But I think that Doug Jones the last 10 to 14 days has been gaining, his media has been good, and he's expressed the fact that he has the ability to work across political lines."

Jones's campaign released an advertisement on November 14 featuring Republican voters who said they couldn't cast a ballot for Moore in light of the accusers coming forward. "You read the story and it just shakes you," one woman says. "Don't decency and integrity matter anymore?" "Just awful," says another.

Perkins, the Jones strategist, says the ad doesn't reflect a wider shift in

campaign strategy. "We're hopeful that Doug Jones's positive message will continue to resonate, and it's our intention to stick with that," he says.

Jones would be the first Democrat elected to the Senate from Alabama since Howell Heflin, who opposed legalized abortion and most gun control measures, won reelection in 1990. A victory would breathe life into a long-dormant party.

Around the perimeter of Birmingham, the state's largest city, Democratic headquarters are cluttered and quiet. In Anniston, an attorney's office displays a lone Jones for Senate sign. Miles from Talladega Superspeedway, a large Democratic party space next to an abandoned furniture store lacks urgency but for one sign standing on the windowsill: "VOTE OR DIE, V-DAY, TUESDAY, DEC. 12." ♦

# A Presidential Report Card

It's not pretty.

BY FRED BARNES

There are many ways to judge a president—polls, approval ratings, legislative successes, foreign breakthroughs, memorable speeches, and historic moments. But there's a better way than any of these, and Fred Greenstein, a professor of politics emeritus at Princeton University, has developed it.

Rather than rely on what others think, the Greenstein method is to judge a president by his performance in office—that is, his effectiveness. Put another way, does the president offer strong and persuasive leadership? Polls and ratings don't always capture this.

Greenstein originally assessed

*Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

presidents from FDR to Clinton on the basis of six qualities related to job performance in his 1996 book *The Presidential Difference*. The six are public communication, organizational ability, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence.

I'm going to judge President Trump on these qualities after only 10 months in the White House. That makes my judgments tentative at best and wildly premature at worst. I suspect Greenstein would frown on this. He waited until presidents had completed their terms before reaching conclusions. And his book is a classic.

Because Trump is so different from other modern chief executives, he deserves a little slack. And since it's so early in his term, I'll grade him simply by pass or fail. This may be a dubious

endeavor since my only qualification is that I've covered presidents since Gerald Ford (whom I liked, by the way).

■ **Public communicator.** Trump is no FDR or Reagan, but he's a pretty good communicator. His practice is to inform the world of whatever crosses his mind. When he tweeted in the campaign, it worked well. As president, not so much. As often as not, he comes off as egotistical, mean-spirited, petty, or poorly informed. At least everyone knows his thoughts and obsessions.

But there's a problem. Harvard professor Richard Neustadt, in his famous book *Presidential Power*, offered a clear definition of presidential power. It's the power to persuade—Congress, the public, foreign leaders. Trump may communicate, but he doesn't try to persuade. As a rule, he doesn't make a case or deliver an argument for what he wants.

There's an exception: national security and foreign policy addresses. Two examples are his speeches in Poland and at the United Nations. Why were they so good? My guess is they were drafted not by the regular speechwriters but at the National Security Council by the one top-notch writer at the White House, Michael Anton.

*Grade: Pass, barely.*

■ **Organizational capacity.** Trump has the organizational ability of a 6-year-old. And no president can thrive in a helter-skelter environment. Can wise decision-making occur when the Oval Office is a madhouse? No.

As chief of staff since July, John Kelly has produced a reasonably disciplined White House. There are fewer leaks, and the worst rivalry on the staff

ended when Steve Bannon was kicked out. But Kelly regards tweets as a presidential prerogative. So they continue to cause confusion, hurting Trump, Republicans, and the country.

*Grade: Fail.*



■ **Political skill.** Trump has plenty, but he uses it incautiously. He's the only Republican who could have beaten Hillary Clinton. But the presidency is a different game with different rules. And he's not particularly good at it. If he were, he wouldn't attack allies such as Mitch McConnell as if they were enemies.

Trump needs an enemy to nickname and demonize. The one success of the "Resistance" is that no one Democrat stands out as the Resister-in-Chief, the opponent for Trump to take apart. In 2020, he'll have one to go after in his reelection campaign.

His growing success in filling the federal courts with talented conservatives represents an important political triumph. Trump's promise to pick a nominee to fill the Supreme

Court vacancy after Antonin Scalia's death from a list of conservatives was inspired. He intends to choose future Supreme Court nominees from a refreshed list of conservatives.

*Grade: Pass.*

■ **Vision.** Trump doesn't have one. His views on policy tend to come and go. He said the Republican health care bill was "mean" and suggested the Senate version of tax reform was better than the House model. Is he serious when he threatens to cut off his ties to Republicans and take up with Democrats? I think he is. The ideological gap between the parties doesn't bother him.

*Grade: Fail.*

■ **Cognitive Style.** Greenstein described this as the style "with which the president processes the Niagara of advice and information that comes his way." Trump often appears to adopt the advice of the last person he's talked to. Other times, he's adamant about sticking to a policy he's been advised to abandon. His sympathy for Vladimir Putin and his insistence on pulling out of the Paris Agreement on climate change come to mind in this regard.

Trump's substitute for books is TV news. It's a source of advice and leads to job offers. Trump has no wise man to rely on. Nixon had Kissinger. Reagan had Jim Baker and Ed Meese. Bush the Younger had Cheney.

*Grade: Fail.*

■ **Emotional Intelligence.** This consists of keeping one's emotions under control and using them for what Greenstein calls "constructive purposes." That doesn't sound like one of Trump's strengths, does it? His emotions are frequently not under control and lead to wrongheaded pursuits. He picks on little people who criticize him—not a good tactic.

*Grade: Fail.*

Presidents have a history of changing in office. The question about Trump is whether he ever will. Republicans desperately want him to follow the model for nominating judges on other issues. That would have him select a policy, then shut up. My advice to Republicans is don't get your hopes up.

◆ THOMAS FLUHARTY

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# That National Feeling

It's far from gone, gone, gone.

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

If Americans think our nation is painfully divided, two statistics from across the Atlantic might put their minds at ease. The first is the percentage of British voters who chose, in a binding referendum last year, to abandon the European Union: just slightly under 52 percent. The other is the number of Catalans who, according to the latest opinion polls, do *not* wish to declare their independence from Spain: slightly over 50 percent.

At first glance, the two might seem unrelated. Opponents of Brexit complain that the vote to leave the EU was a gesture toward national oblivion, isolating Great Britain—politically, culturally, and especially economically—from the continent. Meanwhile, supporters of Catalan secession argue that, despite its unprecedented autonomy within post-Franco Spain, Catalonia suffers at the hands of an onerous central government in Madrid.

Both views, in my opinion, are mistaken. But while the numbers reflect close divisions within their respective states, the active ingredient here is not isolation or federalism but resurgent nationalism. After nearly a half-century's membership in the EU, a narrow majority of U.K. voters concluded that their British identity was more important to them than participation in any European project. And a slightly larger majority of Catalans seem to believe that while they cherish their region's distinctive culture and identity, their primary political

allegiance is to Spain, not to Catalonia.

Being neither English nor Catalan, I leave it to others to decide whether these sentiments are Good or Bad Things: Consciousness of national



Brexit supporter in Birmingham, May 31, 2016

identity is a complex attitude. As a friendly observer of Europe, however, I think they're inevitable.

Most of the educated elites who read and write about such issues, and practice politics, tend to think of themselves as sophisticated beings, at home among genteel people who resemble themselves, regardless of borders. In these precincts, national feeling, or its slightly more demonstrative sibling patriotism, is regarded with a certain embarrassment, a primeval reflex as mortifying as the onset of puberty. And the European Union, as presently constituted, is the embodiment of such genteel attitudes.

To be sure, differences among the nations of Europe led to two catastrophic wars in the last century, and some of the enduring fractures within the continent—between north and south, Catholic and Protestant, Latin and Teuton, etc.—are caused by instincts (racism, sectarian bias, xenophobia) now regarded with horror. But human nature is considerably

more obstinate than diplomacy; and in Europe, especially since the end of the Soviet Union, the story has not been of closer community but awakening nationalism.

For European unity is one of those good ideas about which almost everyone can agree in theory if not necessarily in practice. Indeed, it was an excellent idea in the immediate postwar era, when the visionary French foreign minister Robert Schuman proposed a pooling of the coal and steel resources of France and West Germany and invited neighboring states to join their company. This was not just fuel for the resurgence of economies crippled by war but the groundwork for a rapprochement between two nation-states whose antipathy had proved so disastrous to the rest of the continent.

European unity was an even better idea when, in 1958, the Coal and Steel Community was expanded into a free-trade area, creating a continental common market in the midst of Cold War tensions. Indeed, so successful and appealing was the new European Economic Community that Great Britain, which had been a global political and military power lately drawn into a “special relationship” with the United States, felt constrained to apply for membership—and after rejection by French veto in 1963, to reapply and gain entry a decade later. I happened to be in England when, in 1975, the Labour government of Prime Minister Harold Wilson delivered on its election promise of a national referendum on membership—and 67 percent voted affirmatively.

Yet it was Labour's historic resistance to the European idea that proved prophetic. While Conservatives of the era tended to look upon EU membership as a diplomatic and commercial necessity—Margaret Thatcher, the newly elected Tory leader, was passionately pro-European in the referendum campaign—Labour looked askance at the growing EU management. And it was not so much what the Europeans did as the way they did it: Decisions about the economic life of the United Kingdom were increasingly made not

Philip Terzian is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

by citizens in Britain but by bureaucrats in Brussels.

“Undemocratic,” said Labour.

As indeed it was—and as the rule of elites, and the cream of the crop, and self-selected experts tends to be. As we know in America, democracy often delivers unpleasant surprises, and the weakness of the EU’s half-hearted gesture towards popular representation—the European parliament—merely emphasized where real power lay. And as always, the exercise of power proved no less irresistible to the mandarins in Brussels than it has anywhere else on earth. As the 20th century hurtled toward its end, the purview of the EU in economic, legal, political, even cultural life relentlessly grew.

All of this coincided with the collapse of the Soviet empire, which yielded not the end of history but its resumption—and the emergence from a long winter’s nap of Europe’s old ethnic rivalries, national grievances, and tribal hostilities. This resulted in both democratic success stories (the Czech Republic, Poland) and post-Cold War earthquakes (Yugoslavia, Ukraine, etc.), neither of which were especially affected by the EU’s existence.

Add to this, in recent years, the mass migration of refugees from the fractious Middle East to a tremulous West, and the European Union was revealed to be as ineffectual as another bright idea, the United Nations, in controlling events. In that sense, the EU’s long-term prospects are an open question. And the resurgence of national sentiment—in England, Scandinavia, France, Italy, even the EU’s senior partner, reunified Germany, and its headquarters, Belgium—is neither a blessing nor an affliction but a fact of historical life. Sovereignty matters.

In 1914, European socialists were confident that at the outbreak of war, workers would resist the call to arms and refuse to kill fellow workers. But the class struggle yielded, without a fight, to national allegiance. A century later, that Catalans might adhere to their Spanish identity, or Britons reclaim their independence from Brussels, is no great surprise. The surprise is that anyone should be surprised. ♦

# Constitutionally Illiterate

Roy Moore takes a blinkered view of the rule of law. BY JONATHAN H. ADLER



Roy Moore campaigning in Valley, Alabama, August 3

Asked about allegations Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore dated and engaged in appropriate conduct with teenage girls several decades ago, Alabama state senator Dick Brewbaker commented, “I do not buy the idea that suddenly because it’s now the U.S. Senate, she felt like she had to come forward. I mean, come on. He’s run for governor, and he’s been elected to the highest court in the land twice.” This is one of the main defenses of Moore—that he’s a longstanding public figure suddenly besmirched by allegations about four-decade-old events. And it is certainly true Roy Moore was twice elected to the Alabama supreme court. What Brewbaker neglected to

mention is that in both cases, Moore was removed from office.

On January 15, 2001, Roy S. Moore was sworn in as chief justice of the Alabama supreme court. He promised to “support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Alabama” and to “faithfully and honestly discharge the duties” of his office. Although Moore had been elected to a six-year term, he would be removed from the bench in 2003.

Shortly after assuming office, Moore commissioned for the rotunda of the state supreme court a monument to the “moral foundation of law” depicting, among other things, the Ten Commandments. As anyone could have predicted, progressive activists promptly sued, alleging the monument’s placement in the heart of the state’s judicial building constituted an “establishment of religion,” which is prohibited by the

*Jonathan H. Adler is the Johan Verheij memorial professor of law at the Case Western Reserve University School of Law. His most recent book is Business and the Roberts Court (2016).*

BILL CLARK / CO ROLL CALL / GETTY

First Amendment. A federal district court agreed and ordered the monument removed.

Moore refused to comply with the order, which was upheld on appeal and then denied review by the Supreme Court. Moore's state supreme court colleagues had the monument taken out.

In a 2003 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, Moore maintained that his "decision to disregard the unlawful order of the federal judge was not civil disobedience, but the lawful response of the highest judicial officer of the state to his oath of office." In subsequent remarks, he suggested that removing the Decalogue display was itself a violation of his oath—as if such a monument were required under state law.

The attorney general of Alabama, William Pryor, who was subsequently named to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit by George W. Bush, agreed with Moore on the meaning of the First Amendment. Neither man believes the display of the Ten Commandments in a courthouse constitutes an impermissible establishment of religion. Yet Pryor recognized the binding nature of a federal court order and understood how Moore's defiance undermined the rule of law. Pryor and the state's legal ethics panel, the Alabama Judicial Inquiry Commission, removed Moore from the bench. In failing to comply with a federal court order, the commission concluded, Moore had violated the canons of judicial ethics. The Alabama supreme court upheld the ruling.

Testifying before Congress in 2004, Moore said he was "removed from the position to which I was elected by the people of Alabama because I chose to acknowledge God through a display of the Ten Commandments." That's simply not true. The ethical violation occurred when he refused to comply with a federal court order and flouted the rule of law.

Moore further proclaimed that as a state judge, he was not required to follow the dictates of federal judges: "If by 'defying the rule of law' my critics mean that I have defied federal

judges, then they are equating 'the law' with the pronouncements of those judges. That is not our system." By Moore's lights, he was justified in defying a federal court order because he disagreed with it. "A judge's ruling is an opinion on the law, not the law itself: The opinion carries the weight of the law behind it only so long as it remains faithful to the text of the law." If a judge gets it wrong, according to Moore "his opinion is no longer clothed in the authority of the law." Yet that's not how our system works—or has ever worked.

Any such ideas were put to rest some 200 years ago by the Supreme Court in *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee*. It was one of the Marshall Court's most important decisions, settling why federal court decisions bind state courts, even when state-level jurists believe their federal brethren got something wrong.

*Martin* arose from a property dispute. During the Revolutionary War, the Commonwealth of Virginia seized Loyalist property. A postwar treaty between the United States and Britain pledged to respect the property rights of Loyalists. When Denny Martin sued to regain possession of the seized land, the Virginia supreme court rejected his claim, concluding that the treaty did not entitle Martin to restoration of the property at issue. He appealed to the Supreme Court, which rejected the Virginia decision. On remand, however, the Virginia court stuck to its guns. The Supreme Court, it maintained, lacked jurisdiction over cases originating in state courts, and there was no reason to presume the Supreme Court's interpretation of a federal treaty was superior to that of a state tribunal.

Justice Joseph Story's majority opinion in *Martin* is a mini-tutorial in the nature of our federal system and the authority of the federal judiciary. In rejecting the Virginia supreme court's arguments, Story explained how Article III of the Constitution expressly gives federal courts the power to decide questions of federal law, even in cases that originate in state court.

The courts of the United States can, without question, revise the proceedings of the executive and legislative authorities of the states, and if they are found to be contrary to the Constitution, may declare them to be of no legal validity. Surely the exercise of the same right over judicial tribunals is not a higher or more dangerous act of sovereign power.

In ratifying the Constitution, the American people created a superior power in the federal government (albeit one limited to its enumerated powers). Among its powers was to ensure states do not contradict or obstruct federal law.

Story's argument was not based upon any claim that federal judges are wiser or more likely to reach the correct result than state judges. Accepting "the most sincere respect for state tribunals," he explained that the "necessity of uniformity of decisions throughout the whole United States, upon all subjects within the purview of the Constitution" was the reason why federal court decisions must be able to bind state officers, judges included. Indeed, this was the whole point of having a federal judiciary in the first place.

Our federal system readily accommodates differences in state laws. It is one of its virtues. Different parts of the country can adopt and enforce those laws that are most in line with local preferences. Federal law, however, is of a different nature. When laws are enacted by Congress, they are the "supreme law of the land"—and a law can hardly be "supreme" if it means something different in different places. Thus, a federal judiciary, with the authority to hear cases originating in state courts and overrule decisions on federal law issued by state judges, was essential. Indeed, to some, the lack of a federal judiciary was among the most important reasons to ratify the Constitution. As Alexander Hamilton wrote in *Federalist* 22, the lack of a federal judiciary "crown[ed] the defects" of the Articles of Confederation.

"The responsibility to administer the justice system of the State of

Alabama is a power clearly not delegated to the federal government under the U.S. Constitution,” Moore argued in his defense. True enough, but the “supremacy clause” in Article VI provides that federal law is “the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.”

Moore’s defenders sometimes seek to explain his actions by citing Abraham Lincoln’s harsh criticism of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. Lincoln believed the 1857 decision was wrong and, when president, argued he was under no obligation to follow the court’s holding in the performance of his official duties. In contrast to Moore, however, Lincoln never claimed the authority to reject a court order. To the contrary, he acknowledged “decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit as to the object of that suit.”

Alabama voters restored Moore to the chief justiceship in 2012, but once again he would not finish his term. This time the issue was gay marriage. Like many, Moore feels *Obergefell v. Hodges* was wrongly decided, but he, further, believed that the Constitution does not require Alabama to recognize same-sex unions legalized by the decision. As in his fight over the Decalogue monument, Moore thought his opinions entitled him to disregard federal court orders. This time he went even further, publicly declaring his resistance to *Obergefell* and instructing state probate court judges to follow suit, even after federal courts issued orders against Alabama officials. Moore again denied the authority of federal courts, and again the Alabama judicial inquiry commission cut his term short.

In addition to failing to understand the purpose and operation of Article III and the federal judicial power, Moore seems willing to overlook or ignore those provisions with which he

disagrees. In late 2006, he called upon members of Congress to exercise their power under Article I, Section 5, of the Constitution to refuse to seat the newly elected Keith Ellison in the House of Representatives because of his Muslim faith, conveniently overlooking that Article VI provides that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.” Moore seems to respect only those constitutional provisions compatible with his worldview.

In a recent interview in *Time*, Moore claimed, wrongly, that it’s illegal for NFL players not to stand during the national anthem and argued that his critics are the ones who are “confused” about the relationship between state and federal law. Asked how he might address “illegitimate” court opinions, Moore responded: “Justices who put themselves above the Constitution they’re sworn to uphold? They should be . . . removed.” As an Alabama supreme court justice Moore did, and he was—twice. ♦

## Entrepreneurs Hold Keys to the Future

THOMAS J. DONOHUE

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

November is National Entrepreneurship Month, a time for our country to honor those who drive innovation and encourage a new generation of enterprising Americans to take action on their ideas. At the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, we foster entrepreneurship by promoting policies that not only protect business creation but prioritize it.

Entrepreneurship is the life force of the American economy. Every business started as an idea and required a great deal of courage and commitment to get off the ground. Many entrepreneurs fail multiple times before they find a plan that works. In fact, I often say that if you don’t fail occasionally, you probably aren’t thinking big enough.

Once a business is growing and attracting customers, it creates tremendous value for the

entrepreneurs and their entire communities. New businesses account for the vast majority of net new jobs in the U.S. In the last three decades, firms less than a year old have created 1.5 million jobs annually. Entrepreneurs also drive innovation, which gives our economy the fuel it needs to grow and stay competitive.

One of the most important ways to promote entrepreneurship is to protect intellectual property (IP) rights, which incentivize creativity by allowing those who conceived or developed an idea to reap the rewards of its success. All of those who perform creative work, from entrepreneurs to artists to innovators, must be confident that the fruits of their labor will be shielded from piracy or theft. Ensuring that the creators of new products and services are rewarded is crucial to stimulating new business formation.

The Chamber’s Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) is committed to protecting innovation through IP

and other policies. Last week it held its annual IP Champions Gala to celebrate America’s creators and the policymakers who support their rights. As part of this event, GIPC released its sixth annual *Global IP Index*, ranking the IP protections of various nations based on a range of indicators. The *Index* provides a road map for each country to strengthen its standards.

The roots of entrepreneurship can be found in America’s protections for the innovators and creators who turn ideas into reality. It’s difficult to imagine what the next generation of entrepreneurs may achieve, but our job is to ensure that they have the chance to begin. As we mark National Entrepreneurship Month, the Chamber and GIPC are committed to continuing our long-standing fight to make America’s already strong protections for entrepreneurs and innovators even stronger.



Learn more at  
[uschamber.com/abovethefold](http://uschamber.com/abovethefold).

# Berniecare's Medicaid for All

A terrible idea. Let's hope its time never comes.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

As the Republican effort to repeal and replace Obamacare withered on the vine, the self-described socialist senator from Vermont rushed to fill the political vacuum. Bernie Sanders's Medicare for All Act of 2017 is a single-payer proposal that shamelessly attempts to harness the popularity of Medicare, the government insurance program for the elderly. But the system Sanders proposes would be more aptly described as *Medicaid* for all. It more closely resembles the expensive health insurance plan for the poor, which often provides inadequate coverage and pays such low fees to physicians that many refuse to participate.

Government-funded universal health care has long been a goal of the political left. But attempts to enact such entitlements at the state level have showed single-payer's budget-busting reality. Vermont in 2011 approved a single-payer plan for the state that was supposed to take full effect this year. But legislators never worked out how to pay for it, and after intense efforts to make the program affordable, Governor Peter Shumlin declared it undoable financially and shelved the program. California progressives experienced a similar letdown this year, coming close to legalizing a single-payer plan only to learn that there wasn't nearly enough gold in the Golden State to pay the tab.

It's not clear why a national system would fare any better. Sanders, though, remains a true believer, and he is traveling the country exciting followers with a siren song of free universal coverage for everyone. In truth,

while Sanders's plan would probably bankrupt the country, its flaws go far beyond the price tag. Berniecare's combination of spendthrift utopianism and authoritarian ambition would make us less wealthy, less healthy, and less free.



Protesters in New York City, January 13

■ **Berniecare would create a “universal entitlement” to “free” health care.** The bill creates a fundamental right to receive health care services while forbidding individual “cost-sharing, including deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, or similar charges,” with only minor exceptions. Covered services would be expansive, including “inpatient and outpatient hospital care; . . . ambulatory patient services; primary and preventive services; . . . mental health and substance abuse treatment services; . . . laboratory and diagnostic services; comprehensive reproductive, maternity, and newborn care; pediatrics; oral health, audiology, and vision services; [and] . . . rehabilitative . . . services and devices.” We’d have to buy our own aspirin, but not much else.

■ **Berniecare would obliterate the health insurance industry.** The existing Medicare program is a single-payer system. But that isn’t all it is. Medicare requires substantial deductibles and

co-payments, unlike Berniecare. Even so, Medicare trustees have warned that the program is on track for insolvency in 2028. Beyond that, a robust and competitive supplemental health insurance market exists to help beneficiaries pay for the “gaps” in Medicare coverage. Rather than being purely single-payer, Medicare is more accurately described as a hybrid system, with the government covering the bulk of beneficiaries’ medical costs but private insurers and beneficiaries paying for the balance.

Sanders’s plan would not only destroy Medicare’s hybrid system but would obliterate the health insurance industry, including coverage as a benefit of employment. The bill bans employers from providing benefits “that duplicate payment for any items or services for which payment may be made under the Medicare for All Act of 2017.” The government would have a monopoly with no opt-out except for the rich who can pay the entire cost of their care out of pocket. As a Heritage Foundation study puts it, “competition with the government health plan would be illegal.”

■ **Berniecare would require federally funded abortion.** Currently, an uneasy *modus vivendi* has been reached on abortion. It is legal in every state by court order, of course. But federal tax money cannot be used to pay for abortion under the Hyde Amendment. Berniecare would destroy that comity, requiring that all medical services be paid from a federal government trust fund and explicitly stating that the fund would be exempt from laws like the Hyde Amendments that restrict “the use of Federal funds for any reproductive health service.”

■ **Berniecare would eliminate medical conscience rights.** In the name of “non-discrimination,” the legislation would coerce doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals into performing services to which they have religious or moral objections. Saying “no” to any legal service requested by a patient would be deemed discrimination—which would obviously guarantee access to abortion, sex change surgery,

Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute’s Center on Human Exceptionalism.

infertility treatments, and perhaps one day assisted suicide. This provision of the Medicare for All Act, with malice aforethought, would drive pro-life and other Hippocratic oath-believing doctors and nurses out of medicine.

■ **Berniecare would bust the budget and lead to rationing.** According to the Urban Institute, Medicare for All would “increase federal government spending” by \$32 trillion—that’s trillion with a T—over its first 10 years. Think about the tax increases required to even approach covering those costs—which, as with Vermont’s stillborn law, are not specified in the legislation. Everything we know about government health care in places like Canada and the U.K. suggests the near certainty that the mammoth price tag would lead to stringent cost controls along with rationing by onerous wait times for tests, surgery, and other treatments.

It would be easy to assume that such a radical bill will never pass Congress. Don’t be so sure. If the Republicans implode in 2018 and a strong Democratic majority emerges, President Trump might well decide it would be “the greatest health care we have ever had.” One of his most noteworthy deviations from mainstream Republican views as a candidate came in his repeated statement that he wants universal health care coverage. Moreover, the bill already has 16 Democrat cosponsors, significantly including such potential or likely presidential candidates as senators Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, and Cory A. Booker. More than half the Democratic House caucus has signed onto Rep. John Conyers’s companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

Public opinion polls are also supportive. The *Economist* recorded public support at 60 percent, a Harvard poll had it at a whopping 66 percent, and the Kaiser Family Foundation poll at 57 percent. Sure, that support would drop as people learned more about Medicare for All. But as we should have learned from Obamacare, a bill doesn’t have to be popular to become law, and a health care system doesn’t have to be functional to endure. ♦

# Not the Cream of the Crop

The candidate-selection problem.

BY JAY COST

Republicans in Alabama are facing a nightmare scenario in their upcoming special election—either they elect to the Senate Doug Jones, a Democrat who does not share their values on important issues like abortion, or Roy Moore, a Republican who has been credibly accused of sexual improprieties with teenage girls.

How did it come to this? There are a lot of ways to answer that question, but the proximate cause is that in the September primary, roughly 262,000 Republican primary voters supported Moore over incumbent Luther Strange (who got 218,000). By way of comparison, Donald Trump won 1.3 million votes in last year’s general election in Alabama. So Moore won the Republican nomination by winning about 20 percent of the Republican electorate in the state.

Alabama is not the only place where a very narrow slice of the electorate has made dubious and consequential choices in primaries. In recent election cycles, Republican voters have thrown away winnable races by nominating such notable clunkers as Todd Akin in Missouri, Richard Mourdock in Indiana, and Christine O’Donnell in Delaware. And that’s not counting their judgment in presidential primaries.

Is it perhaps time to reconsider the merits of nominating primaries as a way to select quality candidates for office?

Primaries were popularized in the 20th century. Along with the direct election of senators, they are part and parcel of the progressive movement’s belief that more democracy is always better.

This is a faith that most of the Founding Fathers did not share. To be precise, the Founders came from the *republican* political tradition and indeed had quite radical views regarding it. They thought that government belongs to the people at large and, unlike many European republicans, rejected the legitimacy of any hereditary estates ruling in conjunction with the people. The Constitutional Convention was in large measure an effort to save this radical republicanism from the excesses of democracy.

The state governments of the 1780s were highly democratic as well as terribly behaved. They treated political minorities disdainfully, wrote and revised laws too frequently, and did not contribute to the welfare of the nation. Elbridge Gerry put it bluntly when, at the convention, he argued, “The evils we experience flow from the excess of democracy.” In James Madison’s view, the Constitution was a way to deal with “the inconveniencies of democracy” while remaining “consistent with the democratic form of government.”

The original constitutional schema placed the people directly in charge of only one institution—the House of Representatives. The Senate was selected by state legislatures, and the president by the Electoral College. This is a very republican system, but not a democratic one.

An integral ingredient in the Constitution is *representative* government. The people do not rule directly, but rather through (one hopes) a wise and enlightened class of mediators whom they select. It soon became clear, however, that the people needed more guidance in choosing representatives than the Constitution

Jay Cost is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

offered. This is how the first political parties sprung into being—to frame the debate for the public, to educate it, and to recommend estimable candidates who could achieve the party's goals in government.

Still, the role of party nominations in our system has rarely been given much thought. This is unfortunate, because it gets to the same problem with which the Founders struggled: What is the proper balance between the masses and the elites in public affairs? The Founders were careful in designing the Constitution not to move too far in one direction or the other, striking a middle ground between popular sovereignty and the mediating voices of what they hoped would be a caste of political leaders. Subsequent generations have treated the process of nominating potential members of that caste in a slapdash manner.

Within the first political parties, the process of nomination was largely the domain of the elites alone. Presidential nominations, for instance, were made by the parties' congressional caucuses. But the surge of democratic sentiment in the 1830s made this seem too high-toned, and nominating conventions—which brought in a wider array of public voices—were later employed.

As the 19th century unfolded, the convention process became widely corrupted. Party organizations were funded by government patronage (jobs, contracts, emoluments, and so on), which had precious little to do with public service. After the patronage system was done away with on the federal level, industrial and financial magnates stepped in, subsidizing party machines in the states to dominate politics for their own benefit.

It was this problem that the progressives were rebelling against. And from this perspective, the primary election seemed an eminently sensible device: If the elites were corrupted, power should be taken from them and given to the people. Over the course of the 20th century, that is precisely what happened, as primaries became the

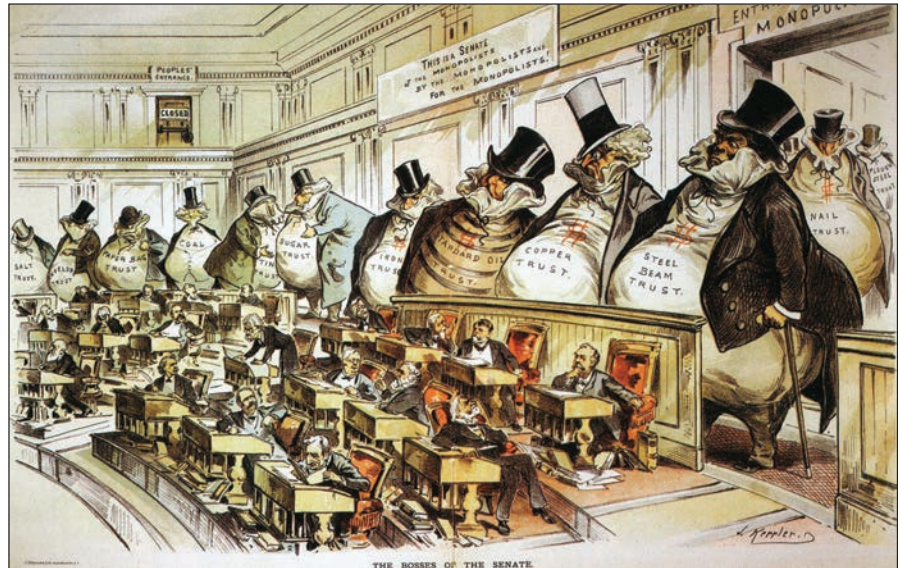
main way nominations were decided.

Yet it is not at all clear that the people at large even care enough to make such decisions. Turnout in most primaries is so embarrassingly low that it is unreasonable to conclude the primary vote is representative of any but the views of the most interested factions within a party—and sometimes those can be quite extreme.

Another problem is that primaries

have a natural disposition to stick with the status quo. This conservatism is reinforced by the fact that incumbents are usually well financed and can scare away serious challengers. Far from being a tool to clean politics of corruption, primaries too often now have the opposite effect.

Does this mean a return to nominating conventions is warranted? No. Conventions suffer from many of the



A turn-of-the-century cartoon advocating direct election of senators as a check on corporate influence

happen without the aid of partisan identification that voters enjoy in general elections. This is an enormously useful heuristic device for voters who do not take the time to learn the ins and outs of policies. They rely on that label—Democratic or Republican—to get a rough sense of what the candidate will do in office. But in an intra-party primary, there are no such labels. Worse, voters in a primary are asked to deliberate on finer-grained matters than a candidate's general disposition on the issues. It's about character, integrity, intelligence, independence—the sorts of qualities that can be the hardest to tease out, especially nowadays when the main interaction with candidates is via TV commercials.

Primaries have also proven very ineffective at removing bad actors from government, one of the main reasons they were introduced in the first place. Lacking sufficient information, voters

same problems. The influence of the smoke-filled room of yore is overstated, but there is no doubt that convention delegates can cut corrupt deals. Moreover, conventions often attract the ideological diehards, creating circumstances in which the nominees do not reflect the party at large.

Instead, what is really needed is some serious *thought*. For too long, public intellectuals in the United States have taken for granted the process of party nominations, accepting without question the normative value of the primary. The truth is that just as parties are essential to democratic governance, a sensible system of party nominations is necessary to make sure that government is actually staffed with people with the right temperament, education, and attachments to the community. We do not have that in this country right now, and that is a big problem. ♦

# The Philosopher's Farm

*Roger Scruton's conservative environmentalism*

BY DOMINIC GREEN

*Sunday Hill Farm, Wiltshire*

A crisp, autumnal morning in the Vale of Malmesbury, 80 miles west of London. Watery skies, clay soil, and gentle hills quilted with the ancient pattern of cows and sheep, hedges and coppices, stone farmhouses and industrial barns. At Sunday Hill Farm in Brinkworth, the range was fired up early, and the kitchen is busy. Half a dozen apple pies are cooling on the table, a partially carved leg of cold lamb waits on the sideboard, and a dog dances under everyone's feet. The annual Apple Festival begins in just over an hour's time.

"It's a rather strange event," Sir Roger Scruton reflects. "Like all traditions, it's an invented one. We at this farm have nothing to sell except me." Leaving his muddy Wellingtons by the back door, Scruton drifts shoelessly through the busy kitchen and into his study, a converted barn with book-lined walls, two grand pianos, and a view over the fields.

Sunday Hill's product is a global commodity. Journalist, lecturer, and author of some 40 books, Scruton is the best-known philosopher in the English-speaking world, and certainly the most influential. He is a prominent example of that rare growth, the philosopher who can talk with ordinary people about matters of common interest—not just philosophy, but also politics, architecture, music, wine, and the weather.

Scruton bought Sunday Hill Farm nearly 25 years ago. "I think of myself as a half-rootless person who's lived his life in search of home, always settling somewhere only to move on," he says, relaxing into a gently distressed armchair. "But here I made a big decision." In his memoir of rustication, *News from Somewhere* (2004), Scruton describes how his love of horses and fox-hunting led to buying an old farm of 30 acres, and how that led to his meeting his wife, Sophie. They now have two children, and the farm, which he



*A Scrutopia apple*

jokingly calls "Scrutopia," has expanded to some 100 acres.

"I feel very strongly about the English countryside and what it means and its history, but also about the situation of our neighbors," he says. Small farmers in Britain face the same problems as small farmers in the United States. Government subsidies and planning favor big agribusiness and the supermarket chains. The supermarkets have depressed the price of milk and meat so low as to render small farms uneconomical. A way of life is being slowly strangled, and the yeoman farmer, the founding type of Englishman, is becoming extinct. As in the United States, suicide is a leading cause of early death among British farmers.

"I'm lucky," Scruton says. "I can earn money through the Internet." His reputation and his newspaper columns about country life have brought the beautiful landscape and hard life of the Vale to the attention of the urbanites. They are the people who make laws and have money—and who drive out on weekend days like this to pick apples and feel connected to the land. Apple Festival is one way to "bring that money into the countryside and benefit people all around." Today's proceeds will be donated to the treatment of a local riding instructor, who is suffering from multiple sclerosis.

A warm, wet wind is in the apple trees. An Atlantic system is blowing in, and the *Monty Python* fans at the Meteorological Office have named it Storm Brian. Still, people are arriving from all over southern England: a couple with matching Barbour jackets and a matched pair of red setters, local families paying a social call, a Romanian economist with a camera, and a group of philosophy postgraduates from Oxford, discussing the language question in anarcho-primitivism.

The people of Brinkworth, like Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, have decided to put on a show in the barn. They have loaded their trestles with freshly baked cakes and bread, vegetables of impressively monstrous dimensions, and arts and crafts. A local apple expert sits in an ancillary barn like a fortune teller at the fair, parsing the flavorful prospects of Howgate Wonders, Golden Nobles,

*Dominic Green, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

VICTOR DE FRANCESCO

and Egremont Russets. There are small-batch cheeses from all over Wiltshire, but the breads are exotic, with French and Italian loaves alongside the rye batches and Irish soda bread. There is also organic Italian olive oil. Not so long ago, this would have been sold at the pharmacist's, as a treatment for earache or indigestion.

"A hundred years ago," Scruton says, "people in this part of the world would eat turnips and carrots to get through the winter. Now, they have avocado pears and rocket salad and all the things that the luvvies in the suburbs of Boston can enjoy." The world has come to the Vale; now the Vale, like rural areas in the United States, must formulate a modern economy if it is to survive as a society. "You can't globalize the old rural economy," Scruton warns. "By its very nature, it's a local thing, and that's what we're trying to support with this little festival."

David and Emma Lewis live on Fernhill Farm, half a mile down the road from Sunday Hill. They have always been dairy farmers, but in 2014, they bought five pigs and have branched out from there. Now they sell sausages, bacon, and lamb at local markets. They use a local slaughterhouse and make their sausages by hand. They specialize in traditional local recipes like pork and leek and pork and apple but have diversified into modern variations, like sweet chili and the extra-spicy Welsh dragon.

On Fernhill Farm's Facebook page, you can buy lamb chops for £10 a kilo (or \$6 a pound). This is a bargain. The Tesco supermarket in Swindon sells four chops of anonymous provenance for the equivalent of £11.82 a kilo, and two chops for the equivalent of £15 a kilo. I buy a kilo of Fernhill's finest, strictly for research purposes. The eight chops have plenty of gamey dark meat and are much less fatty than the average supermarket chop.

What, I ask as I tuck my chops under my arm, is it like having a world-famous philosopher in the village?

"Lovely," Emma says. "Roger and Sophie are very nice people. When they did the Apple Festival last year, they came down and invited us along."

David waves his tongs over the sizzling sausages on his grill. "This is a new thing for us, we've never done the barbecuing thing before."

Shaun and Alison Hunt of Rouselands Farm are newcomers to the Vale. In 2015, they started selling boxes of lamb, beef, and vegetables. Their farm now includes a

10-pitch campsite, with a bell tent and shepherd's hut. There are recipes on the farm's website for Provençal braised lamb with lentils, and lamb with harissa. I buy a sandwich, a fluffy bun stuffed with freshly grilled meat from their lean, grass-fed Zwartbles sheep and topped with a generous squirt of barbecue sauce. It is excellent, tender and smoky. I buy another.

Back in the barn, I throw back a chunk of lemon drizzle cake, about the size of a house brick and still warm from the oven. I wash it down with a tall glass of crisp Sunday Hill apple cider, pressed from Roger and Sophie's apples and sold by Roger and Sophie's teenage daughter. Still strangely hungry, I reach for a thick wedge of fruitcake. This candied Victorian classic is moist with the scents of the Orient and as weighty as a lump of tropical hardwood. I am in ecstasy, so I have another glass of cider.



David and Emma Lewis of Fernhill Farm

At Sunday Hill, Scruton is making a stand for the Burkean principles in which he believes: the continuity of custom and place, the bonds of friendship and family, and the recruitment of the "little platoons" that assemble into society and nation. He is also taking a stand against some of the political alliances that conservatives have made, notably those with agribusi-

ness, suburban sprawl, and the global supply chain, all of which threaten local networks and local economies.

"The global economy," he says, "depends on heavily subsidized things like roads, and planning exemptions for warehouses in the middle of nowhere, and all the things the supermarkets use, like packaging. The global economy packages everything, and as we know, most of the packaging ends up in the Pacific. So it's completely unsustainable. Something will have to be done."

Scruton's *Green Philosophy* (2012), published in the United States as *How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (2012), marked an intellectual watershed. Since the sixties, environmental politics has increasingly become the property of the left. Scruton argues that the roots of environmentalism are also those of conservatism. Like the organic, local virtues of Edmund Burke's politics, they are Romantic, emotional, and pre-political.

"The form of environmentalism which emerged in the 19th century, both in this country and in America, is not really an 'ism.' It's not a system of belief at all," he says.

“It’s a yearning towards the old way of doing things and the old connection to the natural world, and a desire to integrate and to develop in a harmonious way. People like Ruskin in Britain and John Muir in America didn’t necessarily want the same thing, but they did want to get back to a more natural connection with the world. That has endured, and it’s not especially political, though of course it has political implications, and it’s not a form of millenarian belief.”

In the late 20th century, however, environmentalism became a wholly owned subsidiary of the statist left. “The green movement has taken over this natural way



Sir Roger Scruton in his study at Sunday Hill Farm in October

of thinking and made it into an ‘ism,’ something that you join. It took over from Marxism and socialism at the moment when they were thought to be lost causes, and recruited the same kind of people—people who felt they were ill at ease in the world and wanted some comprehensive plan for remaking it.”

“They come with massive, worldwide plans for a new form of government that will control our souls and will replace the old, inadequate ways of compromise. It’s essentially the same mindset as imposed communism on the Russians and the Eastern Europeans and the Chinese. To me, that involves a complete misunderstanding of what our relation to the natural world really is and should be, because it’s a desire to control rather than to adapt.”

The parties of the right, Scruton writes in *Green Philosophy*, have let this happen. As they have tended to see modern politics as a “simple dichotomy” between “individual freedom” and “state control,” they have thrown the baby of environmentalism out with the bathwater of left-wing regulation. Yet the deep roots of

environmentalism coincide with those of conservatism. The political stewardship of conservatism seeks “the maintenance of the social ecology.” The environmental stewardship of conservation seeks “ecological equilibrium” and to “maintain and enhance the order of which we are the temporary trustees.”

In his new essay collection, the aptly titled *Confessions of a Heretic*, Scruton characterizes libertarianism as a “false” member of the conservative family of ideas. “It is a plausible conservative response,” he writes in *Green Conservatism*, “not to advocate economic freedom at all costs, but to recognize the costs of economic freedom, and to take all steps to reduce them.”

“Something will have to be done,” Scruton says at Sunday Hill. “There will be a reverse process, where the food economy becomes partly localized. And the process will be very hard, initially.”

In Stendhal’s *The Red and the Black*, the hero Julien Sorel travels to England. Sorel, Scruton recounts in *News from Somewhere*, is “appalled by the barbarous manners” and “gross diet” of the city dwellers, but “astonished by the one redeeming feature of their country, which is the indescribable sweetness of the landscape.”

That landscape testifies to centuries of struggle between the land and its farmers and, more recently, to the ever-rising pressure of the cities upon the country. To Scruton, the United States embodies the worst of the damage, but it has also pioneered some effective remedies.

“In Britain and America, the countryside is constantly under threat from the flight from the cities, and that flight doesn’t do anything to produce a sustainable agriculture either. In particular,” he believes, “the suburbanization around the cities has led to the complete collapse of the center of many American cities. New York, Chicago, and San Francisco have kept some of their Victorian identity, but many cities have lost their civilized center.”

That said, Americans have led the way in reviving city life. “The New Urbanism movement has got further in America than it has got in Britain. I think that’s the most important environmental movement that we have: a movement to bring back people into the city. Make the cities into proper settlements, and then the countryside is much more protected.”

IMAGES: DOMINIC GREEN

The wind is rising, the sky darkening in the west. About 50 of us shelter in a second barn-cum-library for a lecture, “A Living Landscape,” on how the local environment connects to the national economy and the international system of European law. Much of what Scruton says applies as much to suburban America as to rural England.

“Our country is under great environmental pressure, particularly with regard to biodiversity. The roads and the people are driving out the small species. The countryside must be capable of sustaining a local food economy.”

The traditional family farm, Scruton notes, is “essentially a closed economy.” Selling lamb rolls and pieces of cake to tourists will not suffice. If there are to be agricultural subsidies—and small farmers cannot survive without them—then let them “tip the balance in the favor of the small farmer, against big agribusiness.” It will also be necessary to “think seriously about how to create a new rural economy, into which small businesses can be integrated.”

Scruton sees Brexit as “an opportunity” to reverse the centralization of food and planning policies and the overregulation of small farmers. Brexit has created a community of interest between “middle-class suburbanites” and the rural population that they previously had dismissed as “crude, indigenous badger-baiting people.” It forces the British to devise “a new way of dealing with the outside world” and to redefine their political community and economic customs. That offers hope for the countryside, the “place that has been brought to order as a shared and cultivated home.”

When Scruton moved to his “rustic redoubt,” he knew that his arrival would be seen as a harbinger of the end of life as the Vale knew it. “I was announcing the imminent triumph of town over country, of the romantic love of appearance over the healthy use of things. I was there to etherealize my neighbors and to write their epitaph.” Instead, he has built a “little network” in the image of his principles. The Apple Festival is a small example of practical politics, a lived philosophy where conservatism meets conservation. “So far,” he says, “it’s been a wonderful experiment, living in the modern world while subsidizing the ancient one.”

In creating a modern environmentalism for conservatives, Roger Scruton has plowed a lonely furrow. Ask anyone under 50, and you will hear that the environment is a bipartisan issue. Ask anyone under 30, and you will hear it is one of the most important issues, especially among

educated young people—the people who will be the committed voters and donors of tomorrow. Scruton is no longer a prophet in the wilderness.

I leave Sunday Hill as a country & western band arrives and the first drops of rain fall. David and Emma Lewis are still grilling. “I’m just thinking how lucky we are to live out around here,” Dave says. “I think Roger feels the same. We’re very lucky.”

Back in London, I eat Dave and Emma Lewis’s chops for Sunday lunch, with a glass of globalized Chilean red. The chops are excellent, tender and tasting of real meat. Their quality and price are a strong argument for the support of small farmers.

Two weeks after the Apple Festival, I see Scruton again in Washington, D.C., where he is beginning a short lecture tour. Afterwards, I walk past the think tanks and the buildings owned by every lobbying group imaginable and remember what Scruton had said in his study at Sunday Hill. We had been discussing the leftist uniformity of the American university, and he had praised the creation of a counter-infrastructure of conservative think tanks and magazines. “The natural American response to these things,” he said, “is to start something else.”

A few days after that, the *Guardian* examines the case of Britain’s new environment secretary, Michael Gove. One of the architects of Brexit and a staunch defender of traditional education, Gove has previously called himself a “shy green.” And even the habitually antagonistic *Guardian* finds Gove policies of which it must approve, like banning pesticides that are harmful to bees and moving away from single-use plastic bottles. Gove, a friend said, is now a “full-throated environmentalist.”

The “natural American response” to the centrality of the environment to the politics of the near future is to “start something else”: to follow Scruton’s lead in claiming environmental politics as conservative politics, to start building a counter-infrastructure of green institutions, and to begin making up for political ground needlessly lost.

If this is not a matter of conviction for some conservatives, let it be a practical necessity. The process may be hard initially, but the alternative is to surrender the politics of the earth and its stewardship to the collectivists of the left, with their terrifying euphemisms about “reducing the population” and centralizing economic choices. As the leftists might say, you may not be interested in the environmental dialectic, but the environmental dialectic is interested in you. ♦



*Sunday Hill Farm’s apple cider*



# Open Book

*The high-tech new Museum of the Bible and the agenda of the family behind it.* BY CHRISTINE ROSEN

**W**hat role does the Bible play in Americans' lives? A century ago the answer to that question would have been straightforward: It was the most important book in the home, perhaps read daily, and the place where major events in a family's history (births, deaths, marriages) were recorded. It was then—and is now—the most-bought and most-read book in the world.

And yet biblical literacy is in decline in America. Compared with previous generations, a smaller proportion of today's population—even among regular churchgoers—reads the Bible regularly; in a survey published in 2014 by the Center for the Study of Religion

and American Culture at Indiana University, only about half of the respondents said they had read scripture in the previous year. The portion of American adults who told pollsters that they believe the Bible is the literal word of God has fallen from nearly 40 percent four decades ago to 24 percent this year; for the first time since Gallup began tracking this subject, more Americans now consider the Bible “a book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man” than believe it is the literal word of God. The percentage of self-identified Christians has fallen as well. There are fewer and fewer places in the public square where the Bible's history and importance to American cultural and political life are mentioned.

Thus the Museum of the Bible, opening on November 17 not far from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., appears at a critical time. How do you

engage the citizens of an increasingly secular country, whose founding was nevertheless indelibly marked by principles found in this book, with its history? How do you create a space that acknowledges the cultural primacy of the Bible while also respecting the heterodox religious past and present of the United States? How can an institution talk about one of the world's most controversial texts without itself becoming a flashpoint for controversy?

The short answer: It can't.

There is little controversial about the museum space itself. The Museum of the Bible is housed in a former refrigeration warehouse approximately three blocks from the U.S. Capitol. In addition to its traditional exhibit areas, it includes two restaurants (one named, inevitably, Manna), a Broadway-style theater, a rooftop garden featuring plants mentioned in the Bible, and event spaces. There's a gift shop and a children's area

*Christine Rosen is a senior editor at the New Atlantis and the author of My Fundamentalist Education: A Memoir of a Divine Girlhood.*

SAUL LOEB / AFP / GETTY

called “Courageous Pages” that emphasizes some of the more action-packed biblical stories, such as those of Samson and Esther. There are interactive kiosks and displays to entice even visitors with the most Internet-addled attention spans. The museum cost upwards of \$500 million to build, but admission is free (although donations are welcome).

During a behind-the-scenes tour of the museum in October, as workers were finishing building out the exhibit spaces, it was clear that this would be an impressive—and impressively high-tech—place. The ceiling of the museum’s main lobby features a 140-foot-long LED screen that workers on scissor-lifts were testing when I was there; images of flowers and stained-glass windows flashed periodically on the screens, turning the ceiling into a hypnotic Michelangelo-meets-Times Square montage. The enormous bronze doors that flank the entrance to the museum—dubbed the “Gutenberg Gates” because they bear a huge replica of the first page of Genesis as shown in the Gutenberg Bible, but reversed as the text would have appeared laid out on Gutenberg’s press—have their own Twitter feed.

Each of the museum’s three main levels has its own focus: the history of the Bible, its “narratives,” and its “impact.” I spent most of my time on the second floor, which examines the impact of the Bible and offers exhibits on a range of themes, including compassion, science, human rights, health, family, justice, art, music, and literature. Images of former professional football player Tim Tebow, with his famous eye-black patches of Bible verses, compete with statues of Galileo and George Washington Carver. A pile of burned Bibles offers a stark reminder of efforts to destroy and censor the book. Another room explores “the Bible Now” and features a 360-degree panoramic curved screen that shows the city of Jerusalem along with “real-time” content about the Bible from around the world, gleaned from social media and the Internet. In the center of the room is a “Joshua Machine” in which visitors

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B&A

# Love to Tell the Story

*Tourist attractions try to bring the Bible to life.*

BY GRANT WISHARD

**T**he moment its doors officially open, the new Museum of the Bible, with its prime real estate in the capital, will be the nation’s most prominent institution dedicated to educating the general public about Judeo-Christian ideas and history. But it is far from the first attraction built by evangelical Christians to celebrate and explain their beliefs; the precedents range from the relatively highbrow, like museums that collect and display art with biblical themes, to the hands-on and in-your-face, like the Holy Land Experience, an Orlando theme park that re-creates the ancient world of the Bible. Some of these institutions have been associated with famous evangelical figures, like the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., which honors that preacher’s ministry, and the now-closed Heritage USA theme park in Fort Mill, South Carolina, started by the notorious televangelists Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker.

The American landscape is dotted with similar attractions—pilgrimage sites, you might say. Among the longest-lived and most financially successful are the Sight & Sound Theatres, the original in Lancaster County, Penn., and a younger sibling in Branson, Mo. Both facilities, nearly identical, are professional theaters that stage biblically based musicals on a vast scale. The building housing the Lancaster theater is beautiful, warmly lit, and when I toured it in October was already decorated for Christmas. At the outside entrance, visitors

Grant Wishard is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

are greeted by a statue of a lion lying down with a lamb. Sight & Sound is famous for its candied almonds, the scent of which lends the air a delicious holiday perfume even before you reach the front doors. The lobby is biblically themed, replete with palm trees and statues of heralding angels.

Sight & Sound was founded by Glenn Eshelman, who in the 1970s discovered his knack for showmanship when presenting his landscape photography at Lancaster-area churches. Working with his wife, Eshelman spiffed up his slideshows with a microphone for narration and a turntable for background music; they soon added more projectors and started touring their multimedia productions at churches around the country. By the mid-’70s, the Eshelmans moved into their first permanent location. They began to add live music, dancers, and costumed performers to their shows. Soon they outgrew their original theater, and in 1991 built a new one in the neighboring cornfield, and then, after a fire, built the current 2,000-seat theater in 1998. The Branson location opened in 2008.

The Bible, taken literally, serves as the basis for all of Sight & Sound’s shows, but it’s a relatively generous orthodoxy. The Eshelmans’ first full-scale musical, *Behold the Lamb*, debuted in 1987. In later years, they began to specialize in epic productions, mostly drawn from the Old Testament—*In the Beginning*, a dramatization of the Genesis creation story; *Noah*, the story of the flood; and *Samson*, which featured crumbling pillars bigger than any Sunday-school student could imagine.

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can record their thoughts on the Bible's influence on their own lives (one hopes an editor with quick reflexes will be on-site to prevent the appearance on the panoramic screen of any thoughts bordering on TMI).

Throughout the tour, our guide reminded us that the purpose of the museum was to encourage everyone, not just Christians, to engage with the Bible, and it's clear that the museum's leadership is intent on making it rigorously nonsectarian. The museum's website reinforces this, noting that the mission of the museum is to "invite all people to engage with the history, narrative, and impact of the Bible." Great pains have been taken to avoid controversy. For example, the curriculum section of the museum's website offers guidance for students who are homeschooled, in private school, or pursuing "independent study"—but there is no mention of public schools (message received, ACLU!). Indeed, so dogged are the museum's creators in their determination not to offend anyone's sensibilities that they will no doubt receive some criticism from devout Christians, who might be forgiven for wondering if the effort to make the museum broadly appealing has rendered it spiritually banal.

Consider the museum's meticulous re-creation of a Nazareth village, with beautiful hand-painted frescoes (I watched some of the painters at work the day I was there) and reproductions of the tools and foods of biblical times (including some hyper-realistic fake figs). Once the museum opens, actors will stroll around the village, answering visitors' questions about life in biblical times. One question a visitor might ask is when she will get to see Jesus; when I asked just that, I was told that there would be no Jesus in the museum. Too controversial.

Just as there are multiple versions and interpretations of the Bible, so, too, have critics offered competing interpretations of the motivations of the supporters of the Museum of the Bible. Two of the most vocal critics of the museum and its patrons are Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Baden, whose new book, *Bible Nation: The United States of Hobby Lobby*, offers a deep dive into the

that. The book would have been far more persuasive had it been written as a straightforward exposé; as it stands, it pitches itself as a "journey of discovery" into the world of evangelical Christian philanthropy while flirting with the tone of (but never really delivering the damning indictment of) the muckraker.

For those unfamiliar with the Green family, David Green in the early 1970s founded Hobby Lobby, an arts-and-crafts company that now has hundreds of retail stores around the country. The business has been successful enough to earn him a spot among the 80 richest Americans on the *Forbes* ranking; his net worth is estimated at \$6 billion. Like many wealthy Americans, Green and his family have generously given back to their community and to causes that align with their values, including missionary endeavors and other evangelical outreach efforts, most of which they pursued out of the public eye.

In 2014, however, the Greens became polarizing public figures because of their involvement in one of the big Obamacare cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* centered on whether privately owned companies like Hobby Lobby must follow certain kinds of regulations their owners find religiously objectionable—in this case, the requirement under the Affordable Care Act to provide employees with access to the "morning-after pill" and particular contraceptive devices, both of which are sometimes considered abortifacients. Moss and Baden argue that after winning the suit, the Greens became "iconic patriotic Christians."

As such, evidently, their efforts to promote their beliefs became suspect—at least to academics such as Moss and Baden. Members of the Green family repeatedly told Moss and Baden that they have no intention of promoting a particular understanding of the Bible, but the authors assert that "this is in



The Bible is the 'most-burned book of all time,' according to the president of the new museum. Above, a pile of burned Bibles; below, a display about the Dead Sea Scrolls.



history and activities of the museum's major donor, the Green family.

The authors claim their book is "about the power and influence of one billionaire Christian family and the cultural commitments that have made them so powerful, but it should not be understood as an effort to discredit their motivations." Yet despite this caveat, Moss and Baden spend the next several hundred pages attempting to do just

fact what they are doing,” even if “they may not be entirely aware” of it. Moss and Baden further condescend to the Greens by stating that they are “out of their depth, poorly informed, and a little naïve” on matters related to the Museum of the Bible. The authors make sure to mention, gratuitously, that “David Green and his sons Mart and Steve have only a year of college among them” and argue that “the interventions in higher education of business-savvy self-made Christians without even college degrees creates an unstable hierarchy of values. For academics, qualifications and expertise are key.” Anyone who has followed campus culture in recent years could be forgiven for wondering just which “values” the authors think the Greens could possibly endanger—and as for qualifications, the Greens have assembled for their museum a roster of impressively credentialed administrators, curators, and advisers.

One subject Moss and Baden raise does deserve scholarly attention: the murky provenance of some of the artifacts destined for display at the Museum of the Bible. Disputes over such matters are now rife in the antiquities world. The pilfered heritage of many former civilizations still claim pride of place in some of the world’s most prestigious museums: The Elgin Marbles, now called the Parthenon Sculptures, are still prominently displayed in the British Museum; the Louvre owns many Egyptian frescoes of dubious origin; Nefertiti’s bust resides in Germany, not Egypt; and so on.

But those objects were carried off in a very different era. Today, museums are expected to be scrupulous, above-board, and politically sensitive when collecting artifacts. The Green family has paid a price for what was either sloppiness or intentional misconduct in acquiring the collection for the Museum of the Bible: In July, federal prosecutors announced that Hobby Lobby would pay a \$3 million fine and return thousands of Iraqi artifacts that had been obtained under questionable circumstances.

Still, the tone of Moss and Baden’s book suggests that it’s less the prov-

enance of artifacts than the Green family’s beliefs that ought to be concerning.

Moss and Baden apply a form of strict scrutiny to the Greens’ motives and practices; they seem to see a hidden agenda in everything the Greens do. When the Greens alter the initial wording of the mission of the Museum of the Bible to move it in a more ecumenical direction, Moss and Baden suggest they are trying to cover up their real goal of promoting their particular brand of evangelical Christianity. When the

**Bible Nation**  
*The United States of Hobby Lobby*  
 by Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Baden  
 Princeton, 240 pp., \$29.95



*Founder and chairman Steve Green on site during museum construction in 2015*

Greens rely on experts to guide them in acquiring artifacts for the museum, Moss and Baden fault them for being unscholarly and naïve. But it is Moss and Baden who seem naïve about the dynamics of modern philanthropy. Spend any time with the heirs of great family fortunes and you quickly learn that much of their time is spent fending off hordes of sketchy supplicants. Separating the wheat from the chaff is often difficult; it’s not a surprise that families would tend to trust people who share their values and worldviews. Sometimes that trust can be misplaced, and perhaps the Greens have occasionally received bad advice, but that hardly, as

Moss and Baden imply, reveals a conspiracy to indoctrinate Americans in evangelical Christianity.

To its credit, Moss and Baden’s book does show many pitfalls that can endanger even the most well-intentioned philanthropists in their efforts to craft a meaningful legacy. And from the perspective of the academics engaged in internecine battles over biblical scholarship, papyrological integrity, and artifactual provenance, the Green family and its Museum of the Bible might well appear a big, bumbling—or even dangerous—new institution.

Ultimately, however, what Moss and Baden and other critics of the Green family can’t seem to grasp is why anyone would want to spend that much money to encourage people to understand the Bible. It can’t be that simple, they reason; there must be an ulterior motive, like undermining the separation of church and state or suppressing minority faiths or proselytizing to the unwitting masses or seeking unfair tax breaks.

In fact, it is that simple. And at a time of declining biblical literacy, it’s tremendously important.

Any museum that takes the Bible as its focus will generate controversy, just as the text itself always has. Atheists will scoff at the museum’s mission; fundamentalists will take issue with its ecumenical approach to scripture. When telling the story of the Bible, it’s impossible to please everyone. But what seems chiefly to bother academic critics is that the Greens unabashedly believe that telling the story of the Bible is important and have largely bypassed the squabbles and petty fiefdoms of academics and gone straight to the public to do so.

Whatever your faith tradition or lack thereof, and whatever your political leanings—or your feelings about the Green family, should you have any—don’t let them prevent you from visiting the Museum of the Bible. It is most certainly flawed, as is unavoidable in any attempt to synthesize a complicated subject and display it in a museum. But it is also an appreciation of one of the cornerstones of our civilization, at a time when such an appreciation is sorely needed. ♦

The Sight & Sound team is highly professional, capable of staging productions beyond the capacity of most theaters. The stunts and effects are worthy of Broadway. The main stage is 300 feet long and panoramically wraps around the audience on three sides. Live animals feature in many scenes, including camels, horses, goats, donkeys, sheep, chickens, and doves. (The Sight & Sound production of *Jonah* did not, alas, feature a live whale.) In the theater's control room, which resembles the operations center of a nuclear power plant, buttons labeled "Heaven out" and "Heaven in" control the invisible wires that make the angels fly.

Sight & Sound does all its own set work in a shop in the rear of the theater complex; it resembles a massive airplane hangar. There props up to 40 feet tall are fabricated in incredible detail, sometimes with 3D-printing technology.

Not all Sight & Sound shows are based on the Old Testament. During my visit I saw this year's run of *The Miracle of Christmas*; Joseph and Mary were played by professional actors with professional costumes—forget the oversized bathrobes from your church's Christmas pageant. And the show *Jesus* is set to open in March 2018 after three-and-a-half years in development. It will make use of an enormous new LED screen—more than 100 feet long and over three stories tall—purchased for \$1.3 million.

Unlike the new Museum of the Bible in Washington, Sight & Sound is ready to evangelize. There's an altar call at the end of every performance, and theater staff stand ready to pray with believers and nonbelievers alike. And unlike the new museum, Sight & Sound is a for-profit enterprise. Still, there is an important lesson the Green family that founded the new museum can learn from Sight & Sound: Quality speaks for itself. Some 1.4 million people attended shows at the two Sight & Sound theaters in 2016, nearly triple the number who saw *Hamilton* last year,

and the company has been profitable for decades. All this success has been possible without some of the advantages the new museum enjoys, like deep-pocketed funders and attention from national media.

One other lesson the Green family might learn from Sight & Sound: Don't underestimate the power of a catchy showtune. A little razzle-dazzle can go a long way.



*Moses and the burning bush at Sight & Sound*

As the plans for the Museum of the Bible emerged in recent years, some critics worried that it would turn out to be a site for indoctrination. "I don't expect the Bible Museum to be anything other than a tax-deductible kitsch attempt at spreading Christian fundamentalist propaganda," archaeologist Dorothy King complained to the *Washington Post* in 2015. The fear, for some of these critics, was that the new institution would turn out something like the Creation Museum.

Ken Ham, the Creation Museum's founder, was an Australian schoolteacher before he moved to the United States in the 1980s and founded what would eventually become Answers in Genesis—a fundamentalist Christian organization that advocates Young Earth creationism, the belief that God made the universe in six literal days, the whole thing has been ticking for just 6,000 years (give or take a few), and evolution is bogus. The group is very productive, maintaining a well-trafficked website, a print magazine with 65,000 subscribers, and, most importantly, the Creation Museum in

Petersburg, Ky. The museum's stated mission is to "point today's culture back to the authority of Scripture and proclaim the gospel message." Answers in Genesis selected Petersburg as the site for the museum because two-thirds of the country's population lives within a day's drive.

Stepping through the Creation Museum's front doors, the visitor is immediately greeted by a life-size diorama now infamous because it's an easy target for journalists: It shows an idealized jungle scene with human children and dinosaurs coexisting happily. Mountains of scientific evidence show that such a thing never happened—human beings and dinosaurs are separated by tens of millions of years—but the Creation Museum presses on.

The museum is big enough to fill a full day of meandering. The main exhibit is called the Bible Walkthrough Experience, with each room given an allegorical name so that the whole has a *Pilgrim's Progress* feel: The "Time Tunnel" is followed by the "Cave of Sorrow," which leads to "Legacy Hall." Ken Ham once told NPR that at the museum, "we actually do give both sides," and that's the honest-to-God truth—the visitor is offered a choice between creationism and the conclusions of (if not the reasoning for) evolution, but it's a choice with ultimate consequences: Pick evolution and you're slipping toward atheism, sin, and damnation.

In addition to the exhibits, there are theaters and even a planetarium. What, you may wonder, could possibly be said in a planetarium at a museum dedicated to the proposition that the universe is just a few thousand years old? For the most part, the planetarium program marvels at the beauty of the natural world, taking colorful nebulae and huge stars as evidence for the greatness of God. But on matters where astronomical evidence clashes with Young Earth dogma, the planetarium program dismisses or distorts the science.

Beautiful gardens surround the museum, as well as a zip-line course and a petting zoo that offers camel rides.

Themed restaurants such as “Noah’s Café” and “Palm Pizza” serve hearty Americana; gluten-free and vegetarian options include the “Eden Wrap.”

The whole museum is organized, as Susan and William Trollinger point out in *Righting America at the Creation Museum*, according to dispensational premillennial theology, which explains all of world history in seven phases and warns that a society that rejects God will suffer his wrath. This narrative plays itself out on scales both small (in the lives of every individual) and large (all of human history). The end times are coming, and Christians are called to save as many souls as possible.

A 45-minute drive south from the Creation Museum brings visitors to Ark Encounter, a model of Noah’s life-saving ship, built to the specifications laid out in the Bible and aided by a great deal of speculation about how Noah and his seven family members crammed 7,000 animals aboard plus the necessary provisions. Before my recent visit, I had seen plenty of photographs, but they couldn’t have prepared me for the awe-inspiring reality as the ark came rising up over a hillside. At 50 feet tall and 510 feet long, the ark is the largest timber-framed structure in the world—longer than three NASA space shuttles parked end-to-end. Answers in Genesis hopes that Ark Encounter, which opened to the public in July 2016, will ultimately be just the centerpiece of a theme park re-creating other stories from Genesis as well.

Some 2,600 people were at Ark Encounter the day I visited, milling around exhibits discussing ancient, cross-cultural flood stories and the meaning of climate change. As one guest who boarded the ark with me said in awe, “it’s so . . . slick.” Polished wood ramps angle you through four long decks. And what would the ark be without animals—both real ones, on the second floor, and animatronic creatures in cages, bristling with scales or fur, most growling and whooping exotically. Dioramas show Noah’s family—some-

times mannequins, sometimes animatronic—lounging around or praying to God (instead of, say, scooping the 12 tons of manure Answers in Genesis estimates were produced on the ark every day).

Take a walk through the bookstore back at the main Creation Museum and you’ll find a wide selection of what Answers in Genesis calls “advanced ‘weaponry’” for the fight



Ham speaks at the Ark Encounter ribbon-cutting in 2016.

against secularism—DVDs, devotionals, and homeschooling resources. No doubt you’ve wondered, “Where did Cain get his wife?” There’s a tract for that in five languages. You can find a booklet answering the question “Where Did the ‘Races’ Come From?” and publications explaining such complex topics as the cardiovascular system (“the world insists that our bodies are merely the result of time and chance . . . [but they] can only be the product of a Master Designer”).

Yet there are also hints that Answers in Genesis is battling not just “secularists” but also many fellow Christians. The bookstore includes a guide for identifying which Christian colleges are counterfeit. Elsewhere, a plaque cautions that “many church leaders compromise on the truth of Genesis.” Ken Ham has lamented “that we (sadly) have now come to expect a steady stream of negative comments” from co-religionists.

This is the key to understanding the Creation Museum: With only enemies in the secular world and few allies in the church, the museum aims

to be entirely self-sufficient, a one-stop shop for a certain strain of theology. As the Trollingers put it, the museum attempts to instruct visitors in “a totalizing history . . . that reveals the hidden truth for all time.” Spend long enough in the bookstore and you’ll eventually notice the same authors keep popping up again and again—Ham himself has written some 30 books and participates in hundreds of seminars every year.

For all its insularity, though, the Creation Museum is, on its own terms, hugely successful. And it’s way more fun than anything you’ll find in the Smithsonian.

Perhaps it’s understandable that some observers put off by the intellectual dishonesty of the Creation Museum might be wary of the Museum of the Bible—after all, it isn’t hard to find parallels between Ken Ham and Steve Green, the chairman of the new museum’s board of directors. Ham refers to the Bible as “a

history book that reveals the major events of history”; Green refers to it as “a reliable historical document.” Ham’s organization sells extensive curriculum materials; the Museum of the Bible has experimented with an “elective Bible curriculum for high school students.” Ham has said that our culture is “becoming more like the days of Noah in that we see increasing secularization”; Green has warned that “this nation is in danger because of its ignorance of what God has taught. . . . We need to know [the Bible]. And if we don’t know it our future is going to be very scary.” And there is an institutional link between the two organizations: The Museum of the Bible has permanent exhibits at the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter.

Steve Green and his family had every resource at their disposal to build a bigger, better Creation Museum had they wished to do so—but they chose a different path. The Museum of the Bible “has fenceposts—limits,” Green told the *Chicago Tribune*. “It doesn’t overtly say the Bible is good—that the

Bible is true.” A visitor to the Museum of the Bible won’t likely come away converted or even feeling like he had been preached to; in fact, if he came to the museum looking for spiritual reinforcement he may even leave feel-

ing somewhat unfulfilled. In the place of stridency and elaborate dogma, the new institution offers the artifacts and texts themselves. Its creators can only hope that museumgoers will have the ears to hear and eyes to read the Word. ♦

one else has to wait. We all secretly—or not so secretly—crave status.

Ruth Reichl captured this feeling in a 1993 double-review of *Le Cirque*, written partly as a nobody and partly as the recognized food critic for the *New York Times*. Unrecognized, Reichl had to wait a half-hour at the bar until her reserved table was available—unfortunately in the smoking section. Not long after she starts perusing the wines, a captain stands before her. “I need that wine list,” he says peremptorily, holding out his hand. I surrender, and it is 20 minutes before it returns.”

Several visits later, Reichl is finally identified by Sirio Maccioni. He tells her, “The King of Spain is waiting in the bar, but your table is ready.” At which point she is treated like royalty, given a prime seat in the dining room and not in “Siberia” (a restaurant term dating back to Henri Soulé at *Le Pavillon* in reference to lesser tables, such as ones near the restroom). As for the food, “there is lobster, intertwined with chanterelles, artichokes and tiny pearl onions,” Reichl writes. “This dish is so tremblingly delicate, so filled with flavor, I feel as if I have never really tasted lobster before.”

In his 2001 book *The Last Days of Haute Cuisine*, Patric Kuh explains that the snobbery can be both repelling and intriguing—that “the best way to get people in was to plant in their minds the idea that they might not be able to.” Kuh

refers to Maccioni’s “way of toying with the alternating currents of access and restriction that would always make the atmosphere at *Le Cirque* feel charged.” Ultimately, “it is [Maccioni’s] image that is positioned between one standing nervously at the door and sitting happily at a table. When he himself leads the customer to a table, the journey across the dining room becomes a form of inverted perp walk that demonstrates fame rather than infamy; demonstrates above all that one is known.

Of course they came for the food,

BCA

# Circus Food

*A final bow for elite New York eatery Le Cirque?*

BY VICTORINO MATUS

On March 20, 1974, a new French restaurant opened on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. It was called *Le Cirque* (The Circus), and it soon became the hottest ticket in town. It was partly known for its lavish meals—where Daniel Boulud and David Bouley, among others, earned their fame as chefs. But *Le Cirque* was equally known for its celebrity-studded guest list that included Andy Warhol, Henry Kissinger, the Reagans, Frank Sinatra, Jackie Onassis, Donald Trump, and once even a pope. It truly was a circus, and one managed deftly by its ringmaster-manager Sirio Maccioni.

Almost 43 years to the day after it first opened, on March 24, 2017, *Le Cirque* filed for bankruptcy. According to *Nation’s Restaurant News*, “*Le Cirque* was in the process of reducing expenses ... but was not able to meet lease obligations.” In September, it was confirmed that the doors will close for good after the next New Year’s Eve service.

The Maccionis—Sirio and his three sons—are still looking for a new venue, but the New York press has already bid fond farewell to the current locale in the ultramodern Bloomberg Tower. *Le Cirque* “made its biggest splash

during Ronald Reagan’s presidency—a New York era satirized in *Bonfire of the Vanities*, but also a time of renewed optimism after Watergate, the Vietnam War and the gloomy Jimmy Carter years,” wrote Steve Cuozzo in the *New York Post*—adding that it was “the



The ringmaster: Sirio Maccioni at *Le Cirque* in 1983

city’s premier showplace for the era’s excess and glamour.” As Helen Rosner put it in the *New Yorker*, “*Le Cirque* was the epitome of a clubby Manhattan fine-dining scene whose snobbishness, far from undermining the enterprise, was the mighty engine of its success.”

There’s something to be said about this—call it the case for snobbery. Remember that great scene from *Goodfellas* in which a young Henry Hill thoroughly impresses his date when he takes her to the Copacabana? They cut the line, enter through the kitchen, and are seated front and center while every-

Victorino Matus is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD and deputy editor of the Washington Free Beacon.

SANTI VISALL / GETTY

too, whether it was the sea-bass paupiettes crafted by Daniel Boulud, lobster risotto, chateaubriand, or the model Vatican constructed of white chocolate that Jacques Torres presented to Pope John Paul II. Maccioni himself made famous an off-menu item: the decidedly Italian pasta primavera. (Yes, there's irony in a dish popular among Le Cirque clients—including Donald Trump—being readily available in the frozen-food aisle of your local supermarket.)

In 2014, the *New York Daily News* gave Le Cirque four stars for the cuisine. But, said critic Michael Kaminer, "everything else rates a zero." The four-star executive chef, Raphael Francois, has since left and opened an exquisite French bistro in Washington, D.C., called Le DeSales. Over coffee at the bar, Francois reflected on the challenges of Le Cirque. "We have a lobster salad that we were making in a different way, and some customers, they wanted the lobster salad of 20 years ago, so it was like two restaurants in one restaurant," said Francois. For certain customers, he explained, "you have to keep the menu the way they want at their standard and their palate as well, so it was a big challenge. But with the Maccionis, I mean we had a great relationship—they helped me get that change done, so that's why we stayed together and collaborated for two years."

Francois is hopeful, however, that the flagship Le Cirque will find a new home someplace else in New York (there are other Le Cirques around the world that the Maccionis continue to oversee). He's also of the opinion that finding a new venue will do it some good. "I think to change the location is actually a great thing for them, because they're going to turn the page, and they can start with a new mindset. ... I think for the [Maccionis] sons it's actually a good opportunity."

Eric Ripert agrees. The legendary chef who presides over the three-Michelin-starred Le Bernardin (when he's not skiing the French Alps with Anthony Bourdain) says that Le Cirque is simply continuing to evolve. "When you look at the old Le Cirque,

where [Boulud's eponymous restaurant] Daniel is now—that Le Cirque was basically rejuvenated when they opened in the Palace Hotel. It was much different than the previous one. And then when they went to the Bloomberg building, it's a very modern building, a very different space, and I think they reinvented themselves in many ways."

Ripert also points out that the attraction of a given restaurant is rarely straightforward. "People go to a restaurant to have a certain experience. It's not about the food. It's not necessarily about seeing famous people. It's a much more complex experience that

the clients are looking for." He calls Le Cirque an institution and hopes it won't be gone for good: "We don't want a New York without Le Cirque."

If the restaurant does find a new home, it won't be the same. It may have a bit more, shall we say, *égalité*. "In America it's all about volume," says Francois. "If you target just your regulars, then you're not going to achieve your volume. So the business model [is] you have to actually VIP everybody—but not too much because people want to feel relaxed. But you have to treat everybody the same way. You can't just please your regulars."

But if everyone is a VIP, is anyone? ♦

BCA

## Bride of Gombe

*Watching as the young Jane Goodall falls in love.*

BY PARKER BAUER

Midway through the remarkable new documentary *Jane* comes a scene that could stand for its whole improbable story. Twenty-something Jane Goodall, not yet a credentialed scientist but doing the work of several, sits with a telescope on the floor of an African forest watching chimpanzees in a tree, while beside her at arm's length sits another chimpanzee, in turn watching her with an intentness as rapt as her own. We are put here on earth to behold, claimed Thomas Aquinas—moreover, to behold in love. Goodall is doing just that; who can say the chimp is not doing the same?

"What an amazing privilege it was," Goodall reflects, "to be utterly accepted thus by a wild, free animal." That privilege, if privilege is the word, was hard-won.

As a child in wartime London, she read Tarzan books and dreamed of living in Africa with animals. When her

*Parker Bauer is a writer in Florida.*

Jane

Directed by Brett Morgen



family couldn't afford university, she worked as a waitress, saving tips until she could pay her way to Nairobi. There, in 1957, with more than a touch of boldness, she telephoned the paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey, who hired her as a secretary and later arranged for her to take on a study of chimpanzees in what now is the Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania. Almost nothing was then known of chimpanzees, and Leakey hoped that behavioral studies might illumine his own work on human progenitors—and that Goodall's very lack of formal scientific training, along with her intellect and determination, would yield observations untainted by academic orthodoxy.

She would need to accustom chimps to her presence—to become to them, as she puts it, a "big white ape"—but for months they merely ran away from

her. She discovered nothing meaningful, and her funding was running out. At last came the day when she spied a chimp stripping the leaves from a twig, then poking it into a termite mound and pulling it back out covered with termites for a meal. Here was a chimpanzee making and using a rudimentary tool—something it was thought only human beings could do. Leakey was beside himself, writing her that they would need to redefine “tool,” redefine “man,” or accept chimps as human. In the event, he got funds from the National Geographic Society for Goodall to continue at Gombe.

In *Jane*, now in limited theatrical release, we see Goodall slowly win over the chimp community, becoming not quite one of them but close enough. Hand meets hand, in the manner of the Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. She tickles a young chimpanzee and waves to another with the arm of a stuffed toy chimp.

At the time, she tells us, “It was held at least by many scientists that only humans had minds, that only humans were capable of rational thought. Fortunately, I had not been to university, and I did not know these things. I felt very much that I was learning about fellow beings capable of joy and sorrow, fear and jealousy.”

Jane Goodall’s story might seem an unlikely subject for Brett Morgen, a director best known for documentaries on the life of grunge rocker Kurt Cobain and the early decades of the randily impudent Rolling Stones. But Morgen, whose forte is the creation of films from existing matter, was sought out by National Geographic, which had on its hands a trove of some 100 hours of archival 16mm footage of Goodall and her work shot by the wild-life photographer Hugo van Lawick.

Even without audio, the images could all but tell the story: Jane, barefoot, climbing gaunt old African trees to scan the green hills round about. A young female chimp twirling her infant brother on a stick. Another chimp stealing armloads of bananas

from Jane’s tent, one more banana stuck in its mouth like a crook’s cigar. By today’s lights the 16mm film is a bit low-res, but a few minutes in, it feels perfect, a through-the-looking-glass texture. Not that you’d want to subtract the sound: The minimalist composer Philip Glass has written an orchestral score deftly mitered to the film’s emotions. The voiceover, spoken by Goodall herself, combines interviews with



Goodall in 1965

bits from her books—a good thing, since words on Goodall written by others tend to veer from the documentary toward the devotional.

At Jane’s arrival, Gombe seems an Eden. Scrabbling in shorts up steep hillsides, never getting a visible scratch, Jane amounts to a mythical figure. Poisonous snakes in her path fill out the Edenic milieu—or nearly so, since in this edition of paradise, woman is first to arrive on the scene, and it is she who names the animals, at least the chimpanzees: Goliath (the dominant male), Mr. McGregor (presumably for Beatrix Potter’s irascible gardener), David Greybeard (an old guy), Flo (a favorite), and Fifi (Flo’s daughter), among many others.

From staid scientists Goodall takes flak for giving names instead of numbers and for seeing personalities in her anthropoid subjects, but she goes on undaunted. At first she resists the mythmaking and public appearances, but soon sees the need of it all for fundraising and for calling attention to the plight of chimpanzees in a modernizing and more crowded Africa. News-

papers bill her as a “Pert Scientist” and “Comely Miss.” She brushes it off: “People said my fame was due to my legs. It was so stupid—it didn’t bother me. . . . I was needing to raise money myself, so I made use of it.”

At its wild African heart, *Jane* is a love story. And Jane, in love with her chimps and her work, is as appealing a lover, a real one, as ever appeared on a screen. (Herewith the devotional.) The ponytail, the smile a bit rabbit-toothed, the green eyes reflecting the punched-up forest greens of an otherwise realistic film palette.

A classic, yet unconventional, love triangle develops. A photographer, van Lawick, arrives to document her studies; this too she is unhappy about, but ungrudgingly goes along with it. They fall in love. We feel a twinge of guilt, looking on when the camera rolling on a tripod catches the two of them working with chimps and trading smiles.

There are moments of intimate serenity with the human pair and the chimps around them. Jane and Hugo marry and honeymoon in the Alps. A son arrives, Jane seeming as surprised as if she’d never heard what causes such events. Hugo’s assignment at Gombe comes to an end, and he goes off to film in the Serengeti. Jane and their son go along, but it doesn’t work. Her first love is back at Gombe—is Gombe—her own work with chimpanzees. She’s forced to choose.

Those chimps, meanwhile, have made not love but war. Brutal battle has broken out, and all in a splinter group have been killed. Jane, who has always seen war as “a purely human behavior,” now comes to accept that “the dark and evil side of human nature is deeply embedded in our own genes inherited from ancient primate ancestors.”

Somber, but not the end of the story. The closing note was struck earlier, really, in a scene when Jane, alone with the chimps at Gombe, walks in the rain with binoculars, watching. On her head and shoulders she wears a sheet of whitish plastic, flowing and translucent, looking for all the world like a veil. ◆

CBS / GETTY

# Signs of Grief

*In the dark comedy Three Billboards, a mother turns to vigilante justice.* BY JOHN PODHORETZ

If I tell you that Martin McDonagh is one of the most imaginative writers of our time, I expect you will immediately think he writes science fiction or fantasy—because the word “imaginative” has now devolved into a subset of the fantastic, the surreal, the unearthly. That is not the case with McDonagh. Nothing he writes is remotely surreal, not even when he sets his work in an unnamed totalitarian state. But he lets his imagination loose on the real world in a way that puts self-conscious fantasy “world builders” to shame.

McDonagh exploded into the theatrical firmament in the 1990s with three linked plays he wrote in just a few months about a village in rural Ireland called Leenane. The first and best, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, is about a 40-year-old spinster living and squabbling day and night with her wreck of a mother in their cabin home. She gets a chance at happiness with a man who is emigrating to America, but her mother intercepts the letters he sends her and he moves on—and the daughter makes her mother pay.

McDonagh’s works bristle with wild comedy, tension so extreme you watch the action with your hands over your eyes, vivid bursts of violence, and moments of aching sadness. “Guns, explosions, blood”—that is how McDonagh once described his plays, which captures everything about them but their artistry and the clever revelations of both character and story that make them so memorable. He is a brilliant plotter who makes you think

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

## Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Directed by Martin McDonagh



Frances McDormand as avenging mother Mildred Hayes

what you’re watching is one kind of story when suddenly the action turns on a dime and you learn it is something entirely different.

McDonagh has now released the third movie he has written and directed—and it is the first that truly reflects the head-snapping surprise of his stage work. It’s called *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*. Seven months after her teenage daughter’s rape and murder, a working-class woman named Mildred Hayes (Frances McDormand) puts up a message on three successive billboards near her house attacking the local police chief for failing to find the killer. Her impulsive act enrages the secondary officers in the town police department, who are unswervingly loyal to Chief Willoughby (Woody Harrelson). She makes a particular enemy out of the disgraceful and stupid Dixon (the extraordinary Sam Rockwell), who has been accused of torturing an African-American prisoner in a jail cell.

The chief does not share the rage of his underlings. He explains to Mildred that there are just some cases where you can’t catch a break; no one in the criminal databases across the United States was a match for the DNA recovered from her daughter’s body. Mildred responds by demanding samples be taken from everyone in town and, failing that, everyone in America. He then tells her he’s dying of cancer. She says she’s heard. This is only the first 10 minutes of the movie, after which everything gets wilder still.

Mildred resembles Olive Kitteridge, the character played indelibly by McDormand in 2014’s great HBO miniseries of that name. But where Olive is a hard nut, Mildred is pure vengeance. She is no longer afraid of anything or anyone and cares not a whit for the good opinion of her town. Why should she? She lives a waking nightmare in which she cannot help but flash back to the last moment she spent with her daughter Angela—when she refused to let Angela borrow her car, and Angela shouted that she hoped she got raped to show her

mother she was unfair ... and Mildred shouted back that she hoped so too. Mildred is one of the great characters in recent cinema, and if McDormand doesn’t win an Oscar for this next February, someone should put up three billboards just outside the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood demanding justice.

If this were a conventional movie, I would say *Three Billboards* is a story about the consuming nature of grief or the way in which a consuming injustice spreads to poison an entire community. But it’s not a conventional movie. McDonagh is a visceral artist whose work is really about what happens when openly confrontational people who are not above using petty violence meet others who are exactly like them. He sets a plot in motion, releases the ids of his characters, and sees where it all goes. *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* is funny and foul and shocking, not very pleasant but continually surprising—for, as it turns out, it isn’t really about Mildred at all. ♦



WATSON: GEORGES BIARD