

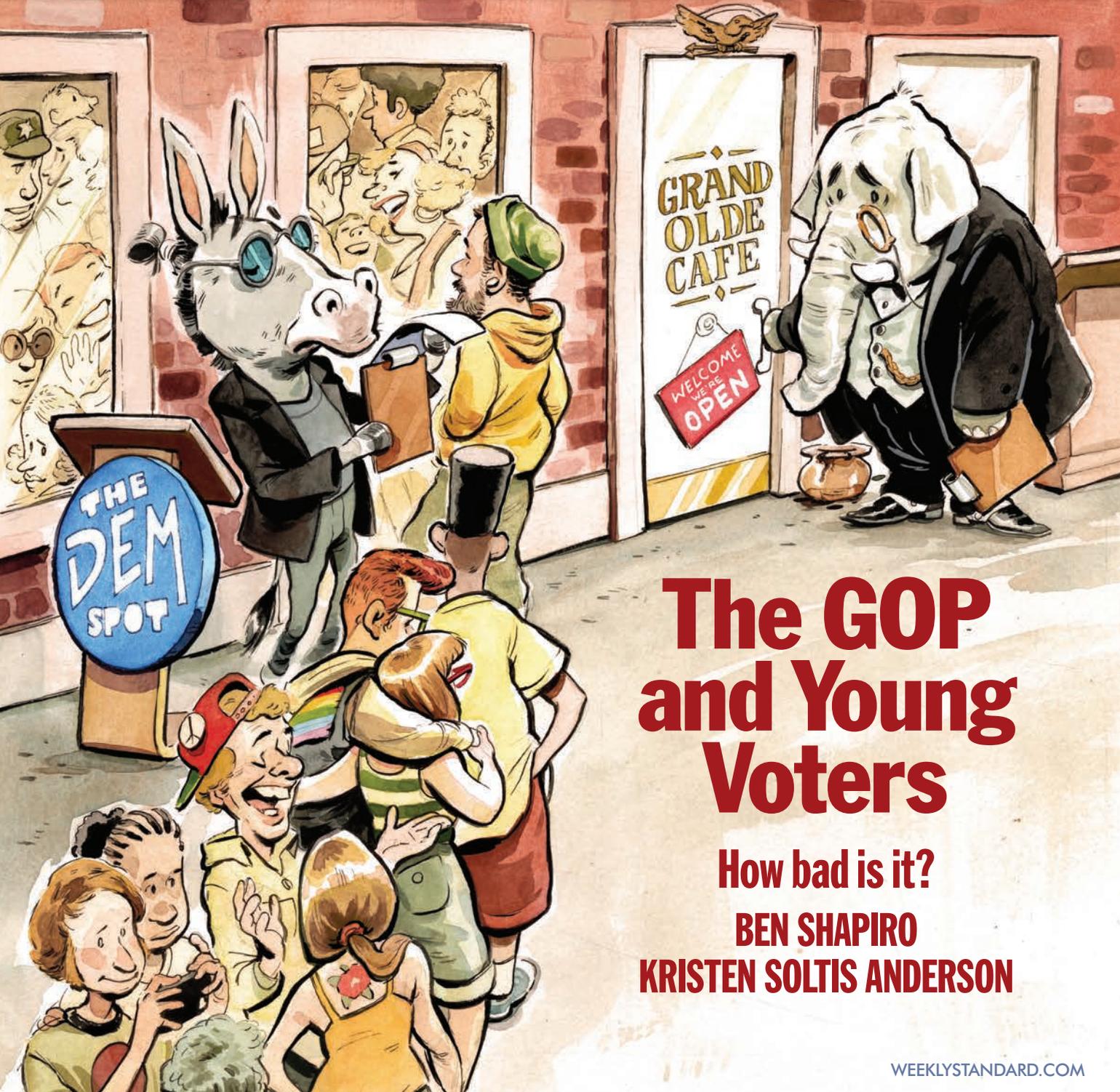
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TO TESTIFY?
STUART TAYLOR JR. & ADAM J. WHITE

the weekly

Standard

MAY 21, 2018

\$5.99



The GOP and Young Voters

How bad is it?

BEN SHAPIRO
KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON

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May 21, 2018 • Volume 23, Number 35



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COVER BY BRITT SPENCER

Advocating for Confusion at the *Post*

Every once in a while, as you work your dreary way through the *Washington Post*, a strange thing happens: You notice something! It can be refreshing but also, just as often, puzzling.

Consider the recent news that four former paramours of New York's then-attorney general Eric Schneiderman say he beat them up. The news first appeared in the *New Yorker* but the *Post* put its own inimitable gloss on it.

In the fourth paragraph, the *Post* tells us that in his career Schneiderman "had advocated for women." Before we are allowed to tease out the meaning of that curious phrase—the misuse of the verb "advocate" followed by the preposition "for" is just the beginning of the confusion—we learn, a few paragraphs later, that "Schneiderman . . . had been an outspoken advocate for women." It's a phrase so nice they used it twice.

For *Post* reporters, the phrase about *advocating for women* must have a self-evident, and probably highly tendentious, meaning. Our own translation, not at

all tendentious, would go like this: "Schneiderman was an oily poseur who routinely made sanctimonious comments about feminism and the #MeToo movement that many suckers, including journalists, mistook for evidence of his moral superiority."

But then, reading on, we got really stumped. The *Post* reporters describe a horrifying list of abuses the women suffered at the hands of Mr. Advocate-for-women: choking, repeated blows to the head, murder threats, and more. Unexpectedly, the *Post* reporters feel the need to clarify:



Hey, maybe if I keep at it, Bezos will get me a laptop!

"All four women said their physical abuse was not consensual."

We struggle to think what "consensual physical abuse" would entail. One clue might be found in the continuing success of *Fifty Shades of Grey* and its successors, a serial celebration of sadism and masochism. It portrays a culture in which the only sexual act considered unwholesome is one that isn't contractually entered into. "He used his body weight to hold me down," one of Schneiderman's victims recalls, "and he began to choke me. The choking was very hard. It was really bad." This might be okay, the *Post* reporter seems to think, if the choking were "consensual." But very not-okay if nonconsensual.

Having thinned its editorial ranks through attrition and buyouts and bulked up with young and untutored replacements, the *Post* often gives off a collegiate air. It seems at times to be put out by slightly precocious journalism majors fresh from their college papers. It's not much of a newspaper anymore, but it has its uses. In the insouciance of these new hires, you start to notice things. ♦

Political Donations as Therapy

The *New York Post* reports that Rosie O'Donnell, the former actress and talk show host who's now best known for erratic behavior, has been breaking the law. It seems that she's given a total of \$5,400 over the legal limit to five different Democratic congressional candidates. Federal Election Commission rules prohibit giving more than \$2,700 to a candidate in a given election cycle.

O'Donnell says she assumed the online donation tools she



used would keep her from exceeding the legal limits. Her other defense is Trump. "My anxiety is quelled by donating to those opposing Trump [and] his agenda—especially at night—when most of these were placed," she told the *Post*. For someone innocently pursuing political-donation therapy, however, O'Donnell seems to have been shifty about it. She "used five different New York addresses and four variations of her name" to make these nocturnal donations, according to the *Post*.

Absent the discovery of more and/or bigger campaign finance violations, O'Donnell is unlikely

to suffer much punishment for her liberality. Nor should she. Campaign finance violations are *malum prohibitum*—wrong because prohibited, as opposed to *malum in se* or wrong because evil—and the idea of severely penalizing people for supporting political candidates rightly offends any ordinary person's sense of decency.

But while we tire easily of the "imagine if our side did the same" complaint, indulge us just this once: Imagine if Charles Koch were discovered to have exceeded the maximum contribution limit to several Republican candidates and used five different addresses and various forms of his name. Weeping and gnashing of teeth would follow: demands for stricter campaign finance laws and severe punishment for Koch.

And no doubt Jane Mayer, the *New Yorker's* in-house Koch paranoiac, would get a book deal out of it. ♦

Half Past

From the London *Daily Telegraph*: Schools in Britain are removing their analogue clocks from examination halls because students can't read them. "Teachers are now installing digital devices after pupils sitting their GCSE and A-level exams complained that they were struggling to read the correct time on an analogue clock."

We don't doubt the sincerity of the complaints. If the only clock you've ever seen is on your smartphone, analogue clocks may seem strange. Why are the numbers in a circle? What do the two little lines mean, and why is one longer than the other? It's all so confusing!

Evidently clocks can stress out these digital-age youngsters. During exams, explains Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, schools want to make everything "as easy and straightforward as possible. . . . You don't want [students] to put their hands up to ask how much time is left."

No, you definitely don't want *that*.

Only an educational institution, we reflect, could be so shortsighted as to conclude that it's easier to remove all the analogue clocks and replace them with digital ones than simply to explain the rudimentary concept on which the former are based. For those schools that haven't yet spent precious school funds in order not to teach kids how to read a clock, a suggestion. Begin exams with two announcements: *First, turn your cell*



And when the little hand gets to here, that's when I stop giving a damn.



phones off. Second, the big hand means hours; the little hand means minutes. ♦

Scandally Clad

Once Utah high-schooler Keziah Daum tweeted several charming pictures of herself on prom night, it was just a matter of time until the grievance and outrage industry found out about it. When it did find out it dealt with her in the usual way. Miss Daum's offense? Her outfit: a high-necked, close-fitting dress in the style of a Chinese cheongsam, or qipao. Since she is not herself Chinese, her choice of prom dress was deemed an act of "cultural appropriation" and thus an offense to indigenous

civilizations and their woke defenders.

"My culture is NOT your [expletive] prom dress," one young tweeter responded, with impeccable logic. "For it to simply be subject to American consumerism and cater to a white audience, is parallel to colonial ideology." "This isn't ok," another wrote, "I wouldn't wear traditional Irish or Swedish or Greek dress. . . . There's a lot of history behind these clothes."

And so the faux-outrage crescendo mounted for days, with thousands of angst-ridden anti-appropriators tweeting their disapproval of Miss Daum's dress. But when the "controversy," as the *New York Times* generously called it, reached China itself, most people had a very different reaction. They

BOTTOM: BIGSTOCK



Daum and dumber

were thrilled and considered it a small triumph for their culture.

“I am very proud to have our culture recognized by people in other countries,” one typical Chinese Twitter-user commented. Others noted that the qipao is itself a product of cultural appropriation, having been based in part on Western styles when it was created by the Han Chinese to celebrate their liberation from the Manchu dynasty in the early 20th century.

The *Times* story about this idiotic episode is appropriately wry, but we did object to one line: “The uproar surrounding the prom dress,” observed the reporter, “highlights America’s growing—and increasingly complex—conversation about race.” We don’t think this growing conversation is “America’s” at all, nor is it complex. We suspect 99.5 percent of Americans are happy to let a Utah teen wear whatever prom dress makes her happy. ♦

Thinking Inside the Bottle

We learned this week from the *Harvard Business Review* of a study alleging that mild intoxication can enhance “creative thinking.” “You often hear of great writers, artists, and composers who claim that alcohol enhanced their creativity, or people who say their ideas are better

after a few drinks,” the study’s author, Andrew Jarosz of Mississippi State University, tells the *Review*. “We wanted to see if we could find evidence to back that up, and though this was a small experiment, we did.”

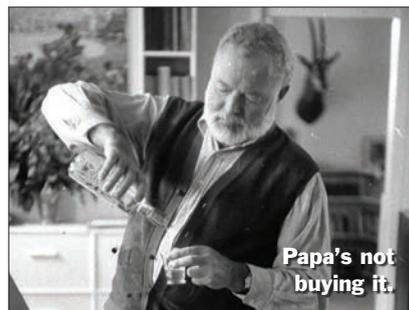
Jarosz and his coauthors put a series of word-association questions to two groups of students—one tipsy, the other sober. For example: Which word relates to these three: “duck,” “dollar,” “fold”? The answer is “bill.” Or this one: “cry,” “front,” “ship.” The answer: “war” or “battle.” In general, the tipsy subjects answered slightly more accurately and quickly.

We have no trouble believing that a drink or two enhances creativity, even if it’s a rather useless form of creativity. And as Jarosz points out, you can easily overdo it. “If you get your blood alcohol level too much beyond .08,” he says, “you probably won’t be very useful. And you may have trouble screening out terrible ideas.”

Where would we be without academic studies to tell us these things?

As for those claims by great artists, writers, and composers that drugs or booze inspired them, we recall an essay by the great English critic John Sutherland published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1998, marvelously titled “Turns Unstoned.” Sutherland examined claims by Walter Scott, Samuel Coleridge, Wilkie Collins, and Jack Kerouac to have produced works of genius under the influence. The short answer: They stretched the truth or just lied.

One other note. Readers may wish to know that THE WEEKLY STANDARD’s editor in chief has just sent THE SCRAPBOOK a memo: Drinks may not be expensed for reasons of creativity-enhancement. ♦



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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except one week in March, one week in June, one week in August, and one week in December) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$5.99. Back issues, \$5.99 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Copyright 2018, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



It's a GAS, GAS, GAS

I'm obsessed with electric guitars. Oddly enough, when I was a gigging musician, from about age 16 through 30, I didn't much care what guitars I played. I was broke, and I didn't want to worry about my guitar getting stolen, drenched in beer, or falling victim to the other hazards that came with being a would-be rock star.

But a few years ago, I found I was spending a lot of time playing for my own amusement. The battered, Mexican-made Telecaster Deluxe from my glory days had some issues, and I decided that I would spec out and build a custom Stratocaster. I had acquired a severe case of what is known among my fellow guitarists as Guitar Acquisition Syndrome, or GAS.

The obsession is part romantic and part technical. There aren't many more powerful icons of the cultural confidence that defined 20th-century America. And if you're at all mechanically inclined, you can take guitars apart and hot-rod them.

Speaking of hot rods, car enthusiasts are probably the best comparison. Electric guitars are still largely defined by the midcentury modern aesthetic and the electrical innovations pioneered by Leo Fender and Les Paul in the fifties and sixties. I don't think it's an accident that the emergence of the electric guitar coincided with the golden age of the U.S. auto industry.

And the jargon of gearheads and GASers isn't that far apart. Not that you asked, but my Stratocaster has staggered 18:1 locking gears, a TUSQ nut, 6105 frets, and a 10-to-14-inch compound fretboard radius. It's got Fender custom shop "Fat '50s" pickups with the Gilmour mod wired to an S-1 switch on the volume knob. It's got a Gotoh 510 three-spring, two-point

trem with a stainless steel block. I finished the maple neck myself with Tru-Oil and gunstock wax, and the alder body has a reliced nitro finish done by MJT Guitars in Missouri: Lake Placid blue exposing a three-tone sunburst.

If I'm being honest, I also have to admit that as I barrel into middle age my guitar obsession is fueled by nostalgia. This is depressing, and for reasons



that go beyond contemplating my own mortality. On May 2, Gibson Guitar, the legendary maker of the iconic Les Paul, declared bankruptcy after years of spectacularly bad management. The Guitar Center retail chain is also facing imminent bankruptcy.

The fact is that the electric guitar is losing its cultural significance. Last year, the *Washington Post* ran a lengthy feature about "the slow, secret death of the six-string electric." The problem is generational. While vintage guitars command more than six figures and baby boomers decorate their law offices with \$10,000 objets d'axe, kids just aren't playing guitar. They make dance music on their laptops, which seems to obviate the thing I liked about rock music when I was their

age. Whether I was in a garage with my friends or playing to 2,000 people, it was a communal experience.

These days my guitars never leave the basement. My communal experience consists of a couple of online friends who share the affliction. One—call him Ian—is from the Sacramento area. I have never met him. But after I built my Stratocaster, I spent a lot of time discussing with him exactly what guitar I wanted to buy next. That was before an aging car and various other expenses intervened.

This past Christmas, my wife handed me a guitar case. Inside was a used, semi-hollow, red Squier Esprit with two humbuckers. It's probably 10 years old, though it's modeled after the Fender Esprit, the signature instrument of legendary blues guitarist and George Harrison sideman Robben Ford. The Squier Esprit was a budget model that didn't sell, but it became collectible after it acquired a reputation for quality comparable to guitars that cost 10 times as much. Suffice to say, it ticks all my boxes.

Ian and his guitar-teacher brother had tracked down my wife and sent the guitar as a surprise. He bought it at a pawnshop years ago and wasn't playing it, and he knew I'd enjoy it. The guitar came with a nice letter from the two of them. It seems making a gift of guitars is something they do regularly—though usually to more deserving and younger people—for no other reason than they think it makes others happy.

They're not wrong. The guitar sits by my desk and not a day has gone by in the last four months when I haven't been humbled by the gesture. I'm still obsessed with guitars, but the gift seems to have cured me of GAS, for which I thank Ian. Maybe the demise of the electric guitar is overstated. A lot of guys my age covet guitars. How many of them actually love guitars enough to give one away?

MARK HEMINGWAY

Opportunity in the Mideast

In the months leading up to President Donald Trump's May 8 decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, we heard the same argument from the deal's proponents: *Iran is complying with the agreement. Why would we want to get rid of it?* There is some truth to this, but it makes a glaring assumption: that the terms of the Iran deal were satisfactory in the first place.

Our chief complaint about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, was never that the Iranians would cheat. That was expected, and they have cheated—they've sought banned ballistic materials, for example, and exceeded the agreement's limits on advanced centrifuges and heavy-water production. The confirmation last month of Tehran's dishonest reporting about its nuclear program and intentions ahead of the 2015 signing of the deal made clear that the Iranians were never going to be serious partners, just as we and its other opponents had long warned.

The problem with the Iran deal was always the deal itself. The JCPOA allowed Iran to press ahead on developing delivery systems and scheduled an end to the embargo on importing conventional weapons and missiles. The agreement's provisions on inspections of nuclear facilities were vague enough to allow the Iranian regime to hide facilities and give inspectors the runaround. Even Barack Obama conceded, in a 2015 interview, that Iranian compliance with the deal would still allow them to "have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly" and that soon "the breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero."

President Trump was right to pull out of the deal. It was weak, and it was made with a regime that cannot be trusted to abide by the spirit of any agreement. The previous administration failed to grasp this easily perceptible truth because Obama wanted an agreement that would revolutionize our Middle East policy and turn a powerful and longstanding foe into an ally. Tehran sensed his desperation—Secretary of State John Kerry hardly bothered to conceal his—and skillfully extracted a deal that lifted sanctions, delivered a great pile of cash, and let it go on doing most of what it was doing already.

Which, of course, is why the regime now insists that it will continue complying with the terms of the deal. If the JCPOA were the tough deal its proponents claim it is, we should have expected Iran to exit as soon as it had a credible reason. Surely the Trump administration's departure was that reason. And yet the mullahs say they'll remain bound by the deal. Why? Because they're happy to go on pretending they have no malign nuclear motives in hopes of keeping

the other signatories—the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, Germany, and the European Union—from reimposing sanctions.

Former Obama officials and the transnational elite that created the deal don't have much reason to complain. The JCPOA is still in effect, sans one party. Presumably that is why so many of them are making peripheral complaints about Trump's exit: that it will raise oil prices, that it will somehow monkey-wrench talks with North Korea, that it will kill contracts between Iran and American companies, and so on. These criticisms are beside the point. No one is claiming an exit from the deal will be cost-free.

Obama wanted to transform the Middle East by aligning America with Iran and ended up empowering and emboldening the region's greatest sponsor of terrorism. The great irony is that Trump's decision to pull out could—if handled judiciously—accomplish something of the transformation Obama sought but lacked the wisdom to achieve.

For decades, the two powers in the Middle East were Iran and Iraq. It was never a balance of power in the old sense: It didn't generate peace, and the two warred brutally. Both detested America, though for a time in the 1980s we made a strategic alliance with Iraq against Iran. The Iraq war ended that heinous duality, but the mismanagement of its aftermath created an opportunity for Iran to become a Middle Eastern hegemon—something it is feverishly trying to accomplish by funding Shia terrorist movements around the region and slowly arrogating weak governments in Beirut and elsewhere.

Now that Trump has finally rejected the Obama-era fantasy that we could entice Iran away from its theocratic delusions, a true balance of power could emerge. On one side, Iran and its proxies, sponsored by Russia. On the other, an Arab-Israeli-American coalition of openness and free markets.

The Israelis have long distrusted the regime in Tehran, and they detested the nuclear deal. But so does the new and forward-thinking leader of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman. So, for largely the same reasons, do the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Governments in Cairo and Amman are not yet in a position to side openly with the United States or Israel, but they are deeply suspicious of Iranian expansionism and could be persuaded over time.

Media coverage of Trump's decision, self-parodically one-sided, has focused on the disappointment of "America's allies," by which our colleagues at places like the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* mean France, Great Britain, and Germany, whose interests in Iran are largely economic. But

the Israelis, the Saudis, the Egyptians, and the Emiratis are our allies, too. And their interests are more fundamental: security, stability, even the right to exist.

These allies cautioned the United States against an agreement that would, by design, strengthen a common enemy, the region's troublemaker. The Obama administration set those warnings aside in its obsessive pursuit of a foreign-policy achievement it could claim as a legacy.

The shared opposition to the JCPOA among our disparate allies in the region has already contributed to unexpected advances in relations between the Israelis and the Saudis and Emiratis. The Saudis and the Bahrainis now speak openly of Israel's right to defend itself—something unheard-of even a few years ago. Could such unlikely temporary alliances lead to a broader realignment? Given the history of the region, the safe bet is the pessimistic one. But lost amidst the brow-furrowing and teeth-gnashing in Washington and New York is any acknowledgment of the opportunity.

In their anger and frustration, former officials and allies of the Obama administration have asked what the Trump administration plans to do now. Does it have a plan other than simply dismantling Obama's legacy? This is a very fair question. Our advice: Think big. ♦

Who's Flattering Whom?

Early on the morning of May 10, Donald Trump tweeted a dramatic 32-second video celebrating the return home of three U.S. citizens held until last week in North Korea. It was a made-for-TV moment, and the slick video ensured that millions of Americans who didn't stay up until 3 A.M. to watch it live could experience this moment of triumph.

It was a triumph: for the three former detainees, for their families, for the president, and for the country. But it was also just a moment—a split second of joy amid decades of North Korean betrayal and duplicity. The president would be wise to expect that any diplomatic encounters with Kim Jong-un will be defined more by the latter than the former.

As he stood on the tarmac at Andrews Air Force Base, Trump said with evident conviction that he believes in Kim Jong-un. When ABC News's indefatigable Jonathan Karl asked the president why the North Korean leader had chosen to release the Americans, Trump said: "I really think he wants to do something. I think he did this because I really think he wants to do something and bring that country into the real world. I *really* believe that, Jon,

and I think that we're going to have a success. I think this will be a very big success."

We hope the president is right. If Trump somehow convinced Kim Jong-un to denuclearize in a comprehensive and verifiable way—through bluster, flattery, coercion, punishment, or some combination of all four—it would indeed be a very big success, one accomplished against the longest of odds. But there are three decades' worth of reasons to believe that this won't happen, that the sacrifices made by successive North Korean regimes to acquire nuclear weapons were not made in order one day to walk away from the very thing that won them face-to-face negotiations with the world's superpower.

We're confident that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser John Bolton are well aware of this history and have expressed their skepticism to the president. Such concerns are sometimes reflected in the president's language. But often they are not.

Trump lets his eagerness for a deal, for something he can tout as a victory, shape his public pronouncements in unhelpful ways. In welcoming the former prisoners home, Trump said: "We want to thank Kim Jong-un, who really was excellent to these three incredible people." This comes after Trump's recent comments hailing the North Korean leader as "very open and I think very honorable based on what we are seeing."

Kim Jong-un was not, in fact, excellent to these Americans, his regime having detained them in the first place. And whatever his latest public gestures, Kim continues to preside over the most closed society on earth. Summary execution is an oft-used tool of state repression in his country, and brutal forced-labor camps operate there to this day. And let us not forget Otto Warmbier, the American college student who was arrested by the North Koreans, sentenced to hard labor, and sent home to the States in a persistent vegetative state last summer. He died six days later. Not open, not honorable.

Hours after Trump celebrated the return of the American prisoners, he announced via tweet that a face-to-face summit with Kim Jong-un would take place in Singapore on June 12. The meeting will provide the president with many made-for-TV moments and many opportunities to claim triumphs. But the risks in such a high-stakes negotiation are tremendous, particularly if Trump entertains the possibility of removing U.S. troops from South Korea, a longtime objective of the North Koreans that fits nicely with Trump's America-first instincts.

The president has shown again and again—in his dealings with the media, with politicians here and abroad—that he's susceptible to manipulation by flattery. There's little doubt Kim Jong-un has been paying attention.

We don't think Trump should hold a face-to-face meeting with the North Korean despot. We nonetheless wish the president well as he embarks on this consequential mission. And we encourage him to negotiate with John Bolton seated directly to his left and Mike Pompeo directly to his right. ♦

FRED BARNES

The Wipeout of Obama's Legacy

President Obama's legacy is rapidly vanishing. The decision by President Trump to withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran is the biggest blow, but it's only the latest. The elimination of the individual mandate and canceling the yearly bailout of insurance companies have left Obamacare in a precarious condition. Young immigrants whose parents brought them to the United States unlawfully—so-called dreamers—are losing their legal status.

This is historic. Presidents often vow to wipe out big chunks of their predecessor's legacies. President Eisenhower was going to take on the New Deal. Ronald Reagan targeted the Great Society. Both backed down. Trump, working with congressional Republicans, hasn't. He's eager to deflate Obama's standing and inflate his own.

Obama and Democrats have made Trump's efforts surprisingly easy. Obama, you'll recall, succeeded brilliantly in the first two years of his presidency when Democrats controlled Congress. But once Republicans held the House, Senate, or both over the next six years, he ignored Capitol Hill as much as possible. He spared himself the unpleasantness of compromising with Republicans and instead governed by executive orders and regulations.

Decisions taken by the president alone are vulnerable to being erased by subsequent presidents. And that's what happened to the pact with Iran. It wasn't a treaty ratified by the Senate. Democrats used the filibuster to block even a nonbinding vote on it. Trump killed the deal with his signature. That was also all it took to quit the Paris accord on global warming.

There were two factors behind Obama's decision to shun a treaty, which requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate. Winning that lopsided a vote appeared to be impossible. On the other hand, Obama had a backup—Hillary Clinton. She was expected to win the presidency in 2016 and could be relied on to protect the nuclear agreement.



Decisions taken by the president alone are vulnerable to being erased by subsequent presidents. And that's what happened to the pact with Iran.

On immigration, Obama might have prevailed if he'd sought congressional approval of legal status for young illegals, the dreamers. Again, Republican votes would have been needed, which meant the bill would be a compromise, not pure Barack. He rejected that. Since Obama had said he couldn't legally act on his own, it looked like nothing would be done.

Then Obama changed his mind and simply announced the approach known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Neither a regulation nor a law, it is simply a policy. With Obama gone, it lacks a presidential defender. Trump abandoned it, though he's offered a pact to keep the dreamers here: They'd be legalized and Trump would get his wall on the southwest border. A pretty straightforward exchange, except Democrats oppose

the wall. It's more important to them than the fate of hundreds of thousands of dreamers. Democrats declined.

Which leads to another problem they've created for themselves, one that further jeopardizes Obama's legacy while making political life less of a struggle for Trump and Republicans. Democrats have adopted a strategy of resisting Trump across the board. It's blind resistance, all anger and ideology, no common sense.

And there haven't been many exceptions. Perish the thought. When the GOP tax bill was under consideration last year, private talks—chats, really—between a few House Republicans and Democrats blossomed. Republicans were willing to discuss a smaller tax cut, if only to pick up Democratic votes and assure passage. But when a particular tax idea was put on the table, one Democrat's response was, "If Trump's for it, I've got to be against it." That attitude left no room for any compromise. It also meant Democrats would have no influence on the tax bill.

I asked a Republican leader what Democrats might have gotten if they'd pitched in. Not only would the size of the tax cut have been trimmed, he told me, but Obamacare's individual mandate and the full deduction for state and local taxes would have been preserved. It would have allowed Democrats to claim the tax bill "could have been worse" absent their intervention. They were right. From a Democratic standpoint, it's much worse. That's why Trump and most Republicans like it.

As much as Obama and Democrats are to blame, the shrinking of Obama's legacy isn't entirely their fault. A good bit is the result of Trump's success and canny choice of issues. On foreign policy, does anyone want to return to the days of appeasing North Korea? Should the American embassy in

Israel be moved back to Tel Aviv at the earliest opportunity? Ought we go back to insisting that concessions by Israel provide a path to peace in the Middle East?

On domestic issues, the Obama legacy has better prospects for survival, or at least for being revived by some future Democratic majority. The Democratic mindset on taxes is locked in place. Nancy Pelosi embodies it. She's impervious to such things as incentives, private investment, and growth. She's for raising taxes because cutting only benefits the rich. She's already rich. One can make a case that she's more influential on the tax issue than Obama.

But all they've said and done as Mr. and Mrs. Tax Hike hasn't changed the country's mind. It will be an uphill battle to convince Americans to go back to higher taxes. That's not much of a legacy. ♦

COMMENT ♦ TERRY EASTLAND

The Justice Department stands up for free speech

The Justice Department has won a small but significant victory in the campus free-speech case of *Young America's Foundation and Berkeley College Republicans v. Napolitano*. Justice didn't have to get involved in the case, but it did so and has helped the cause of free speech.

Justice's work in the case and others like it is a reminder that good government is possible in the agencies, despite the daily White House drama.

According to a Justice Department summary of the case, the plaintiffs, YAF and BCR, allege that the University of California, Berkeley, has a double standard when it comes to free speech. BCR says that Berkeley applies more rigorous and highly discretionary policies to the events BCR seeks to offer than the university does to those arranged by other campus groups, especially for events featuring "high-profile" speakers.

The student nonprofit organizations filed their lawsuit in April 2017 having discovered how hard it is for them (though not so much for those to their left) to satisfy the university's free-speech regulators, with some speeches by conservative figures being canceled in the wake of violent protests. The plaintiffs contend that Berkeley's "High-Profile Speaker Policy" (which is not written down) and its "Major Events Policy" (which is) violate their First Amendment rights by granting university administrators unfettered authority to decide event locations, times, and security fees.

Janet Napolitano, the former Democratic governor of Arizona, is the defendant in the case by virtue of her status as president of UC-Berkeley. And her school, ironically the home of

the 1964-65 Free Speech Movement, has lost on a motion to dismiss. YAF and BCR will now have the chance to prove their allegations.

A filing in the case that the presiding judge might have found persuasive was the Justice Department's "statement of interest." That is an



Had Justice not filed a brief in the case, it might have been dismissed outright. Good lawyering can make a difference with any relevant task and apparently did so in the Berkeley case.

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constitutionality of a policy at Georgia Gwinnett College (a state school) that limits student expressive activity to two very small free-speech zones totaling 0.0015 percent of the campus. Students wanting to use the space are required to secure prior authorization from the college, limit their expressive activity to a specified date and time, and comply with the student code of conduct's prohibition of speech that "disturbs the . . . comfort of person(s)." In its statement of interest, Justice said the college's speech policies were not neutral as to content, established a heckler's veto, which can curtail speech, and were not "narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling government interest." A motion to dismiss is pending, and procedural matters have postponed a decision.

In addition to the Georgia Gwinnett and UC-Berkeley cases, Justice has also filed a statement of interest in *Shaw v. Burke*, challenging a 616-square-foot "free speech area" at Los Angeles Pierce College. To use the area, a student must first apply for a permit. In its statement of interest, Justice said that this policy amounted to an unconstitutional prior restraint that chilled free expression. The motion to dismiss was denied, and the case will now be heard.

These uses of statements of interest are of recent vintage, as it used to be that the only interests an administration of either party would attend to were those involving national security and diplomacy. That changed under President Obama, whose Justice Department decided to file statements of interest in cases involving domestic matters—civil rights in particular.

The *New York Times* was quick to see the story, calling it "a novel legal campaign that began early in the Obama administration and has expanded." The cases in which Justice had filed concerned legal aid, transgender students, juvenile prisoners in solitary detention, and auto dealers' installation of hand controls for disabled individuals. Said the *Times*: "The Obama administration is saying it has an interest in preserving [what it regards as] constitutional rights [just as it] has an

interest in [securing the nation]." The Trump administration can say the same thing, though its domestic-side interest is politically much different, involving as it has (and will) the preservation of students' free-speech rights in often politically correct campus environments. Of course, Sessions could find other interests to advance, assuming he stays in his job. The "interest" agenda could expand.

The key question raised by the filing of a statement of interest in a case is whether the government's involvement might help in getting to the right outcome. In the cases in which Justice has filed, it certainly hasn't hurt. And in the Berkeley case, the most important of the three controversies, lawyers who follow free-speech issues said that the judge's order denying a motion to dismiss was based on the arguments Justice made in its statement of interest and that had Justice not filed a

brief in the case, it might have been dismissed outright. Good lawyering can of course make a difference with any relevant task and apparently did so in the Berkeley case.

Governing by statements of interest is something that can't be done other than by the Justice Department. And in an era of increasing polarization in our politics, it's not surprising that the Trump administration decided to follow the Obama administration precedent by filing such statements. The interest that the attorney general has chosen to protect has supporters everywhere—after all, we're talking about the free-speech components of the First Amendment. As Sessions says often, "a national recommitment to free speech on campus and to ensuring First Amendment rights is long overdue." We'll see whether he's right about that as more interests are stated and statements filed. ♦

COMMENT ♦ PHILIP TERZIAN

Keep the congressional chaplains in your thoughts and prayers—they might need them

Speaker Paul Ryan, who has tended his recalcitrant flock in the House with a generally deft hand, stumbled last week on a trivial matter: the status of the House chaplain, a fractious Jesuit named Rev. Patrick Conroy. Six months short of his own withdrawal from Congress, Speaker Ryan suggested to Father Conroy that he quit his seven-year tenure as chaplain before he was shoved aside, and Conroy duly announced his resignation.

It is not entirely clear what prompted Ryan to act. Conroy seems to have raised eyebrows in certain quarters of the House with opening prayers that strayed from bipartisanship, and there are stories of complaints about his pastoral inattention to some members. Still, Conroy's behavior during resignation week suggests that rumors

of ill-temper and high self-regard are not misplaced. Having submitted his resignation to Ryan, he promptly withdrew it—and Ryan, no doubt seeking to minimize damage, agreed.

Too late. There were press reports that an aide to Ryan had remarked to Conroy that it might be time for a non-Catholic chaplain to rotate in—the two pastors for the past 18 years have both been Roman Catholic—and Conroy's lawyer complained publicly about religious bias. This opened the floodgates to what amounted to an all-Catholic assault on Ryan: A progressive Franciscan asserted in the pages of the *Hill* that Conroy is a "true Catholic" whereas Ryan is not, and the always-reliable Catholic League for Religious Liberty and Civil Rights detected widespread anti-Catholic prejudice in the House.

Before too long, House Democrats, led by minority leader Nancy Pelosi, were calling for justice for their embattled chaplain and, of course, public hearings. Whether such hearings will ever take place is doubtful, as is Conroy's survival as chaplain beyond next January. Still, what had begun as a gesture of institutional reform—and, presumably, conciliation and renewal—soon deteriorated into partisan rancor and sectarian strife. Which is too bad, if all too predictable.

Speaking as a mildly detached Protestant who is also a graduate of a Roman Catholic university, I am constrained to say that Paul Ryan has always struck me as a legislator whose Christian beliefs inform his public and personal practices. And the fact that Democrats quickly formed a defensive phalanx around Father Conroy suggests that the dogma in play is ideological, not theological.

There may also be a lesson here about unintended consequences. For one inevitable outcome of the dispute has been a revival of discussion, out loud and sometimes fervent, about whether either house of Congress requires a chaplain at all.

We are, of course, a republic with no established church and a constitutional mandate for separation of church and state. As is well known, the phrase is not explicitly stated in our national charter; but as the courts have largely ruled, it is surely implied. And

no less than James Madison, father of the Constitution, believed that neither the House nor Senate should have chaplains and that sessions of Congress need not—indeed should not—be opened with prayer.

Yet Madison also knew that we're a pious democracy and kept his views prudently to himself. Just as presidential inaugurations and professional athletic contests alike begin with prayer, we've adjusted in political life to a casual mixture of civic practice and faith.



One outcome of the dispute has been a revival of discussion, out loud and sometimes fervent, about whether either house of Congress requires a chaplain at all.

This has led, in such matters as Father Conroy's post, to a pleasant *via media* in public life to which I subscribe. People who take their religion seriously, or believe that God pays close attention to the United States of America, are welcome to bow their heads when the chaplain prays; everyone else is free to check his watch. In the long run, everybody—except serial malcontents and the holier-than-thou—is largely satisfied, or at least not danger-

ously aggrieved. And in a society of our size and scope, that's no minor feat.

For my sins, I tend to apply this principle to the divisive subject of public monuments and civic observance. I also happen to believe that congressional chaplains are a useful adornment to the American political tradition and opening prayers emphasize the serious nature of congressional labor. Tradition, moreover, gives weight to the national project. By modern standards, George Washington was more faithful statesman than statesman of faith, but his public pronouncements invariably included a ritual invocation to Divine Providence, just as Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed on the radio for the success of the D-Day invasion.

In my youth, the Senate chaplain (1949-69) was a Methodist divine named Frederick Brown Harris, whose grave but strictly nonpartisan appeals to heaven perfectly reflected the civic piety of the Eisenhower era. But the Senate has always taken its chaplaincy a little more seriously than the House, and as the nation has evolved over time, so has Harris's old job. The current Senate chaplain, for instance, is a much-admired African-American Seventh-Day Adventist.

Whether Paul Ryan's chief of staff actually suggested that it was time for a non-Catholic chaplain in the House (he denies it), the point is not without merit—and no reflection on Rev. Patrick Conroy's faith or political views. Democrats and Republicans take note: The enterprise for which chaplains pray in Congress is of greater importance than any particular faction or individual cleric. ♦

Worth Repeating from *WeeklyStandard.com*:

What have we learned from the latest flood of news regarding Michael Cohen, the president's personal lawyer whose consulting firm accepted payments from Russian oligarchs and major corporations? For one, the swamp hasn't been drained so much as replaced by influence peddlers of a Trumpian variety.

Another: that companies will throw ridiculous amounts of money at just the possibility of proximity to power. Novartis, for instance, gave Cohen a \$1.2 million contract that resulted in just one meeting before the pharmaceutical giant determined Cohen couldn't deliver.'

—Michael Warren, *'Meet the new swamp'*

It's Come Undone

President Trump cancels the Iran deal.
Now comes the hard part. BY REUEL MARC GERECHT



Iranians burn American flags during a protest in Tehran, May 9.

Since the parameters of the Iranian nuclear accord became apparent in 2014 until Donald Trump canceled the deal on May 8, Washington essentially divided into three camps: those who supported the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, those who thought it was a seriously deficient accord but didn't have the stomach to challenge it since that would oblige them to accept the risk of another war in the Middle East, and those who opposed the accord and were prepared to accept the risk of conflict. The second group was probably the largest. A fair number of Democrats and Republicans, who really didn't like what Barack Obama had wrought, took refuge there. Unquestionably, the smallest group in Washington was the last.

It is an odd political fate that the Republican presidential candidate who was so hostile to the Republican foreign-policy establishment's

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internationalist spirit, who out-Obama-ed Obama in his desire to see America downsize its responsibilities and influence in the Middle East, took a decision that returns the United States to the region with a vengeance and draws a clear red line for military action against the mullahs. If the clerical regime were to attempt to reconnect a large number of its IR1 centrifuges at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility or the still-unperfected IR2m machines at the buried-beneath-a-mountain Fordow site, President Trump would have to strike militarily or see America's position collapse. It's a decent guess that the more conventional Republican presidential candidates, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, and even Lindsey Graham, who all ardently campaigned against the JCPOA, would have kept America in the agreement. They were, most likely, in Camp Number Two. Trump's unorthodoxy, his vivid dislike of President Obama's achievements, and his ability to live with messy situations have

surely allowed him to act when others would have punted.

Trump's decision is condign punishment for Obama, who cut out the Senate (with the complicity of most Democratic senators) from rendering judgment on what was obviously a treaty. Ditto for the Obama officials, especially his secretary of state John Kerry, who tried to sell the nuclear deal as a "permanent" panacea to the mullahs' nuclear quest. The accord manifestly did not "cut off every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon," as President Obama put it in 2015. Given the sunset clauses in the agreement, its failure to include Iran's continuing development of long-range ballistic missiles, its timid verification procedures (close surveillance of known sites but no access to military bases or nuclear personnel and paperwork), the deal was at best a temporary respite from the clerical regime's atomic ambitions at the price of transferring billions of dollars to Tehran's imperialism.

This is probably the point—the temporary surcease to our nuclear anxiety in exchange for our blind eye to slaughter—that former Obama officials try most assiduously to ignore and react against most vociferously when pressed. The deal strategically makes sense if you adopt Obama's left-wing "realist" approach to the Middle East: If Washington officially doesn't *really* care how many Syrian Sunnis are slaughtered by the Damascus-Tehran-Moscow axis, if Washington doesn't *really* care if Iraq becomes an Iranian satrapy, if one believes that Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic need to learn to "share" the region, and if one believes that America's presence in the region prevents a détente from developing between Washington and Tehran, then it doesn't matter that Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei transfers a big slice of his JCPOA profits to the Revolutionary Guards and his foreign advisers.

It is by no means clear whether President Trump can handle the repercussions of what he has unleashed by scuttling his predecessor's proudest foreign-policy accomplishment, but

ALI MOHAMMADI / BLOOMBERG / GETTY



he has been Oscar-worthy in his very male, outrageously American version of Nemesis. Hubris usually has a price, and President Obama's flip-pant unilateralism—his unwillingness to acknowledge bipartisan restraints on his grand ambitions at home and abroad—led to Trump and May 8. The Obama crowd may yet get the last laugh if Trump and his advisers don't design a tolerably coherent approach for dealing with the mullahs and the Europeans, who are obviously angry about Trump's actions. And one can feel considerable sympathy for the Europeans, as they were often perplexed by President Obama's overly concessionary, rushed approach in the nuclear negotiations with Tehran. They were regularly dismayed by the too-close and too-trusting relationship that developed between Secretary Kerry and Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who, to put it politely, has a penchant for lying.

A temptation now for the administration, with the worst possible consequences, would be to go easy on

secondary sanctions against European companies with business interests in Iran. That may still be the bureaucratic reflex in Washington, where transatlantic sympathies and concerns have a way of softening American foreign policy. However, the only real economic leverage the White House has over the Islamic Republic is through the secondary effect of American sanctions. President Trump is, of course, ideally suited to bring greater pressure on Europe since he seems to care even less than his predecessor about transatlantic ties. His advisers, especially Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the philo-European State Department, may try to compensate for Trump's disinterest by slowing the punch or diminishing the bite of extraterritorial sanctions.

That would be a huge mistake, especially if one cares about the Western alliance. The amount of bureaucratic effort now required of Washington to bring enormous hard-currency pressure on Tehran isn't that much. Since 2015, when the nuclear deal

was concluded in Vienna, the lingering specter of American sanctions has slowed, if not stopped, a lot of European commerce with the Islamic Republic. A telling example of this power was the refusal of German companies, fearing American sanctions, to refuel the aircraft of foreign minister Zarif when he went to the Munich Security Conference in February. German chancellor Angela Merkel had to order the Luftwaffe to refuel Zarif's plane. It would be far less harmful to U.S.-European ties to let the Europeans know clearly and quickly the range and depth of American sanctions that will hit them. If Washington suggests that there may be some wiggle room, that the "snapback" of American sanctions will take longer than what is spelled out in the governing legislation, then the Europeans will be more likely to invest themselves in hope and blocking actions.

Given his speech, President Trump appears ready to take a maximalist approach toward the reimplementa-tion of sanctions. National security

adviser John Bolton is surely in favor of more, sooner. The wild card is whether the “fix-the-deal” diplomatic talks that Brian Hook, the head of policy planning at State, was leading up until the last hour convinced Secretary Pompeo that the “fix” approach hasn’t yet played out. The possibility of Americans and Europeans renegotiating the deal might remain alive precisely because the Europeans could conclude, however reluctantly, that they can guide Washington better by compromising their attachment to the original JCPOA in exchange for some sanctions flexibility by the Trump administration. It is always essential to recall that the driving force behind the European engagement with the clerical regime in 2003, after Iran’s clandestine nuclear sites were revealed, was fear of American or Israeli military action. Obviously, President Trump has reenergized that fear. The Europeans may surprise themselves by a newfound fondness for working with President Trump provided he goes easy on their business interests.

If no one else, Bolton will certainly intercede to try to stop such a self-defeating American compromise. He probably understands that any attempt to “renegotiate” the JCPOA means that the Trump administration is de facto adopting a regime-change strategy toward the Islamic Republic since the requirements for a “good deal” would mean that Tehran would have to shut down permanently its quest for the bomb and stop its aggression in the Middle East. Any deal that would allow sanctions relief to Iran while the Revolutionary Guards and their allied Shiite militias are running amok would take the Trump administration right back to where the Obama administration left off. There can be no new deal without the Islamic Republic changing its spots. Logically, this is where the White House is headed; it’s just not clear whether the president and the national-security bureaucracies, especially the State Department, fully understand the course that Trump laid out in his May 8 speech. ♦



Patrick Morrisey, right, campaigns in Huntington with Sen. Rand Paul, left, May 3.

Well, That Could Have Gone Worse

Quality candidates made it through the Republican primaries this time. BY JOHN McCORMACK

Kearneysville, W. Va.

Republicans breathed a sigh of relief on May 8 when Don Blankenship—a bigot with a penchant for going after what he called “China people” and a coal baron who went to jail for a disaster that killed 29 miners—was soundly defeated in West Virginia’s GOP Senate primary. Following a May 1 prime-time Fox News debate in which Blankenship’s Republican rivals, Congressman Evan Jenkins and state attorney general Patrick Morrisey, attacked each other and ignored Blankenship, a handful of internal polls (conducted by the Jenkins and Morrisey campaigns and a Republican pollster unconnected to either candidate) suggested Blankenship got a bump that put him into

contention to win the nomination. No public polls were released in the final two weeks of the campaign.

A Blankenship victory would have tossed away a good pick-up opportunity for Republicans, who now control the Senate 51-49 and see incumbent Democrat Joe Manchin as vulnerable. And it would have indicated that the Republican party was heading in a very ugly direction—that the Roy Moore fiasco in Alabama wasn’t a fluke, and the most demagogic aspects of Trumpism held more sway over a plurality of GOP voters than Trump himself. The president tweeted the day before the election that West Virginians should oppose Blankenship and vote for Jenkins or Morrisey, who had stopped fighting each other and focused on defeating Blankenship in the closing days of the campaign. In the end, Morrisey

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TOM WILLIAMS / CQ ROLL CALL / GETTY

won with 35 percent of the vote, edging out Jenkins, who came in second at 29 percent. Blankenship came in a distant third at 20 percent. Blankenship's poor showing likely means the polls were overstating his support. But it's quite possible that the final days of the campaign, when Blankenship took fire from Trump and Morrissey, also hurt his election day performance.

Democrats weren't entirely displeased with the result: A Democratic super-PAC had spent nearly \$2 million against Jenkins (while laying off the other two candidates), a clear sign they thought Jenkins, a former Democrat, was the strongest GOP threat to Manchin. But with Morrissey on the ballot, the Senate seat is still up for grabs in November. "It's going to be a close race," says Jennifer Duffy of the *Cook Political Report*. Donald Trump won the state 69 percent to 26 percent in 2016, but Manchin, a former governor, has been able to withstand the Republican trend of the state.

On election night, Morrissey immediately took up the task of trying to unite his party. He had been (dubiously) attacked by Jenkins during the primary as a "NeverTrumper" because he didn't publicly back Trump until the Republican National Convention. But in his victory speech he heaped praise on the president. Addressing Trump directly, Morrissey looked into the news cameras and said: "If you're watching right now, let me tell you: Your tweet was *huge*. I want to further say, thank you. You've been to the state now four times. I'd like you to come back as many times as you can between now and November."

Morrissey praised the other Republicans in the race, but when asked that evening if he'd like Blankenship to campaign with him, he dodged the question. "I want to unite the whole Republican party," Morrissey told THE WEEKLY STANDARD. "I think all the Don Blankenship supporters out there should rally behind my candidacy because I know they care a lot about draining the swamp."

Asked to name the biggest issues in his campaign against Manchin, Morrissey highlighted guns, abortion,



Joe Manchin with United Mine Workers officials, October 3, 2017

and taxes. "There's a long list, and I talked about some of them on stage. But beyond him selling West Virginia out on Hillary and Barack Obama, I think he's been very problematic on the Second Amendment and on

With Patrick Morrissey on the ballot, the West Virginia Senate seat is still up for grabs in November. 'It's going to be a close race,' says Jennifer Duffy of the *Cook Political Report*.

issues of life," Morrissey said. Manchin "voted against the tax cuts, and he really hasn't been a leader for our state." Though Manchin is generally supportive of gun rights and votes pro-life, he has flip-flopped on federal funding for Planned Parenthood and has cosponsored some modest gun control legislation.

Whether those social issues will be able to pry away enough Manchin supporters remains to be seen. Morrissey, of course, has his own vulnerabilities. He spent most of his life in New Jersey and unsuccessfully ran for Congress there in 2000. In 2012, he defeated a five-term Democratic incumbent

in his first race to be West Virginia attorney general, and he handily won reelection to the post in 2016.

The May 8 primaries were in general a positive development for Republicans. Not only was their nightmare averted in West Virginia, Duffy argues Republicans may also have nominated the best candidate in Indiana's three-way Senate primary, in which businessman Mike Braun defeated rival Republican congressmen Luke Messer and Todd Rokita. "Some people said Republicans didn't get the candidate they need. I kind of disagree. I think they may have actually found one who can't be labeled part of the problem," says Duffy, who cautions that Braun, who served three years in Indiana's legislature, is nevertheless inexperienced and hasn't been well vetted.

The primaries have put the general election into clearer focus—Mississippi and Arizona appear to be the only two primaries left on the calendar in which Republicans could badly damage their prospects by nominating a disastrous candidate. But it remains anyone's guess which party will end up controlling the Senate in 2019. "I believe there's like a 40 to 45 percent chance that Democrats get the majority," says Duffy. "There's an equal chance we end up with a tied Senate. There's a slim chance we see a status quo Senate." ♦

Instant Nostalgia

Fans relive the 2016 campaign with Diamond and Silk. **BY ETHAN EPSTEIN**

Greensboro, N.C.
A stuffy ballroom in a mid-tier hotel in an economically depressed Southern city must feel like a comedown after sampling the majesty of the United States Capitol building. But Diamond and Silk, the YouTube performers who skyrocketed to fame during the 2016 election as prominent black Trump supporters, nonetheless seemed pleased to be here on a recent May evening. They beamed as they took the stage (in true rock-star style, they arrived several minutes late) and were greeted with rapturous applause from the assembled crowd of several hundred fans. Even though most of the audience appeared to be middle-aged, they hooted, hollered, and cheered like enthusiastic teenagers.

Lynette Hardaway (“Diamond”) and Rochelle Richardson (“Silk”), who are, in fact, sisters, were in Greensboro as part of their “Chit Chat Live Tour,” a traveling roadshow that will take them to New Orleans, Cleveland, and Richmond, among other cities. Tickets start at \$50 a pop—and for \$150, you can also have your photo taken with the charismatic pair. Diamond and Silk have been on the road a lot lately, addressing the National Rifle Association at its convention in Dallas two days earlier and before that, testifying at a congressional hearing ostensibly devoted to examining censorship on social media sites. (Diamond and Silk claim that Facebook and YouTube have tried to suppress their content.)

The hearing before the House Judiciary Committee devolved into a

spectacle in which Republican congressmen pledged their fealty to the social media stars while Democratic members attacked them for dishonesty—not an unfair charge, as it turns out. Diamond testified under oath that



Above, on the 2016 campaign trail for their man; at right, in a YouTube bit

she had never received money from the Trump campaign, despite the fact that Federal Election Commission records show that the Trump campaign paid the duo more than \$1,000 for “field consulting.”

In other words, it’s been something of a whirlwind for the heretofore-unknown North Carolina natives, who claim they were loyal Democrats until Trump came along. Their rise to fame began with a viral YouTube video in August 2015, in which they berated then-Fox News host Megyn Kelly for asking a tough question of Donald Trump during a primary debate. Their weekly videos soon began attracting wider attention, and eventually they were sucked into the Fox News ecosystem, appearing frequently on the network to support Trump. “I’m not big on Facebook or computers,” one woman in the Greensboro ballroom says, “but I do watch them on Fox!”

Diamond and Silk have a particular style of performance: Like a southern-fried version of Penn and Teller, there’s a loud one and a silent one. Diamond does most of the talking, while Silk is reduced to making jerky head gestures, exaggerated facial expressions, and the occasional statement of agreement (“That’s right.”). Despite its title, their show is less “chit chat” than it is a predictable recitation of Diamond and Silk stock phrases. “Trump is not a racist. He’s a realist. And the only color he sees is green,” Diamond says. One middle-aged woman, a devout viewer of Diamond and Silk videos, slipped out midway through the show for a cigarette break. “I feel like I know what they’re going to say, even before they say it,” she said with a shrug.

The 90-minute performance, which was broken into a 60-minute monologue followed by 30 minutes of pre-screened questions that included “How has the left treated you because you are a Trump supporter?” and “When will you appear on *The View*?” was remarkably light on political content. There were many pledges of loyalty to President Trump—“We support him”—but almost nothing about why they support him or even which of his policies they endorse. The contrast with, say, pundit Ann Coulter or radio host Michael Savage, who are both generally supportive of Trump yet critical of him on certain issues, is striking. Then again, Coulter and Savage were never paid agents of the Trump campaign. Nor do they sell “bling pins”—jewelry with the word “TRUMP” rendered in glittery fake diamonds—or “Trump’s Yo President” coffee mugs, as Diamond and Silk do on their website.

Diamond and Silk did channel Trump during the portion of the performance devoted to lambasting the Democrats who questioned them during last month’s congressional hearing. Diamond was dismissive of the suggestion

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that she had violated FEC rules, calling the Trump campaign payment “a reimbursement, not compensation,” a line that garnered enthusiastic applause. A little later, she angrily criticized Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, at which point a middle-aged woman in the back row of the ballroom screamed in agreement, “She’s a piece of s—!”

The racial element of Diamond and Silk’s shtick is impossible to ignore. The duo played to an audience that was approximately 95 percent white, and each time Diamond said something about the “Democrat plantation,” the crowd went wild. At one point, Diamond asked whether there were any former Democrats in the house. Three black women raised their hands; the crowd then gave them a standing ovation, presumably for leaving the “plantation.” Diamond and Silk count themselves among a growing number of black “heretics” who are enthusiastically embraced by white conservatives: David Clarke, Candace Owens, and Kanye West have all received similar receptions in recent months. That they are women is particularly appealing and unusual: Exit polls show that Donald Trump won only 4 percent of the votes of black women in 2016.

In the end, an evening with Diamond and Silk amounts to little more than a tedious recounting of the 2016 campaign, suggesting that Hillary Clinton (or “Crooked Hillary,” as they frequently referred to her) isn’t the only person unable to move on after the last election. “Chit Chat Live” is in that sense a nostalgia tour—like Billy Joel, who hasn’t released an album since 2001 yet still trots out “Piano Man” for a fan base that gets older every year, Diamond and Silk relive the highlights of the Trump election for their fans. But Diamond and Silk have a shorter shelf life than Billy Joel and far less talent, so they need to harvest those \$150 ticket fees and push their branded merchandise while the getting is good. The Trump presidency will one day end and the cameras will move on. As they are no doubt keenly aware, Diamond and Silk aren’t forever. ♦

Birth of a Counternarrative

How fake news enters the mainstream.

BY HOLMES LYBRAND

‘Fake News’ swiftly made its way into the heart of the American lexicon. Collins Dictionary and the American Dialect Society both dubbed President Trump’s favorite accusation the word of the year in 2017. But it is much more than a silly term to shout at opponents on Twitter. There are active chains of disinformation that masquerade as news that must be regarded with all seriousness.

In late April, I came across the intrepid headline “BREAKING: OPCW finds NO Chemical Weapons at Damascus research center,” a claim peddled by a website named the *Duran* that had quickly gained momentum on Facebook.

This account of findings by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) turned out to be false. Fact checking it, I began to see just how much “fake news” the Russian and the Syrian governments had been churning out since the chemical attacks earlier that month, and how some Western media outlets came to accept these stories.

On April 7, the rebel-held town of Douma, in the eastern suburbs of Damascus, was attacked. Videos and images of the devastating aftermath quickly circulated online: lifeless bodies strewn across rubble-filled basements, gas cylinders that had reportedly been dropped from a helicopter above, medical personnel frantically washing out the eyes and mouths of victims and placing oxygen masks over the faces of terrified, coughing toddlers. The evidence was supported by reports from NGOs,

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medical personnel, and eyewitnesses. The Syrian government denied any involvement and suggested that it was a hoax meant “to hinder the army’s advance” on Douma. Hours after the attack the rebels abandoned the town.

Partners of the World Health Organization reported that more than 70 people, including women and children, had been killed, with “43 of those deaths ‘related to symptoms consistent with exposure to highly toxic chemicals.’” The State Department issued a statement saying that the “reports, if confirmed, are horrifying and demand an immediate response by the international community.”

Syria is a Russian client, and Russia-friendly media outlets quickly began spreading skeptical accounts saying that Bashar al-Assad would never attack his own people and positing that any attack came at the hands of the rebels rather than the Syrian government. “Cue the chemical weapons stunt in Syria,” ran a headline in the Kremlin-controlled Sputnik on April 8, alongside dozens of similar columns and articles pushing the “hoax” theory.

Two days after the attack, Fox News’s Tucker Carlson also cast doubt that Assad was the perpetrator. “We should be skeptical of this,” Carlson told viewers on April 9, “starting with the poison gas attack itself.” “How would it benefit Assad using chlorine gas last weekend? . . . It wouldn’t,” Carlson said, pointing to Trump’s stated desire to pull troops out of Syria (which a renewed use of chemical weapons would undermine) and Assad’s nearing victory over the rebel forces. “‘Well, he did it anyway,’ they tell us. ‘He’s that evil!’ Please.”

Russia Today spread the pro-Assad narrative nonstop from its worldwide television network, repeatedly claiming in the days after the attack that it was “staged to provoke a U.S. airstrike.” “Syria and Russia have dismissed the accusations and called the reports fake news,” Russia Today announced one day after the attack, “aimed at helping the extremists and at justifying potential strikes against Syrian forces.”

On April 13, Russia’s defense ministry accused the U.K. of helping the rebels stage the attack, a line that Russia Today and Sputnik soon picked up. Such “false flag” theories have been promulgated by Russian media outlets and the Assad regime after previous chemical weapons attacks in Syria. The line runs counter to a 2017 U.N. report confirming that Assad’s government had perpetrated at least 27 chemical attacks since the civil war began seven years ago. The U.S. government says there have been 50 chemical weapons attacks by the Syrian government, and there are unconfirmed accounts placing the number above 70.

More than a week after the Douma attack, reporters from London’s *Independent* newspaper and One America News Network (OAN), a right-wing U.S. cable channel, were allowed in under the supervision of the Syrian government. Their on-the-ground reports both supported the claim that the attacks never truly took place—or if they had, the rebels were to blame.

“When I asked [the doctors] what they thought the chemical attack was, they told me, all of them told me, that it was staged by the rebels who were occupying the town at the time,” OAN’s Pearson Sharp told viewers in a videocast. (Sharp, it should be noted, was a prominent publicist of the Seth Rich conspiracy last year—the bogus theory that Hillary Clinton ordered the murder of a young Democratic National Committee staffer.) A “senior doctor” told Robert Fisk in an “exclusive” for the *Independent* that there were in fact victims in Douma, but that they had not been affected by chemical weapons “but by oxygen starvation in the rubbish-filled tunnels and basements in which they lived, on a night

of wind and heavy shelling that stirred up a dust storm.” Other doctors and nurses told al-Ekhbariya, a pro-Assad TV channel, that the attack “ignited fires that triggered asthma symptoms in many people.” Fisk and Sharp ignored reports from the U.S., French, and British governments—alongside those from multiple NGOs and partners of the World Health Organization—that confirmed that a chemical-weapons attack had taken place.

The *Guardian* and the *Washington Post* both reported that medical personnel in Douma were ordered by Syrian forces to say nothing of the attacks, with the severity of these

London-based cardiologist whose daughter Asma is married to President Assad, and is closely linked to the regime.” A former ambassador to Syria who is in league with an organization founded by Assad’s father-in-law was appearing on major Western news outlets to discuss the Syrian leader. Ford argued against the idea that Assad was behind the Douma attack in interviews with both the BBC and Fox News. On Tucker Carlson’s show, Ford said that the chemical attack was a hoax, “all being carefully videoed and put out by rich Arab country propagandists.” There is no evidence, however, to support Ford’s claims. An April 14

The Duran TRENDING DC LATEST VIDEO LOG IN / REGISTER T-SHIRTS

BREAKING LATEST NEWS

BREAKING: OPCW finds NO Chemical Weapons at Damascus research center

Narrative pushed by “expert” American intelligence and political forces continues to unravel, revealing the corruption of foreign policy in Western governments.

by SERAPHIM HANISCH
April 25, 2018, 13:19

13K Views

threats increasing when investigators from the OPCW arrived. The Russian government argued that a thorough investigation should take place before any accusations were levied, but when the OPCW attempted to examine the attack sites on April 14, the fact-finding team was blocked by Russian and Syrian troops. It took another week for them to be allowed access.

Meanwhile, claims that the attack was all one big hoax multiplied. Russia Today proclaimed “no attack, no victims, no chem weapons.” “You really need to engage your brain to understand what’s going on,” former British ambassador to Syria Peter Ford told Russia Today on April 26, arguing that certain conflicting testimonies “backed up the Russian version of what happened.”

On April 22, London’s *Daily Telegraph* reported that Ford had recently been appointed director of the British Syrian Society, an organization “founded by Fawaz Akhras, a

report from the French government confirmed the authenticity of the majority of the footage and images from the attack.

Nevertheless, Russian propaganda continued to appear, leading us back to the false report on April 26 in the *Duran*. It claimed that the OPCW had confirmed there were “no chemical weapons” in one of the research facilities bombed by the United States, France, and the U.K. in retaliation for the Douma attack. The article relied on a false report from Sputnik, which quoted the Russian general Sergey Rudskoy citing the OPCW report. But Rudskoy was clearly referencing a 2017 report from the OPCW, not anything from the current fact-finding mission. The OPCW will not release its findings on the Douma attack for another few weeks. While the *Duran* has issued a correction to its report—though the false headline, subhead, and body of the text remain—Sputnik has made no such correction.

So goes the life of a fact checker in 2018, pulling on one thread to see an entire narrative unravel. A denial from Assad turns into a counternarrative from the Russians and dozens of little lies from their propaganda machine. All dangle as bait to susceptible Western journalists interested chiefly in “exposing

the lies of the mainstream media.”

The countless “Fake News!” accusations flying around the Twitter-sphere can seem no more important than the latest salacious tidbit about a porn star and her president. But in some places around the world, fake news is the difference between life and death. ♦

Old Labour, Old Danger

The shadow chancellor thinks Marxism is a force for change today. BY OLIVER WISEMAN

London

Harold Wilson, British prime minister in the 1960s and 1970s, once said that the Labour party he led owed more to Methodism than to Karl Marx. Those at the top of the party today do not share their predecessor’s view.

Before Jeremy Corbyn was unexpectedly elected Labour leader in 2015, he led a career of far-left obscurity, catching the attention of the public now and then only thanks to his support for Hamas, Hugo Chávez, and anyone lined up on his side in what he sees as a global battle against capitalism and the West. Three years later, he is the bookmakers’ favorite to be Britain’s next leader.

But for all that Corbyn has poisoned British politics—most recently by allowing the emergence of a rabid anti-Semitism in his party’s rank and file—he isn’t the biggest threat to the country. The man who would take the reins of the British economy were Corbyn to become prime minister is far more dangerous.

John McDonnell is Corbyn’s closest political ally. As shadow chancellor of



the exchequer, he is the second most powerful man on the British left. And he sees the Labour party’s intellectual inheritance a little differently from Harold Wilson.

On May 5, when the rest of London was outside enjoying the spring heat wave, McDonnell was inside a drab lecture hall at the University of London, delivering a speech on “Marxism as a Force for Change Today.” It was 200 years to the day since the birth of Karl Marx.

Just a few hundred yards from the

British Museum reading room where the political philosopher committed many of his dangerous and disproven ideas to the page, earnest and aging Marxists gathered to mark the date. The speakers included representatives from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation of Berlin, the head of the Marxism department at China’s Academy of Social Sciences, and the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), with an assortment of left-wing sociologists making up the numbers. McDonnell’s speech was the main event.

The shadow chancellor heralded the fact that “10 years after the banking crash, interest in Marxism hasn’t declined, it has increased.” “This,” he went on, “has led Labour to discuss how it can develop the co-operative sector and take back into public ownership rail and water and the post office.” For McDonnell, it’s all part of the broader question that the rise of the far left under Corbyn has reopened: “Who really owns our society?” As he spoke, an embroidered banner of Karl Marx emblazoned with *The Communist Manifesto*’s rallying cry, “Workers of All Lands Unite,” hung behind him.

Corbyn once confessed that he had “not read as much Marx as I should’ve done.” But for McDonnell, Marx is the ideological lodestar. According to a recent profile in the *Financial Times*, the members of a trade union book club that McDonnell ran in the early 1980s used to joke that he prescribed the same book every week: *Das Kapital*. In 2006, he said that the biggest influences on his thought were “The fundamental Marxist writers of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, basically.” In 2013, speaking about the financial crisis, he said, “I’m honest with people: I’m a Marxist. This is a classic crisis of the economy—a classic capitalist crisis. I’ve been waiting for this for a generation. ... [For] Christ’s sake don’t waste it.” The man who could soon be in charge of the British economy is someone who sees a recession not as a time to limit economic damage, but as a chance for revolution.

McDonnell’s hard-left views extend well beyond economics. Like

GARY LOCKE

Corbyn, he has a history of praising violent extremists, particularly the IRA. Speaking two years after the IRA killed five people and came close to murdering Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with a bomb in Brighton in 1984, McDonnell said that the “ballot, the bullet, and the bomb” could all be used to unite Ireland. As late as 2003, he was still suggesting, “It’s about time we started honoring those people involved in the armed struggle.”

The British electorate is usually good at spotting—and avoiding—dangerous ideologues. And that’s why, appearances at Marx birthday parties aside, the shadow chancellor sticks in public to a critique of the government’s spending cuts, which appeals to large swaths of the electorate weary of the Tory belt-tightening that is now in its ninth year.

According to a recent poll, 66 percent of British voters think public-spending cuts have gone too far, with even a narrow majority of Conservative voters agreeing with that verdict. Labour’s flagship economic policy of renationalization of utilities and the railways is also popular. Sixty percent of voters support a return of the railway system, which was privatized in the early 1990s, to government ownership.

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott, another close Corbyn ally, recently said that as shadow chancellor, McDonnell “has done his best to transform himself into a friendly, bank-manager-type figure, which, if you know John McDonnell as well as I do, is ... interesting.”

On occasion, the mask slips. When pushed on the cost of Labour’s nationalization plans recently, his response was “Parliament will set the price,” a clue as to what a more “democratic” economy looks like. It is one in which the tried and tested ingredients for prosperity—including private property—aren’t just subtly undermined but wholly ignored.

Behind its well-meaning and popular-sounding calls for government to spend more, Labour is committed to far-left economic ideas that have left people poorer and less free whenever and wherever they have

been tested. And when doctrinaire radicals are given a chance to run their experiments on us all, they tend not to change course when things go wrong.

The economic debate in Britain is dominated by Brexit, with people on both sides of the conversation obsessed with the question of how much the decision to leave the E.U. will end up costing the nation. That debate flared up once again last month with the news that the British economy grew

by a measly 0.1 percent in the first quarter of 2018.

It is just possible that the real drag on the British economy isn’t Brexit, but the Marxists waiting in the wings. And if other far-left governments—with their hostility to political as well as economic liberty—are anything to go by, the price Britain would pay were McDonnell ever to get the keys to the Treasury would be counted in more than just pounds and pence. ♦

A Political Kamikaze Mission

What induces someone to run against Mitt Romney in Utah? BY DANIEL ALLOTT

Salt Lake City
As political speeches go, it was certainly more memorable than the poll-tested, bromide-filled, sleep-inducing addresses one typically hears at party nominating conventions. U.S. Senate candidate Larry Livingston had just admonished the Democratic delegates assembled at the Salt Palace Convention Center for embracing policies too liberal for the state’s electorate.

“If you think you’re going to win this state with your radical left-wing agenda, then you’re on a better drug than I am,” Livingston said. “You will not!”

Then came the mike drop: “I told you last time I ran that Donald Trump was going to win, and you called me ‘stupid.’ Well, you’re stupid!”

And with that, Livingston, a perennial thorn-in-the-side candidate but never an officeholder, walked off stage.

Livingston’s speech elicited scattered boos and laughter. But mostly it was ignored, though maybe its

message shouldn’t be. The day’s events for Utah Democrats began with a Bronx assemblyman’s rousing call to resist America’s “racist, sexist, misogynistic, Islamophobic, homophobic, demagogue” president and ended with the nomination of four candidates for federal office whose chances of electoral success are . . . not great.

Utah has not gone for a Democrat for president, senator, or governor in 50, 40, and 33 years, respectively. The party’s last congressman, Blue Dog Jim Matheson, departed the House in 2015.

Two years ago, the party convention’s choices for the Senate race were family therapist Jonathan Swinton and transgender grocery store cashier Misty Snow. Snow won the primary handily after Swinton was outed for having once called himself a “conservative Democrat” and “pro-life.” Snow lost to incumbent Republican Mike Lee by 41 points.

In February former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney announced his candidacy for the Senate seat being vacated by Orrin Hatch. At the Utah Republican convention in April, Romney failed to win enough votes to avoid a primary contest. But

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he remains the heavy favorite to claim the seat.

The interesting question raised at Utah's Democratic convention is this: What motivates people to launch campaigns they are almost certain to lose? Is it hubris, delusion, naïveté or something more edifying, like hope?

For a gadfly like Livingston, it's simply to make a point. Over dinner at a dive restaurant near his home in Bountiful, a few miles north of Salt Lake City, Livingston estimated that he's run 15 races over 30 years, winning just 1, a primary in which he ran unopposed. A substitute teacher on "Mormon welfare," Livingston said he would not have run if election officials hadn't waived the \$1,355 filing fee.

For Mitchell Vice, another long-shot Democratic candidate for Senate, the motivation to run came from his desire "to take the progressive message to the national stage."

I met Vice at a candidate-training event in December. Vice said he shed his cynicism about politics while witnessing Bernie Sanders's improbable presidential campaign unfold. Suddenly, Vice said, "I realized there's power in getting involved."

At the time, Hatch was weighing retirement and Romney was considering a run to replace him. So I asked Vice the obvious question: Which one of these political titans would you rather face?

"Romney," he answered after a brief pause. "Because like Mitt, I served as a missionary in France and am a high priest in the LDS church. I'm 6'1" and have a great head of hair with just the right amount of gray."

Unlike Romney, Vice was a political novice with no money, few contacts, and almost no name recognition. Worse, his Sanders-like message of a \$15 minimum wage, debt-free college, and Medicare for all seemed better suited to his native Los Angeles than to conservative Utah.

Romney, meanwhile, is arguably Utah's most popular politician, the savior of the 2002 Salt Lake City

Olympic Games and the man whom Governor Gary Herbert has called the state's "favorite adopted son." Popular former Salt Lake City mayor Ted Wilson has referred to Romney as "a guy who's almost a god in Utah politics."

Wilson, by the way, is a Democrat and father of Salt Lake County councilwoman Jenny Wilson, Romney's Democratic opponent this fall.

When Wilson declared her candidacy last July, she did so expecting to face Hatch. When I met her for lunch in downtown Salt Lake City a few days after the Democratic convention, I asked her whether she would have preferred to run against Hatch.



Jenny Wilson, left, and Mitt Romney

"Oh yeah, oh yes," she said without hesitation. "It would have been easier to overcome the Republican nature of the state had it been a wounded incumbent." The *Cook Political Report* wrote that Hatch's retirement made the "solid Republican" seat even safer.

Vice projected optimism in the run-up to the April 28 convention. In a planning session at his campaign headquarters two days before, Vice and his all-volunteer campaign staff—inevitably dubbed "the Vice Squad"—discussed their convention strategy and critiqued the candidate's speech. "I can't cry on stage," Vice said after receiving some encouraging feedback from the group. "I have to be a badass."

Vice was irked by the "Rolodex test" national Democrats had put him through. They informed him that he shouldn't expect help unless he raised \$250,000 for the party. "My dad's a retired Teamster, and I'm paying rent," he said by way of explaining the impossibility of raising that much money.

The national party needn't have been concerned. Vice won just 19 percent of the convention vote to Wilson's 81 percent, which may be the apex of her fortunes this year.

A February UtahPolicy.com poll showed Romney leading Wilson 60 percent to 14 percent. Romney led Wilson even among voters identifying as "somewhat liberal." Wilson's strategy is to portray Romney as a carpetbagger and a flip-flopper, a "political opportunist" who would "rubber stamp" President Trump's agenda.

Calling herself a "moderate Democrat," Wilson hopes her Utah roots will win over some Republicans, perhaps even some Trump voters who might appreciate her frankness. Unlike Romney, she said, "I'm not all over the map [on issues]. I don't ping-pong around and never have. Ultimately it's a matter of trust."

Utah political experts I consulted universally expect Romney to cruise to victory. "He won't run a bad campaign," said Matthew Burbank, a political science professor at the University of Utah. "He might run a boring campaign but not a bad one."

"Outside of an act of God that incapacitates Mitt Romney, [Wilson] has no shot," said Michael Barber, who teaches politics at Brigham Young University. "And even then, I think they would elect him posthumously."

If it seems like Wilson is on a political kamikaze mission, it's one she has embarked upon with her eyes wide open and directed slightly toward the horizon. Professional that she is, Wilson has a Plan B. Democratic Salt Lake County mayor Ben McAdams is polling within the margin of error against incumbent Republican Mia Love in Utah's Fourth Congressional District race. If McAdams wins, the state's Democratic delegates would pick a successor to serve out the remaining two years of his term.

In that case, Wilson says flatly, "I would seek the support of my party to take his position of mayor."

"I'm running to win," she says. "But I'm also not naïve." ♦

WILSON: MICHAEL LOCCISANO / GETTY; ROMNEY: KIMI RAFF / BLOOMBERG / GETTY

A rally in Edwardsville,
Illinois, March 4, 2016



It's Not a Lost Cause

How conservatives can win back young Americans

BY BEN SHAPIRO

Young Americans are moving to the left. On virtually every issue, they support the Democratic party. A Harvard University poll taken in December 2017 found that among likely American voters aged 18-29, fully 65 percent supported Democratic control of Congress. Polls consistently show greater warmth for socialism among millennials than their elders, greater sympathy for regulation, and less interest in protecting core constitutional liberties ranging from freedom of speech to freedom of religion.

“So,” conservatives usually respond, “what else is new?”

And there’s some truth to this. For generations, conservatives have had to fret over the possibility of losing

their children to the attractions of the left, and for generations we’ve been comforting ourselves with the bastardized saying, “If you’re not a liberal when you’re 20, you have no heart; if you’re not a conservative by the time you’re 40, you have no brain.” We tell ourselves that as Americans age, get married, have children, and pay taxes, they’ll inevitably move to the right.

Not anymore.

Given the polling data, cheery optimism isn’t just whistling past the grave. It’s whistling with one foot in the grave. Older conservatives, clutching the Trump presidency like a security blanket, sound less like steady advocates for calm and more like the man questioned about how things are going just after jumping off the top of the Empire State Building: “So far, so good.”

Here’s what the polls show: Young Americans are moving left and staying there. According to a Pew Research study from June 2017, approximately 41 percent of millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996)

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MICHAEL B. THOMAS / AFP / GETTY

considered themselves either mostly or consistently liberal in their views in 2004; in 2011, that number had remained somewhat steady at 38 percent; by 2017, that number had ballooned to 57 percent, with just 15 percent of millennials calling themselves consistently or mostly conservative. A March 2018 Pew study on the generation gap in American politics found that among Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1980), 29 percent considered themselves liberal in 1994; today, that number has shot up to 43 percent. In 1994, liberal baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) were actually outnumbered by conservatives 29 percent to 22 percent; today, liberals outnumber conservatives 39 percent to 32 percent.

Typically, conservatives combat this sort of broad-based political change by pointing out the extremism of the left. During the Carter era, things certainly looked dark for the GOP, but conservatives were able to point out Carter's incompetence; after Bill Clinton's 1992 election victory, Republicans ran against Hillarycare and higher taxes; after Barack Obama's landslide 2008 election, conservatives made war on Democrats' overspending and regulatory overreach.

And there is no reason to think that Republicans can't win the same kind of victories now. Republicans famously swept local and state political races across the country between 2010 and 2016; they took the House, the Senate, and the presidency. Meanwhile, Democrats have continued to swing more and more wildly to the left. Vermont senator Bernie Sanders is now the ideological head of the party, promoting insane schemes to guarantee jobs, student loans, and an infinite supply of ambrosia and nectar to all through the power of centralized government. Thought leaders like Ta-Nehisi Coates have sought to replace the blue-collar base of Bill Clinton with the intersectional coalition of Barack Obama, using identity politics as a club against Americans who refuse to admit their "white privilege." Campus ideologues have declared that the future will be replete with "safe spaces" and compulsory use of transgender pronouns. The left has thrown its moderates out with the bathwater. There are only three pro-life Democrats in Congress. There are few pro-gun Democrats there.

So why do the polls show Republicans facing likely defeat in upcoming elections? Why are the trend lines so awful?

The problem isn't politics. It's values.

THE CONSERVATIVE GENERATION GAP

To understand the generational shift taking place in American politics, we should narrow our focus: Instead of looking at young Americans vs. older Americans, let's look at young *conservatives* vs. older conservatives. The data show that young conservatives tend toward libertarianism on issues like drugs and sex but share the same priorities as older conservatives on fiscal and economic issues.

This makes some sense. Younger Americans are less religious than older Americans by a long shot: Only 52 percent of millennials say they are "absolutely certain of their belief in God"; only 43 percent say they pray daily or more often; 28 percent say they attend religious services on a weekly basis; and a mere 41 percent say religion is very important to their lives. It makes sense, then, that liberal social values have resonated with younger Americans. They believe that the case for religious freedom is actually a case for religious bigotry and think that opposition to same-sex marriage reflects a hackneyed version of Old Testament sexual repression. Millennials were raised on the gospel of diversity and tolerance, not the Judeo-Christian moral

Young voters believe that the case for religious freedom is actually a case for religious bigotry and think that opposition to same-sex marriage reflects a hackneyed version of Old Testament sexual repression.

standards of their grandparents.

But the leftward shift on social issues has infused even young *religious* conservatives. Forty-five percent of millennial evangelicals said they supported same-sex marriage as of 2014; the numbers are undoubtedly higher now (only 23 percent of older evangelicals supported same-sex marriage in the same poll). Fifty-one percent said homosexuality should be accepted by society, compared with 32 percent of older evangelicals.

Young conservatives in general are far more likely to support gay rights and marijuana decriminalization as well as openness to immigration. But they're not embracing gay rights and marijuana decriminalization for the same *reasons* as liberals. Young liberals embrace the LGBTQ agenda because they believe that the strictures of traditional sexual lifestyles are damaging and intolerant; some even embrace marijuana decriminalization because they think that broadening one's experiences by smoking pot is a necessary precondition to maturity. Young conservatives are far more likely to support same-sex marriage and marijuana decriminalization because they believe that the government should leave everyone alone. Young liberals call for tolerance because they want to promulgate

a lifestyle, in other words; young conservatives call for tolerance because they actually believe in tolerance, even of lifestyle choices with which they disagree. In return, young conservatives demand that their opponents mind their own business.

Tolerance is a moral touchstone, then, for young Americans on both the left and the right, but for different reasons.

All of which suggests young conservatives have a shot at winning over their friends and classmates: They're operating in the same moral universe as many of their peers. Contrary to Hollywood's portrayal of young Republicans, they're not Bible-thumping, church-going, hallelujah-shouting religious proselytizers. They're small government, leave-everyone-alone libertarians. Young conservatives may not care about same-sex marriage, but they're deeply pro-life and pro-gun. In fact, contrary to popular opinion, younger Americans tend to be more pro-gun rights than older Americans. They're against government spending programs and favor private market solutions. They militantly oppose the myth of a racist, sexist America, even as they condemn individual cases of racism and sexism.

This *should* be their time to shine. Government spending grows yearly, as does regulation. Both parties appear to have abandoned fiscal responsibility. And with the new social consensus around controversial social issues like same-sex marriage, which has essentially been taken off the table by the Supreme Court, there's no reason young Republicans can't make serious inroads among young Americans of all political stripes.

But that's not happening.

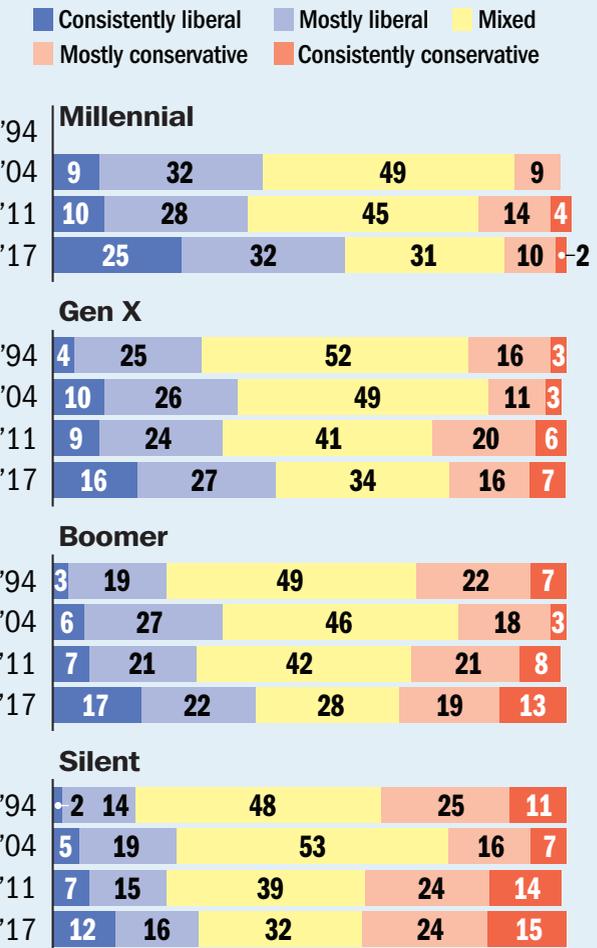
Which brings us to President Trump.

THE TRUMP PHENOMENON

President Trump's startling popularity among Republicans has been well-documented. He has consistently maintained high levels of support among Republicans, no matter the headlines and controversies raging around him. Opposing Trump with a presidential primary challenger would be an exercise in futility—polls show that a huge majority of Republicans want to see Trump renominated. But that doesn't hold true among younger Republicans. An incredible 82 percent of Republican and Republican-leaning voters between the ages of 18 and 24 say they "want another Republican to challenge President Trump for the party's nomination in 2020." So do 57 percent of those aged 25 to 34 and 58 percent of those aged 35 to 44. Compare that number with the 74 percent of Republicans over the age of 65 who oppose a primary challenge, and you've got a chasm the size of the Grand Canyon.

Millennials more liberal early on—and later

Ideological consistency based on answers to 10 political-values questions. Conducted in June and July 2017.



SOURCE: Pew Research Center; figures may not total due to rounding.

Why don't young conservatives like Trump? It's a question that baffles older conservatives. To older conservatives, Trump has been a savior. He's the president who cut regulations and passed tax cuts and ended the individual mandate; the man who moved the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem; the lively character who takes the fight to the media and refuses to back down when slandered. Most of all, he's the figure who prevented the ascent of Hillary Clinton. Sure, he tweets silly things from time to time, but his Twitter presence helped him win the presidency. Yes, he's rough around the edges and impolitic; he's crude about women and ignorant about policy. But he's politically incorrect, and he speaks the language of the average American. What's not to like?

Young conservatives, however, are more likely to see

Trump as an obstacle to progress. Yes, they acknowledge that he's pushed some great policies. Sure, they're happy to praise him when he's right, and they're amused when he attacks members of the media over their obvious bias. But they see him mainly as a club the left can wield against the right in perpetuity—a political monster living under the bed that Democrats can dredge up every time conservatives seem to be making headway. They cite his egregious response to the Charlottesville alt-right march and subsequent terror attack and his willingness to wink and nod at the alt-right during the campaign; they point to his nasty comments regarding women, as well as his penchant for bedding porn stars; they cringe at his reported comments about immigrants and balk at his nearly endless list of prevarications.

Older conservatives judge Trump on his politics; younger conservatives judge Trump on his values.

There are a few reasons for this gap. First, older conservatives already fought the character battle over Bill Clinton, and they carry the scars from that ordeal. They remember arguing that Bill Clinton was unfit for office based on his treatment of women and his perjury, and they remember losing that argument. They remember arguing that character counts, even as Democrats held aloft the banner of “Lion of the Senate” Teddy Kennedy, who left a woman to drown in his car and made waitress sandwiches with fellow Democratic senator Chris Dodd. Older conservatives remember Mitt Romney, the cleanest candidate for high office in modern American history, being destroyed by the media over pure nonsense. Older conservatives weren't looking for character in 2016. They were looking for a hammer.

Younger conservatives, however, still feel that the battle over character is unfolding, which it is—*among young Americans*. Young Americans are still trying to decipher which party best reflects their moral values. Trump presents a serious problem for young conservatives trying to make the character argument in favor of the Republican party. Young conservatives didn't see the battle of 2016 as a battle in which character had already lost. They saw it as presenting a question about their own character. Were they willing to stand enthusiastically with a man they personally abhorred? The answer, by and large, was no. Young conservatives want to be able to tell their friends—all future voters, by the way—that they didn't stand by silently when a candidate of their party said he could grab women by their private parts.

Second, older conservatives saw the 2016 election as a

cataclysmic event, perhaps, indeed, the end of the republic. Hillary Clinton posed an existential threat to the future of the country. Older conservatives remembered Hillary's corruption from her days in the White House; they recalled her radicalism and her venality. They believed that Hillary, if elected, would usher in a generation-long rule of the hard left. Donald Trump's victory, in that view, was a miracle of biblical proportions, the hand of God reaching down and plucking a reality TV star out of the realms of cornball theatrics and plopping him into the Oval Office in the biggest upset in political history.

Younger conservatives were far more sanguine about 2016. In their view, Hillary would certainly have been a rotten president. But would she bar the door to all future

conservative victories? Younger conservatives thought such an outcome unlikely. After all, Republicans were likely to retain control of the Senate and the House. Furthermore, Hillary was widely disliked, burdened by scandal, and unpopular even with her own base. Older conservatives looked at young Americans and saw the end of the country; young conservatives looked at other young Americans and saw the possibility of change. If young conservatives voted for Trump, they did so far more halfheartedly than their par-

ents and grandparents did.

Third, because young conservatives and older conservatives disagreed about the consequences of 2016, they also disagreed about the level of risk to the Republican party. This marks the third distinction between young and older conservatives regarding Trump: Thanks to the crisis mentality of older Americans, the brand damage done by Trump became of secondary concern; thanks to the *lack* of a crisis mentality among younger conservatives, the brand damage done by Trump became a crucial problem. Young conservatives simply couldn't understand how so many older conservatives were willing to dispose of key planks of the Republican platform to back Trump, or why so many older conservatives who had preached to them about personal values were suddenly gushing over a man who bragged about sleeping with other men's wives. Young conservatives knew that they were constantly being called racist, sexist, and homophobic by their comrades at school; they had always responded by saying that they and their party were being slandered. And they were right. But here was Trump—a man who, during the election cycle, feigned ignorance about David Duke—providing a

Young conservatives saw the battle of 2016 as presenting a question about their own character. Were they willing to stand enthusiastically with a man they personally abhorred? The answer, by and large, was no.

custom-made caricature for the use of young liberals. This left young conservatives with a decision to make: Would they wear the Trump button and walk in line with him? Or would they separate from him, even if they embraced many of his policies?

Which brings us to the fourth area of controversy between older and younger conservatives regarding Trump: Is Trump an asset in the fight against political correctness? One area of significant overlap between younger and older conservatives in the current political maelstrom lies in their mutual opposition to political correctness. The modern left has become an extreme conglomeration of self-appointed victim groups, banded together by a common interest in tearing down the “system,” which they define as a white male patriarchy devoted to the repression of minorities. In its quest to tear down the “system,” the left has promoted censorship of opposing views and full-scale character assassination of anyone who dares to cite inconvenient data. Here, young conservatives and older conservatives agree. So do most Americans; according to polling data, 71 percent of Americans “believe that political correctness has silenced important discussions our society needs to have.”

Conservatives disagree, however, about the best

measures to adopt to fight such intellectual tyranny. Older conservatives resonate to the verbal brickbats thrown by President Trump. They see him as a bull in a china shop, but he is *our* bull in *their* china shop. That’s the reason Trump could so easily escape punishment for political snafus that would have crushed any other conservative. He routinely claimed his own blunderings were the result of his willingness to fight political correctness. “Sure, he says dumb stuff sometimes,” the argument goes, “but he’s also willing to label the *New York Times* fake news. Nobody else fights like Trump fights!”

Young conservatives, by contrast, see Trump’s strategy for fighting political correctness as counterproductive. It’s one thing to attack politically correct viewpoints with data—to “destroy,” in the common YouTube parlance, political opposition through superior intellectual heft. But saying innately offensive things and then justifying those offensive statements under the rubric of political incorrectness actually *undermines* the battle against political correctness. The left *wants* to make the case that when conservatives say they’re being politically incorrect, they’re actually covering for their own bigotry; lending that case a helping hand by promoting bigotry under the guise of fighting political correctness does the left’s work for it.

Infrastructure Week: Time to Build

THOMAS J. DONOHUE

PRESIDENT AND CEO
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

American infrastructure was once the envy of the world. Our expansive interstate system, bustling and modern airports, cutting-edge power grid, and other infrastructure developments were tremendous assets to our economy. But for decades these resources have been left to age and crumble, even as our economy and society have advanced dramatically. As a result, our people and businesses face gridlock, safety challenges, and logistical nightmares. It’s time to rebuild our infrastructure to improve productivity, increase safety, and create jobs.

As we mark Infrastructure Week, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is sending the message to policymakers that few other priorities have the potential to pack as big of an economic punch as infrastructure modernization. It would positively affect every business that ships goods, transports workers, uses broadband, or consumes energy—in other words, *every*

business. That’s why the Chamber helped launch Infrastructure Week to serve as an annual platform for the conversation about how to strengthen the critical arteries of our economy.

Leaders on both sides of the aisle have acknowledged the need for a sweeping infrastructure modernization bill, which the Chamber has long said should include upgrades to roads, bridges, rail, ports, airports, water systems, and the energy grid. Unfortunately, action on such a measure during this election year will remain an uphill battle. The Chamber will, nonetheless, continue to push for progress, including pursuing two legislative opportunities to make inroads on parts of our infrastructure agenda.

We’re urging the House and the Senate to reach consensus on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), both of which carry opportunities to strengthen critical infrastructure. The FAA Reauthorization presents a valuable opportunity to reinvest in America’s airports and other

aviation systems, while the WRDA will authorize investment in flood protection and hydroelectric structures.

These bills will support our goal of building a modern, efficient infrastructure system to support America’s 21st century economy. We will advance that mission this week with events across the nation bringing together business leaders, workers, government officials, and citizens to share ideas and build consensus. When it comes to modernizing America’s infrastructure, kicking the can down the road won’t make the problem go away. And the longer we wait, the harder the decisions will be and the more the projects will cost.

The Chamber urges every American and every business to get involved in Infrastructure Week and keep the conversation going until Washington gets this done.

Visit www.infrastructureweek.org for more information.



Learn more at
uschamber.com/abovethefold.

HOW TO WIN BACK YOUNG AMERICANS

The gap between younger conservatives and older conservatives over Trump isn't likely to be bridged any time soon. It speaks to deep issues of values and hopes for the future. And if the gap between young conservatives and older conservatives is a microcosm of the gap between conservatives and young Americans more broadly, then the future looks grim.

So what can conservatives do to close the generation gap and win over young Americans?

To begin with, conservatives must stop promoting the notion that policy victories translate to political victory. Foolishly hopeful Republican legislators keep repeating the tired nostrum that if they simply pursue solid policy, young Americans will follow—if they pass tax cuts, cut regulation, and build up the military, they'll stave off the impending generational electoral tsunami. Certainly, good policy is a precondition to victory. But it's not enough. When asked about youth outreach, conservative politicians talk about things like school choice; this is a missed opportunity to discuss what really matters to younger voters.

Second, most voters make decisions on the basis of perceptions about character. This is especially true for young Americans, who engage in politics because they want to change the world and because they want to feel better about themselves. Democrats know this. Democrats win elections by claiming that Republicans are morally deficient; they claim, as Joe Biden did in 2012, that Republicans want to “put y'all back in chains,” or that Republicans are fighting a “war on women,” or that conservatives don't care about the impoverished. Democrats will make the case that not only is Donald Trump personally deplorable, but that anyone who expresses even mild support for him is deplorable by extension. That argument did little to stir older Americans who had been through the political wars; it didn't upset seasoned politics-watchers who knew that Hillary Clinton was more than a little deplorable herself. But it worked among young Americans, and it will continue to work so long as conservatives' response is “but Hillary.”

So, how *should* conservatives respond?

They should respond by acting morally and arguing morally.

First, and most pressingly, with regard to President Trump this means condemning bad behavior. Conservatives should celebrate every victory for their policies earned by President Trump; they should praise him to the skies for them. Conservatives should laugh along with Trump when he correctly attacks phony media coverage. But they should not humor him over his personal failings, proclaim him a David-like figure in the absence of David-like holiness, or shrug off his various imbecilities and vile utterances simply

because they like his policies. Young Americans aren't judging Trump. They've already judged him. They're judging *you* and determining whether or not they can ever vote for the same candidates you endorse based on whether or not they admire *your* character. That doesn't mean Trump can't win reelection or win over young people. But that requires him to change his character, and it requires us to call on him to do so.

Second, conservatives must argue in moral terms, and they must use moral terminology young Americans understand. This means learning to argue on secular grounds rather than religious grounds and recognizing that tolerance is a key value to young Americans. Fortunately, tolerance of opposing viewpoints is also a key value for small-government conservatives.

Arguing in secular terms doesn't mean arguing without reference to values. It means arguing against the controlling hand of the left. Capitalism is good because you own your own labor and you have the right to exchange that labor for someone else's labor and no one has the right to steal your labor from you. Socialism is evil because it says that a third party can tell you what your labor is worth.

Religious freedom is good because freedom of association is good and no one has the right to tell you how to live your life so long as you're not forcibly imposing your views on anyone else. Governmental discrimination against religious institutions is evil because it is none of the government's business how you choose to worship, how you choose to operate your business, and how you choose to raise your child.

Freedom of speech is good because you have value as an individual human being with a unique point of view; you're not reducible to your skin color, your ethnicity, or your income. Political correctness and identity politics are evil because they utilize censorship to box you into a group identity that denies your individuality.

Small government is good because it allows you to pursue your goals without someone else telling you what to do, and if we can't agree to leave each other alone, you'll have to fear my tyranny as much as I fear yours. Big government is evil because it insists that a cadre of bureaucrats knows more about how to run your life than you do.

These are winning arguments. And young Americans are open to them.

Most of all, conservatives can't lose hope. A crisis mentality breeds poor decisions and short-term thinking that sacrifices long-term interests. We've seen discouraging trendlines before. But they can be reversed. In 1976, it would have been difficult to imagine the Reagan Revolution that was just four years away. Young Americans won't inevitably move toward conservatism, contrary to the old saw. But decline isn't inevitable either. ♦

How Bad Is It?

*The estrangement between young voters and the GOP
is substantial—and growing worse*

BY KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON

Shortly before Christmas 2013, the Obama political operation got into the holiday spirit and gave unto us a child. He became known as Pajama Boy, his image splashed across the Internet in an advertisement that quickly went viral and ignited a low-grade firestorm on the right. In the ad, a hipsterish, bespectacled twentysomething wearing a red plaid flannel onesie clutches a mug next to the text: “Wear pajamas. Drink hot chocolate. Talk about getting health insurance.”

Disdain for millennials (defined by Pew Research as people born between 1981 and 1996) is a well-documented phenomenon. Older generations have been complaining about *kids these days* since time immemorial. For a brief moment, Pajama Boy, that “insufferable man-child,” as news outlets described him, became the modern avatar of all that was wrong with *kids these days*, recognizable by his silly ironic clothes, sense of entitlement, dependence on Mom and Dad or, worse, the state. The Affordable Care Act had changed health insurance law to allow children under the age of 26 to remain on their parents’ health insurance policies, a provision that was popular in public opinion polls but viewed by the right as emblematic of how the left coddles the young. The Pajama Boy ad efficiently encapsulated conservative anger about Obamacare and their anxieties about young people.

During the last decade, antipathy for millennials and their views has been something of a hallmark of the conservative movement. Poll after poll shows young people abandoning the right, and the feeling is evidently mutual. Despite losing young voters by a two-to-one margin in the 2008 election, Republicans largely shrugged their shoulders and decided the problem wasn’t the GOP, it was *those darn kids*.

Baby boomers look at the generation they raised, growing up in the world they created, and scratch their heads

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in confusion and horror. In focus groups I conduct, I often hear older voters on the right describe millennials as a hostile force trying to take their country away from them. Older Americans are more likely than younger Americans to say they agree with the statement, “These days, I feel like a stranger in my own country,” and doubtless part of the reason Donald Trump performed so well with older voters was his success tapping into this sentiment.

Sometimes I wonder if Pajama Boy isn’t a more terrifying prospect to the Republican base than perennial campaign-ad favorite Nancy Pelosi.

Conservatives aren’t wrong to be worried about what



Pajama Boy at work

a millennial-run America would look like, given just how thoroughly today’s young adults disagree with them on matters of politics and policy. Only 2 percent of millennials consider themselves “consistently conservative,” for example, while a quarter consider themselves “consistently liberal.” As for political party affiliation, young people aren’t enamored of either party, but they have a stronger affiliation with the Democratic party. That gap has not narrowed as voters age; in fact, it has widened to give a whopping 33-point advantage to Democrats among millennials. Young people are not discovering conservatism on their own and they are largely repelled by what they see coming from the right in the Trump era.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Opportunities exist for common cause between the right and the millennial generation, as long as leaders on the right don’t simply throw up

their hands and abandon efforts to connect to this generation. To do so risks the future of the conservative movement.

Political views are reasonably malleable for individuals who are newly engaged in politics, but those views solidify over time. It has been a decade since the alarms were first raised about the leftward drift of the millennial cohort, and time is running out for conservative leaders to effectively make their case for why their ideas should matter to a new generation in a new era.

Consider Pajama Boy. If he had been a typical 26-year-old in the 1980s, he would already be married and close to buying his own home. Today, however, the usual path to adulthood—graduating from high school, greater independence through employment or education and, soon thereafter, homeownership and family-formation—has been disrupted by economic and cultural change. The percentage of young adults living with their parents is significantly higher than it was three decades ago, for example, and shot up from 26 percent to 34 percent in the decade spanning 2005-2015. These factors don't just change who marries whom or who lives in Mom and Dad's basement; it alters how people view politics and policy.

In 2015, I wrote about these changes and their political implications in *The Selfie Vote: Where Millennials Are Leading America (And How Republicans Can Keep Up)*. At the time, THE WEEKLY STANDARD's Michael Warren said that the "subtitle suggests that the GOP needs to 'keep up' with millennials as they lead America into the future. Would that the parties—and their leaders—tried leading millennials instead."

Unfortunately, Warren's suggestion has not come to pass. For the most part, the right has abdicated any leadership role when it comes to young people. This is partially driven by a lazy assumption that no leadership is needed. Conventional wisdom incorrectly suggests that young people always hold progressive views and older people hold more evolved conservative views that have been duly informed by experience in the "real world." The kids, this reasoning goes, will eventually realize the error of their ways.

The data tell a different story. Ronald Reagan was able to win an enormous share of the youth vote for his reelection campaign in the 1980s, and as recently as the election between George W. Bush and John Kerry, young voters were still somewhat narrowly divided between the two political parties. It is only in the last decade that a new and

dramatic right-left, old-young divide has emerged. Today, not only are young people increasingly identifying as liberals even as they age, and eschewing conservatism as a movement, but their views on many hot-button issues are now predictive of where *older* generations will stand on those issues in a decade. On some issues, such as guns and abortion, for example, Pew Research reports very little change over time in generations' views. Where the generation gaps are largest, however, there has been substantial movement over time, and always in the direction of older generations "catching up" with the views of their younger counterparts rather than the other way around.

Consider issues where these gaps are the largest, such as LGBTQ rights, marijuana legalization, and immigration. For issues where trend data is available, it is difficult to find a single instance of millennials growing more conservative with age. By contrast, the percentage of baby boomers who favor "allowing gays and lesbians to marry" currently sits at 56 percent; this is roughly where the millennial generation stood 10 years ago (and it has since risen to 73 percent). A nearly identical pattern emerges with regard to marijuana legalization.

And contra the belief that the Trump era corresponds with a souring of views on immigrants, Pew finds that baby boomers have been feeling more positive about immigrants during the last decade, catching up to the views of the millennial generation. The percentage of boomers who say that "immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents" has risen to its highest level in decades, and roughly matches where millennials were a decade ago. Millennials, meanwhile, have also shifted, with roughly 8 in 10 believing immigrants have a net positive impact on society.

Older generations are not leading young Americans. They may be in the White House, but it is the young who appear to be squarely in the driver's seat.

The good news for conservatives is that Pajama Boy isn't real. Yes, the young Obama supporter who posed for the infamous ad is in fact a real person, and it's entirely possible he enjoys wearing flannel onesie pajamas. But the *idea* he represented in the minds of those who poked fun at him—that a self-absorbed generation was happily mooching off its elders and unconcerned about the future—is woefully inaccurate.

Yes, young Americans hold more progressive views than

Today, not only are young people increasingly identifying as liberals even as they age, and eschewing conservatism as a movement, but their views on many hot-button issues are now predictive of where older generations will stand on those issues in a decade.



The Network of Enlightened Women table at the Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington, D.C., February 23, 2017

older generations on a host of controversial topics. And at the moment, most young Americans are no fans of President Trump and want little to do with the label “conservative.” But there is a great deal that conservatism can do to connect with young people while holding true to core principles.

Young Americans are extremely interested in entrepreneurship, and without a healthy economy and a restrained regulatory state, they won’t be able to capitalize on their ambitions. Conservatives shouldn’t assume young people are lazy; instead, they ought to deliver a clear message to young Americans that ingenuity and hard work—not taxation and the regulatory state—are the engines that drive a better quality of life in our country.

As well, young Americans tend to be more personally financially responsible than older generations, creating an opportunity for the conservative message on both fiscal and temperamental grounds. A conservative movement that speaks to young Americans about a shared belief in prudence, planning, and making responsible choices, both as individuals and as a nation would resonate.

Government can appear old, clunky, inefficient, and dramatically out-of-step in a world where friendly, artificially intelligent speakers in your home instantly tell you the news and ship almost anything to your front door overnight. Conservatives should have something to say to young people about the free markets that deliver so much of what gives them this material quality of life, and why ideas like socialism that failed dramatically in the past (often long before they were born) remain bankrupt today.

Young Americans are also increasingly experiencing

the effects of a loneliness epidemic spawned in part by the fact that genuine community and human connection have too often been replaced—inadequately—by screen time and social media. It is true that social conservatism, which is often unfairly portrayed by the media as a basket of retrograde views on gender and sexuality, remains a nonstarter with young people, but the idea that families and communities need strengthening, that they are not replaceable by the state, and that they are essential to a fulfilled life is a message that conservatives should be shouting from the rooftops.

The world is changing, and changing quickly. Donald Trump was able to build a coalition and win an election by tapping into voters’ anxieties about these changes—economic, cultural, technological, demographic—and convincing many people that these changes haven’t all been for the best. In the process, many young people have been driven away from the right, and they can be forgiven for wondering if standing athwart history tweeting “Stop!” is an appealing long-term strategy for the country.

For their part, conservatives have done little to bridge the generation gap, or even effectively to make their case, instead treating young people as at best a nuisance and at worst a problem. But as young people’s political power continues to increase, their influence over the direction of the country will intensify as well. Their voter turnout levels will rise, their ranks among candidates for political office will grow, and their occupation of positions of influence throughout society will expand. Far better for conservatives to harness this power now than to risk losing it forever. ♦

Privilege and Precedent

*It is far from clear that Mueller can compel
Trump to testify before his grand jury*

BY STUART TAYLOR JR.
& ADAM J. WHITE

Special counsel Robert Mueller wants to talk to the president. With the pitched battle of words forever escalating—Trump’s new team of gloves-off lawyers and his vocal supporters pitted against the special counsel’s own proponents in the media—many exude confidence in Mueller’s power to subpoena the president’s testimony, assuming the eventual backing of the Supreme Court.

But let’s slow down a bit. Although Mueller has warned Trump’s lawyers that he might subpoena the president if he refuses to testify voluntarily, he might well elect not to. The two sides could compromise on a deal for testimony on limited subjects or only in written interrogatories. Or Mueller might see the risks, delay, and other costs of starting a subpoena battle as outweighing the benefits—especially if the evidence he has gathered does not clearly implicate Trump in any serious crime. Mueller’s risk in starting a subpoena fight is that he might win less in the Supreme Court than he could have gotten in negotiations, or even lose entirely.

This last possibility is something that Trump’s critics greatly underestimate. The popular analysis is that the Supreme Court’s decisions in *U.S. v. Nixon* (1974) and *Clinton v. Jones* (1997) require the president to obey a subpoena to testify before Mueller’s grand jury. Harvard’s Laurence Tribe exemplifies those who hold such presumptions. “The Supreme Court held in the Nixon Tapes Case that executive privilege cannot overcome a grand jury subpoena,” he told *Business Insider* in March. “So Trump

would have to answer every question or be held in contempt—unless he takes the Fifth Amendment.”

We are far less confident in this reading of *Nixon* and *Clinton* and that the Supreme Court would award Mueller an unqualified win. If Mueller subpoenas Trump to testify, and Trump fights, then the Court may well decide to limit the questions that the president must answer, if not quash the subpoena altogether. It would have leeway to deal such a setback to the special counsel within the parameters set in the *Nixon* and *Clinton* decisions. And whatever the justices may think of this particular president, they will show more care for the needs of the presidency than have the analysts who favor a total victory for Mueller in any battle with Trump.

Let’s begin with *U.S. v. Nixon*, in which the Supreme Court rejected President Nixon’s assertion of executive privilege in the face of special prosecutor Leon Jaworski’s subpoena for tapes, documents, and other materials relevant to the criminal trial of the Watergate burglars. The Court unanimously ordered Nixon to turn over to Jaworski the secretly recorded Oval Office tapes that he had subpoenaed. While the Court recognized that executive privilege provides some protection for a president’s confidential communications, it also ruled that this protection must give way to the prosecutor’s need for evidence “demonstrably relevant” to the pending criminal trial of several indicted Nixon co-conspirators.

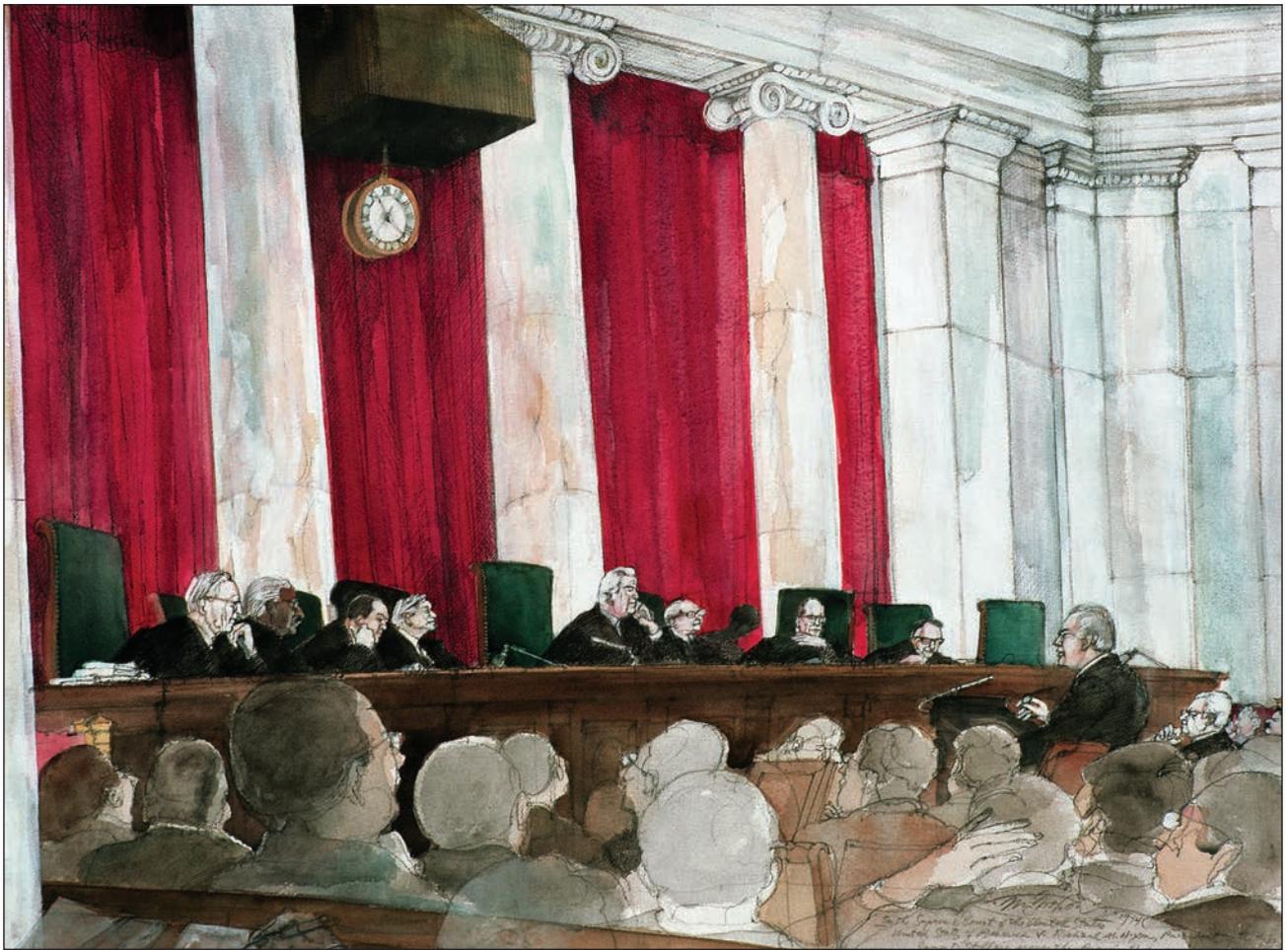
Analysts like Tribe construe this as a blanket rule enabling the special counsel to subpoena not just Nixon’s tapes, but also the current president’s testimony. “*U.S. v. Nixon* (1974) held the president must comply with a grand jury subpoena for his Oval Office tapes,” Tribe tweeted recently. “There is no basis for treating a grand jury subpoena for the president’s live testimony any differently.” This ignores the key limits and nuances of the justices’ analysis in the 1974 case. The Court did not conclude that



Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton

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NIXON: HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY; CLINTON: WALLY MCNAMEE / CORBIS / GETTY



The Supreme Court hears arguments in U.S. v. Nixon in 1974.

the criminal process always outweighs executive privilege; rather, it concluded only that “the legitimate needs of the judicial process *may* outweigh Presidential privilege” (emphasis added).

Nixon’s mistake was in asserting too categorical a privilege—too broad in scope and too far removed from the specific case at hand. The Court rejected his assertion of “an absolute privilege as against a subpoena essential to enforcement of criminal statutes on no more than a generalized claim of the public interest in confidentiality of non-military and nondiplomatic discussion.” And it then struck a careful balance: Absent a showing of military or diplomatic need for executive confidentiality, a subpoena for documents for which there was a “demonstrated, specific need ... in a pending criminal trial” must be obeyed.

It is not hard to see defenses that Trump’s lawyers could mount. They could attempt to distinguish the two investigations by stressing that the case against Trump actually involves diplomatic sensitivities. It is, after all, a *Russia* investigation. And they could argue that *U.S. v. Nixon* only requires them to disclose documents for which

the special counsel can provide a “demonstrated, specific need” in a “pending criminal trial.” Requesting information for matters not directly tied to an already-filed indictment could fall short.

And whereas Tribe and others discount the difference between a *trial* subpoena for *tapes* and a *grand jury* subpoena for *testimony*, the distinction seems important to the Court’s own analysis in *U.S. v. Nixon* for at least two reasons. First, in 1974, the Court stressed that the president’s tapes were to be screened first by the trial judge *in camera*—that is, secretly—so as to minimize the risk of improper disclosure. Could today’s justices feel confident that presidential testimony would not be leaked by someone, no matter Mueller’s directives or promises? Second, the Court stressed that merely divulging tapes would not expose Nixon to a risk of “being harassed by vexatious and unnecessary subpoenas” by Jaworski or others. Again, could today’s Court feel so confident that Trump would not face a flurry of subpoenas? The ex-New York attorney general’s myriad legal actions against Trump—more than 100, as of last December—suggest otherwise, especially

concerning at a moment when the president's diplomatic and national-security burdens are every bit as sensitive as Nixon's foreign-policy responsibilities in 1974.

And any president's preparation for testimony before a grand jury on the broad range of topics allegedly proposed by Mueller's team would be *far* more burdensome than simply requiring Nixon to hand over some tapes. The process of preparing for and giving sworn testimony under questioning by a special counsel who has already indicted Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort, and George Papadopoulos would be time-consuming and arduous.

If Mueller does subpoena the president's testimony, we should expect a more nuanced outcome than the unqualified victory envisaged by Trump's most confident critics. Perhaps Mueller would succeed in compelling the president to testify, but only if his questions are tailored narrowly, clearly justified in terms of his investigation's specific needs, and constructed to minimize their impact on U.S. diplomatic or military sensitivities. It is worth remembering that, as former U.S. attorney Harry Litman observed recently on *Lawfare*, "no sitting president has ever been forced to provide testimony as a target of a criminal investigation." Bill Clinton received a subpoena from independent counsel Kenneth Starr, but Starr eventually withdrew it after the two sides struck a voluntary deal for limited testimony.

Which brings us to *Clinton v. Jones*, the Supreme Court's 1997 decision rejecting a presidential claim of immunity from civil suits while in office. Like Nixon, Clinton asserted a categorical privilege: "temporary immunity from civil damages litigation arising out of events that occurred before he took office," in "all but the most exceptional cases." Again, the Court rejected the absolutist approach. And again, it took care to define its ruling very specifically rather than giving prosecutors a blank check to subpoena presidents. Citing previous presidents' cooperation with civil lawsuits, the Court reaffirmed that executive privilege cannot "bar every exercise of jurisdiction over the President" (emphasis added), but stressed that the courts must be cognizant of—and even give "utmost deference" to—the executive's own responsibilities.

The justices struck a careful balance in 1997: "The high respect that is owed to the office of the Chief Executive, though not justifying a rule of categorical immunity, is a matter that should inform the conduct of the entire proceeding, including the timing and scope of discovery." It predicted that its decision, "if properly managed by the District Court," would not "occupy any substantial amount of [President Clinton's] time."

In hindsight, the Court's confidence can be justly

mocked. But regardless of whether today's Court would emulate the Clinton-era Court's naïveté, we expect that the justices would at least announce a similar rule: If the president shows that the special counsel's requests, and the threat of other actions against the president, "could conceivably hamper the President in conducting the duties of his office," then the lower courts should "manage those actions in such fashion (including deferral of trial) that interference with the President's duties would not occur."

Again, the Court's cautious approach in *Clinton v. Jones* seems to point towards its strictly managing Mueller's demands for answers, as well as managing other legal proceedings brought against Trump. Justice Stephen Breyer was particularly sensible of these risks in 1997, which he stressed in an emphatic concurring opinion, and one trusts that he would reason from those concerns if the issue returned to the Court today.

Thus, when critics assert, as Loyola law professor Jessica Levinson recently did to *Vox*, that "I consider this case all but settled by *Clinton v. Jones*," it is less careful analysis than wish fulfillment.

The facts of the current situation, moreover, might well reinforce the justices' appreciation for the need to carefully calibrate rules governing the president's susceptibility to legal process.

First, they will be aware that the risk of being indicted by a zealous prosecutor for perjury, even for what might in fact have been an unintentional misstatement of fact, is so great that criminal defense lawyers now routinely advise clients to invoke the Fifth Amendment. The president's habit of telling bald-faced lies on an almost daily basis would make grand jury testimony especially perilous before a special counsel who has already indicted multiple Trump subordinates. If the Court required President Trump to testify, it would be setting the stage for an unprecedented and politically explosive invocation of his Fifth Amendment right not to testify.

Second, the justices may recognize that Trump's recent statements and actions suggest a willingness to use his pardon power broadly, to preemptively immunize people within Mueller's crosshairs—perhaps including his own self. Again, the justices might well act to avoid such a cataclysm.

Neither of us relish taking such considerations into account. The fact that Trump is a persistent liar and that there is genuine risk that he would wield the pardon power as a weapon of self-protection are sad reflections on the character of this president. The Court's decisions in the *Nixon* and *Clinton* cases were emphatically contextual, and so likely would be any Trump-related decision. Such considerations might well incline at least some on the Court to see a decision to order Trump to answer Mueller's

questions as more dangerous to the president's ability to do his job than anyone foresaw at the time of the *Nixon* and *Clinton* decisions.

Again, a Supreme Court win for Trump does not seem to us likely, but it is far from impossible. And a split decision, with two or more justices siding with the president, might embolden Trump. The president might simply defy the order and direct U.S. marshals not to enforce it, setting up a risky constitutional standoff between the executive and judicial branches.

The president may also be immune to an actual indictment while in office, as the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel concluded during both the Nixon and Clinton years. (Other experts strongly disagree.) To the extent that Mueller's questions are aimed at the president's own conduct, the Court might conclude that presidential immunity to indictment renders such questions superfluous and thus an unjustified burden on the president. It would further, probably, be deemed improper for a criminal investigator to gather evidence solely for possible use in a House impeachment proceeding.

For all these reasons, we doubt that the justices would without qualification order Trump to answer every question Mueller wishes to ask. The Court might well put a time limit on any questioning, which Trump could use to run out the clock before the prosecutors get to many of the questions that they want to ask. The president's latest defense lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, suggested such a limit in his May 2 interview on Fox News: "Some people have talked about a possible 12-hour interview. If it happens, that's not going to happen—I'll tell you that. It'd be, max, two to three hours around a narrow set of questions."

And the justices might limit the subject matter that Mueller could ask about. The president's lawyers would surely argue that many or even most of Mueller's proposed questions, especially those inquiring into Trump's firing of former FBI director James Comey, should be ruled out if Mueller cannot give the Court a "demonstrated, specific need" for answers to those questions—the standard in *U.S. v. Nixon*.

Trump would no doubt tie his objections to questions about the firing of Comey—and threats to fire Mueller and deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein—to his power under Article II of the Constitution to fire subordinates. It is so broad, some serious legal experts argue, that even an allegedly corrupt motive, such as firing a subordinate to

quench revelations of misconduct, cannot be obstruction of justice or any other crime.

This is a hotly contested topic. Scholars such as Josh Blackman of the South Texas College of Law in Houston have detailed the argument that the exercise of a core presidential power cannot be obstruction of justice. While others emphatically disagree, some lawyers who are no fans of Trump also caution that it might be unwise for the Court "to demand that any president account to a prosecutor for his intent in making a personnel change," as William Taylor, a respected criminal-defense lawyer, told us. Taylor added that a "president might have good reason to fire a law enforcement official who persists in an investigation the president thinks is improper or politically motivated." Indeed, even Comey himself noted to Trump during an early 2017 meeting "that he could fire me any time he wished." Giuliani has raised this point in public.

In addition, there remains the controversy surrounding the propriety of the investigation itself. Deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein's extremely broad original grant of power to Mueller—to investigate "any links and/or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump"—has been assailed as improperly reaching beyond

suspected crimes of the Trump campaign and beyond the terms of the Justice Department regulation that Rosenstein invoked. U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis told Mueller aide Michael Dreeben during a May 4 hearing on the charges against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort: "If I look at the indictment, none of that information has anything to do with links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals [or] anything the special prosecutor is authorized to investigate." "You don't really care about Mr. Manafort's bank fraud," Ellis added. "You really care about what information Mr. Manafort can give you that would reflect on Mr. Trump or lead to his prosecution or impeachment or whatever."

The composition of the special counsel's team and the exposure of private anti-Trump comments by two former members have additionally spurred critics to accuse it of partisan bias. Might some justices share that suspicion? And is this the context in which the Court would take the unprecedented step of granting a special counsel unqualified power to subpoena the president's testimony?

As the Supreme Court showed in the *Nixon* and *Clinton* cases, it knows well how to protect the president's privileges and responsibilities without putting him above the law. ♦

The Court's cautious approach in *Clinton v. Jones* seems to point towards its strictly managing Mueller's demands for answers, as well as managing other legal proceedings brought against Trump.

Books & Arts

From Memory to Myth

*The exploits of Patrick Leigh Fermor,
the 20th century's greatest travel writer.*

BY DOMINIC GREEN

Patsos, Crete

A warm June night in the foothills of the Amari Valley. The moon is down and the land is dark. Below us, the gorge falls away unseen toward the medieval chapel of St. Anthony and the Minoan cave sanctuary, then down to the coastal plain at Rethymnon, where the lights twinkle around the bay. White light from the taverna's terrace where we sit spills onto the shade trees and spring of Patsos's tiny *plateia*. Behind us, the invisible hills push upward through the darkness toward the pale hump of Mount Psiloritis, from whose southern face the gorges defile

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steeply into Crete's rocky southern coast. We cannot see this geography as we sit on the terrace, but we know it is there.

We have come to Patsos in a group from the Patrick Leigh Fermor Society. In April 1944, Leigh Fermor, his fellow Special Operations Executive officer William Stanley Moss, and a supporting cast of Cretan resistance fighters kidnapped General Heinrich Kreipe, the commandant of German-occupied Crete, on the road near Knossos. For 18 days and nights, the kidnappers evaded German search parties and traversed the mountainous spine of Crete—until a Royal Navy launch extracted them and their prisoner from the beach at Rodakino on the south coast. In 1957, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger made a film out of William Stanley Moss's diary of the operation,

ULF ANDERSEN / GETTY



Patrick Leigh Fermor (1915-2011): an adventurer who walked across the European continent as a young man, a courageous war hero who kidnapped a German general, a society figure who beguiled women with his good looks and legendary charm, and a writer whose books and letters describing his travels have earned a devoted following

Ill Met By Moonlight, with Dirk Bogarde as an improbably dainty Leigh Fermor.

Hundreds of ordinary Cretans assisted the flight of the Kreipe party. Patsos was one of many villages that, risking mass executions and the burning of its homes, protected and sheltered the kidnapers. Our group from the Leigh Fermor Society includes William Stanley Moss's daughters and granddaughter. They spent the morning tracing the Kreipe party's escape route along the eastern flank of the Amari Valley. The valley is shaped like

To understand the growth of the Leigh Fermor cult, and the enthusiasm that impels people to search out caves and safe houses in the mountains of Crete, we have to dig back to 1934, when the 18-year-old set out to walk from Holland to Constantinople.

an inverted horseshoe, a long loop of mountains around a flat, lush plain. At Fourfouras, a huddle of houses with a café whose pergola is made of the loading rails from German tank transports, an ancient man emerges from a battered Fiat. Stephanos Tsimanderas, now 94, had heard of our party's approach and driven down from the top of the valley. He shows Moss's daughters an old photograph of him and his *andarte* (resistance) friends, all bristling mustaches and British-issue Sten guns. As a teenager, Tsimanderas had aided their father and the Kreipe party when, climbing to the crest at the valley's southern end, they had seen their escape route, a triangle of blue where two hills slid into the Libyan Sea.

The Amari Valley was a center of Cretan resistance. After the fall of Crete in May 1941, the villagers smuggled hundreds of British, Australian, and New Zealander soldiers to the beaches on the south coast. Over the next three years, British agents and bands of *andarte* guerrillas harried the Germans from the caves above the villages. In August 1944, as the Germans prepared to withdraw to the coastal plain, they massacred the civilian populations of nine villages. On the way down the western side of the valley, the Leigh Fermor Society stops at the monument at Ano Meros. The bones of the murdered villagers are visible through a glass-doored ossuary. There are bullet holes in the skulls.

"We are now hiding in a delightful spot which is about a mile from Patsos," William Stanley Moss wrote in May 1944.

We sleep in a stone-walled hut which has been built against the base of a steep cliff, so with trees on three sides and the cliff behind us we could not have found a more sheltered position. The dinner was excellent. We are being cared for by a charming family which, though very poor, gives us everything it has. The father is a fine, old-fashioned Cretan type, and he tell us that since the German occupation he has looked after more than sixty British and Colonial stragglers who were hiding from the enemy.

Their host, Efthimios Harokopos, allowed his son Giorgios to join the kidnapers on their escape to Egypt. Though his wealth, Moss recorded, consisted of "little more than some goats and a few olive trees," he refused Leigh Fermor's offer of gold sovereigns.

Tonight, the same family has honored the Leigh Fermor Society with a banquet at its taverna. Our host, Vasilis Psiharakis, is Giorgios Harokopos's nephew and a retired colonel in the Greek special forces. The guests include Giorgios's octogenarian cousin Zacharenia Pattakos, whose parents were murdered in the German reprisals. Dinner is excellent. The glasses are filled with *tsikoudia*, the paint-stripping Cretan spirit, and Vasilis Psiharakis stands to attention in his immaculate dinner jacket, his mother watch-

ing from the doorway of the kitchen.

"Every Greek landscape has a name and an association with memories," Psiharakis says. "Here, we were disgraced; there, we were glorified. The landscape is soaked with moments of happiness and moments of misfortunes, of sacrifice which, rising by its rigorous course, cannot be escaped. It is a call, and you must hear it. We welcome you with the same feelings of pride and the same warm embrace as we did 72 years ago."

Toasts are made to Leigh Fermor, Moss, and the *andartes*, and to the peoples of Crete and Great Britain. The link between the families of Harokopos and Moss, and the link between the Amari villagers and the British visitors drawn here by the terrible epic, would be the stuff of legend—were they not true. Like all living myth, this tale is both prosaic and fantastical. Yet Patrick Leigh Fermor, an accomplished fantasist in prose, was not its author. He polished Moss's account and also translated *The Cretan Runner*, the *andarte* George Psychoundakis's memoir. But *Abducting a General*, which collected Leigh Fermor's own extensive operational reports from 1944 and a similarly detailed narrative of the Kreipe operation written in the 1960s, was not published until 2014, three years after Leigh Fermor's death.

Chris White, the editor of *Abducting a General*, is with us at Patsos. White, who retains the genial patience of his upbringing as a Quaker and career as a social worker, is now a full-time battlefield historian, an expert on the caves and high places of wartime Crete. Such is the transformative potential of the memory and myth of World War II. But as Leigh Fermor discovered, mythic transformations are more easily wrought than reversed.

Leigh Fermor bequeathed a literary legend and several captivating and profound memoirs of his journeys across the lost continent of prewar Europe. His writing is evocative, lyrical, and meditative and his books remain popular despite their uncompromising sophistication of style and historical range. But the question of his literary value cannot be separated from that of his cultural standing. Our perception of the past

changes over time—as did Leigh Fermor’s—as facts and experiences are layered into memories and myths. To understand the growth of the Leigh Fermor cult, and the enthusiasm that impels people to search out caves and safe houses in the mountains of Crete, we have to excavate across time and space. To begin, we must dig back to 1934, when the 18-year-old Leigh Fermor set out to walk from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople.

How many English literary writers from the early 20th century remain genuinely popular? Wodehouse and Waugh, certainly. Maugham, though, is almost forgotten, and Conrad is more respected than read. Leigh Fermor produced six full-length books in his 96 years. A Caribbean travelogue, *The Traveller’s Tree* (1950), which Ian Fleming used as a source for *Live and Let Die*, was followed by a missable novel, *The Violins of St. Jacques* (1953). Next came a pair on Leigh Fermor’s visions of Greece, *Mani* (1958) and *Roumeli* (1966). Then, with production slowing to a book per decade, Leigh Fermor wrote *A Time of Gifts* (1977) and *Between the Woods and the Water* (1986), two of the projected three volumes describing his “Great Walk”—or “Great Trudge,” as he sometimes called it—across Europe in 1934. To fend off his publisher, he also wrote a couple of etiolated memoirs, one on living silently in French monasteries, the other on traveling garrulously in the Andes. Like his correspondence, the short books are the fruit of the most arduous evasion in the field of letters, procrastination by substitution.

Though relatively small, this output suffices to confirm Leigh Fermor as the 20th century’s finest exponent of a genre that the English invented: travel writing. It is a pack mule among literary genres, prone to digression and indulgence but also capable of carrying con-



Above, part of the team that kidnapped Kreipe in 1944. From left: William Stanley Moss, Patrick Leigh Fermor, Emmanouil Paterakis, and Antonios Papaleonidas. Below, Leigh Fermor and some of the other abductors reunited with the German general in Greece for a 1972 documentary.



siderable weight when properly distributed. Leigh Fermor’s picaresques are weighted not just with historical anecdote, heraldic speculation, and more purple streaks than a sunset at Collioure. They also carry the freight of his generation. When Wodehouse (born 1881) was confronted with the enormities of World War II, he persisted with his Edwardian fantasies and got himself into trouble accordingly. To Waugh (born 1903), the Nazi-Soviet Pact revealed the enemy “plain in view, huge and hateful, all dis-

guise cast off ... the Modern Age in arms.” When the Soviet Union changed from enemy to ally, Waugh knew that, one way or another, the Modern Age would win. Leigh Fermor was born in 1915. The precocious literary pedestrian was formed by a war that he did not expect to survive.

When Wodehouse was 23 years old, he wrote *The Gold Bat* (1904), a novel of boarding school pranks involving a miniature cricket bat. When Waugh was 23, he wrote “The Balance” (1926), an experimental story written as a film scenario. When Leigh Fermor was 25, in 1940, he trained as an Irish Guards officer, transferred to the Intelligence Corps, and sailed for Greece. “I had read somewhere that the average life of an infantry officer in the First World War was eight weeks, and I had no reason to think that the odds would be much better in the Second. So I thought I might as well die in a nice uniform.” By the time he was able to get out alive from the war, get out of uniform, and, his derring done, set out again from Britain and return to Greece, he was 31 years old.

“The clock has suddenly slipped back ten years, and here I am sitting in front of our café in the small square, at a green-topped iron table on one of those rickety chairs,” he wrote to his prewar lover Balasha Cantacuzène from the island of Poros on the day before Easter 1946. “The marble-lantern, with its marine symbols—anchors and dolphins—is within reach of my arm; the drooping tree has been cut down. But the same old men, in broad, shady hats, snowy *fustanellas* [traditional skirt-like garments] and moustaches, sit conversing quietly over their *narghilehs*. They all bowed and greeted me warmly, but soberly as if I had seen them only yesterday.”

On Easter Sunday, he crossed the strait from Poros to the harbor at Galatas. He climbed up through the lemon

groves to the mill where he and Balasha had lived before the war. Their hosts had prepared a feast “under the vine-trellis—paschal lamb and retsina.” Below the mill, he wrote to Balasha, “our amphitheatre of orange and cypress and olive wavered down to the glittering sea and the island.” Everything was as it should be, but nothing was the same. Balasha, trapped in Russian-occupied Romania, would shortly be immured behind the Iron Curtain. And Leigh Fermor, though he did not mention it in his letter, had fallen in love with the photographer Joan Eyres Monsell.

This letter anchors *A Life in Letters*, first published in Britain as *Dashing for the Post*, and released last year in the United States by New York Review Books, which has been publishing or republishing all his writings, short and long. Adam Sisman, the volume’s editor, thinks it “probable” that Leigh Fermor never sent that letter to Balasha, but wrote it “to make sense of his conflicting feelings.” In 1977, Leigh Fermor substituted a similar epistolary device for a conventional introduction to *A Time of Gifts*. This time, he addressed his close friend Xan Fielding, with whom Leigh Fermor had shared first the dangers of operations in Crete and then the pleasures of postwar exile as a writer in the Mediterranean.

It was hard, Leigh Fermor wrote, “to believe that 1942 in Crete, when we first met—both of us black-turbaned, booted and sashed and appropriately silver-and-ivory dagger and cloaked in white goats’ hair, and deep in grime—was more than three decades ago.” Both he and Fielding had dropped out of school, walked across Europe, and ended up in the Special Operations Executive because they disliked regular army discipline and happened to know Greek. Hiding in caves among the limestone crags, they had “reconstructed our pre-war lives for each other’s entertainment” and had convinced themselves that “the disasters which had set

us on the move had not been disasters at all, but wild strokes of good luck.”

In Leigh Fermor’s books, memory is layered over speculation and digression patched over confession. Many passages are so overworked that the planes creak and sag beneath their own weight. This florid sensuality marks Leigh Fermor as a delayed Edwardian—an unacknowledged heir to Norman Douglas, who first applied the Modernist method to travel writing in *Siren Land* (1911) and *Old Calabria* (1915).

In his letters, Leigh Fermor’s voice



Leigh Fermor on Ithaca, 1946

is clearer. The phrasing is crisper, the relish for books and gossip more pungent. He might be a better writer over the sprint than the marathon: *A Life in Letters* confirms him as a late champion of epistolary form. But the conflicts of his character are more visible too. He is a charmer, a lover of books and women but, as in Crete, he is infiltrating a society under assumed identities. He hides in plain sight, a social climber singing for his supper. He is split between his art and his life.

In February 1960, he is supposed to be writing a book at Chagford, the small hotel where Evelyn Waugh wrote his novels. Instead, he expends his energies hunting on Dartmoor and corresponding with Ian Fleming’s wife, Ann. The master of the local hunt is “Chas Hooley, a tremendous s— with carrot-coloured hair and side whiskers.” Hooley leads

Leigh Fermor on “shaggy, almost pre-historic helter-skelters” over “a rolling moor beset with bogs and tors and druidical stones” so ancient that “we might almost be out after dinosaurs.” On one hunt, the only other follower is “Bunny” Spiller, scion of the Spillers Dog Biscuits dynasty. On a second excursion, Leigh Fermor dismounts in order to inspect the rood screen in a “lovely late Plantagenet church.” On a third, he gets lost “in mist, rain, rocks and swamp” miles from anywhere. A “drenched elderly, chubby and equally lost horseman”

turns up. They trot home in the rain, the other man reminiscing about “embassy life in St. Petersburg, Constantinople, the Atlas Mountains” and complaining about “the absurd prices that Fabergé cigarette cases fetch nowadays.” Their paths fork at a dolmen: “We said good-night with gravely doffed headgear.” The other rider is Harold Nicolson’s brother, Frederick, Baron Carnock.

Leigh Fermor did love a lord. He positively adored a lady. Somerset Maugham called him a “middle-class gigolo for upper-class women”; among his regulars were Diana Cooper (23 years his

senior) and Ann Fleming. Even Joan, his longtime companion in the simple life and eventually his wife, was a viscount’s daughter. “I do believe my snobbish days are over,” he tells Joan after a night out with various Sitwells in 1952. Really they are just beginning. He cannot hear a name without dropping it or see a shoulder without rubbing with it. In 1954, he tells Diana Cooper that discovering that his new friend is the great-great-nephew of Sydney Smith sets his “historico-snobbish fibres a-tingle.” Around this time, he befriends Deborah, Duchess of Devonshire, the youngest of the Mitford sisters. Christmases ensue at the Duke of Devonshire’s palace, Chatsworth.

“It’s lovely here,” Paddy writes to Balasha from the library at Chatsworth at Christmas 1975. Sybil, the Dowager Duchess of Cholmondeley, is staying.

BENAKI MUSEUM, ATHENS

Diana Cooper says that Sybil, who is Philip Sassoon's sister, had an affair with the French actor-director Louis Jouvet. Everyone has gone for a walk, apart from Paddy and "Uncle Harold"—Macmillan, that is. "He's sitting beside the fire now, leaning back with long legs outflung, reading Thomas Hardy's poetry, the book held almost touching his nose, occasionally reading out a few lines—'Rather good, eh?'—when I break off this letter for a minute or two's chat."

Leigh Fermor worked harder at his act than his writing. The interests that enrich his books—heraldry, defunct royal houses, literary gossip—become the higher gossip of his letters. In his correspondence with "Debo" Devonshire, he plays the court jester. Both remain lodged in the slang of the 1930s. Life can get "beastly" and "queer," but most of the time it's "ripping" and "smashing." He sends her inscribed copies of each of his books. "Look here, honestly, it's awfully good," he says. "All right, Pad, I will try one day," she replies. But she never does. He wastes his talent on his intellectual inferiors because they are his social superiors. His good luck—survival as a war hero—has turned into disaster, entrapment in the role of courtier. But the world is not the same as it was before the war, and he is too dashing for the post.

In 1944, when Leigh Fermor was in the Amari Valley, Evelyn Waugh, a veteran of the earlier Battle of Crete, retired to Chagford to write *Brideshead Revisited*. "I took you out to dinner to warn you of charm," Waugh's aesthete Anthony Blanche tells his social-climbing protagonist, Charles Ryder. "I warned you expressly and in great detail of the Flyte family. Charm is the great English blight. It does not exist outside of these damp islands. It spots and kills anything it touches. It kills love; it kills art; I greatly fear, my dear Charles, it has killed you."

Joan Eyres Monsell was born in 1912, three years before Leigh Fermor. A skilled, self-taught photographer—a collection of her pictures, edited by Ian Collins and Olivia Stewart, is published this month—she broke with her

family and mixed with the smarter end of Bohemia. In 1939, Joan married a boozy journalist named John Rayner, who had shaped the tabloid style of the *Daily Express*. She wanted an open marriage; he did not; they broke up during the war. "Do you really want to start our same old life again?" Joan asked Rayner in a letter from 1943.

Joan and Paddy met in Cairo in late 1944, when she was working as a cipher clerk and he was recuperating after the Kreipe kidnapping. In late 1945, he pursued her to the Athens office of the British Council. Simon Fenwick's *Joan: The Remarkable Life of Joan Leigh*

Somerset Maugham called Leigh Fermor a 'middle-class gigolo for upper-class women'; among his regulars were Diana Cooper (23 years his senior) and Ann Fleming, wife of Ian.

Fermor (2017) is another hefty slice of Fermoriana—and an important corrective to the legend. Joan was a freer spirit than Paddy, less dependent upon the attention and approval of others and much less sentimental about everything, except cats.

"I listened in most of yesterday to the Royal Funeral," Paddy wrote to Patrick Kinross in 1952, after the death of George VI, "and for someone like me who reacts to these things like a scullery maid, it was almost too much—a knot in the throat for almost 6 hours on end."

"For me, it doesn't make the slightest difference materially to life here," Joan wrote to Paddy that week. But it was "maddening" that the BBC's idea of mourning extended to cutting the scherzo from Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony: "what balls."

Reading Joan's biography, I wondered if, without her, Leigh Fermor would

ever have managed to extract any art from his disordered life. The legend of Leigh Fermor tends to obscure the fact that it was Joan's money that kept him afloat throughout their decades together. It was her need for stability that pushed them to find a home in Greece and her inheritance that allowed them to buy a plot of land and build a house at Kardamyli in the southwestern Peloponnese. And it was her prewar friends who became his postwar friends.

The contribution of friends to Leigh Fermor's writing and thought is a subject explored in an exhibition now at the British Museum. *Charmed Lives in Greece* explores the Leigh Fermors' friendships with two post-Cubist painters, Niko Ghika and John Craxton. Along with Barbara Rothschild (who would become Ghika's second wife) and Lucian Freud, they formed a close circle of friends starting in the 1940s and early '50s.

Ghika, an admiral's son from the Greek island of Hydra, had absorbed Modernist painting in Paris and returned to Athens in 1934 to become a key figure in the "Generation of the Thirties." These artists and writers created a specifically Greek style of Modernism. They believed in the continuation of Hellenism through Byzantine civilization and folk art, and recognized the resemblance between Byzantine art, with its flattened picture plane and rocky Greek landscapes, and the shortened perspectives and jagged geometry of Picasso. And had not Picasso drawn upon the Cretan master El Greco, who, before taking up the brush, had worked as a butcher in the market at Heraklion?

While Ghika pushed outward—from Greek history toward international Modernism—Craxton dug inward. The son of an English musician, Craxton's early work was associated with Neo-Romantic painters like Paul Nash and John Piper, who were doing for the English tradition what Ghika and his friends wanted to do for the Greek. Craxton's line was formed in London, but his color was transformed, as every visitor's eye is, by the merciless clarity of *to phos*, the Greek sunlight. He settled by the harbor at Chania in Crete, grew a shepherd's mustache, and was unfairly



Ghika's Hydra Port at Sunset (1957-60)

overlooked by the London galleries.

While Ghika and Craxton were painting, Leigh Fermor was writing. Given readers' fascination with Leigh Fermor's style, it is surprising how little attention has been paid to its sources. One influence was the 19th-century French novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans, who could elaborate a descriptive passage over several pages and turn lists into composite images; Huysman's work had a "profound effect" on Leigh Fermor, according to biographer Artemis Cooper. But the influence on Leigh Fermor of Greek Modernism was arguably greater—from Constantin Cavafy to the Generation of the Thirties.

In the fifties, Leigh Fermor wrote *Mani* at what he called Ghika's "perfect prose-factory," his house on Hydra with its views of the Gulf of Argos. Craxton stayed there, too (as had Henry Miller before the war). The house burned down in 1965, but when I climbed over the wall a couple of years ago, the arch of Ghika's

studio was still there among the overgrown fig trees. When I asked the locals about the fire, I was told that a servant had torched the place because she was jealous of the new Mrs. Ghika or that a wild orgy had got out of hand. A letter from Craxton in the exhibition clears up the record: The Ghikas were away and their watchman got drunk and fell asleep in bed with a cigarette.

Leigh Fermor's deep and unique immersion in Greek Modernism is laid out in a brilliant essay by Joshua Barley in the Leigh Fermor Society's privately published magazine, the *Philhellene*. Barley invites us to consider Leigh Fermor's descriptions of a visit to Ghika's house, first in a 1957 *Encounter* article and then in the 1958 book *Mani*. The steps to Ghika's house are "collapsible rulers" and the surrounding houses "a chaos of angles." The landscape is "geometrical," and the light plays "conjuring tricks." These are the principles of Greek Modernism, laid

out by Ghika and others; they are the invisible geography behind Leigh Fermor's vision of Greece.

"It is a striking fact," Barley writes of *Mani*, "that almost all of the most memorable parts of the book—the flights of fancy, the dolphins, the reminiscing about the War, the description of Gladstone—are to be found neither in the previous drafts nor in the notebooks of the journey itself in the Mani." Nor is the famous scene in which Leigh Fermor convinces himself that the fisherman Strati Mourtzinis is the heir to the lost throne of Byzantium. Leigh Fermor's notes from his first visit to Kardamyli could be from a postcard. "Nice hotel. Socrates Phalireas. Comfortable beds, pillows unlike usual cannon-balls. Hist. of Kardmyli. Lawyer, school-master. Sleep. Tour. Then off to Areopolis next day, bathe."

In the elaborations of the finished text, however, he compresses the weight of Greek history and myth onto the

vehicle of travel narrative. The past lives beneath the surface of reality, just as Orpheus, Achilles, and Zeus appear from the dust of a museum floor at Sparta when the caretaker douses the mosaic in water. Leigh Fermor would later explicitly compare “thinking hard about a particular place in one’s past” to pouring water onto a dusty mosaic. With contemplation, regression, and corroboration by “a few old letters” and diaries, all becomes “clear in the end.”

So Leigh Fermor did not dissipate *all* of his prodigious imaginative energy in socializing. While Ghika was returning Cubism to its origins, Leigh Fermor was carrying that Modernist Greek synthesis back into the English-speaking world. Craxton too was making the same circuit. For the cover of *Mani*, Craxton offered an abstract painting of the island of Hydra. The sea and sky are flattened against the vertical. The sun is a solar eye emitting black rays.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud writes that some mental impressions, like those of early childhood, are “effaced or absorbed”—but that most are obscured by distortions of memory. Under the right circumstances, notably “regression,” the original impressions can be revealed. “This brings us,” Freud writes, “to the more general problem of preservation in the sphere of the mind.” Freud uses the analogy of Rome. A visitor cannot see the earlier layers of Roman civilization, but his guidebook tells him where they once were. This knowledge allows him to ponder a fragment and imagine an entirety or to see a building and locate a now-invisible one. Looking at the Colosseum, we can contemplate the vanished Golden House of Nero. In *Between the Woods and the Water*, the older Paddy looks at the waters of the Iron Gates Dam and contemplates his younger self, who visited

the Turkish island of Ada Kaleh, since drowned beneath the waters.

The problem, Freud writes, is that the workings of memory are incompatible with reality. A single physical space cannot hold “two different contents.” If it did, Freud observes, then the Palazzo Caffarelli would occupy the same spot as the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and the temple would be visible in both its earlier, Etruscan form and its late,

Charmed Lives in Greece

Ghika, Craxton, Leigh Fermor
British Museum
through July 15



Niko and Barbara Ghika, John Craxton, and Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor on the terrace of the Ghika house in Hydra, 1958

imperial form. But the “phantasy” of memory easily condenses multiple historical images into a single and timeless imaginary space—a myth.

In the final scene of *A Time of Gifts*, the older Paddy leaves his younger self on the bridge at Esztergom, “meditatively poised in no man’s air”—between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and between past and future—then constructs an elaborate fantasy of the people of the medieval city preparing for the nocturnal procession that marks Holy Saturday. The phrase “no man’s air” evokes the military metaphor of “no man’s land,” suggesting the tragic future that the younger Paddy did not foresee; the richness of the fantasy is the erudition of the older Paddy superimposed on his unknowing younger

self. The original mental impression has been effaced by its reconstruction.

After that kind of reconstruction, Freud thought, the original impression cannot be recovered. This is what happened to Leigh Fermor and most of the material intended for the final installment of his Great Trudge trilogy.

The third part of the trilogy was actually the first to be reconstructed on paper. In 1962, Leigh Fermor turned a commission from *Holiday* magazine for 5,000 words on “The Pleasures of Walking” into “A Youthful Journey,” a full-scale imagining of his walk from the Iron Gates to Constantinople, written entirely from memory. In 1965,

Leigh Fermor set aside “A Youthful Journey” unfinished, first to build his house at Kardamyli and then to write the whole walk saga from the beginning. Also in 1965, he saw Balasha Cantacuzène again and recovered from her the “green diary” that narrated the final leg of the walk.

In the decades that followed, he just could not pull it off. The difficulties were not just those of age, creeping blindness, and an expectant public. Leigh Fermor could not reconcile

“A Youthful Journey” with the facts of his green diary. The third volume only came out in 2013, two years after his death, under an apology of a title, *The Broken Road*.

Artemis Cooper and Colin Thubron, editors of *The Broken Road*, wonder if the “callowness” of the green diary “jarred with the later, more studied manuscript” of “A Youthful Journey,” or whether the “factual differences disconcerted” Leigh Fermor: “The two narratives often diverge.” The soldier who worked with disguise and subterfuge became the romancer who masked youthful adventure in the garb of myth. Leigh Fermor had already absorbed his youthful impressions, had already effaced them as he reconstructed them in “A Youthful Journey,” had already

covered the truth in a performance of which his writing was only one facet. The waters had clarified the mosaic, then obscured it as surely as the waters that buried the submerged island of Ada Kaleh. "Progress has now placed the whole of this landscape underwater."

Following the sound of running water in irrigation pipes, I climb through the lemon grove up to the mill above Galatas. The miller's house is derelict, its roof smashed by a rock fall. The trellis has vanished. A fig tree has erupted through the floor of the hut where Paddy and Balasha lived before the war. A monstrous vine has forced its way up the hollow tree trunk that dropped the water onto the mill wheel. At the foot of the trunk, the machinery lies collapsed and rusted. Across the strait, Poros looks much the same as it did on Easter Sunday 1946, that "amphitheatre of orange and cypress and olive wavered down to the glittering sea and the island." Everything is as it was, and nothing is the same.

In *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), Paul Scott suggests how an impartial observer might see the architecture of the British Raj and the climacteric of the British Empire in World War II:

What impresses him is something for which there is no memorial but which all these things collectively bear witness to: the fact that here in Ranpur, and in places like Ranpur, the British came to the end of themselves as they were.

The further World War II recedes in time, the sharper the edges of its essential contours become. Patrick Leigh Fermor's books and letters are strung across time's abyss, skeins that still connect the English to themselves even as the rope runs out. He was one of the last Englishmen. This, and not his esoteric reworking of Greek Modernism, is what explains Leigh Fermor's posthumous growth from popularity to eminence, from heroism to myth. As Vasilis Psiharakis said after dinner at Patsos, "The sincere feelings of friendship and unity remain unchanged, and serve as a bridge for the principles and values they embody." ♦

BCA

Stuck in the Middle with Virtue

Lessons from Aristotle for American self-government.

BY HARVEY MANSFIELD

Here is a fine comparison of America's founders with Aristotle on the value of a middle class. Aristotle wrote the first treatise on politics, and the world still uses the word "politics" as abundantly as if there were none other that would do. And Aristotle's politics featured the middle class, which we also call by name but do not praise so markedly. Our liberalism based on individual rights makes us suspicious of politics and of reliance on the virtue of a class. Is the similarity between Aristotle and America merely nominal or has Aristotle stated a truth on which we depend? This is the question of Leslie Rubin's compact and important study.

It begins by establishing Aristotle's thought on the middle class. The basis for politics, given at the start of Aristotle's treatise, is the reasoned speech with which men distinguish good and bad, useful and harmful, just and unjust. With these notions they claim the power to rule their city or country not merely in order to be on top but to be there for a purpose. In that purpose—some view of the good life chosen and defended—lies the nobility of politics as opposed to mere power-seeking. The pur-

pose can be stated in many ways, but the most characteristic difference is between those who want to include all in the city and those who want to prefer the best or strongest or richest. The former are democrats calling as they do

today for inclusiveness in the common good; the latter are oligarchs, insisting on recognition of the greater value of their contribution to the common good. Between these two extremes lies the middle class, the "middling element" that is Aristotle's concern and Leslie Rubin's topic.

Both democrats and oligarchs seem to have a point, a partial truth that seems opposed to a corresponding partial truth. For how can everyone be included without lowering the standard for inclusion? And if on the other hand the standard

is high, how will one supply the needs of the rulers and deal with those who are excluded? Some compromise in the rule of a middle class seems necessary and desirable. But Aristotle in his treatise on ethics, where he describes virtue as a mean, goes further than compromise. The way of virtue is at a mean between too much and too little of a quality, for example the virtue of courage between rashness and timidity. Here the extremes are not two partial truths but two vices, and the mean is not a compromise of extremes but the better way between them of virtue.

America, Aristotle, and the Politics of a Middle Class

by Leslie G. Rubin
Baylor, 275 pp., \$49.95



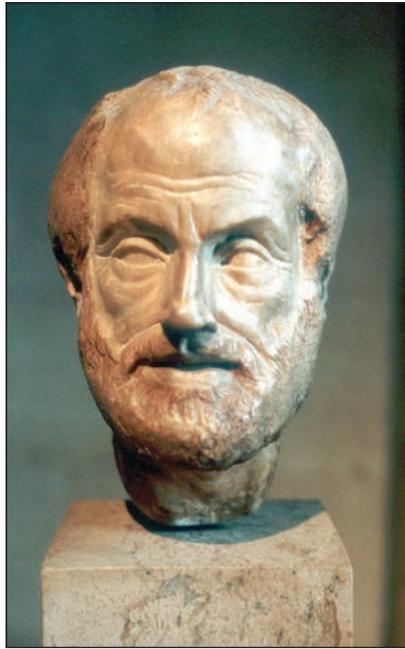
Leslie G. Rubin

Harvey Mansfield is professor of government at Harvard and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Applied to politics, the virtuous mean turns democracy and oligarchy into failures. Whether the middle class between rich and poor can reach this standard of moderate virtue is very uncertain, but at least by its middle situation it remains pinched between two classes it fears, eager for self-defense and ready for compromise.

This is the Aristotelian analysis Rubin finds especially in Book 4 of Aristotle's *Politics*, devoted to modes of improvement and reform and setting forth the model of "polity," the standard of reform that stands between oligarchy and democracy. How, then, does America fit this analysis, based on the possible virtue of the middle class? For this Rubin addresses the Founders, but not so much Publius. Publius was the pseudonym of the authors of *The Federalist*, written in defense of the Constitution and relying on institutions and a large, various country to provide checks and balances. Rubin studies John Adams, John Dickinson, Noah Webster, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson, and others describing and promoting in addition to constitutional structure the value of a middle class to a new republic.

Our liberalism, deriving from the thought of John Locke, begins from the state of nature, to escape which government is instituted by consent, rather than from Aristotle's picture of political argument in an active regime. Liberal "consent" means consent to the rule of others elected to the job rather than ruling oneself or participating in a party of others similar to oneself. Political power is exercised not for a version of the good life but for the defense and security of one's rights, hence "power" for whatever purpose suits that necessity. Thus Publius in *The Federalist* speaks most obviously of the dangers of power rather than of its disputable ends: the danger of too much power in the government when one power encroaches on another, or too much power in the people when a majority threatens the rights of individuals or the aggregate interest of the whole people, or too little power when government lacks energy or proves unstable.



Aristotle, man of the middle

Rubin's book is divided into a discussion of 'Aristotle's Republic' and 'The American Founders' Republic,' the first a careful analysis of the best text on politics ever composed, the second a discussion of the Founders on the 'moral self-governance' of the middle class.

As to middle-class virtue, Locke's liberalism centers on the increase and security of property as the main business of a free people rather than the business of self-government as with Aristotle. The result in America is the fashioning of what is today called "bourgeois virtue"—honesty, reliability, frugality, and industriousness—with the passion for nobility lacking or trimmed down (think "thank you for your service").

Added to bourgeois virtue, but separate from it, is the sort of life of professionals in science and technology, who work for progress in knowledge as well as improvement in the standard of living. They have a touch of nobility for being in a common enterprise of human perfectibility, but for that reason they share in the apolitical character of bourgeois virtue. Propertied virtue and intellectual progress were designed by Locke (and of course his philosophic friends) to distract a free people from an Aristotelian notion of rule and to prevent them from destroying themselves by disputing over who should rule. The middle class according to Locke's liberalism can protect its security and satisfy its cramped ambition by participating in elections that rotate politicians in office—rather than decide between or somehow mix the few and the many by ruling directly.

Still, the question remains whether attenuated liberal virtue is a testimony to Aristotle's wisdom or a more or less successful replacement of it. These two judgments are not entirely inconsistent, but Leslie Rubin clearly prefers the former. For her, America's Founders and America today would be at a loss without Aristotle, and particularly without his understanding of the middle class, on which America's Founders depended to describe the people whose government they legislated. Her book is divided into a discussion of "Aristotle's Republic" and "The American Founders' Republic," the first a careful analysis of the best text on politics ever composed, the second a collected discussion of the Founders on what she calls the "moral self-governance" of the middle class. The self-government of a free people is incomplete and unavailing if the free do not rule over those who are free because of their virtue. To be free one must take responsibility for rule, as Aristotle showed, and be neither distracted from nor disdainful of politics, as are so many today.

One must add that Leslie Rubin died in a street accident in October of last year. It is terrible to welcome this book and at the same time have to say adieu to its author. ♦

"The organization on Wednesday announced a new name for its Boy Scouts program: Scouts BSA. The change will take effect in February. Chief Scout Executive Mike Surbaugh said many possibilities were considered during lengthy and 'incredibly fun' deliberations before the new name was chosen."

—Associated Press, May 2, 2018

PARODY

Boy Scouts of America

1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
Irving, Texas 75015



TO: The National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America
FROM: Mike Surbaugh, Chief Scout Executive
DATE: April 30, 2018
RE: Fun New Name!

Dear Members:

As all of you know by now, we have spent a lengthy amount of time deliberating the title of our 108-year-old institution with an eye toward a more gender-inclusive future. I am immensely grateful for the thoughtful suggestions you provided.

The top five finalists:

- Young Pioneers
- Safe Scouts Youth Organization (aka SS Youth Organization)
- Modern Scouts 13 and Under (aka MS-13)
- Webelo Big Time
- Scouts BSA

It gives me great pleasure to announce that effective February, the new name of our organization will be Scouts BSA! (The exclamation point is optional—I'm just so excited!) Needless to say, this has been an incredibly fun process.

This fall we will launch our first-ever BSA Cookies Sale. Please send in your inclusive cookie name suggestions (no appropriating—sorry, Samoas!) no later than May 31.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike".

Mike Surbaugh
Chief Scout Executive
Scouts BSA

P.S. Don't forget: We have switched from three-finger to one-finger salutes!