

the weekly Standard

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REEFER MADNESS

TONY MECIA
on the Colorado
Pot Rush

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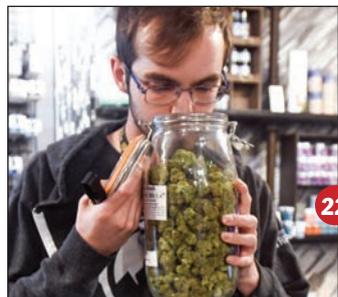
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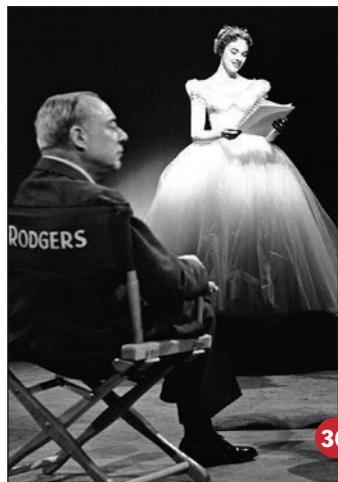
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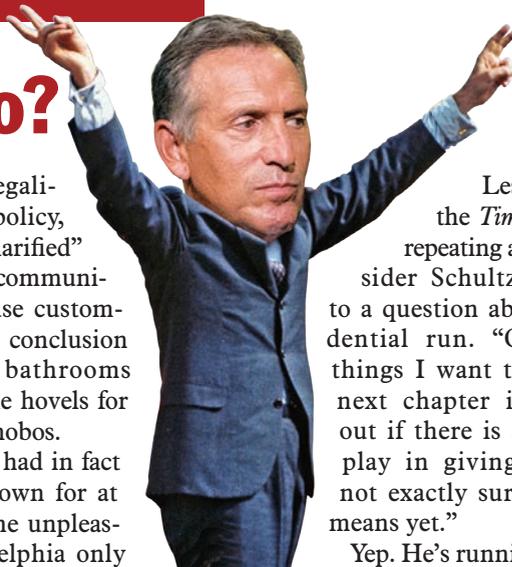
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President Frappuccino?

When we saw the headline in the *New York Times*—“Howard Schultz to Step Down as Starbucks Executive Chairman”—we mistakenly assumed Schultz’s decision to retire had something to do with the recent ruckus over racism. In mid-April, remember, a Starbucks franchise in Philadelphia was accused of racial bias when its manager asked the police to remove two black men for loitering. The coffee mega-chain, in a preposterous act of penance for one store manager’s pardonable overreaction, announced that its 175,000 employees at 8,000 locations would undergo a four-hour course in “unconscious racial bias.” It was Schultz, too, as we mentioned in this space last month, who announced the

company’s new egalitarian bathroom policy, which had to be “clarified” by the company’s communications arm because customers had drawn the conclusion that Starbucks bathrooms would soon become hovels for drug-pushers and hobos.

But no, Schultz had in fact planned to step down for at least a year, and the unpleasantness in Philadelphia only delayed the announcement. Why is he retiring, then? According to the *New York Times*, he may be running for president. “He is frequently mentioned as a potential candidate for the Democratic Party and has become increasingly vocal on political issues.”



Lest you think the *Times* is simply repeating a rumor, consider Schultz’s response to a question about a presidential run. “One of the things I want to do in my next chapter is to figure out if there is a role I can play in giving back. I’m not exactly sure what that means yet.”

Yep. He’s running.

We don’t doubt Schultz’s capabilities. If he can persuade half the country to pay four or five bucks for a flavored coffee, he’s not an untalented man. But we’re not sure if the country is ready for a four-year course in unconscious racial bias. ♦

Socialism in Action

It’s difficult to quantify how upset progressive America was in the wake of Donald Trump’s winning the presidential election, but one reliable measure of that anguish is \$7.3 million. That’s how much money 161,000 Americans donated to the Green party presidential candidate after she promised to spearhead a recount effort in swing states that would ostensibly prove Donald Trump had not, in fact, won the election.

Nearly two years later, people want to know what Jill Stein did with all that money. The *Daily Beast* reports that well over \$6 million has been spent, and while significant sums went toward recall efforts, it’s unclear whether much of what was spent on salaries and other expenditures had anything to do with the recount. And in violation of the law, Stein hasn’t filed an FEC report on the funds since September of last year.



It took a bit of chutzpah to pitch this fundraising effort to progressives—Stein’s name on the ballot, after all, may have cost Hillary Clinton the election. Donald Trump’s Electoral College margin was the result of besting Clinton by about 80,000 votes in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Jill Stein took 130,000 votes in those three states, and it can be safely assumed that a significant portion of her voters would have backed Clinton.

To the extent Stein did engage in recount efforts, they were not promising. Wisconsin officials found another 131 votes—for Trump. A federal judge rejected the request for a recount in Pennsylvania. In Michigan, the recount effort exposed potential voter fraud in the Democratic stronghold of Detroit. “Optical scanners at 248 of the city’s 662 precincts, or 37 percent, tabulated more ballots than the number of voters tallied by workers in the poll

books,” reported the *Detroit News*. So the Stein campaign promised progressive donors empowerment, and all they got was more pain and embarrassment. Maybe Stein wanted to show us what socialism looks like in practice. ♦

The Right, Reduced (cont.)

THE SCRAPBOOK has complained at least once in recent days about center-left news media using the terms “the right” and “conservatives” in highly tendentious ways.

We grant that it’s defensible, even if not strictly or literally true, to speak of the *New York Times* editorial board as “left” and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board as “right.” It’s sometimes necessary for the sake of convenience to collapse an assortment of commentators and public officials into these broad terms. What’s not defensible is to use the terms “the right” or “conservatives” to denote people who bear little relation to anything credibly called conservative.

These reflections occurred to us more than once in the days after

TOP: TWS ART; SCHULTZ, MIKE PONT / WIREIMAGE / GETTY
BOTTOM: TWS ART; FIGURE: BIGSTOCK; STEIN, GAGE SKIDMORE!

Roseanne Barr's Twitter tirade and the cancellation of her show. Consider a piece published in the *Guardian* headlined "How the Right Is Defending Roseanne Barr's Racist Tweets." We consider ourselves a small part of the right, so we were curious to discover who among our ideological co-belligerents would defend Barr's bigotry. The piece, by Arwa Mahdawi, mentioned several people: Ted Nugent, the ancient rocker and pro-gun radical; Noelle Nikpour, "a Republican strategist"; Alex Jones, the 9/11 truther; Peter Imanuelsen, "a Swedish commentator" and Holocaust denier; Lauren Rose, "a self-proclaimed white nationalist with a large following"; and Ali Alexander, "who has a large following on the right."

The right, then, consists of assorted flakes a writer for the *Guardian* found on Twitter.

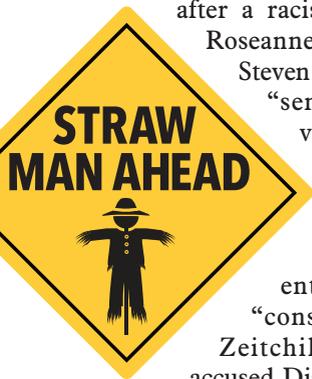
Less egregious but still offensive was a *Washington Post* story about the Walt Disney Company. "ABC's abrupt cancellation of 'Roseanne' after a racist tweet from star Roseanne Barr," the *Post*'s Steven Zeitchik explained,

"sent many conservative voices on Wednesday into a frenzy about [the] politics of ABC and parent Disney." These "conservative voices,"

Zeitchik repeated, had accused Disney of "applying a more lenient standard to liberals."

Well, okay. But who are these "conservative voices"? "The charge was led by President Trump," Zeitchik noted. Trump had complained on Twitter that although Disney CEO Robert Iger apologized to Valerie Jarrett, the object of Barr's slur, he never apologized to Trump for "HORRIBLE statements made and said about me on ABC."

There was a further allusion to "conservative blogs," but that was it. The piece mentioned no other conservatives or "conservative voices," despite there being "many," all in a "charge" "led" by Trump.



STRAW MAN FIGURE: BIGSTOCK



THE SCRAPBOOK appreciates how gratifying it must be to associate conservatism with Roseanne Barr, and we don't relish complaining about nomenclature. But if reporters for respectable media outlets wish to discuss conservatives and the right, perhaps they could be bothered to mention one or two actual conservatives their readers are likely to have heard of. ♦

A Boxer Prize Nominee

In March THE SCRAPBOOK introduced readers to the Boxer Prize—a very special literary award given to famous authors, typically celebrity or politician authors, whose fictional

heroes bear a striking resemblance to their creators. We call it the Boxer Prize in recognition of former California senator Barbara Boxer's stupendously bad debut novel *A Time to Run*, about a liberal U.S. senator who risks her career by standing up to right-wing extremists. This year we have already nominated actor Sean Penn for his debut novel *Bob Honey Who Just Do Stuff*, in which the story's eponymous hero is a barely coherent and ferociously profane left-winger who at one point meets with a Mexican drug lord.

We think we have another contender: Bill Clinton. The 42nd president has coauthored a novel

with thriller-writer James Patterson titled *The President Is Missing*. We read the book and must admit it's a pretty fun read—though the book's readability as a thriller, we reckon, has more to do with Patterson's abilities (or collaborator David Ellis's) than Clinton's. What makes us think Clinton should be shortlisted for the Boxer Award is its main character, President Jonathan Duncan. As THE WEEKLY STANDARD'S Barton Swaim explains in the *Wall Street Journal*,



seems to be driven by the instant-gratification worlds of Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, and the twenty-four-hour news cycle. We're using modern technology to revert to primitive kinds of human relations. The media knows what sells—conflict and division. It's also quick and easy. All too often anger works better than answers; resentment better than reason; emotion trumps evidence.”

Boxer, Penn, Clinton—these people aren't gifted writers. But at least they try to write about the one thing on which they are undisputed experts: themselves. ♦

Mr. Clinton's compositional contributions, if I'm right, consist mainly in the fictional president's first-person reflections on life and politics. President Duncan, in essence, is President Clinton as President Clinton imagines himself to be. There are a couple of obvious differences—President Duncan was an Army Ranger and had a loving wife (now deceased). But this chief executive is a principled and idealistic Southern liberal who eschews petty political motives and whose determination to protect the American people is thwarted chiefly by a sickeningly unprincipled speaker of the House. The latter character's name is Lester, but it might as well have been Newt.

President Duncan is given to shallow and, I think it's fair to say, rather Clintonian reflections on what ails politics in modern America. “All too often,” he observes in a bit that sounds as if it were lifted from a State of the Union address in the late 1990s, “those who rail against ‘them’ prevail over earnest pleas to remember what ‘we’ can be and do together.” Or this: “Participation in our democracy



Sentences We Didn't Finish

“I was assigned female at birth, but as I got older I felt less and less feminine. I am not someone who always knew I was transgender. I knew it only when the body I loved—my androgynous child's body—turned into something unmistakably female. I got breasts. And suddenly . . .” (“When Neither Male Nor Female Seems to Fit,” *New York Times*, June 3). ♦

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TOP: DAVE MALANI; CENTER, BIGSTOCK

A Freelancer in Rome

I went to Rome not long ago and took H.V. Morton along for the ride. He was an agreeable companion, for the most part. Through no fault of his own, he has been dead for 40 years, but before he clocked out he managed to publish a series of travel books that brought him fame and riches. His native England was a favorite subject and so was the Holy Land, but it was in Rome that he plowed especially fertile ground. Over a dozen years he managed to produce *A Traveller in Rome*, *This Is Rome*, *A Traveller in Italy* (with lots of stuff about Rome), *A Traveller in Southern Italy* (ditto), *The Waters of Rome*, and *The Fountains of Rome*. Thus he managed to match and exceed the freelancer's mandate: "Publish every piece three times." He's a hero.

Morton's first fame exploded when he broke the news of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1923. After that sensational ka-boom his work and career settled down. His tokens were the quiet anecdote and the picturesque detail. The best of his Rome books is the first, *A Traveller in Rome*, and I tossed it in my carry-on bag for inflight reading, hoping that once airborne I could resist the temptations of *Black Panther* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox* beckoning from the seatback screen 18 inches from my face.

Morton had the essential journalistic quality: absolute confidence in his own judgments. Without it a hack can never achieve the fluency needed to shovel words by the bushel. "Often wrong, never in doubt" was long the motto of editorial writers, but it can be applied to the journalism racket generally. And so: "To cut a good figure," writes Morton, "to have *panache*, to preserve one's 'face,' are necessary to the

self-respect of the Italian, and to reduce him in his own estimation is to earn his eternal enmity." Is this true? I have no idea—my knowledge of the Italian character doesn't extend beyond *Godfather I* and *II*, which are about Sicilians. It sounds plausible enough, and whatever it is, it's not mush. Morton gives his readers granite-hard assertions they can grab onto and use to hoist them-



selves into the next paragraph. He is full of assertions.

And he phrases them always in excellent prose. Common enough among pen-pushers of his day, Morton has a style that flirts with the fancy, approaches the purple, but always turns back in the nick of time. I never knew what would draw my companion's attention. Rome, I learned early on, "has the most wonderful steps in the world," a fact that launches him into a kind of prose poem about stairs, along with their effect on his leg muscles. He grows censorious when he contemplates Roman elevators. "Italy is a country of intransigent lifts," he scowls. And the motor scooter

Romans favored in the postwar years: "An absurd vehicle."

Morton isn't a full-time grump. He would hardly have been worth taking along on a trip if he were. His eye for beauty is worthy of Rome, and he is always open to surprise. I find him especially useful for the unexpected fact with which a traveler can impress fellow travelers and feign worldliness. Did you know that it was once traditional, when a pope died, for the Cardinal Chamberlain (whatever that is) to enter the papal bedchamber and give the Catholic carrion three ceremonial taps on his forehead with a silver hammer? Me neither. But I know it now, and so do you, thanks to my companion's tireless researches. Morton does not, unfortunately, go on to explain why this tapping ritual was performed. He's not perfect.

It is commonplace to observe that in Rome history lies in sedimentary layers. The clay of imperial Rome covers the Roman Republic, that of Alaric and the barbarians is laid upon the remains of empire, the Middle Ages barely peeks through the Renaissance, and so on, up to the bullet-pocked façade of Mussolini's headquarters. To these I now add an idiosyncratic layer of my own. When I walk the length of the Lateran basilica, I think not only of popes and saints and pilgrims; I think that this is where a British travel writer walked more than a half-century ago, author of what has become one of my favorite books, who left this holy place one afternoon for a quick bite to eat and recorded the event with his inexhaustible capacity for wonder.

"To watch an Italian faced by a gigantic mass of spaghetti is always to me an interesting spectacle. The way he crouches over it, combs it up into the air and winds it round his fork before letting it fall into his mouth and biting off the fringe, rouses the awe . . ."

ANDREW FERGUSON

EDITORIALS



Dave Mullins (in hat) and Charlie Craig ('Open your heart') protest the Masterpiece Cakeshop in 2012.

Coercive Liberalism's Dawn

On June 4, the Supreme Court ruled 7-2 in favor of Jack Phillips, the Colorado baker who in 2012 refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. Phillips, who has owned the Masterpiece Cakeshop for 24 years, concluded that his Christian faith wouldn't allow him to create a custom-baked cake for two men wishing to celebrate their matrimonial union.

In 2012, the Court's *Obergefell* decision hadn't yet happened, and indeed Colorado law didn't yet recognize same-sex marriage. The two men, Charlie Craig and Dave Mullins, were planning to marry in Massachusetts (where same-sex marriage was already legal) and celebrate their union back in Colorado. Rather than simply picking a different bakery and perhaps complaining about the Masterpiece Cakeshop on Yelp, they took their complaint to the Colorado Civil Rights Commission (CCRC). The commission investigated the case and found that Phillips had violated the couple's rights—this despite the fact that the baker's understanding of marriage was at the time in keeping with Colorado law.

The commission's insistence that Phillips had violated the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act was not *prima facie* unreasonable. That law forbids an individual or business to "refuse, withhold from, or deny to an individual or a group, because of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or ancestry, the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of a place of public accom-

modation." The addition of "sexual orientation" came only a decade ago, but it is there in black and white.

We suspect most fair-minded people feel there's something unjust about coercing a baker to create a cake that, for reasons of deeply held conviction, he doesn't want to create—especially when the same-sex couple in question needed only try the next bakery in the phone book. But the law was clear: no discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Phillips's legal team made two arguments: first, that the CCRC applied the law in a way that violated his First Amendment right to free speech—an argument premised on the ideas that (a) cake-baking is an art and (b) art is speech. And, second, that the state violated Phillips's First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion.

Most observers expected a 5-4 decision with Justice Anthony Kennedy the deciding vote, but in this instance Kennedy managed to persuade two of the court's liberals, Justices Elena Kagan and Stephen Breyer, to agree that the CCRC had evidenced hostility to Phillips's religious convictions in arriving at its decision and therefore abridged his First Amendment rights. In his majority decision, Kennedy quoted a state commissioner comparing Phillips to those who used freedom of religion to justify slavery and the Holocaust. "Hostile" is one word for it. "Idiotic" is another.

Kennedy was right to contend that the CCRC unfairly disparaged Phillips for his religious beliefs, but Kennedy's

is a procedural argument, not a substantive one. He, together with Kagan and Breyer in their concurring opinion, appeared to suggest that if the commission hadn't been so overtly hostile to Phillips, the substance of its decision would have been perfectly constitutional. The dissenters, Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, held that the commission's hostility was irrelevant.

That's five justices who, under different circumstances, would be willing to endorse a governmental authority's punishing a business for refusing to take part in a marriage ceremony that until a few years ago was illegal in every state. Better get with the times, people!

The question for conservatives and constitutionalists is this: If laws like Colorado's anti-discrimination statute ban individuals from withholding goods and services from people based on sexual orientation, how can bakers and caterers and florists and wedding planners legitimately refuse to serve same-sex patrons? The legalization of "mar-

riage equality" has given this question added urgency, but it was bound to arise sooner or later as a society dominated by left-liberal hyperindividualism added more and more protected identities to anti-discrimination statutes. Related questions will continue to beset us. Why, to take the most obvious example, should a clergyman be permitted to refuse participation in same-sex marriage ceremonies? Kennedy in his opinion says "it can be assumed" that a clergyman couldn't be compelled to perform this service, but no such thing can be assumed.

Religious and individual liberty survived the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* decision unscathed, but we're likely to see a day when businesses and individuals are punished by the state for abiding by their moral and religious convictions. When that happens, lawsuits may be less effective than simply refusing to comply, accepting the punishment, and allowing the world to see just how coercive "liberalism" can be. ♦

The Loneliest Cause

On June 5, Medicare's trustees published a report warning that the health-insurance program will be unable to pay scheduled benefits in 2026, not in 2029 as previously thought. The same report maintained the 2017 estimate that Social Security will be insolvent by 2034. These two programs, Medicare and Social Security, together with their correlative for low-income Americans, Medicaid, are far and away the largest recipients of public money in the federal budget. They bear overwhelming responsibility for the federal government's \$20 trillion debt and nearly \$700 billion yearly deficit.

Does anyone care?

We ask the question literally. Does anyone actually care? Left unchecked, these programs will swallow the federal budget and require dramatic tax increases to sustain them, leading in turn to permanent economic lethargy. But almost no one cares. For elected officials in Washington, the problem is never sufficiently urgent to do anything about—and in any case, the assumption is that tampering with benefits is a pretty certain way to lose your next election. For Americans outside Washington, the problem is too abstruse and complicated to ever get exercised about. If no one

was alarmed by the prospect of an insolvent Medicare in 2029, no one will care about its insolvency in 2026.

Meanwhile the cost of the programs keeps rising—partly because more and more people qualify as beneficiaries, partly because benefits are set by federal statute and rise automatically (hence the term *entitlement*). If law-

makers do nothing, taxpayers will have to bail the programs out, and do so again and again, until entitlement programs eat almost the entire non-defense federal budget. That means discretionary spending on infrastructure, research and development, and a vast array of grants to state governments and other institutions—they all get axed in order to keep paying for retirement benefits and health insurance for the



'We've got ours; good luck to you younger folks.'

elderly. The American economy just can't keep up with our entitlement programs.

The Democrats' answer to this problem, on the rare occasions they've offered one, is always the same: Raise taxes. After all, they say, Europeans have partially succeeded in paying for their burgeoning welfare states; why not here? Leave aside the political question of whether Americans, accustomed to greater political freedom and less intrusive government than their European

SAUL LOEB / AFP / GETTY

counterparts, are prepared to pay higher taxes in return for an entitlement state. Americans also have to pay for a superpower military to counter global foes—Russia, Iran, China, North Korea, et al. Europeans, thanks to the American umbrella, are not thus burdened.

American liberals regard last year's tax cuts with uncomprehending rage. Republicans, they shout, pose as the party of fiscal responsibility and yet they starve the government of revenue at a time when our largest entitlement programs are about to go bust. It's a reasonable complaint. But entitlement programs were racing towards disaster long before the tax cuts. Why? In part because of huge demographic shifts and the programs' poor structures. But also because the American economy had hobbled along at 2 or 3 percent growth for a decade. Productivity has fallen for even longer than a decade. To put it plainly: The Obama-era economy, shackled by punitive corporate taxes and stultifying regulation, was never going to rise to the challenge.

It's not clear yet that tax reform will escalate growth in the long term. But it has a far better chance than the previous status quo.

The bigger question is whether Republicans have the will to make entitlement programs sustainable. The reform ideas are well known on Capitol Hill: raising the

eligibility age for Medicare recipients, reducing Medicare subsidies for beneficiaries with higher incomes, altering the formula for Social Security's cost-of-living adjustments. George W. Bush bravely tried to let Americans privatize part of their Social Security savings. He failed at that effort, but succeeded, alas, at adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. Paul Ryan proposed an ambitious plan that would have replaced Medicare's absurdly inefficient direct-payment system.

But Ryan is retiring, and GOP lawmakers no longer seem interested—if indeed they ever were. President Trump has repeatedly expressed fierce opposition to anything resembling “cuts” to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. It's a hopeful sign that Howard Schultz, retiring head of Starbucks and likely Democratic presidential candidate, on June 5 called the debt the most pressing domestic policy challenge facing the country. But candidates have often shown interest in such reforms and lost it as officeholders.

One thing is guaranteed to spur reform: the collapse of one, two, or all three of our major entitlement programs. When 63 million people don't get their Social Security checks in the mail, we may be sure that major changes will take place—along with a great deal of governmental upheaval and political chaos. If you're reading this, you'll likely see it happen. It is just eight years away. ♦

Costs of Recent Trade Policies Rack Up

THOMAS J. DONOHUE

PRESIDENT AND CEO
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Our nation's critical trading relationships are growing more complicated by the day. Using a combination of tariffs and tough negotiating tactics, the Trump administration is attempting to solve a number of real and serious trade challenges facing America around the world. Its approach, however, runs the risk of erasing the recent economic gains it worked so hard to secure through tax and regulatory relief without even solving the underlying problems.

To be clear, the administration is right to call attention to the trade barriers that American companies face and demand reform from our partners. But our strategy must take aim at the right problems, not trade deficits. It must also take aim at the right targets, not our closest allies. Unfortunately, the growing list of tariffs proposed or imposed by our government, as well

as the continued uncertainty over the future of NAFTA, is already taking a toll on businesses.

For example, U.S. steel prices have risen nearly 40% since January and are now 50% higher than in Europe. The most recent *U.S. Chamber + USG Commercial Construction Index* shows higher material costs have suddenly become a substantial concern for contractors. These recent trade moves are creating great uncertainty in the business community, and uncertainty is the enemy of investment.

If these actions continue, our businesses will lose customers, workers will lose jobs, and American consumers will lose family income through higher taxes and higher prices. Studies show that a combined 760,000 jobs could be lost from the tariffs already enacted as well as those being considered on autos and auto parts. And if the administration carries out its threat to withdraw from NAFTA, an additional 1.8 million U.S. jobs could be lost in the first year alone.

On each of these issues, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has privately and publicly expressed our concerns to the administration and Congress. We have reminded them that a tariff is nothing more than a tax, and it is not paid by the exporting country—it is paid by the American people. At the same time, we have expressed our support for robust negotiations to open foreign markets for U.S. exporters and level the playing field.

The Trump administration began by making growth its highest priority, a refreshing change from years past. Now it's time to reaffirm that growth remains our top priority. That must include an effective approach to trade and a reaffirmation of our nation's trade leadership. This leadership is essential to economic security, national security, and our strategic interests around the world.



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

FRED BARNES

Trump makes the midterms exciting

We have President Trump to thank for the noisy and exciting midterm elections. If John Kasich were president, the sound of the campaign would be zzzzzzzzz. Trump's aides must have forgotten to tell him presidents aren't on the midterm ballot. With luck, they'll keep it a secret.

But even Trump hasn't been enough to stamp out the most tedious aspect of electoral coverage, the narrative. That's what we call it when the press—or if you prefer, the media—comes up with a word or two to make an otherwise zippy campaign boring. As of last week, the 2018 midterm is all about the “blue wave.” It's a rerun.

We went through wave talk once before in this cycle. Then it ran out of gas as Trump's approval rating went up and his value as a target for Democrats went down. And Trump turned his attention to Iran and North Korea and the G7.

Now we have it on the authority of the *Washington Post* that Democrats have gotten a “blue boost” from primary elections in California and six other states. The result is their chances improved of capturing the House in the midterm and impeaching President Trump.

That's the new narrative for the 2018 campaign. What's implied is that as long as Democrats stay out of trouble, they'll surf to victory on that wave. There's only one minor impediment—Republicans.

There's never been much talk of a “red wave” strong enough to keep the House in Republican hands, the Senate too. But that thought is in the air.

And as luck would have it, there's evidence for such a thing.

Midterm elections focus on the president, but Trump is no longer the punching bag he was last year. His approval rating has inched up to 44 percent, which isn't great but not bad either. Better yet, expectations that his approval would soon blow up



Republican intensity—how hyped up they are about the election—has gotten stronger than the anger of all those resisters. That's a pretty amazing development.

because of a gaffe haven't panned out. Democrats should have known better. Trump doesn't suffer from gaffes. He thrives on them. Anyway, there's evidence a red wave is building.

Strategists treat the “generic ballot” as a magic number. It asks which party you intend to vote for. At one point, Republicans were minus-18. That's landslide time. Now they're minus-3 or tied with Democrats.

Republicans have underpolled on this question for decades. This leads to a twist. If they're at minus-7 or better, they'll probably lose fewer than 23 seats and relegate Democrats to the minority for two more years. That's what GOP savants say, anyway.

Ah, but there's more. Republican intensity—how hyped up they are about the election—has gotten stronger than the anger of all those agitated Democratic resisters. That's

a pretty amazing development. So is the emergence of the 89-90 percent of Republicans who say they're fine with Trump, according to a GOP survey of likely voters.

Issues? The double whammy of a surging economy and huge tax cut are bound to boost Republicans. House minority leader Nancy Pelosi is sticking to her story that the tax bill merely sprinkled crumbs around the country, but no one else is.

Pelosi will get relief from her agony should Democrats do well in the seven Republican-held House districts that Hillary Clinton won in California in 2016. However, the seven Democratic candidates are rookies, having never run for office before. Nor have they been looked over by Republican investigators, but they soon will be.

A Republican veteran insists the party needs only one more thing to top off its midterm effort: a Supreme Court vacancy. Nothing would bring out Republican voters like the prospect of confirming another conservative. And no one is better at making it happen than Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell.

Meanwhile, Democrats have created a special issue of their own, gerrymandering, the practice of drawing the lines of voting districts to maximize your party's success. They pretend that Republicans do it all the time. Don't Democrats do the same? Perish the thought. The media have taken up the issue, too, as they do when Democrats give them a nod.

Not that there's anything wrong with denouncing gerrymandering. Democrats are just being hypocrites. They have a long record of gerrymandering whenever they have the opportunity.

Republicans do it better. The trick is hard work over the long haul. Republicans have poured money and

effort into electing governors and state legislators—that is, the folks who actually draw the congressional district lines.

Rather than do the work, Democrats take the easy way. They turn to the courts to bail them out, notably in Pennsylvania. Once they got a Democratic majority on the state supreme court, they filed suit on the grounds the longstanding lines were unconstitutional. They won.

A bipartisan group of legislators created the old districts. A Democratic court killed them and drew new ones designed to favor Democratic candidates. “The supreme court wreaked havoc,” says Republican leader Charles Gerow. The result: Democrats are likely to gain two or three House seats in Pennsylvania.

How can Trump help? He can do what he does best. He can tweet and denounce. He can travel and speak out. He can appear on Fox. He can be a noisemaker. He can make Democrats pay a price for gerrymandering. Just don’t tell him he’s not on the ballot. ♦

Worth Repeating

from *WeeklyStandard.com*:

‘I mean, sweet jeebus, who wants to furnish their apartment with a hotel mattress? Pruitt’s job is supposed to be cleaning up toxic waste sites, not scamming them for his personal bedroom. Hasn’t Pruitt ever seen one of those videos of what a hotel mattress looks like under a black light?’

—Charles J. Sykes,
*‘The Mystery of
Scott Pruitt’s Mattress’*

COMMENT ♦ PHILIP TERZIAN

Rediscovering those legendary three-martini lunches of yore

A writer in the *New York Times Magazine* recently fixed our present epoch in time as “a few decades after the heyday of the notorious ‘three-martini lunch.’” The gin-soaked midday meal, he explained, had been “an anachronistic ritual during which backslapping company men escaped a swallowing sense of existential pointlessness.” Nowadays, of course, we know that too much booze is both unhealthy and inconsiderate to colleagues; in truth, however, the martini has disappeared from America’s lunchtime menu not because of “some renewed sense of temperance but because of our ascendant obsession with cramming every minute of our day with work.”

I don’t know how old that *Times* writer happens to be, but his second observation seemed to suggest that he sees our present virtuous habits as a mixed blessing, at best. Which is why an earlier passage in his essay took me aback:

Would it surprise you to learn that the three-martini lunch was once such a staple of the American workday that it was celebrated by the former President Gerald Ford? [He] called the practice “the epitome of American efficiency. Where else can you get an earful, a bellyful, and a snootful at the same time?”

I raise the subject of the writer’s age for a reason. He acknowledges that, in Ford’s 1978 address, the ex-president was not celebrating the three-martini lunch so much as delivering a laugh line. But it is not clear that the writer fully comprehends Ford’s joke or why Ford was making it.

Now, I tend to think that the “heyday of the three-martini lunch” in America, like any number of journalistic themes, is exaggerated. But the phrase itself was almost entirely unknown until Jimmy Carter rose up from Georgia to challenge Ford for the presidency. And a crucial portion of Carter’s crusade was his complaint



The phrase was almost entirely unknown until Jimmy Carter made it part of his crusade against Washington influence-peddlers who wined and dined their way to leverage.

that the practice of politics-as-usual in Washington included tax breaks for lobbyists and other influence-peddlers who wined and dined their way to leverage through “three-martini lunches,” which they wrote off as business expenses.

As a populist invocation of corruption in the nation’s capital, it was a political masterstroke—as Ford must have realized. Not only were lobbyists working night and day against the interests of the People, they were doing so—at taxpayers’ expense!—while indulging themselves in orgiastic “three-martini lunches.” And like most stereotypes, there was a particle of truth in the imagery: Lobbyists do exist in Washington, and in ever-increasing numbers, and you can walk into any random selection

of restaurants during lunch hour and see them at work.

The problem is that the special interests they represent are very nearly as numerous as the number of lobbyists. And of course one definition of “special interest” is approximately as valid as another. Somehow, a three-martini lunch on behalf of legislation I support seems more benign than a three-martini lunch hosted by my adversaries and their paid publicists. Moreover, the whole spectacle—a moneyed enclave of cynical powerbrokers and compliant officeholders—is an old, partly mythical, and surely perennial complaint about Washington.

Indeed, I would argue that as Americans, we might take some satisfaction in the progress we’ve made from the vision of our national capital as rustic backwater—*nought but woods, and Jefferson they see / Where streets should run, and sages ought to be*, in the words of the visiting Irish poet Thomas Moore (1804)—to the citadel of sharp practices and deluxe consumption we now recognize. For just a few decades later, when the Whigs roused the Democrat Martin Van Buren from the White House (1840), an indignant Pennsylvania congressman memorably took to the floor of the House to describe the executive mansion and its

Blue Elliptical Saloon . . . its spacious courts [and] sumptuous drawing rooms, its glittering and dazzling salons, with . . . French bronze lamps, gilt framed mirrors of prodigious size . . . and satin settees, sofas, bergeras, divans, tabourets, and French comfortables.

Yet so enduring is the idea of political Washington as an island of gilded duplicity and self-indulgence—think of Donald Trump’s 2016 clarion call to “drain the swamp,” for example—that each succeeding generation rediscovers it in turn. I am old enough now to have lived through a couple of cycles. In my childhood, of course, the debonair country squire Franklin Roosevelt was remembered fondly as the scourge of the self-made orphan Herbert Hoover and his band of millionaires and heartless tycoons in federal office. And as a baby editor at the *New*

Republic, in the mid-1970s, I labored on a special issue with an arresting, but familiar, theme: “The Good Life in Washington Is Bad for America,” illustrated with a cover drawing by William Hamilton, the *New Yorker* chronicler of the comfortable upper classes.

It was then, in fact, that I witnessed the one and only three-martini lunch in my experience, and it was an eye-opener. There was an older writer at the *New Republic* named John Osborne, a courtly Mississippi-born veteran of *Time* who wrote a popular feature called “White House Watch.” Then as now, I tended to be more interested in the past than the present and liked to talk to Osborne about his days as a colleague of Henry Luce and Whittaker Chambers—in particular, about his unfinished biography of the first defense secretary James Forrestal—which must have annoyed him. But he was a kindly soul, in his way, and invited me to lunch one day at his favorite watering hole, the now-defunct Federal City Club.

The Federal City Club, I should

explain, had been founded in early-1960s idealism as a reaction to the refusal of other Washington clubs to desegregate. It had no permanent headquarters; but on any given day, it was a floating exhibition of liberal Washington and, on that occasion early in the Carter administration, featured such New Deal-Kennedy-Johnson luminaries as Robert S. McNamara, James H. Rowe, Carl T. Rowan, and a visiting Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. All were imbibing some version of the “notorious three-martini lunch”—not least Osborne himself, who consumed a couple of Gibsons in swift succession, with (so far as I could tell) no ill-effect.

It occurred to me, at the time, that my fellow diners could be easily mistaken for “backslapping company men [with a] swallowing sense of existential pointlessness,” but they wouldn’t have seen it that way. Still, the irony was instructive: The guardians of progressive Washington were indistinguishable from their adversaries. You can drain the swamp, for a while, but it quickly fills back up. ♦

COMMENT ♦ NOEMIE EMERY

Sympathy for the wives of the devilish

Poor Mrs. Weinstein, Mrs. Harvey Weinstein that is, estranged wife of the man who’s the King of the Hill atop a long list of sinners knocked off their thrones for having treated the females in their employ as slave owners once treated chattel on their plantations and lordlings once treated their serfs. Abuse, rape, harassment, and the death of careers were just part of the story, but Harvey’s wife, Georgina Chapman, is the one for whom *Vogue* would prefer you feel sorry. There she is, in the latest issue, alone in the world except for her beauty, her friends, her fabulous houses, her clothing line, and the huge divorce settlement she will be getting, if her husband has anything left.

Feel sorry, too, for Mrs. Anthony Weiner, née Huma Abedin, closest of

aides to Hillary Clinton, who shares with Georgina the mortification of having been wed to a colossal embarrassment—hers had a habit of sexting over the Internet earned him almost two years in jail. Her own appearance in *Vogue*, in 2016, celebrated her as the glamorous aide to the plain but still fabulous Hillary Clinton, who once in the White House would bestow on Huma a fabulous job. But the White House—and job—would sadly elude her, and *Vogue* feels her pain. Editor Anna Wintour, Clinton fangirl and bundler, was packing her bags to become Madam Ambassador to the Court of St. James when Trump popped the bubble. So now they find themselves linked in a chain of misfortune—leaving them all feeling sorry indeed.

Raising money for Clinton was not the only index of Wintour's ambition. In her magazine's pages, she took care to showcase political women, always on the liberal side. Lots of feminist Democrats, no matter how boring and commonplace; no Republicans, not even the ones who were powerful, breakers of barriers, war veterans, or just good-looking. It's as if *Vogue*, like the Democrats, wants to preserve the caricature of Republicans as older white men who want women barefoot and chained to the kitchen. Or perhaps it's the old feminist line that women who don't think the right way really aren't "women" at all.

The tradition of feminists dissing their "sisters" is one that goes back years. Gloria Steinem called Republican women "female impersonators," Madeleine Albright and Steinem assailed younger women for going with Bernie, and when Hillary lost, she and her friends assailed white women who voted against her. In Clinton's world (and in *Vogue*'s) sympathy went to the numerous women who claimed that Trump groped them. None went to the women who said they were groped by Bill Clinton, who were slandered by Democrats of both sexes as trash. The two sets of standards used in the cases of women were also applied to the men. When Trump chased and groped women, he was rightly assailed as a lout and a lecher, but when Bill Clinton did the same things, he was a man of the world, a sophisticate, and a free spirit whose search for "connections" just showed his life force. When feminists pretended to chide him, they did so in ways that did him a favor, that sidestepped the worst parts of his bad behavior, and let him emerge almost unscathed.

What *Vogue* did in the cases of Weinstein and Clinton and Weiner was to skirt the criminal aspects of their transgressions and play up the pain of their wives. The story on Chapman in the latest issue could be modeled on the one on Hillary in 1998, when impeachment was raging, which countered her pain with a flattering photo shoot on the cover and pages of egre-

giously saccharine prose. This month's issue has gorgeous shots of the wistful and stricken Georgina, a tear-jerking story, and an editor's letter from Wintour about the unfairness and cruelty of life. The women come off as greatly mistreated. The men come off badly; Weinstein more so than Clinton, whose wife stayed with him.

But this sort of treatment actually does the men a favor, framing the problem in terms of the pain that their misdeeds brought to their wives. If you're focused on feeling sorry for Hillary, you're not thinking Bill Clinton molested the help, toyed with an intern, lied under oath, and may have been guilty of rape. If you focus on the grief he caused poor Georgina, you aren't thinking that Harvey Weinstein's charged with rape, a man who abused and threatened hundreds of women and destroyed the careers of many others. It saves the left from confronting the worst of their actions and from having to face a tough question: How could it be that these men so supportive of femi-

nist policies turned out to be the most egregious abusers of all?

Cry if you want for Georgina (and Huma and Hillary) but remember: They will be fine. They have support, friends, and money; they will still be invited to all the best places; people will throw things their way. For their husbands' victims, the damage was far worse, the scars were long lasting, and the network of friends far less powerful. "People think you're beautiful, you're thin, you're rich, you're photographed on the red carpet," Abedin told *Vogue*, explaining why (outside of *Vogue*) she and her new friend Georgina Chapman were not seen as tragic victims. Sure enough, there was Huma in all the papers earlier this month, photographed at the Met Gala, in chandelier drop earrings and an off-the-shoulder gold gown. Next year, her friend will be back, and she too will be stunning. Weinstein's real victims do not have those options. *Vogue*, if it really does care about women, could throw some attention their way. ♦

COMMENT ♦ BARTON SWAIM

Deem them not useless

One of the last laws in Europe banning abortion, Ireland's eighth amendment, was decisively rejected by voters on May 25. The plebiscite's result allows the amendment to be struck from the country's constitution. Once that happens later this year, Irish women will no longer have to smuggle in abortifacients or cross the Irish Sea to terminate their pregnancies. Eminent news media in Europe and North America interpreted the vote as a glorious victory in the cause of freedom and rights.

The ban remains in the small U.K. province of Northern Ireland, but abortion-rights activists, with the enthusiastic backing of those

same news media, have now turned their attention there. On June 7 the British Supreme Court blocked an attempt to strike down Northern Ire-

land's abortion law, but only because four of seven justices concluded that the organization filing the suit—the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission—didn't have legal standing. The court's presiding justice, writing for the majority, agreed that Northern Ireland's law is "incompatible" with the European Convention on Human Rights. One may wonder how a medical procedure so dependent on modern technology can be a human right, but such is the unassailable logic of modern liberalism.



The right to abortion, if there is such a thing, is usually spoken of in clinical and abstract terms, but of course the application of this right is hideous and disturbing, difficult even to discuss without blanching. The abolition of the eighth amendment will allow the Irish, to take just one component of this grim subject, to wipe out an entire population—namely those with Down syndrome, a genetic disorder causing moderate intellectual disability and distinctive facial features. In North America and much of Europe, a prenatal screening revealing this chromosomal abnormality usually results in the destruction of the unborn person. It's difficult to know how many pregnancies end in abortion as a result of a Down syndrome diagnosis, but it's likely close to 67 percent in the United States. In Europe, that figure is 92 percent and perhaps higher. One rarely encounters a person with Down syndrome in continental Western Europe.

No parents would prefer that their child have Down syndrome, so in a sense it's understandable that expecting parents receiving the news that their child is affected by the disorder would seek a way to avoid this outcome. Yet government policies permitting abortion for any or almost any reason have meant not just the dramatic reduction of Down syndrome, but the dramatic reduction of a class of persons. What the practical consequences of this reduction may be for the developed world (an ironic term in this context) are perhaps damaging in ways few of us can appreciate.

These thoughts occurred to me recently when my youngest daughter "graduated" from her public elementary school. Among the 200 or so names of students announced during the ceremony was that of a 10-year-old boy with Down syndrome. When his name was spoken and he proceeded across the stage to claim his certificate, the assembled crowd of maybe 1,500 erupted in cheers and applause. The sight of this happy and proud young man drew from

us an innate impulse to protect and honor the weakest in our little community. The response was spontaneous and beautiful.

It was in a sense a little picture of the ways in which people with Down syndrome draw out kindness and generosity from their fellow creatures. They are hardly the only ones bearing this office, but they are among the ones we have it in our power quietly and clinically to exterminate. The ministerial role of the poorest and weakest among us is the subject of a

Among the 200 or so names of students announced during the ceremony was that of a 10-year-old boy with Down syndrome. When his name was spoken, the crowd erupted in cheers and applause.

mostly unremembered poem by William Wordsworth, "The Old Cumberland Beggar," about an ancient vagrant whose only function is, it would seem, to soften and humanize the villagers among whom he travels.

*Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with
a slack
And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the
coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the
rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels
o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,*

*Shouts to him from behind; and if, thus
warned,
The old man does not change his course, the
boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.*

Wordsworth was concerned chiefly with government policies meant to place vagrants in workhouses, but his warning transcends the political circumstances of England in the 1790s and is, I think, highly pertinent to the plight of our Down-affected citizens.

*But deem not this man useless.—Statesmen!
ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye
contemplate
Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him
not
A burden of the earth.*

Our Down syndrome friends also have a wonderful capacity to rattle social conventions and otherwise keep those around them from becoming too complacent. I think for instance of my friend Simon (not his real name), a member of my church. I recently taught a class on First Samuel, an Old Testament book about just and unjust political power. Former FBI director James Comey had been much in the news that week-end, and I mentioned Comey's name in passing. Simon awoke from his slumber and raised his hand. I called on him. "My dad," he stated proudly, "says James Comey is a lying bastard, and I agree with him."

Whatever a pair of frightened parents might conclude when told bad news about their gestating child, surely no one wants a world with fewer Simons. These guileless people leaven our communities with an undefinable beauty; they evoke passions we didn't even know were there and disincline us from cruelty and spite.

What will we become if we rid ourselves of them? Probably not kinder or more lovely. ♦

Credulity as Policy

A misbegotten ‘ceasefire’ in Afghanistan.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN & BILL ROGGIO

Ashraf Ghani, the president of Afghanistan, announced June 7 that his government’s forces would unilaterally enter into a ceasefire with the Taliban until June 20. It remains to be seen how the Taliban responds. The jihadists didn’t agree to the plan beforehand and may simply use the lull in fighting to plan the next wave in their nationwide assault on the government. Ghani and his American backers are hoping for something much more. They think there is a chance the Taliban’s men

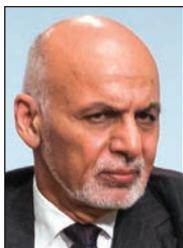
will lay down their arms. General John Nicholson, who oversees the U.S. war effort, quickly endorsed Ghani’s move, calling it a “bold initiative for peace” and saying he supports “the search for an end to the conflict.”

But the ceasefire isn’t “bold”; it is desperate and delusional. The more we listen to America’s military commanders the clearer it becomes that they do not understand the enemies they face. Nor do they have a realistic plan for victory.

The current strategy hinges on the idea that the Taliban will tire of the fight, especially since President Trump decided, somewhat surprisingly, to stay in it last year. With several thousand more troops, the military argued, they could train enough Afghans to push back the insurgents and make them abandon their relentless jihad. Nearly 10 months later, we know that is not even close to true. According to our

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estimates, approximately 60 percent of Afghanistan’s districts are either contested or controlled by the Taliban. The jihadists outright control at least 10 percent of the districts. But fully half of Afghanistan is contested terrain, with the two sides vying to claim the ground as their own.



Ashraf Ghani

The United States and its Afghan allies have thus not beaten back the jihadists in the months since the Trump administration announced its new strategy last August. They have, at best, prevented them from conquer-

ing even more ground. Why would the Taliban, which is not close to being defeated, give up now?

Ghani’s ceasefire was first proposed by the Afghan Ulema Council (AUC), a religious body of up to 3,000 figures from throughout Afghanistan who support the government. Earlier this week, the AUC ruled that suicide bombings were religiously impermissible and the ongoing Afghan jihad is illegal. Naturally, the Taliban rejected both findings out of hand, declaring that the AUC’s announcement was nothing more than American propaganda. Furthermore, the Taliban warned “religious scholars” they should “fear for their end in this and in the next world for considering the critical issue of righteous jihad as illegitimate.” Those are not the words of a group looking to make peace.

In praising Ghani’s announcement, Nicholson cited a February 14 “open letter” from the Taliban to the American people as evidence that the group is serious about negotiating peace. He has even gone so far as to claim that the Taliban “outlined” the “elements of a peace proposal” in the missive. It does not require a close Straussian reading of the text to see that the Taliban did

no such thing. The jihadists merely offered to negotiate the terms of their own victory.

As in other statements, the Taliban demanded an end to “foreign occupation,” stressing it is the Afghans’ “legal, religious and national obligation” to fight the Americans until they are gone. The Taliban blasted the Afghan government as an illegitimate, “corrupt regime,” while accusing anyone who works with it of “committing treason against our nation and national interests.” The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan—that is, the Taliban’s authoritarian regime—is the only true “representative of its people” and a “regional power with deep roots which cannot be subdued by sheer force.”

So much for the idea of getting the Taliban to participate in a unified political entity—the central goal of the peace talks envisioned by the Afghan government and its American allies. The Taliban will not compromise on the central reason for its existence: the resurrection of its Islamic emirate. The only “plan” offered by the Taliban is this: We win, you lose. No other reading of the February 14 letter is plausible—one has to be seriously confused to think it represents anything close to a pathway to peace. The Taliban even blames the United States for the rise in the Afghan opium trade, despite the fact that the Taliban itself is the main beneficiary of this illicit trafficking.

There are other reasons to be skeptical. The Obama administration’s attempts to negotiate with the Taliban ended in a fiasco. The United States made various concessions—for example, allowing the Taliban to open a political office in Qatar and removing some Taliban figures from international terrorist designation lists—but received nothing in return. Many Taliban leaders remain safely ensconced in Pakistan, where they are under no immediate threat. And the Taliban refuses to forswear al Qaeda, as the United States has begged the organization to do for years.

Perhaps Ghani’s gambit will somehow bear fruit. Given this sordid history, however, we wouldn’t count on it. ♦

BLOOMBERG / GETTY

The Trump Summit Team

Mike Pence and John Bolton are on the bench.

BY MICHAEL WARREN

Don't say Donald Trump isn't a man of faith—the president has lately expressed a great deal of it when it comes to Kim Jong-un's readiness for change. Trump is placing all his hopes for his June 12 summit with the North Korean dictator on the possibility Kim really is willing to dump his nascent nuclear program. "I think they want to do that," Trump said on June 1, shortly after his meeting at the White House with Kim's number two in Pyongyang, Kim Yong-chol. "I know they want to do that." He cautioned that unraveling the program would be the "beginning" of a "process" but promised "a very positive result in the end."

Trump's point man on the summit, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, has been similarly optimistic, at least in public. After his first meeting with Kim in North Korea this spring, Pompeo said he believed there was a "real opportunity" for ending the hermit kingdom's nuclear program. After meeting with Kim Yong-chol a day before Trump's sit-down, the secretary of state spoke hopefully about the "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" the summit presented.

A commitment to denuclearization would be a remarkable turnaround for Kim and his regime. The 34-year-old supreme leader has continued and accelerated the work of his father and grandfather to develop his country's nuclear weapons capabilities, with North Korea making some major advances in its program in recent years—including a likely successful

test of a hydrogen bomb last September. A fully functioning nuclear weapons program would be the culmination of decades of development by three successive regimes in North Korea, an integral part of the Kims' effort to achieve their sense of national security as well as global respect.

But the economic turmoil North Korea has faced as a result of the U.S.



Who will blink?

"maximum pressure" campaign of tough sanctions (with the necessary cooperation of the Chinese, Pyongyang's critical economic lifeline) has changed Kim's calculus, so the president's thinking goes. Permanent denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is the policy goal of the United States, and the administration's hope is that Trump's meeting with Kim in Singapore will begin a process for achieving it.

"The president has told me if he gets the sense that Kim is not there for denuclearization, he will push away from the table," says Cory Gardner, the Republican senator from Colorado and a top North Korea hawk on Capitol Hill. But there are signs that Trump is looking to come away from Singapore with a deal, any deal.

The effective benching of two top advisers who have been less than

enthusiastic about deal-making with Kim is instructive. Vice President Mike Pence, whom one White House aide described as the "skunk at the garden party," has in discussions with the president focused on North Korea's abysmal record on human rights—a topic Trump is not expected to broach in Singapore. And the chief North Korea hawk in the administration, national security adviser John Bolton, has not convened any formal meetings about the summit with National Security Council members.

There has been speculation, which the White House denies, that Bolton and Pence were looking to undermine the summit. Both men had in television interviews cited positively the "Libya model"—that is, Muammar Qaddafi's decision in 2003 to give up his nuclear program voluntarily. But to the North Koreans, that "model" extends to the NATO-backed removal of Qaddafi from power in 2011, which ended with the dictator's death at the hands of rebels. Bolton's invocation of the Libya model in April apparently irked Trump, but a White House official says the president was aware Pence planned to use the term in a Fox News interview on May 21.

Still, the vice president's warning that "this will only end like the Libya model ended if Kim Jong-un doesn't make a deal" prompted Pyongyang to issue a blistering statement blasting Pence as a "political dummy" and effectively threatening to engage in nuclear war. On the morning of May 24, Trump released an open letter to Kim canceling the summit. The official White House line was that a lack of communication from the North Koreans had gummed up the planning and rendered the June 12 date next to impossible. But just hours after canceling it, Trump began saying the summit could be back on schedule. A week later, Trump and Pompeo were meeting with Kim Yong-chol in the Oval Office—neither Pence nor Bolton was in the room—and the president emerged to confirm the summit was back on.

There are two big questions ahead

Michael Warren is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

TRUMP: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI / AFP / GETTY; KIM: SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL BLUE HOUSE / GETTY

of the Singapore summit, say Korea watchers. The first is whether the U.S. definition of denuclearization—known in diplomacy jargon as “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization,” or CVID—is the same as Kim’s. Historically, Pyongyang has viewed revoking the American nuclear security guarantee to our ally South Korea, with whom the North is still at war, as an integral part of “denuclearization,” something past American administrations have been unwilling to consider. Despite assurances from Pompeo that both the United States and North Korea are “in complete agreement” about the specifics of the goal, hawks say Trump needs to stand firm on our definition. “The key objective for Trump is to drill down hard on what Kim wants to denuclearize,” says Gardner.

Victor Cha, a senior adviser on Korea policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was Trump’s expected pick for ambassador to South Korea until his objections to administration policy scuttled his nomination. A skeptic of diplomacy with North Korea, Cha says it’s not just Kim’s idea of denuclearization that may be at odds with U.S. policy. “Is the president’s definition different?” he says. Or, as other skeptics have suggested, could Trump’s threshold for an acceptable level of denuclearization change in the moment in Singapore—something short of CVID that is nonetheless “more” than what any previous American president has achieved? What he says in the room with Kim will define the parameters, as far as the North Koreans are concerned, for the expected follow-on negotiations among lower-level officials.

The second important question, Cha says, concerns what the United States is willing to give North Korea in any deal on denuclearization. Publicly, Pompeo has spoken broadly about economic aid and relief from sanctions. There’s also been discussion of offering North Korea “security guarantees” in exchange for giving up its nuclear ambitions. Gardner says Harry Harris, the former Navy admiral who is Trump’s nominee for ambassador to

South Korea, has even brought up the idea of including North Korea in the so-called nuclear umbrella that provides those guarantees to South Korea and Japan. (The State Department declined to comment on that idea.) The lack of clarity from the administration on what the United States is ready to concede worries even Trump allies, who are concerned the president could negotiate away big items in the name of a deal.

Take, for example, the idea of pulling out of South Korea the 28,000 American troops stationed there. Doing so would be perhaps the biggest concession to North Korea and would appear to be an unthinkable abandonment of our ally without a verifiable change in Pyongyang’s behavior. But there’s reason to think Kim may perceive an opening. In recent months, both President Trump and Defense Secretary James Mattis have publicly

said the idea was on the negotiating table. Mattis has since walked that back, saying last week that U.S. forces in South Korea are “not going anywhere” and that “it’s not even a subject of the discussions.” But Josh Rogin of the *Washington Post* reported on June 7 that privately, “Trump continues to say he doesn’t agree with the argument that U.S. troops in South Korea are strategically necessary, and he thinks the United States gets nothing back from paying to keep them there.”

The fear from Korea hawks is that Trump’s strong desire for a deal and his ability to be charmed by whomever he meets increase the risk he will fall into the same traps previous administrations have found themselves in: empty guarantees from the North Koreans in exchange for concessions that embolden the Kim regime. “They know Trump wants a success,” Cha says. ♦

Nixon’s the One

From Brooklyn to Buffalo, ‘Miranda’ takes her show on the road. BY ALICE B. LLOYD

Albany, N.Y.

A journey across the state she wants to govern has landed actress, activist, and insurgent gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon in the upstairs library at the state capital’s oldest men’s club (women were admitted grudgingly in 1989) taking questions on the particulars of tax policy. When she doesn’t have a precise answer on hand, Nixon reverts to a softer, prettier version of the refrain Bernie Sanders customarily shouts: “I think that voters across New York would agree that millionaires and billionaires could afford to pay a little bit more.” She blinks and pauses for even longer than usual while trying to conjure an explanation

of how she’d navigate a state senate that’s announced it’s unwilling to revive the failed proposal to “tax millionaires” she’s promised she would resurrect if elected.

Last month, Nixon blinked and paused in Brooklyn, too, at a pop-up press conference on a subway platform, when a reporter asked how she’d fulfill the promise of “no more train delays” that she’d just made to a Manhattan-bound commuter. And here in Albany, she haltingly holds forth again. This Nixon is a telling contrast to the candidate I heard the night before, chatting confidently about the one subject she knows better than anyone: Cynthia Nixon.

“*Tanner ‘88* is about a man running for president, and I’m his daughter,” Nixon explained to me about the 1988 HBO miniseries made by

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Robert Altman and Garry Trudeau, which Altman revisited 16 years later. “But in 2004—in the world of Michael Moore—Altman, who was not a fan of Michael Moore, not a fan of documentary, or at least thought it was getting more glory than it deserved, made a *mockumentary* about my character making a *documentary* about my dad’s failed bid for the presidency. It is not a very interesting sounding documentary and that was part of his point.”

We were in Ithaca at a twee event space stocked with Bernie Sanders delegates. The role of Alex Tanner, the college-age activist daughter of a liberal long-shot candidate, was a natural for Nixon, 52. “I’m a person who comes from people who will believe in social change through protest,” she said. “There’s a photo of me at age five at a Vietnam protest outside of my school.”

I’d asked about *Tanner* because at her talk in Ithaca, Nixon had echoed the controversial proposal Jack Tanner makes in the show: His only defined policy position is the legalization of drugs, all of them. And Nixon, for her part, proposes not just to legalize marijuana in New York state—“We’re putting people of color in jail for something that white people do with impunity” runs her racial-equity pitch on pot—but, as of the Ithaca event, to provide safe spaces for heroin users to shoot up. “I think 100 percent, I don’t know why it hasn’t happened already. We need safe-injection sites,” she said, of a policy so far enacted only in San Francisco and Philadelphia. “We need safe-injection sites *here*, to save people’s lives.” This and her legal weed plug were the big applause lines in Ithaca.

Three months out from the state’s Democratic primary, it’s still Nixon’s most famous acting job that defines her candidacy. From 1998 to 2004, she was the sarcastic, high-powered lawyer Miranda Hobbes on *Sex and the City*. She was the “smart one” and the least conventionally sexy of the ensemble cast. Being Miranda makes

her a stronger and better-known challenger to Andrew Cuomo than was Fordham law professor Zephyr Teachout in 2014. But Nixon’s poor showing at the party convention on Long Island last month reminded the starstruck subset of the electorate what a powerful head start the two-term incumbent Cuomo has: Less than 5 percent of Democratic delegates cast votes for Nixon, who’s since moved on to collecting signatures to get on the primary ballot.

She says such setbacks only affirm



Cynthia Nixon greets a supporter after announcing her candidacy for governor of New York, March 20.

her rallying cry that Albany is a cesspool of corruption and favoritism—as do the conviction of Cuomo aide Joseph Percoco for bribery and the sitting governor’s record of pay-for-play politics in the statehouse. A veteran political operative and ex-Cuomo staffer admits, “I’ve been surprised by how many people are favorable to voting for her just because they don’t like Cuomo.” As an adamant public education advocate for 17 years, Nixon is “respected by serious people,” this Albany insider notes. But for her actually to win in September, “something would have to happen”: a late-summer surprise on the scale of the career-ending revelation that ex-New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman abused his girlfriends. “Were something like that to happen, she’s absolutely situated to win,” the former staffer says, launching into the story of former New York governor Eliot Spitzer’s sexual exploits with

escorts. “Stranger things have happened in New York politics.”

This unofficial slogan of the Nixon campaign—and of the post-2016 era in American politics—hangs in the air wherever she goes. *Stranger things have happened*. In the most recent public poll, Nixon was 22 points down. But her celebrity carries undeniable force.

At the Buffalo Pride Parade on June 2, a group called Queers for Racial Justice is waiting for Nixon to meet them at the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Allen Street, in Buffalo’s “gayborhood.” Bridge Rauch, a 32-year-old trans person with a five-o’clock shadow and punkish garb, disapproves of the parade’s sponsorship by M&T Bank but looks forward to meeting the candidate. Nixon’s choice to march with Queers for Racial Justice, the parade’s intersectional contingent, Rauch explains to me, “shows she’s not trying to perpetuate the systems of corporate control that applaud cisgendered people for accepting us.”

But, except for a post-parade photo-op with their organizer, Nixon didn’t join the Queers for Racial Justice. She ran late at Lincoln Memorial Methodist Church and after the service stopped at her hotel to change her shoes. I find her several blocks away from Bridge’s group, wearing purple Converse high-tops with towering wedge heels and stopping often to hug, shake hands, and take selfies with well-wishers while her wife, Christine Marinoni, walks backwards to keep pace. “*Mirandaaaa!*” a costumed member of a gay black men’s advocacy group shouts from atop a *Black Panther*-themed float. “Oh my f—ing God,” another Cynthia says when he sees her on the parade route.

When things have quieted down, we talk about the Methodist service she attended that morning. She’s no stranger to progressive Protestantism, though she takes her two children from a previous relationship to synagogue. “We’re both Episcopalian,” Nixon tells me, with a smile at Marinoni. They were married in 2012 by

TIMOTHY A. CLARY / AFP / GETTY

the openly gay Episcopal bishop Gene Robinson, whose elevation threatened a schism in the Anglican Communion. “My mom died the following January, so we kind of just made it. She held on,” Nixon says. “It was theater, it was theater,” she laughs, remembering what the ritual meant to her devoted stage mother.

The pre-parade service in Buffalo was not overtly political, Nixon assures me. The pastor, George Nicholas, in casting the Old Testament covenant in contrast to the New “made one reference to ‘who you love,’” she recalls of the sermon. “But it was more that threats shouldn’t be used in the name of religion. In the same way that we should rule with love, in the same way that scaring your children into behaving doesn’t really work. You’ve got to love them into behaving.” Scripture applies to the political game too, she thinks, especially once you’ve won. “I feel that governing with fear is not the right way to lead,” she adds.

Jim, a lawyer who asks that I conceal his surname for fear of recrimination from the governor, gives me a lift back to my car after the parade. I pack in with three of his friends. They will all probably vote for Nixon in September—if only “to send a message to Cuomo,” Jim says, describing the governor as callous, selfish, and mean. Cuomo legalized same-sex marriage in 2011 and because of it he wins fealty from New York’s gay community that Jim doesn’t think he deserves: “He got marriage, but was only for *his* agenda, not ours.” There’s an urban myth that Cuomo, while managing his father’s gubernatorial reelection campaign in 1982, plastered New York City with “Vote for Cuomo, Not the Homo” posters when then-mayor Ed Koch was still in the running. One of Jim’s friends gasps at the story, “He didn’t?” Jim intones, grimly, “He did.” Jim repeats a line I heard often during my days upstate: “Andrew Cuomo, even his friends hate him.”

But at least they know him. A couple of progressive Ithacans, a blogger and a freelance writer, wonder just what brand of progressive retail politics—economic populism or identity

politics?—Nixon is campaigning on. Given the choice, she throws in with Sanders: “If I had to pick one of those categories, I would say I’m a progressive populist,” she says, “We need government that listens to the people, and responds to the people.”

But her stump speech opens with a timely story of female grit: Nixon and her mother living in a one-bedroom walk-up, just the two of them, after separating from her abusive father. “There have been 56 governors of New York and not a single one has been a woman” is another of her signature lines. And downstate, race dominates her talking points: Nixon started her campaign in late March at a black church in Brooklyn.

One man likely to vote for Nixon is

Patrick Meagher, 42, a Manhattanite working on a public-art installation in Ithaca. He admires her controversial argument that legalizing marijuana represents “reparations” for black people. “It was brave of her to say what she actually meant,” he thinks, “whatever the connotation. It’s true, and it’s about time.”

A straight-talking protest candidate recycling policy proposals from anywhere to the left of the incumbent, Nixon makes the most of her celebrity. Her greatest gift, an even Trumpier feature than her fame or inexperience, is that partisans tend to see in her whatever kind of champion it is that they want. To become the left’s Trump, all Nixon has to do now is actually win. ♦

The Balancing Game

Investigating discrimination at Harvard.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

The judge in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard University* has set a trial date of October 15. SFFA is the student group alleging—it filed its complaint more than three years ago—that the university discriminates in admissions against Asian-American applicants. Most observers expect the case will go to the Supreme Court, not least because of the question it asks: Why are Asian-American applicants to Harvard and other elite schools less likely to be admitted than less academically qualified whites, blacks, and Hispanics?

Coincidentally, the Center for Equal Opportunity has released a study of enrollment data trends for three selective schools—Caltech, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and, yes,

Harvard. Authored by Althea Nagai, a research fellow at CEO (where I have an affiliation), the paper bears the ironic title—not one the suing students would fail to cheer—“Too Many Asian Americans: Affirmative Discrimination in Elite College Admissions.”

Caltech doesn’t use racial references to admit students, while both MIT and Harvard do. Asian-American applicants to colorblind Caltech have proved so well qualified that they now win more than 40 percent of the seats in a class. Asian-American applicants to MIT and Harvard are no less qualified than those accepted by Caltech, and yet they are awarded many fewer seats than in the California school.

At MIT, says Nagai, after years of increases in the number of Asian-Americans admitted, a high-water mark of 29 percent was reached in 1995, after which the school saw a

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slow decline to 26 percent, where it remains today. At Harvard, Asian-American undergraduate enrollment increased to 21 percent in 1993 before dropping over the next few years to the level sustained since, which is roughly 17 percent.

Nagai takes those numbers as evidence that there is a “cap” or “ceiling” on how many Asian-American appli-

Alexandria Walton Radford helps provide an answer. Their study of preferential admissions at eight elite schools found that, to have such a chance, Asian-American applicants would have to score (on the “old” SAT) 140 points higher than white applicants, 270 higher than Hispanics, and 450 higher than black applicants, all other factors remaining the same.



Asian-American Harvard grads: Shouldn't there be a lot more of them?

cants MIT and Harvard will admit. She assumes there are such caps on Asian-American admissions at most elite schools and sees them as discriminatory and illegal. “Those who would have been admitted but for the ceiling have been discriminated against,” she says, “certainly as a matter of fact and most likely in a way that is not consistent with the constraints on such discrimination that the Supreme Court has established.”

A recent article in the *Harvard Law Review* cites studies showing that Asian-Americans have “the lowest acceptance rates of all racial groups.” At the same time, conventional indicators of academic merit show that they “tend to be better qualified than the average applicant.” That means, as the article says, that Asian-Americans must “perform better than all other groups to have the same chance of admission.” Which raises the question, how much better?

Research by the Princeton sociologists Thomas J. Espenshade and

Espenshade and Radford didn’t publish their book until 2009. But the probabilities of admission it reported are unlikely to have changed or we would know it. Whether Harvard was one of the eight schools the scholars studied we simply don’t know, as the colleges and universities refused to have their names disclosed. Harvard is now in full view, the defendant in a case of national interest, a key question in which is the extent to which Harvard has made it tougher for Asian-Americans than for other students to get in. Indeed, in its complaint SFFA cites statistical evidence showing that Harvard holds Asian-Americans to “a far higher standard than other students and essentially forces them to compete against each other for admissions.”

SFFA has little patience with the notion that the racial preferences used by Harvard are not large and just a “plus factor” in an applicant’s file, as the school insisted in the landmark 1978 *Bakke* case (which provided the

diversity rationale for preferences) and still maintains today. Harvard’s racial preference, says the complaint, is “so large” that race becomes the “defining feature” of an application. “Only using race or ethnicity as a dominant factor in admissions decisions could . . . account,” says the complaint, “for the remarkably low admission rates for high-achieving Asian-American applicants.”

SFFA accuses Harvard of racial balancing, which almost no one says is legal. Somehow the school is able year by year to admit and enroll the same percentage of blacks, Hispanics, whites and Asian-Americans, even though, says the complaint, “the application rates and qualifications for each racial group have undergone significant changes over time.” SFFA sees the “remarkably stable admissions and enrollment figures” as “the deliberate result of system-wide intentional discrimination designed to achieve a predetermined racial balance of its student body.”

If SFFA is right about that, then Harvard has put a thumb on the scale to make sure the campus does not have “too many” Asian-Americans in a class.

Institutions that accept federal funds violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when they engage in discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. To prove that Harvard has run afoul of the law, SFFA is relying on statistical evidence while also preparing to argue that Harvard is guilty of intentional discrimination. The group finds evidence for that in the words of school officials who over the years have made prejudicial and stereotypical statements about Asian-American applicants—statements that assume Asian-Americans share “the same academic interests, experiences and personal attributes and that . . . as a group, lack certain qualities Harvard values.”

Since this case was filed, Harvard has responded by saying it does not discriminate against any racial or ethnic group. You’d expect it to say that. But the venerable school on the Charles River in Boston will soon have some explaining to do. ♦

PAUL MARCOTTA / GETTY

Reefer Madness

Colorado legalized marijuana in 2014 and the Pot Rush is on—but the ERs are filling up and a generation of kids is at risk

BY TONY MECIA

Pueblo, Colo.

Colorado is the national pioneer of legalized marijuana. In 2014, it became the first state to allow any adult over 21 to buy weed or grow it without fear of prosecution. Since then, eight others and the District of Columbia have legalized the drug, and, with a momentum that feels irreversible, more are heading that direction. Public opinion is rapidly shifting in favor of legalization. Coloradans approved marijuana sales in a

But that's not the end of the story. Some residents here believe these achievements are coming at too high a cost. Legalization, they say, has attracted vagrants and cartels from out-of-state, contributed to spikes in crime, and endangered the health of a generation of kids raised to believe the drug is harmless. A new study from Colorado State University-Pueblo's Institute of Cannabis Research portrays the effects of legalization as mixed at best—far from the unqualified success that marijuana boosters like to project.

GET TO KNOW YOUR BUDTENDER

It's a frantic Thursday morning at The 404, a rock-'n'-roll-themed marijuana store located a few blocks north of downtown. Pueblo has eight such "dispensaries," and everyone is preparing for the following day, April 20, or "4/20" as it is known to marijuana enthusiasts. It is the high holy day for marijuana users. The 404's manager, Will Swift, says it is "a combination of Black Friday and the Super Bowl."

Swift is talking about the challenges of running a marijuana business—chiefly, keeping inventory on the shelves—but he keeps getting interrupted as suppliers and customers stream in. Karina, a short-haired young woman, is dropping off a cardboard box filled with "caviar." But it's not fish eggs. Rather, caviar here is a highly potent and expensive marijuana delicacy consisting of plant buds soaked in hash oil and dusted with kief, or marijuana-flower resin. Swift excuses himself to "go take care of Shaggy," an employee's husband who has just walked in and needs assistance, and leaves one of his experienced sales clerks, Nicole Lucier, to explain how the business runs.

Lucier, 35, says she got her start selling marijuana in 2014 when her children's father was a security guard at another dispensary in town. She's what is known as a "bud-tender," and as she explains the different strains of marijuana and the dozens upon dozens of cannabis-infused products for sale, it becomes clear that if you believe pot is just pot, you've greatly underestimated the ingenuity of American capitalism. Marijuana has come a long way since the days of Cheech & Chong.



The 404 sells 40 different types of marijuana buds.

referendum, with state leaders musing that it would be a grand experiment and an exercise in federalism that could be instructive for the rest of the country.

Nowhere are the results of this experiment being felt more than in Pueblo, a small city of 108,000 about two hours south of Denver. Pueblo is an old working-class steel town largely left out of the prosperity of Denver and the state's famous ski resorts. With nearly 200 legal marijuana farms, Pueblo is at the forefront of the state's rapidly expanding pot industry. Marijuana has become big business. It is creating jobs, harnessing the energies of young entrepreneurs, raising millions in new tax revenues, attracting visitors to town, and giving residents more personal freedom.

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IMAGES: DOUGAL BROWN/IE



A budtender at work in The 404. There are now, 533 recreational marijuana dispensaries in Colorado—about as many as there are Starbucks and McDonald's locations combined in the state.

The 404 sells about 40 different strains of marijuana buds, or “flower.” The cheapest sell for \$6 a gram. Top-shelf buds cost double. With names like Acapulco Gold, Blue Dream, and Critical Skunk, each has a different smell and potency. They fall into three categories: sativas, viewed as better for cerebral daytime highs; indicas, preferable for

white, and blue.” The dispensary also sells all manner of topical creams, lotions, and body oils, as well as high-potency oils and extracts that can be smoked. They also sell tinctures, liquid extracts placed directly under the tongue. Some extract products, known as “dabs” or “shatter,” have THC concentrations of more than 80 percent.



The 404 is one of eight dispensaries in Pueblo, a city of 108,000.

evening relaxation; and hybrids that combine qualities of both. In recent decades, pot has become stronger, thanks largely to improved growing methods. Studies have shown that the average level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active chemical in marijuana responsible for getting users intoxicated, rose in federally seized cannabis from 4 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2014. Dispensaries like The 404 sell buds with THC levels of 20 percent or more.

Customers buy the weed, grind it at home, and roll it into joints or smoke it in a pipe. A gram can usually make three joints. (Colorado law limits purchases to 1 ounce, or about 28 grams, per day.) If grinding and rolling sounds like too much work, stores also sell “pre-rolls.” But that’s not all. The 404 carries a wide range of other marijuana products, Lucier explains. There are cannabis-laced chocolate bars, granola bars, turtle brownies, hard candies, red-velvet cookies, waffle cones, fruit punch, and root beer. There’s cannabis-infused honey and sugar, plus artificial sweeteners for diabetics—all suitable, she says, for putting in coffee or tea. She opens a box of hand-painted cannabis-chocolate truffles. “Aren’t they gorgeous?”

Lucier shows off some multicolored marijuana gummy candies: “These are fun. They’re cool because it’s Americana. They’re shaped like little leaves, and they are red,

Most customers come in for buds. Some swear by marijuana’s curative effects, like those listed alongside a Vitruvian-like “Cannabis Man” poster that hangs on The 404’s wall: “promotes bone growth,” “reduces inflammation,” and “inhibits cell growth in tumors and cancer cells.” Other patrons, like Otello Ganni, 59, are just looking for a high. He shows his ID to the security guard in the store’s entry hall and walks up to Lucier, who greets him enthusiastically.

“I’d just like some of your good stuff,” he says.

Since it’s the middle of the day, she recommends a sativa—so as not to make Ganni sleepy—and brings over two foot-high glass jars filled with buds: Pink Sherbet and Lost Coast OG. He puts his nose to the top of each jar and inhales. He settles on

Lost Coast OG, which clocks in at 26.18 percent THC.

“It’s gonna get you uplifted and energized!” Lucier tells him, as she takes his two \$5 bills and puts four buds into a vial. She adds that she has logged his purchase into The 404’s loyalty rewards program.

Ganni, who moved to Pueblo from California two years ago to live closer to his grandchildren, has a full-time job as a cook, but also cuts stones and makes jewelry. Sativas, he says, “really get me going.”

The 404 is a “recreational” marijuana dispensary. Colorado licenses and regulates medical marijuana separately from recreational marijuana. Medical marijuana has been available in the state since 2001, and sales have been flat in recent years, even dropping in 2017. The recreational side, though, has boomed. Recreational dispensaries sold \$1.1 billion of marijuana in 2017, more than triple the amount sold in 2014. Some Colorado cities don’t allow dispensaries, and others, including Pueblo, cap their numbers. Despite those restrictions, there are now 533 recreational dispensaries in Colorado—about as many as Starbucks and McDonald’s locations combined. Residents also have the option to grow their own marijuana, up to a maximum of 12 plants per household.

Lucier thinks her customers enjoy the camaraderie of

DOUGAL BROWN/IE

the dispensary. They build relationships with her just as they might with a bartender or a hairdresser. “It’s amazing to see all the changes in life that come through here,” she says. “You hear people’s joys in life as well as their sorrows. I had a guy in here who still had the bracelet on his wrist from the hospital, who came in and said, ‘My baby was just born!’ It’s amazing.”

SCROMITING AT THE ER

Brad Roberts won’t soon forget a 24-hour stretch in late 2017 at Parkview Medical Center, Pueblo’s main hospital. An emergency room physician, he’s used to seeing crazy things. But three patients he saw then reinforced in his mind the dangers of Colorado’s marijuana laws.

The first patient, a woman in her 30s, came in on a stretcher wearing only a bathrobe. Medics had picked her up at the Loaf ‘N Jug, a nearby convenience store, with blood on her face and head. She had severed three of the toes on her left foot and had a gash on her hand. She had been to the Parkview ER before—police had found her throwing furniture off an overpass—and tested positive then only for cannabis. On this visit, she tested positive for both cannabis and meth. She wouldn’t reply to Roberts’s questions and just kept repeating the Lord’s Prayer.

The second patient was a teenager brought in by the police. He had cut himself more than 100 times between his right elbow and wrist and required nearly 50 stitches. He stared blankly ahead, never acknowledging Roberts. His urine tested positive only for cannabis.

The third patient, a man in his late 40s or early 50s, came to the ER and said he had smoked pure cannabis oil. He told Roberts he had an out-of-body experience in which he knew the rapture had taken place. He had met the Anti-christ, heard the trumpets of Revelation, and believed it was his job to warn everybody, he said.

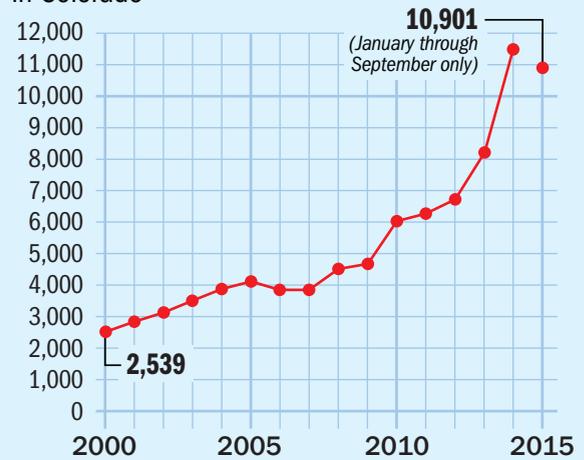
“I saw them back to back to back,” Roberts recalls. “I said, ‘Holy cow! These are horrible cuts, and you severed off your toes, and you aren’t even responding to me! You’re psychotic!’”

Most people know that marijuana has at least some documented medical benefits—such as reducing eye pressure in glaucoma patients, stimulating the appetites of people suffering from AIDS, combatting seizures, and reducing nerve pain. But far less publicized is that marijuana is increasingly being found to have side effects, too. In 2016, when Pueblo voted on whether to allow dispensaries, 237 local physicians signed a statement of opposition.

One of the most dangerous effects, doctors say, is psychosis. Of course, not everybody who uses weed experiences psychotic episodes. But studies suggest that the risk

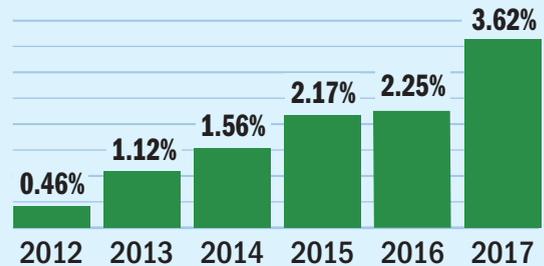
Pot and Public Health

Hospitalizations related to marijuana in Colorado

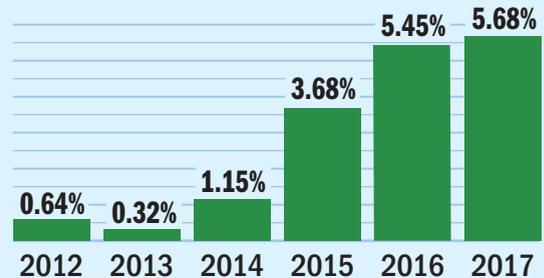


SOURCE: Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

Expectant mothers testing positive for marijuana at Pueblo’s Parkview hospital



Newborns testing positive for marijuana at Pueblo’s Parkview hospital



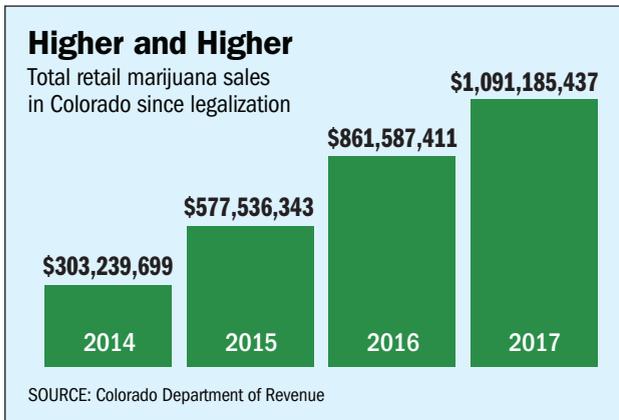
SOURCE: Institute of Cannabis Research, Colorado State University-Pueblo

is especially acute among adolescents, whose brains are still developing. Regular marijuana use while young has been linked to schizophrenia.

In 2017, after reviewing the scientific literature, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) concluded that “teens who use marijuana regularly may develop serious

mental health disorders, including addiction, depression, and psychosis.” Also upending conventional wisdom, the country’s leading organization of pediatricians found that “evidence clearly shows that marijuana is an addictive substance,” with 9 percent of those trying the drug developing an addiction. The consequences of marijuana use, the AAP statement concluded, include “impaired short-term memory and decreased concentration, attention span, and problem-solving skills ... alterations in motor control, coordination, judgment, reaction time, and tracking ability.” Those effects can contribute to poor and dangerous decisions.

More people under the influence of marijuana are cer-



tainly streaming into Colorado’s emergency rooms. An analysis of five years of hospital drug-screening data by a nursing professor at CSU-Pueblo found “unmistakable evidence” of an increase of positive drug tests in ER patients. Similar results were found in a study in Denver of ER visits by adolescents and young adults since 2014.

Marijuana can also be a gateway to other, harder drugs, says Libby Stuyt, a board-certified addiction psychiatrist in Pueblo. In the last few years, she has seen more patients whose primary addiction is to marijuana—though many of them also use meth, cocaine, alcohol, or opiates. With marijuana widely available, she says, it’s harder for clients to complete her 90-day inpatient drug rehab program.

“I have many arguments with patients,” Stuyt says. “I tell them they will have to stay away from everything when they leave here. They say, ‘No, there’s nothing wrong with marijuana. It’s green. It’s natural.’ They really believe there’s nothing wrong with this drug.”

Doctors are also seeing more pregnant women using marijuana, perhaps because they believe it helps with morning sickness and sciatica. The percentage of newborns at Pueblo’s Parkview Hospital testing positive for marijuana has surged since 2014, to nearly 6 percent of all births last year. So has the share of expectant mothers testing positive for marijuana; last year they accounted for nearly 4 percent

of Pueblo’s maternity patients. Those increases seem to be aided by the dispensaries, too: A study published last month by the University of Colorado School of Medicine found that nearly 70 percent of 400 Colorado dispensaries surveyed recommended cannabis use for first-trimester morning sickness. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that all pregnant women, women contemplating pregnancy, and breastfeeding mothers avoid marijuana. Use during pregnancy has been linked to low birth weights and an increased risk of stillbirths, the organization says.

There are other effects, too. On Colorado’s roads, marijuana-related traffic fatalities have doubled since legalization. The American Lung Association warns that smoking marijuana can lead to bronchitis. Other studies have linked it to depression and suicide.

Doctors in Colorado are also reporting a newer affliction, called cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome; it is known colloquially as “scromiting,” because its symptoms consist of simultaneous screaming and vomiting. The condition is little understood but seems to be most prevalent among long-term marijuana users. Roberts estimates he sees a case of it in Pueblo every week.

Proponents of legalization say there’s no irrefutable proof of marijuana’s negative effects, which they say are merely “anecdotal” and more likely linked to other causes. Federal prohibitions on marijuana have restricted the number of scientific studies gauging its benefits and consequences. And, with some justification, proponents note that any effects in Colorado might seem amplified because the state did a poor job of collecting data prior to legalization—a point that even Colorado’s governor acknowledges.

To Roberts and other doctors in Pueblo, though, a lack of scientific certainty should have led Colorado to adopt a more careful approach. Instead, the state implemented regulations and adjusts them as problems arise.

“We’ve taken something that probably has some medical benefit, and instead of doing like we’ve done with any other medicine, we have this free-for-all where now you can have a dispensary on every corner giving medical advice,” Roberts says. “We are building the plane while flying it. We’re just throwing it out there and figuring out after the fact what’s going on.”

A MOTHER AND A SON

Aubree Adams moved to Pueblo 15 years ago. She figured it would be her forever home. Now, she’s planning to get out. She’s tired of the drug dealers and the drifters. The effects of the pervasive marijuana presence have taken a toll on her historic North Side neighborhood—and on her own family.

THE WEEKLY STANDARD

On a driving tour of the area around her house, she turns onto 19th Street. She points to a small house that she says grew marijuana and sold it out back: “There were people coming in and out of here all night long. They had to gut the whole thing because the smell was so bad.”

Pulling into a nearby alley, she drives past a nicely maintained yard owned by a couple with three young children. Their misfortune is to live across an alleyway from a popular gathering spot for marijuana users: “All the smoke comes into the backyard, and they have to go inside.”

Turning onto 23rd Street, she drives by the spot of a 2016 marijuana deal where a 46-year-old Pueblo man was shot on a Friday morning: “He lay dead right here, right in the driveway right there.”

Driving around Pueblo with Adams, you hear a range of emotions. Sometimes she’s matter-of-fact, pointing out the Sam’s Club where the marijuana smell wafts across the street from a legal greenhouse. Sometimes she’s angry, blaming marijuana-industry profiteers, irresponsible media, and shortsighted politicians. And sometimes, she sounds frustrated that her message of marijuana’s dangers is falling on deaf ears. She has heard legalization called the Trojan horse that’s going to implode America, and she agrees.

Adams, 44, acknowledges some people view her as a scold plucked straight out of *Reefer Madness*, the overwrought 1936 film that warned of marijuana’s dangers. Pueblo’s local theater troupe presented a staged version of the film in April in part to poke fun at activists like her.

She’s a regular at public meetings, proselytizing about marijuana’s dangers. She cheerfully records interviews with community leaders and drug users for her YouTube channel. Trying to get people to sign an anti-marijuana petition, she says, she’s had hecklers blow pot smoke in her face.

If she sounds like a busybody who is ruining marijuana’s good vibes, it’s because she has experienced the fear and anguish of marijuana’s effects up close.

She and her husband moved to Pueblo with their two young sons in 2005. She took a job as an assistant to a physical therapist. The family’s troubles began in 2014, just after Colorado legalized marijuana, when her older son was in eighth grade.

He started getting in fights at school and skipping class. He’d cut himself. Adams later learned he was experimenting with edibles, marijuana-laced food products that were



Aubree Adams and pictures of her two sons, now in their teens. She sees legalized marijuana as America’s Trojan horse.

newly legal for adults. He moved on to more potent forms of marijuana—the concentrates known as “dabs.” Adams calls these “crack weed.” He became increasingly irrational, paranoid, inconsolable, and angry.

One morning in February 2015, Adams walked by his room and smelled vomit. She found her son passed out. He had taken 250 ibuprofen tablets in a suicide attempt. It marked the start of a painful period in which he was in and out of hospitals, drug treatment, and counseling. Nothing worked. He started taking meth and heroin. He disappeared for days at a time, and Adams would drive around town looking for him. Passing the Loaf ’N Jug a few blocks from the hospital, she says, her voice cracking: “I came down here one time. He was begging for food and water, right here. He was standing there with homeless people.”

It is a tragic story, one that is familiar to too many American families. Teen drug addiction has been with us for years, long before Colorado legalized weed, and teens struggle with addiction in all the states where marijuana is still banned. Why blame legalization?

IMAGES: DOUGAL BROWN/IE

“He wouldn’t have had access to this high-potency crack weed that we have just completely made accessible all throughout our community,” she says. “He wouldn’t have been exposed to all this normalization, glorification, commercialization. ... I know people don’t give a crap about my kid. It’s all my fault, they say. I’m like, ‘You have no idea how our children are being preyed upon and how impressionable they are.’”

The data on teen drug use in Colorado is open to interpretation. A Healthy Kids Colorado survey shows that the number of teens saying they had used marijuana in the last 30 days increased to 21.2 percent in 2015 from 19.7 percent in 2013. Colorado media and state government officials say that’s an increase of 1.5 percentage points, which they characterize as “flat” and “not statistically significant.” Opponents say it is an increase of nearly 8 percent, which might be understated because the survey did not include three of the largest school districts in the state. Both interpretations are valid. And asking teens to self-report their illegal drug use, even anonymously, might be a poor way to track actual behavior changes. In Pueblo, 30 percent of students said they had used marijuana in the last month, the highest rate in the state.

People who work with teens in Pueblo say drug use seems to be up and attitudes more accepting. A 2017 survey of Colorado school-resource officers found that 86 percent believe legalization led to increases in marijuana-related incidents, as did 68 percent of school counselors in a 2015 survey.

“They see it like, ‘If my parents do it and it’s legal, why can’t I?’” says police officer Heather Smith, who worked as a resource officer at a Pueblo middle school from 2014 to 2017. “It’s viewed as acceptable now. They feel like there is not harm that could happen to their brain and brain development. ... It’s hard to tell a kid it’s bad for them when they see their parents doing it.” Most students whom she busted for marijuana at her school had joints or pipes they had taken from their parents, she says. The youngest she caught with the drug was in fourth grade.

Pueblo police discontinued D.A.R.E., the drug education program, in city schools in 2012 to be able to put more officers on the streets. Today, there is little attempt to teach kids about the dangers of drugs, police say. A school spokesman said he had no information about any anti-drug education in Pueblo.

Adams plans to keep talking about marijuana to anyone who will listen. She has traveled to Maryland, Georgia, and Vermont at the invitation of activists working to defeat legalization in their states. “People are like, ‘Oh, you need to keep out of my business.’ I’m not here to tell you what to do, but your personal use is affecting us all,” she says. “Yeah, there will be some kids who experiment

and get through it. But what about those who don’t? Those are the ones I stand up for.”

THE MARIJUANA AGRI-BOOM

Walking through a greenhouse filled with dozens of six-foot-tall marijuana plants, Jarrod Mason says he has always enjoyed trying new things. That’s how he wound up here, at Los Sueños Farms, 15 minutes east of Pueblo. Running the farm, believed to be the nation’s largest legal outdoor marijuana-growing operation, is a daunting task: There’s no instruction manual on how to cultivate marijuana on this scale. The site is licensed for 36,000 plants on nearly 40 acres.

“Every day is a learning experience, trying to figure out how you can grow cannabis in a field this size,” Mason, 27, says. The farm has 50 workers, with 25 to 40 more added seasonally. It doesn’t test them for drugs, but has a strict policy banning drug use at work.

Los Sueños (Spanish for *dreams*) resembles most any farming operation you might see, with acres of loose dirt, John Deere tractors, and agribusiness magazines in the office lobby—except for the barbed wire. Los Sueños is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence that encircles a taller chain-link fence. It also has some 300 surveillance cameras.

Mason’s connection to marijuana has a personal element. His older brother was a heroin addict. Mason started taking neuroscience courses at CSU-Pueblo to understand addiction. He worked with the professors who were launching CSU-Pueblo’s Institute for Cannabis Studies. After graduating in 2016, Mason landed a job here and rose quickly through the ranks. Today, he is Los Sueños’s director of sales and business development. He’s wearing a blue blazer at work.

Because the last frost hasn’t passed, the plants are inside a series of greenhouses kept between 69 and 80 degrees. This greenhouse is known as the “mother bay,” where the farm grows the original marijuana plants and then clones them for planting outside when the weather turns warmer.

In the far corner of the mother bay are five workers, dressed in T-shirts, caps, and sunglasses. They are talking and laughing as they clip branches of a mother plant, dip the end of each stem in a hormone compound, and place it in soil in a tray. The farm plans to grow 35 strains of marijuana this season, and the one this group is working on is known as Queen Mother Goji. Los Sueños is working deliberately to increase plant yields and make the crop more durable. It recently hired a Ph.D. in molecular biochemistry.

Before the plants can be harvested in September, though, the farm will have to overcome the pests. Two years ago, it brought in more than a million ladybugs to eat aphids and mites. Then it added 8,000 praying



In the greenhouses at Los Sueños Farms, marijuana plants are cloned for planting outside when the frosts pass. Los Sueños, the largest outdoor marijuana farm in the country, expects to produce 20 tons of the drug in 2018.



IMAGES: DOUGAL BROWN/IE

mantises as reinforcements. Last year, the farm deployed 100 chickens to combat grasshoppers—“public enemy number one,” Mason says—who like to munch on cannabis leaves. But only about 20 of the chickens survived the season. Hawks grabbed the rest. “It’s nature at work,” he says. This year, Los Sueños is contemplating doubling the number of chickens.

Even if the pests are held at bay, Mason says the marijuana business remains a hassle because of burdensome state regulation. Colorado requires growers to meticulously track each plant and keep detailed records subject to inspection. They must have security cameras rolling 24 hours a day and store the video footage for 45 days. The list goes on and on, with every regulation adding to costs and cutting into profits.

Lauren Davis, a Denver lawyer who specializes in business formation and legal compliance for the cannabis industry, says companies must follow 222 pages of state regulations on top of any local ordinances. She says some, like the security procedures, make sense, but others, like the packaging and labeling rules, are excessive. “The regulations are pretty overwhelming,” she says. And there’s no way Colorado bureaucrats can keep up with the paperwork they’re requiring cannabis companies to generate. “Even the question of who’s an owner and what it means to be an owner would make your head spin,” Davis says.

The marijuana business is further complicated by legal uncertainty. Under federal law, growing and selling marijuana are felonies. The federal government does not generally prosecute cases in which state law permits those activities. But the law grows murkier when it involves federal regulatory agencies and courts. On the one hand, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration are not policing the advertisements and medical claims made by Colorado’s marijuana businesses. On the other, companies can’t trademark their cannabis products, file for bankruptcy protection, or use most banks because of federal prohibitions. Federal tax rules also prohibit marijuana companies from claiming many business deductions, which drives up their taxes.

One local couple, Phillis and Michael Reilly, even sued a Pueblo marijuana farm under federal racketeering laws, which permit private lawsuits against criminal enterprises. According to the suit, the couple owns 105 acres of rolling pastures with a view of Pike’s Peak and uses the land for riding horses and hiking. But a marijuana company called Rocky Mountain Organics, which operates two dispensaries

west of Denver, started building a marijuana farm to grow 600 plants on an adjacent lot. “Marijuana plants are highly odorous, and their offensive smell travels long distances,” the complaint says. The suit is making its way through the federal courts.

“The cost of doing business is too unpredictable to make money,” says Bob DeGabrielle, Los Sueños’s managing partner. “I’ve never been in an industry where the rules change every two-and-a-half days.”

Los Sueños is one of 190 licensed marijuana cultivation facilities in Pueblo County, about a quarter of the state’s total. The area is popular among growers because land is cheap, the weather is favorable, and it is one of the few counties in Colorado that allows outdoor commercial marijuana cultivation. Local leaders have embraced the industry, citing its economic benefits. Driving around Pueblo County, marijuana-growing operations are easy to spot. Just

look for a greenhouse or metal building in the middle of an open field surrounded by a tall barbed-wire fence.

An economic-impact study by CSU-Pueblo found that the cannabis industry boosted the local economy by \$36 million in 2016—a figure expected to double this year. The benefits have trickled down, especially to construction businesses. Statewide, the marijuana industry remains small but fast-growing. It employs an estimated 18,000 people, or less than 1 percent of the Colorado’s total employment, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. It is also creating niche jobs in fields including

law, accounting, consulting, media, and advertising, to say nothing of the people in associated fields who create custom glass pipes, design marijuana jewelry, and run shops selling T-shirts with puns (“Rocky Mountain High” and the “Mile High Club” are popular).

State and local governments share in the tax revenues, which are used for a variety of purposes. In 2018, Pueblo County plans to spend \$6 million of marijuana tax money on 20 community projects, including college scholarships, road work, and replacing the golf carts at a public course west of town.

Los Sueños is profitable, says DeGabrielle, 69. But he didn’t get into the business just to make money. He was a retired real-estate developer enjoying the good life in North Carolina. He had houses in Florida, Virginia, and the Outer Banks, and he’d go fishing in Costa Rica with buddies every few weeks. After a couple of friends were diagnosed with cancer and told him marijuana helped with their symptoms, he started researching the drug and how it interacts with the



Marijuana wax can have THC concentrations of over 80 percent.

IMAGES: DOUGAL BROWN/LE



Some of the new arrivals for Pueblo's 'Pot Rush' have ended up homeless in shantytowns.

human body. His “whole attitude changed,” and he moved to Colorado as legalization was taking off. He built a dispensary in Vail, but then saw the chance to grow marijuana in Pueblo. Los Sueños opened in 2015. Its first harvest yielded 7 tons of marijuana. This year, the farm is hoping for 20 tons.

DeGabrielle believes Pueblo County has a shot to become to marijuana what Napa Valley is to wine and Silicon Valley is to technology. While the arguments of marijuana opponents are “based in fear,” DeGabrielle says Los Sueños offers hope. With his Southern drawl, he can sound like an evangelist for marijuana’s therapeutic benefits: He says it can help with cancer, post-traumatic stress disorder, Parkinson’s disease, Crohn’s disease, Tourette syndrome, and many other ailments. A review of medical research last year by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that cannabis can be modestly beneficial in treating chronic pain and seizures and helping reduce nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy but concluded more research is needed on other health effects.

THE POT RUSH

Anne Stattelmann has seen the scene play out time and again in recent years: People from other states in loaded-up cars, sometimes with mattresses on top, arriving in Pueblo looking for a new life. They’ll stay at a campground or a by-the-week motel while looking for

housing and a job. When they don’t find either one and burn through their meager savings, they wind up in her office seeking help.

“You remember the Gold Rush? We call it the Pot Rush,” says Stattelmann, the director of Posada, a nonprofit that provides housing assistance to Pueblo’s homeless. “Not only do people think they’ll be able to smoke marijuana, but people think they can get jobs working in the marijuana fields.”

Those green dreams rarely materialize. Rents are rising as people move to town, and a lot of the new arrivals are unable to pass employer background checks or drug tests. Many wind up in shantytowns filled with tents, tires, and garbage along Fountain Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River that cuts through the middle of town.

In 2013, Posada helped about 2,400 homeless people with housing and other services. In 2016, the number more than tripled, to 7,800. Other Pueblo nonprofits, like the city’s soup kitchen, have experienced similar surges. Last year, Posada changed its approach. It placed a notice on its website discouraging people of limited means from moving to town and adopted a philosophy of helping Pueblo residents first, ahead of newcomers. Posada still steers the most desperate toward help, but it won’t assist out-of-towners in applying for government benefits. Because of that approach, in 2017, the number of those receiving services fell back to pre-legalization numbers.

Stattelman doesn't know precisely how many come here because of marijuana, but she estimates from interviews that it's about one-third. "Can you smell that?" she asks, as homeless people start filing into Posada's downtown case-management center. "I have a nose for it."

The new crop of homeless is rougher than Stattelman and her case manager, LaTanya Yarbrough, are used to. Stattelman founded Posada 31 years ago. Yarbrough has been there for 20.



The arrival of out-of-state migrants has strained local nonprofits.

"These new people, they'll fight you," Yarbrough says. Posada employees have been harassed, shoved, hit, and kicked. Yarbrough, who is black, has been called racist. She reminisces about some of the more bizarre encounters they've had in recent years.

"What about the girl who came in with no pants on?" Yarbrough asks.

"Hmm. Memories," Stattelman replies. She is retiring at the end of June.

Everybody in town acknowledges that the number of homeless has increased. But there is fierce debate, playing out on the letters page of the local newspaper, about whether marijuana is the lure. Skeptics say cities outside Colorado are seeing more homeless, too. The state has also expanded Medicaid benefits, unlike its neighbors to the east. But people who work with the homeless say the connection is clear. "We are observing from talking to people that many people who are homeless came here so that they could get marijuana legally," Pueblo's police chief told the local paper. A CSU-Pueblo study, based on interviews with 20 local police officers, found that most believed "the pull of legal marijuana has brought in a new population to the state who then commit property crimes to get money to buy drugs."

Any link between legalized marijuana and crime is harder to establish. The subject has barely been studied in

Colorado or anywhere else. But in Pueblo, violent crime is up about 20 percent since 2013. Property crime overall is about the same as it was before marijuana legalization, though vehicle thefts have more than doubled. Throughout Colorado, the crime rate has also risen since 2013, even as crime has fallen nationally. State officials are reluctant to link that increase to legalized marijuana and say more study is needed.

One of the goals of marijuana legalization is to eliminate the black market for weed by regulating it and bringing it under government control. In Pueblo, police say that has not happened. People are moving to the area, growing marijuana, and either shipping it out of state or selling it on the street locally for less than the price at dispensaries. In the murder a few blocks from Adams's house, police arrested three men from Oklahoma City who they say had come to Pueblo to buy marijuana. Their purchase turned into a robbery, and Pueblo native Brad Fowler was shot and killed. The three suspects are awaiting trial.

Pueblo police last year investigated 95 code-enforcement cases involving marijuana violations. About 80 percent of those involved people who were growing marijuana outdoors for personal use, in violation of city codes that require personal grows to be indoors. But there were also some examples of outsiders converting existing structures into illegal grow houses. In one case described by police, a group of Cubans paid cash for a house in south Pueblo. They stripped out the inside, redirected air ducts, and installed a new electrical box without a permit. They then put in \$10,000 worth of fans, lamps, and heavy-duty electronics. The house racked up \$4,600 a month in electrical bills.

In a separate incident in late April, the county sheriff raided a house west of town and found 72 marijuana plants. Deputies charged two people "with ties to Cuba" with felonies and confiscated all but 12 of the plants—the number allowed for personal use under Colorado law. "Before legalization, we didn't have Cubans coming to grow marijuana in Pueblo," notes Sgt. Daniel Anderson, who oversees the police department's narcotics division.

Anderson says that with so much marijuana being grown around town, illegal marijuana sales are thriving. An ounce of marijuana at a dispensary costs around \$120, he says. He asks a narcotics officer in a nearby cubicle how much marijuana is going for on the street, and within 30 seconds, the officer has printed out three ads from Craigslist Pueblo's "health and beauty" section. They indicate buds are selling

DOUGAL BROWN/LE

for about one-third the price they go for at dispensaries.

“If I want my high, why would I spend \$120 if I could get it for \$40?” Anderson says.

Asked what he would say to communities considering legalizing marijuana, Anderson says: “Tell people to stop legalizing it. It will do more damage than you can understand.”

Anne Stattelmann’s advice is simpler: “Don’t. It’s changed our city. It’s changed everything about our community.”

4/20 AND BEYOND

The push to legalize marijuana rolls on. It is no longer just a libertarian pipe dream. Politicians from both major parties are increasingly declaring themselves open to legalization as polls indicate a public shift. Gallup last year found that 64 percent of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, back legalizing recreational use of the drug. Senator Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) says he’s working with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) to craft a “states’ rights” bill that would offer protections to marijuana companies in states that opt to allow those businesses. Democratic senators calling for more lenient marijuana laws include Chuck Schumer, Kamala Harris, Kirsten Gillibrand, Cory Booker, and Bernie Sanders. Former Republican speaker of the House John Boehner joined the board of a cannabis company in April.

Michigan will have a referendum in November that could make it the first Midwestern state to legalize. Connecticut lawmakers are considering a bill that would move their state toward legalization. Recreational sales in Vermont are scheduled to start in July.

Marijuana advocates are anticipating national victory, but in Colorado, they’re already celebrating. No more so than on 4/20 itself. The term “420” is said to have originated in the 1970s from a group of California high school students who would meet after school at a designated time—4:20 P.M.—to smoke pot. The term became synonymous with marijuana and, decades later, led to annual extravaganzas in U.S. cities on April 20.

On that day in Colorado, Pueblo’s dispensaries are all offering 4/20 sales events, and nearby Colorado Springs has a festival. But the real party is in Denver. Celebrations are being held throughout the week and include a cannabis film festival, panel discussions, parties, and concerts headlined by rappers Snoop Dogg and Lil Wayne.

It is a festive (if smoky) atmosphere that morning aboard a packed bus on the \$49 “Complete Cannabis Tour.” As reggae music blares and the bus hits the road toward a local growing company, most of the 20 passengers pull out

joints or pipes. Smoking is encouraged on a bus billed as “420-friendly transportation.”

The group are largely in their 20s and 30s, but from all around the country: New York, New Jersey, Texas, Florida. Some offer puffs to those around them and compare notes on marijuana. The tour guide encourages drinking lots of water to “stay level”: “We want you to enjoy your day and smoke up, definitely,” he says.

At the tour of an indoor-grow operation, participants



Marijuana is creating new niche industries, such as pot magazines, like these on display at a Denver Barnes & Noble.

learn about marijuana cultivation and snap photos of the plants and their distinctive leaves. They take turns posing for selfies with a one-pound bag of buds, valued at more than \$1,200. They buy goodies at the on-site dispensary and re-board the bus to enjoy their new purchases. One participant has tickets to Snoop Dogg that night. Others are headed to the big Mile High 420 Festival at Civic Center Park. Most are happily smoking as the bus heads back to the city center.

Then there’s Aubree Adams back in Pueblo. Her son, now 18, has been in Houston at an intensive outpatient drug-treatment program since 2016. He’s been sober for 22 months. She says he seems mature, aware of his mistakes. He has a peer-support network there. “I have my son back,” she says joyfully.

There’s no way she’ll bring him back to Colorado, she says. There are too many temptations, too many painful memories. The family is planning to move to Houston this summer.

Adams says she’s heard that pro-legalization forces are active in Texas. She will keep fighting—fighting for her son, her family, her country. She plans to keep spreading the message: “Legalization means promotion. It means more future users. That’s the most uncool thing ever.” ♦

Bloom and Grow Forever



Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II on the set of the CBS broadcast of *Cinderella*, 1957

Rodgers & Hammerstein in their day—and ours. BY PETER TONGUETTE

Can Rodgers and Hammerstein be untethered from their own era?

For about 15 years in the 1940s and '50s, composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II partnered to produce a succession of popular, pathbreaking musicals, including *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, and *The Sound of Music*. In the nearly six decades since the 1960 death of Hammerstein, the music the duo made together has survived—often heard outside of the shows that first housed it or in new productions of those shows that take liberties with their makers' intentions.

Peter Tonguette is the editor of, most recently, Peter Bogdanovich: Interviews.

Something Wonderful

Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway Revolution
by Todd S. Purdum
Henry Holt, 386 pp., \$32

The brilliance and singability of such songs as “Some Enchanted Evening” from *South Pacific* and “My Favorite Things” from *The Sound of Music* all but assured their entrance into the Great American Songbook. The Rodgers and Hammerstein repertoire has been endlessly adapted, altered, and remixed for artistic and commercial purposes—and as is often the case with art, some renditions have strayed quite far from the spirit

of the songs in their original context. It is hard to believe that Rodgers and Hammerstein would have nodded approvingly at the slow, sexy cover of “My Favorite Things” that accompanied a 2012 Victoria's Secret commercial, or Lady Gaga's interpretation of songs from *The Sound of Music* during the 2015 Academy Awards, or the way Jerry Lewis annually trotted out “You'll Never Walk Alone” from *Carousel* for his Labor Day telethon.

Perhaps one reason such spectacles seem out of tune with Rodgers and Hammerstein is because the pair reached their artistic apex during an era now long past, a fact reflected in Todd S. Purdum's enthusiastic, often-enlightening, sometimes-frustrating new book.

CBS PHOTO ARCHIVE / GETTY

“In their prime,” Purdum writes, “the partners seemed to stand for the best of America: forward-looking, liberal, innovative, internationalist—progressive both artistically and ideologically.”

Indeed, several of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s best shows are characterized by pie-in-the-sky jubilation of the sort that followed the end of World War II—like a musical theater equivalent of Alfred Eisenstaedt’s photograph *V-J Day in Times Square*. Consider the enthusiastic endorsement of ordinariness in “A Wonderful Guy” in *South Pacific*, in which Ensign Nellie Forbush revels in her own schmaltziness; or the lovely mix of expectation and certitude in the reprise of “Sixteen Going on Seventeen” in *The Sound of Music* when Maria von Trapp affirms to young Liesl that she will find a romantic partner, to which the girl first replies “when that happens” before correcting herself to say “after it happens”—a winning acknowledgment of the inevitability of true love. The very titles of such songs as “There Is Nothin’ Like a Dame” from *South Pacific* and “I Whistle a Happy Tune” from *The King and I*, Purdum writes, “evoked the infectious, ebullient, can-do optimism of the era.” Rodgers, responding to charges of sentimentality leveled at *The Sound of Music*, put it even more bluntly: “Anyone who can’t, on occasion, be sentimental about children, home or nature is sadly maladjusted.”

At the same time, Rodgers and Hammerstein retained a clear-eyed pragmatism about human failings and foibles. In *South Pacific*, Nellie must rid her mind of racism in order to embrace her beau, Emile de Becque, and his half-Polynesian children; and Lt. Joe Cable has to weigh setting aside his highfalutin Philadelphia family’s plans for him before committing himself to the Tonkinese girl Liat. Likewise, *Carousel* is sufficiently sophisticated to admit that the feelings that pass between partners are seldom straightforward; the show makes plain that Julie Jordan cares for Billy Bigelow in spite of his brutishness and that the child born of their tempestuous union would have done well to have grown up with any father,

even one as foolhardy as Billy. Said Hammerstein: “I can’t conceive of an unregenerate soul, I can’t conceive of a dead-end to any kind of existence.”

The strength of Purdum’s book is in its descriptions of its two subjects’ careers and collaboration. In choosing to enter the field of musical theater, librettist Hammerstein (1895-1960) was honoring the trades of both his grandfather, theater producer Oscar Hammerstein I, and his father, theater manager William Hammerstein. Purdum reveals that neither man made as big an impression as his mother, the former Alice Nimmo. “Without ever punishing me, and without ever seeming stern, she had a way of letting me know when she meant a thing to be done or not to be done,” Hammerstein said of his mother’s virtues; he might as well have been describing the tough but humane approach he took in presenting his characters’ flaws.

The personal and the professional again overlap in Hammerstein’s comments about his mother’s death. “I never feel shaken by death, as I would have been if this had not happened to me when I was fifteen,” Hammerstein said. “I received the shock and took it, and sort of resisted as an enemy the grief that comes after death rather than giving way to it.” Here, is Hammerstein not commending the virtues vouched for in “You’ll Never Walk Alone”? That song, wrongly thought of as mawkish, commends strength in grappling with life’s trials and tribulations—coaxing listeners, as Hammerstein might put it, to receive shocks and take them.

Purdum superbly sketches Hammerstein, pausing to comment on his sturdy build—at 6-foot-1-and-a-half, he was “quite tall for his day”—and snappy sense of style. “In his prime, he favored English shoes, from Peal & Co., and shirts, from Turnbull & Asser, and when white dinner jackets were in vogue, he dared to wear a salmon pink one to a Hollywood party,” writes Purdum, who also acknowledges the lyricist’s distinctive manner of speaking. “He spoke in an accent that, to the modern ear, sounds almost dese-

dem, and dosey (pronouncing ‘board’ as ‘bawd,’ ‘working’ as ‘woiking,’ and ‘fast’ as ‘fay-ast’).”

The author is no less precise in evoking composer Rodgers (1902-1979), who—as with Hammerstein—seemed guided by kismet to his eventual career. His father, William Rodgers, was a doctor (seemingly responsible for instilling hypochondria in his son), but family time was spent at the piano. “There was music every day, every day, every day,” said Rodgers, whose mother, Mamie, had a gift for sight-reading. “And curiously it was show music,” he said.

Their eventual work together was dependent on a series of happy accidents. In 1929, Rodgers—then in the midst of a run of shows created with lyricist Lorenz Hart—took up residence in a penthouse apartment in the Lombardy Hotel. His neighbor? Author Edna Ferber, whose novel *Show Boat* had been reworked into a revolutionary musical by Hammerstein and his then-partner, composer Jerome Kern. Twelve years later, Rodgers and Ferber were mulling an adaptation of her novel *Saratoga Trunk* when Hammerstein’s name came up—call it six degrees of musical-theater separation. Four years after that, each man independently alighted upon material worth adapting together: Lynn Riggs’s play *Green Grow the Lilacs*. When Rodgers commended it to Hammerstein, the lyricist answered: “I don’t have to read it. I know it and I’m crazy about it. I’d love to do it with you.” Such was the start of their first collaboration, *Oklahoma!*

Purdum offers a keen-eared appreciation of Rodgers’s melodies, which “turn and twist in surprising ways,” and of Hammerstein’s agility with words, noting of the construction of “My Favorite Things” that “critics have mocked the song for celebrating the prosaic and quotidian, but Oscar’s notes show that he labored over it with the care of a master craftsman.”

Purdum is less successful, however, in his attempts to make Rodgers and Hammerstein’s shows accessible, or acceptable, to modern readers. Despite being an enthusiastic, well-informed

devotee of the duo, Purdum too often writes in ways that reflect our time more than theirs. For example, in a discussion of the musical *Flower Drum Song*, he is unable to let pass without mention that eternally charming, entirely unobjectionable commendation of femininity, “I Enjoy Being a Girl,” which he describes as “sexy” but “sexist, by modern lights.” He describes the touching, earnest plot of their *Allegro* as “a bit baffling from a distance of seventy years.”

Purdum also missteps in emphasizing aspects of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s personal lives that seemingly conflict with their work, such as Rodgers’s alcoholism and Hammerstein’s dalliance with a showgirl. There is nothing wrong with including these biographical details in a book of this sort; they belong there, and many readers would note their absence. The problem is that Purdum seems to want to juxtapose unsavory biographical details with the content of the art in a way that suggests his subjects were hypocrites or that at least will supposedly complicate our understanding of the art. But such personal stories don’t improve our critical understanding of the art one iota. And it is difficult to imagine that theatergoers who find lessons in *South Pacific* or solace in *Carousel* will set aside their sincere responses upon learning that, for example, Hammerstein was not especially warm and fuzzy in interacting with his children.

Less troubling but still striking is Purdum’s mostly uncritical endorsement of present-day producers who are persuaded of the need to enliven or alter Rodgers and Hammerstein’s shows (in contrast to Rodgers’s demand that productions “display an amber-like fidelity to the original staging,” as Purdum puts it). Yet does not much of the pleasure of spending time with works of art from earlier eras in America—from the landscapes of Andrew Wyeth to the films of Frank Capra—derive from encountering styles and sensibilities of the past? That is one reason we are fortunate to have film versions of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musicals produced during the artists’ lifetimes; they have lastingly preserved the original spirit of the shows, if not always the letter.

Of course, modern artists can—indeed should—continue to interpret Rodgers and Hammerstein, but the results are most coherent if the artists put themselves in the minds of the men who made the music. Lady Gaga can sing the notes of *The Sound of Music*, but her hip, protean persona is profoundly at odds with the show’s devotional tone, resulting in a scrambled, even incomprehensible, performance.

In the end, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s shows endure because the attitudes they express are not commonly encountered in contemporary culture—such as gratitude for the blessings of life and courage when confronted with the prospect of its end. Purdum is at his most powerfully persuasive not when he strains to link Rodgers and Hammerstein to our time or document their flaws but when he

describes the way each embodied his own moral code when it counted, as when they confronted sickness.

In 1955, when Rodgers received a diagnosis of jaw cancer, he took the news stoically, as recalled by his daughter Mary: “Because he’d been waiting for something terrible to happen for so long, when it finally happened he was like, ‘Oh, well, now I’ve got that over with.’” Later, when Hammerstein was reckoning with the stomach cancer that would soon claim him, he reacted with the serene fortitude exemplified by “You’ll Never Walk Alone.” Hammerstein, in words as poetic as any he ever wrote for a song, told his son James: “I’ve had a good time as a young man. And I’ve had a terrific middle age. The only thing that I’m disappointed in is that I was looking forward to having a really good old age, too.” ♦



Reading Dangerously

The illiberal philosophers and our fractured politics.

BY IAN MARCUS CORBIN

It was with some disappointment that I closed my copy of *Dangerous Minds*, a very short, largely correct, almost useless book by an excellent scholar of political philosophy, the University of Toronto’s Ronald Beiner. The book, to be as fair as I can, seems to have been rushed to press to participate in the vast media circus revolving around white nationalist Richard Spencer and his thousand or so fascism-LARPing Internet acolytes. While a longer, better book might have been more helpful, this one’s glaring failures are illuminating—and can shed light on our contemporary national unease.

The unease is palpable in places like mine. A few of my politically aware

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Dangerous Minds

Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right
by Ronald Beiner
Pennsylvania, 167 pp., \$24.95

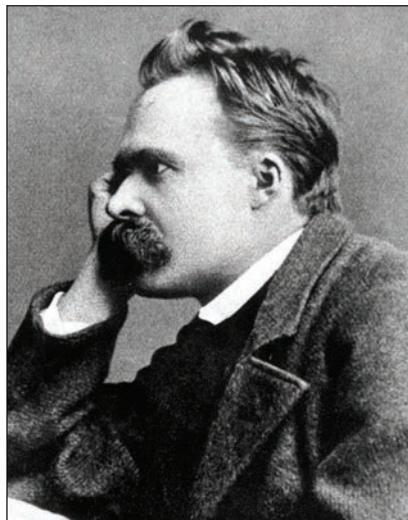
Boston friends—a small minority—have maintained a basic equanimity as the great Trumpian disruption crackles across our shining screens, day after #ThisIsNotNormal day, but a larger number pronounce themselves unable to sleep, mired in depression, crippled by rage, or sick with worry for the future of our country. The less perturbed often are those who have been blessed to live some part of their lives as ideological insurgents. I count myself among them. In my case, I was born to hard-living hippies who, when I was 2 years old, became teetotaling evangelicals, and before long became the pastors

of a small, impoverished Pentecostal church. Through my childhood and adolescence we supported Republicans, laid hands on the sick, eschewed secular music, and mistrusted science. All of this would be unremarkable but for the fact we lived this wild religious melodrama in the Boston area, the bleeding heart of blue America.

In the public schools I attended, my teachers spoke nonchalantly of evolution, abortion, gay rights, and the enslavement of housewifery, with perfect confidence that they and their pupils had been given the sight to see the simple right on every issue of consequence. There was no felt need for doubt or discussion, and for most of my schooling I was too shy to broach any. I'd sit with hot skin, incapable of forming a clear sentence, while the Good, True, and Beautiful were maligned with breezy self-satisfaction by some cross-country coach with a Boston accent. A big part of me believed—*knew*, in fact—that my teachers and classmates were blithely pounding nails in their own spiritual coffins with every word, descending further into a doctrinal darkness I could barely fathom, but I was too cowardly and inarticulate to save them—and the few times I tried they turned on me with wild, angry, uncomprehending eyes. As if I were insane. A small but persistent part of me wondered if they were right. The feeling of alienation was terrible and palpable; it hung around my gangly teenage neck like a chain.

Looking back now at the role that inhibiting chain has played in my life, I would wish it most fervently on anyone who wants to opine in public or to consider himself a citizen of the world. Provided that is, that he finds himself unable to write off his neighbors as monsters, as I was unable to do. Out of raw animal loneliness I gradually became adept at explaining and eliciting explanation. As I learned how to unpack the deep motivations for my unthinkable opinion X or Y, I never once failed to find a sympathetic ear. Disagreement was common and sometimes ineradicable, but enmity was reliably dispatched if you looked people in the eye and spoke sincerely and can-

didly. Or so I found. It made me think that while some of us are undoubtedly wrong on question X or Y, most people are pretty decent, uncertain, and, deep down, doing their damndest. This is the sort of understanding I was hoping would emerge from a book purporting to explain the philosophical roots of contemporary far-right thinking.



Friedrich Nietzsche

Dangerous Minds has a simple foundational premise: The great philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger are in possession of some decidedly illiberal ideas. Herren Doktoren Nietzsche and Heidegger would be quick to cop to Beiner's charge. Both unabashedly declare liberal societies sad, enervated, and soul-sucking; both pine for something nobler and more intense.

The main figure in the book is Nietzsche, who emerges as stern, strenuous, and manly. Beiner's interpretation—anchored in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *Twilight of the Idols* (1889), as well as some earlier essays—gives us a Nietzsche drawn to harsh rules and harsh realities. He lionizes rebels and rulers who laugh in the face of restraints, conventions, and opponents. Nietzsche, as Beiner conveys his views, is fundamentally concerned with how we will thrive in a post-theistic universe, one that emphatically does not care for us, was not made for us, offers icy silence in response to our pleas for solace and succor. Instead of

imagining that reality will answer one's hopes, Nietzsche thinks that one must rise to reality's level, becoming not just its equal but its master in strength and even cruelty. As Beiner puts it, for Nietzsche, "Nobility = life affirmation = grappling with the tragic character of existence and not being defeated by it but, on the contrary, *affirming* it in all its harshness." Nietzsche's is a bold, invigorating call for unashamed, unrelenting hunger and demand, in defiance of any putative refusal.

Beiner sums up Nietzsche's take on what ails modernity: "Life, to be life, needs to affirm itself and push itself to transcend itself, and none of that is possible without a culture with definite boundaries that understands with perfect clarity what its purpose is." In this view, the wide, airy, choose-your-own meaning horizon of a godless liberal society gives the common man nothing to strive toward or push against. Beiner is at least somewhat sympathetic to this diagnosis. Nietzsche, for his part, thinks that this is a crisis of epic proportions because the weak, uncreative majority desperately needs rules and goals if its members are to achieve anything like strength or feel anything like purpose.

Great men are another matter. These, according to Nietzsche, need to grapple with the meaningless, indifferent nature of the cosmos, the wide, empty horizon: Their world is "a world of fate," Beiner writes, "of tragedy and tragic responsibility; of courage and manliness; of resoluteness and resolute masculinity; of strength, heroism, existential pathos, rock-hard fidelity to one's own chosen values." The great beauty possible in Nietzsche's godless cosmos is raw, unapologetic, unwavering self-assertion, willfully building a good and affirmative life on the coldest, cruelest plane imaginable, a life of perpetual war and victory, open only to a brazen few.

The rest of us will need the safe confines of a traditional civilization, Nietzsche argues, in which our betters tell us what we must be and do, as betters have in most times and places. This is an unapologetically inegalitarian vision. It presumes that strength varies widely between individuals, that heroic strength is vanishingly rare, and that not

everyone is willing or able to confront the full picture of a meaningless reality. Some will be better off with orders to follow. In summary, Beiner writes: “Nietzsche wanted creativity and open horizons for the heroic philosopher and wanted brutally closed and confined horizons for everyone else.” More succinctly: “This guy is not a liberal!”

No, he certainly is not. But perhaps Nietzsche shares his illiberalism with reality itself. This is not a possibility Beiner is willing to countenance; the larger picture of the post-theistic human predicament scarcely comes up; Darwin doesn’t figure in his account at all. Although he acknowledges Nietzsche’s acumen as a diagnostician, Beiner rejects the philosopher’s prescriptions. “Nietzsche’s positive philosophy is all nonsense or lunacy: *Übermenschen*, will to power, eternal recurrence of the same, a return to ancien régime-type European aristocracy. It’s impossible to take any of that seriously.” Beiner doesn’t feel the need to explain why he cannot take these prescriptions seriously, other than briefly noting that “one can’t conjure up the notion of *Übermenschen* without simultaneously conjuring up the notion of *Untermenschen*.” Perhaps the closest he comes to offering a substantive rebuttal to Nietzsche’s vision of illiberal greatness is this modest assertion from Alexis de Tocqueville: “Equality is perhaps less elevated; but it is more just, and its justice makes for its greatness and its beauty.” This, it seems, will be antidote enough. “The Tocquevillean acknowledgement of egalitarian justice is a quote that every reader of Nietzsche should cleave tightly to his or her bosom,” Beiner writes. “We need it to ward off what’s most perilous in Nietzsche’s thought.” Heavens, then; a very good thing that we came across it.

Beiner turns next to Heidegger, the German philosopher whose undeniable dalliance with Nazism is, as more evidence accrues, coming to seem something closer to a full-blown love affair. Beiner treats Heidegger’s thought as a variation on Nietzschean themes, transposing and expounding upon the Nietzschean notion that, in Beiner’s words, “we are bound by an existential

obligation to live lives that are untranquilized.” In Heidegger’s case, the raw fact is that existence—both ours and the existence of this planet, tree, rock, or atom—is a wild mystery before which we can do little more than stand in awe. It is also fragile and intrinsically limited, perched always on the edge of annihilation. We tranquilize ourselves by ignoring the wondrousness of our reality, disregarding the most fundamental question of all: Why is there something rather than nothing? Into and around this question Heidegger insinuates a sort of primal, mystical, death-focused vitalism that fit neatly enough with Hitler’s philosophy to get Heidegger an official position in the Third Reich.

It would be difficult to find anyone who would deny Beiner’s central claim that Heidegger, like Nietzsche, was not a liberal. But Beiner’s textual analysis—which, in the case of Heidegger, draws largely on *Being and Time* (1927)—leaves basically untouched the matter of why these ideas are, per his title, *dangerous*. That is, why are illiberal ideas bad and why would anyone find them appealing?

In an admirable concluding chapter, Beiner advises “us”—the good liberals reading his book, who find ourselves facing Trump, Bannon, Miller, et al. across the great chasm—not to fall back on a kind of secular supersessionism in which liberalism has finally won its permanent victory as all the fallacious detritus of premodern politics has been swept away by Progress. As Beiner writes, “For Rawls, Rorty, and Habermas, Nietzsche has been refuted by history and sociology. He hasn’t! He can only be refuted by a more compelling account of the human good.” Bravo. Yes. Let’s please hear it.

En route to such an argument, Beiner suggests that we must continually engage Nietzsche as a live opponent, who might just have his hand on something that is both wicked and enduringly attractive. “Reading these thinkers,” Beiner assures us,

doesn’t automatically turn us from liberals into something else (or hopefully it doesn’t!); but hopefully what it does do is draw us into a fully ambitious questioning of what human life expects of us.

This is a generally welcome exhortation, basic to the practice of philosophy, but if Beiner ever concludes his ambitious questioning (and is still a liberal!) I hope he will write another book in which we can learn what it means for “human life” to “expect” anything at all of “us” in a God-shorn universe. Nietzsche thinks it expects nothing at all, and we need to demand that it meet *our* expectations. One is tempted to see this as another example of Beiner’s quietly placing all of the most momentous philosophical action offstage, as if there is some agent out there called “human life” that will save us from the heavy task of judging and deciding in the absence of a Great Judge.

Professor Beiner is a deeply learned man and his instincts, especially as manifested in his concluding chapter, are wise and humane. Would that more confirmed liberals realized that history is not over and that there may be more in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in *A Theory of Justice*. Would that more liberals at least considered shimmying across the great chasm to figure out why the political vision of Donald Trump (such as it is) might seem beautiful to a critical mass of intelligent, kind, responsible, fallible, fearful human beings. I can confidently suggest that most Trump voters fit this description because, per my research, almost everyone does if you shimmy up close enough. I probably wouldn’t believe it if I hadn’t spent so much of my life as a person whom Hillary Clinton would call deplorable, while living among wonderful people whom the deplorables would call godless, pajama-boy cucks.

Beiner’s good instincts are part of what makes his book so frustrating; he mysteriously fails to follow his own excellent counsel, as he refuses to explore or acknowledge the very real—and yes, potentially dangerous—beauty of Nietzsche’s prescriptions. But maybe he’s just exercising prudence. If these prescriptions are potentially dangerous, why bother to discern the goodness or beauty in them? These ideas are not liberal! Keep them under wraps!

There are at least two reasons not only for deeply reading these illiberal philosophers but for considering how

their prescriptions might be found attractive. First, there is no such thing as a dangerless, fail-safe philosophy. Liberalism was for a time thought to be such a thing but that confidence has been shown to be too optimistic by a mile. Life is hard and confusing—we can't afford to be ruling out interpretations willy-nilly. Second, to put it bluntly, the elite, educated failure to understand the reappearance of populist nationalism is a very bad thing, speaking on a purely practical level—on the level, in fact, of safety and danger.

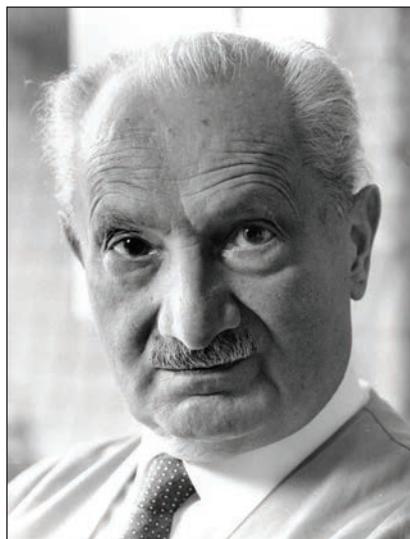
I currently split my professional life between academia and the Boston art world, the most liberal corners of the most liberal state of the union. I can't speak strongly enough about the beauty and kindness of the black, Jewish, Hispanic, gay, transgender, feminist, socialist people whom I count as colleagues and friends here. They are deep, sensitive, searching souls. As a straight, white, able-bodied male, though—one who has even occasionally voted for Republicans—I am, on paper, a perfect storm of privilege and prejudice.

Perhaps shockingly, my colleagues and I have managed to treat each other with respect and at times even deep friendship and care. That's good—it's wonderful, actually—but I also have the misfortune to be a regular reader of opinion journalism and social media posts. The people I speak to in my art gallery and classroom are likely, on any given day, to publish scorching social media screeds directed at people like myself. They post pictures in which they gleefully sip from mugs marked "White Male Tears" and they make sweeping, ecstatically "liked" and commented-upon pronouncements about the insidious, ubiquitous racism of people with my skin tone and about the domination, oppression, and evil that #YesAllMen daily impose upon them.

Now there are many, many injustices that plague our common life. Some are indexed to race, sex, and other identity categories; some have long, horrific histories; in some cases, the lingering fallout is in its own way horrific. Because of the way I look and dress and speak, I surely get preferential treatment from

some store clerks, bank-loan officers, job interviewers, police officers.

It is possible to acknowledge all of this, however, and still be struck by the wild imbalance between our lived experience of one another and the verbal portrait of ourselves that we daily paint on social media. Perhaps I'm not treated like a ravening predator in my personal relationships because I'm "one of the good ones" in my identity category. Fine. Many chauvinistic group-ideologies are willing to make exceptions for exceptional individuals.



Martin Heidegger

But I don't think that's what's going on here; I don't think that I get a special pass and all of the other white men in my acquaintances' path are treated like monsters. Rather, for many of us, our public, impersonal lives contain a much higher percentage of status-seeking performance than our day-to-day interactions. We're playing roles.

Living as I do among activists who talk the talk of "toxic masculinity" and "mansplaining" and so on, I know to take it all with a grain of salt. We're not truly at war with one another; for the most part, we're just playing games, enjoying the sensation of wielding high-caliber verbal weapons. But imagine being a differently situated white male—say a high-school-educated pipe-fitter from Idaho. Mightn't you feel despised, attacked, unfairly blamed? Mightn't

you want to reply that life is very hard and that while you may have messed up in some ways you're really doing your level best? Would you have any way of knowing that these online activists are actually decent people who would, if they sat and drank a glass of whiskey with you, realize that you too are a decent, trying-as-hard-as-you-can human being?

The rise of populist nationalism in the United States certainly has to do with economic and social issues—demographic changes, the transformation of the workforce, the effects of globalization, etc. And maybe it also has to do, as Ronald Beiner argues, with the influence of illiberal philosophers' ideas. Maybe it is overdetermined. But whatever its causes, surely our modes of social intercourse are making things worse. A modest proposal: We should all shut the hell up for a little while, go outdoors, and try to understand the people we run into. It is hard to understand one's neighbors in the best of circumstances, and even harder when the people you run into are unlike you in important ways. That is, however, the task we sign up for by coming to or staying in America.

The Prussia of Nietzsche's day also included many smart and sophisticated people who obsessed over politics and believed that it was the primary forum for determining human salvation and damnation. He writes, beautifully and perhaps dangerously, that

every philosophy that believes the problem of existence to be shelved, or even solved, by a political event, is a sham philosophy. There have been innumerable states founded since the beginning of the world; that is an old story. How should a political innovation manage once and for all to make a contented race of the dwellers on this earth? If anyone believes in his heart that this is possible, he should report himself to our authorities: he really deserves to be Professor of Philosophy.

Politics may be a necessary evil—but talking incessantly about politics and viewing your countrymen solely through a political lens is an evil that we're actively choosing, day by day. We should stop. ♦

Laboratories of Liberty

The states' underappreciated role in our constitutional system(s). BY ADAM J. WHITE

John Rutledge was a natural first-round pick for the Supreme Court. An accomplished statesman and patriot, Rutledge was a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, where he chaired the crucial Committee on Detail. Once the new federal government was in place, President Washington made Rutledge the second justice ever appointed to the nation's highest court. But in early 1791, after just 15 months on the court, before hearing even a single case, he got a better offer—namely, to serve instead on South Carolina's Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions.

"This State having thought proper to create the Office of Cheif [sic] Justice & offer it to me," he explained in a letter to President Washington, "I conceive I could not with any Propriety refuse it." So he proceeded to "inclose, & resign, my Commission, of an Associate Judge, of the United States."

Today, such a move would be utterly incomprehensible; no sitting justice would ever leave the U.S. Supreme Court for a state court. But Rutledge's choice of the South Carolina bench over the federal bench was, at the very least, symbolic of the relative standing of the U.S. Supreme Court and state supreme courts in the founding era, before Chief Justice John Marshall firmly established the Supreme Court as our nation's constitutional center of gravity.

Today, we look reflexively to the Supreme Court as the definer and defender of constitutional liberty. But state courts, too, have played

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51 Imperfect Solutions

States and the Making of American Constitutional Law

by Jeffrey S. Sutton
Oxford, 278 pp., \$29.95

an important role, and to the extent that the Supreme Court leaves too little jurisprudential space for state supreme courts—or to the extent that the state courts themselves choose to simply echo Supreme Court opinions—then our liberty may suffer. That is Judge Jeffrey Sutton's appeal in his new book, *51 Imperfect Solutions*.

The author is well suited to explore this subject. Since his appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit by President George W. Bush in 2003, Sutton has been one of the leading constitutionalists of his generation, on a federal appellate court that regularly adjudicates constitutional disputes, including challenges to state laws. But perhaps just as significant for present purposes is Sutton's pre-judicial career: For three years he served as Ohio's solicitor general, representing the state in federal and state courts, including nine oral arguments in the U.S. Supreme Court. From this firsthand experience, Sutton is able to explain the importance of federalism in protecting liberty not only in theory but in practice.

The theory is well rehearsed, of course: By our Constitution's allocation of power to the federal and state levels of government and by the federal and state governments' own separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers, "a double security arises to the rights of the people. The different governments will control each other, at the same time that each will be controlled by itself." So explained James Madison,

famously, in *Federalist* 51. (So famously, in fact, that one wonders whether Sutton's choice of title—which on its face refers to the 50 states plus the U.S. Supreme Court—is an intentional double entendre.)

How has theory played out in practice? Sutton details four accounts of constitutional issues in which the state courts, applying the states' own constitutions, developed or refined constitutional rights in lieu of the U.S. Supreme Court. "There is a rights-innovating side to federalism," Sutton explains. "State constitutional litigation can proceed without waiting for, or worrying about, the shadow of constitutional law."

And "rights," in this context, can include not just negative rights but positive rights—that is, not just freedom from government restraint but also entitlement to government aid, as highlighted by Sutton's first case study: student claims of a constitutional right to equalized funding of schools across districts. In *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), the Supreme Court declined to infer such an entitlement from the U.S. Constitution and thus left undisturbed the wide disparities in school funding among richer and poorer neighborhoods that result when schools are funded by property taxes. But "while the U.S. Supreme Court permitted" stark school-funding inequalities to continue, Sutton explains, "the States demanded change." While Texas's approach had survived review in the U.S. Supreme Court, the state's supreme court declared its framework unconstitutional under an 1875 provision of Texas's constitution, which provides that "it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools." Applying Texas's constitution to Texas's people, the Texas judges concluded in 1989 that "children who live in poor districts and children who live in rich districts must be afforded a substantially equal opportunity to have access to educational funds. Certainly, this much is required if the state is to educate its populace

efficiently and provide for a general diffusion of knowledge statewide.” Sutton notes that Ohio largely followed suit, under its own constitution; we can add Kansas to that list, since its supreme court struck down the state’s school funding structure last year. And all of them follow in the wake of the New Jersey supreme court, which since 1985 has been micromanaging the state legislature’s funding for schools.

Sutton’s other three case studies are more conventional stories of negative rights, yet each highlights the nuances, opportunities, and challenges evident when state constitutions and state courts are layered atop conventional federal-centric accounts of constitutional development. After the Supreme Court declared in *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940) that public schools could compel students to salute the American flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, at least three state courts issued decisions construing their own states’ constitutions as prohibiting such compulsion; then the Supreme Court famously followed suit by reversing itself in *West Virginia v. Barnette* (1943). (The landmark *Barnette* decision popped up in the news again last month, after President Trump stated that people who do not stand for the national anthem “shouldn’t be in the country.”) Sutton stresses that state-specific protections on this issue—including those that came from state courts after the U.S. Supreme Court gave nationwide protection in *Barnette*—remain crucially important: “Should the U.S. Supreme Court change its mind yet again in this area,” citizens of those states still “would have nothing to fear” from state legislative efforts to compel salutes and pledges.

Similarly, after the Supreme Court adopted a rule excluding from trial any evidence obtained in violation of the U.S. Constitution’s right against unreasonable search and seizure but then created an exception for evidence obtained unconstitutionally but in “good faith,” many state courts and legislatures rejected that exception

and thereby expanded constitutional protection against unlawful searches and seizures beyond what federal law affords.

Sutton’s other example focuses on one of the most infamous Supreme Court decisions: *Buck v. Bell* (1927), in which the Court affirmed progressive eugenics laws by ruling that the U.S. Constitution does not protect people against involuntary sterilization. After *Buck*, states took the lead in ending such programs themselves, first through nonenforcement of their



eugenics programs and finally by repealing them. “The state legislatures become the eventual heroes of their own story,” Sutton observes.

But Sutton’s inclusion of the eugenics story in his broader narrative also highlights precisely the reason why litigants seek protection first and foremost in the Supreme Court and the U.S. Constitution: to protect themselves from the impositions—sometimes draconian impositions—of state and local governments, from which the state’s own courts and laws offer too little protection.

Indeed, that is precisely why the post-bellum Republicans added transformative amendments to the Constitution, especially the Fourteenth Amendment’s prohibition against state violations of “the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States,” or state deprivations of “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law,” or states’ denial of “equal protection of the laws.”

Judge Sutton is not naïve, of course: “Taking the independent status of

state constitutions seriously does not inherently favor the government or the individual,” he warns. His former boss, Justice Antonin Scalia—Sutton clerked for him in the early 1990s—understood this, too. Sutton recalls a line from Justice Scalia’s last opinion for the Court: “The state courts may experiment all they want with their own constitutions, and often do in the wake of the Court’s decisions.”

But at such moments, it is worth also recalling one of Justice Scalia’s famous pre-judicial speeches, “The Two Faces of Federalism”:

we have to bear in mind that [federalism] is a form of government midway between two extremes. At one extreme, the autonomy, the disunity, the conflict of independent states; at the other, the uniformity, the inflexibility, the monotony of one centralized government. Federalism is meant to be a compromise between the two. *As such, it is a stick that can be used to beat either dog.* [Emphasis added.]

Accordingly, federalism sometimes counsels in favor of state discretion and sometimes against it. When states have discretion, they serve as laboratories of democracy and liberty alike.

And when the Supreme Court preserves space for the states to experiment, the Court itself can benefit from those experiments. This is Sutton’s most important insight. “By allowing the state courts to be the first responders in addressing innovative rights claims,” he observes, “the U.S. Supreme Court can gain valuable insights.” After all, “in a federal system, nothing prevents the state courts from being path blazers.”

When constitutional issues percolate through state courts first, each state is able to experiment with less risk of unintended consequences. When Supreme Court justices decide how to calibrate a constitutional right and define its practical outer limits, they do so under the shadow of uncertainty cast by the fact that their rulings will affect laws, people, and preexisting arrangements far removed from the specific litigation at hand. But when state

courts decide the case, the judges do so with the knowledge that their decision will affect far fewer people, laws, and arrangements—and the judges will often be more familiar with them in the first place. They also will be better rooted in the culture and expectations of the people whom the judges serve.

True, each state will make its own

mistakes. But as Sutton stresses, that's the point: "fifty imperfect solutions—each grounded in constitutional guarantees the States have chosen for themselves, crafted to meet the peculiar needs of each State, and implemented by accountable state officials—are almost certainly superior to one imperfect solution."

Any constitutionalist making this argument must contend with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), a case in which national intervention by the Supreme Court was utterly necessary and justified. Sutton's attempt to distinguish *Brown* (from, specifically, the school-funding cases) falls flat. "There is nothing complicated in principle about a Supreme Court ruling that says the Equal Protection Clause prohibits a State from denying students entrance to a school based on race," he writes; "not so with school funding." One can say this only by ignoring the decades of complication and unrest that followed *Brown*, beginning with the Court's own follow-up opinion, in *Brown II* (1955), which directed federal district courts to take all actions "as are necessary and proper to admit to public schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis with all deliberate speed the parties to these cases." Thus followed decades of acrimony over how best to remedy the segregation that *Brown* struck down—fights over busing, school district lines, remedial affirmative action, and so on. *Brown's* principle was simple, but putting that principle into effect was not, and perhaps the better justification for the Supreme Court's intervention in *Brown* was simply that decades of strife and litigation were a small price to pay to erase the still greater problem of racial segregation.

But on issues less significant than the nation's history of racial discrimination—which is to say, on almost all other issues—Sutton's call for increased state involvement in constitutional development is sensible, especially because it could help to bring constitutional deliberation back closer to the people themselves.

Sutton recognizes this, too: "There is something to [Justice Felix] Frankfurter's insight that civil liberties are best protected when they become part of our political culture and part of what we Americans do for each other, not part of what the Court does for us. Each time the Court protects us from our own mistakes, we cheapen self-government and undermine its capacity to steel us against the next ill-conceived policy urge of the moment." What a well-timed civics lesson. ♦

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

B&A

Father Figure

Harper Lee's inspiration in creating Atticus Finch.

BY ADAM KEIPER

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a chimaera, created through the merging of multiple manuscripts. In writing the 1960 bestseller, Lee stitched together several of her short stories about childhood and brought back characters from her unpublished first novel, *Go Set a Watchman*. The rediscovery and controversial 2015 publication of *Watchman* led to a spike of interest in the reclusive author and her work. For readers curious even now, more than a year after her death, Emory University historian Joseph Crespino offers a volume of new and familiar scholarship. In *Atticus Finch: The Biography* (Basic, 272 pp., \$27), Crespino starts with the story of the man on whom Lee modeled her most famous character: her father, Amasa Coleman Lee.

Like Atticus, A.C. was a widower, lawyer, and state legislator; unlike Atticus, A.C. was for 18 years a newspaper editor. Crespino digs into A.C. Lee's hundreds of editorials, showing how his political and religious con-

servatism and his integrity and idealism—sometimes bordering on sanctimony—were reflected in the character his daughter invented. Crespino next turns to Harper Lee's writerly beginnings and to the creation of Atticus in *Watchman*, his less cynical re-creation in *Mockingbird*, and the iconic version that appears in the 1962 film adapta-



tion. Crespino doesn't make much out of the moment in which A.C. Lee met Gregory Peck, the celluloid Atticus; we're left to imagine how strange the encounter must have been for the 82-year-old.

Crespino uses the Lees' writings to explain the moral and political evolution of Alabama on segregation. A.C. Lee, who died in

1962, was basically the sort of "white moderate" Martin Luther King Jr. criticized in his 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail." But a year later, in *Why We Can't Wait*, King praised the way Atticus Finch "disperses the mob with the force of his moral courage." For the sake of that example of moral courage, we should be glad Harper Lee was so daunted by the success of *Mockingbird* that she never got around to finishing the third Atticus novel she was considering. ♦

Adam Keiper is the Books & Arts editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



Caricature Study

Paul Schrader's dreary latest film creates a noxious new cliché for our times. BY JOHN PODHORETZ



Ethan Hawke and Amanda Seyfried in *First Reformed*

The word “masterwork” is being tossed about liberally since the release of a new film called *First Reformed*, so I felt I had to see it—even though four decades of exposure to the productions of its 71-year-old writer-director, Paul Schrader, have offered me little save savage instruction in the meaning of the phrase “waste of time.”

Surely, I thought, it couldn't simply be that *First Reformed* gained its fan club because it tells a story about a tormented pastor awakening to the threat of global warming. That couldn't possibly be the only reason.

It's not the only reason. There's also a bad guy based on the Koch brothers. He's the second-worst polluter in America and the big reveal here is that he gives \$85,000 to his local church. Eighty-five thou? Please. A really evil Koch clone would give \$50 million. Oh, and there's also a kid at a Christian fellowship meeting wearing a T-shirt with a cross on it who complains about Muslims. I didn't see the movie at a critic screening, but I assume the critics who have been raving about this collection of wildly obvious caricatures had to restrain themselves from

clapping like audience members at the Samantha Bee show.

As for me, I sat through this cockamamie piece of emotionally apocalyptic claptrap wondering why there are no lightbulbs brighter than 40 watts anywhere in upstate New York. It's dark, you see. Dark because the pastor, played by Ethan Hawke, is in despair. But why doesn't the pregnant woman who seeks his help, played by Amanda Seyfried—why doesn't she have some nice 100-watt bulbs? Or even one? She needs some general illumination. She might fall down the stairs or something.

First Reformed is the sort of film that's usually called a “character study” because it devotes every second to its central character, Rev. Toller (as in ask not for whom he tollers, because he tollers for thee). But Toller, played by Ethan Hawke, isn't a character at all. He's a collection of attributes. He's not only sick at heart, he's literally sick in the stomach with what is surely cancer. He keeps a diary but keeps ripping out the pages. He drinks a lot. He's alone because his wife left him. His wife left him because their son died in Iraq after Toller persuaded the boy to go to the Virginia Military Institute.

Indeed, as Toller begins to go bonkers around halfway through the movie, I was reminded of Schrader's disgrace-

ful role 40 years ago in helping to create the noxious cliché of the deranged and homicidal Vietnam war vet in his screenplay for the 1977 movie *Rolling Thunder*. Now he's created a new cliché to go with the old one: the deranged father of a dead Iraq war vet. Let's hope this one doesn't catch on.

Rolling Thunder was one of the screenplays that made Schrader's reputation. He was launched onto the Hollywood A-list in the 1970s because he showed genuine creativity in coming up with terrific ideas for movies.

George C. Scott as a small-town Michigan Calvinist who discovers to his horror that his daughter has become a porn actress and goes to rescue her? Genius! Alas, the movie itself, called *Hardcore*, was risibly awful. How about Richard Gere as an Armani-clad, sports-car-driving *American Gigolo*? Brilliant! Except that's all there was. A fancy horror remake of the 1940s B-movie *Cat People* set in New Orleans? Sure, why not? Audiences giggled. A Patty Hearst movie seen almost exclusively through the eyes of Patty from kidnapping to bank robbery? Inventive! Nope, awful. With the exception of his screenplay for *Taxi Driver*, which is far more memorable for Martin Scorsese's direction than anything else, Schrader has never made a good movie. And he's made 20 of them.

Even when he left the Hollywood elite and became an independent filmmaker in the 1990s and 2000s, he had great ideas followed by lousy execution: Willem Dafoe as a high-class drug courier in his 40s trying to figure out how he's going to live the rest of his life in *Light Sleeper*, Woody Harrelson as the gay best friend of D.C. society ladies who finds himself in the middle of a murder case in *The Walker*.

Now there's *First Reformed*, which seems to be a movie about a clergyman wrestling with God but is really about Schrader wrestling with Ingmar Bergman's own series of tormented-clergyman movies of the 1960s, complete with ticking clocks and mirrors and windows. Those movies were better. But what else is new? Everybody's movies are better than Paul Schrader's. I knew that. I know that. And yet I fell for the Schrader hype. Again. ◆

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

A People's Historian

John Julius Norwich, 1929-2018.

BY DOMINIC GREEN



John Julius Norwich in Oxford, March 26, 2014

John Julius Norwich, the historian, travel writer, man of letters, and television performer known to *Burke's Peerage* as 2nd Viscount Norwich and beloved by millions of readers, viewers, and listeners for his erudition, wit, and inerrant handling of historical narrative, died last week at 88 years of age. A patrician, Norwich specialized in the democratic art of elucidating the human past to the ordinary reader, as Gibbon, Hume, and Macaulay had done before him.

I never met Norwich, but it was through him that I first met the Norman knights of Sicily, the merchants and mariners of the Venetian republic, and the emperors and bishops of Byzantium. Later, he introduced me to the saints and sinners of the papacy, and the poets and painters of Victorian Venice too. Writers learn by reading other writers, and reading Norwich

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is a masterclass. Spring-heeled in his Gibbonian rhythms, alert for aesthetic and narrative treasure glinting by the side of political and military highways, magisterial in his sweep and subtle in his corrections of earlier historians, and never without a touch of Augustan irony, Norwich was a serious writer. He was also a modest one.

"I have not discovered a single new historical fact in my life," Norwich said when his memoir *Trying to Please* came out in 2008. Anyone can discover facts; the archives are full of them. But Norwich's narratives, deceptively light in their handling of leaden documentary matter, were buoyed not just by the enthusiasm to which he admitted but by the heavy reading and hard writing that, in the English way, he disavowed.

On 21 November 1354, John Palaeologus slipped out of Tenedos. It was a dark, moonless night with occasional bursts of heavy rain, but there was a good following wind that drove him quickly up the Hellespont and into

the Marmara. In the early hours of the 22nd, he reached Constantinople which, still under cover of darkness, he succeeded in entering unobserved. Once inside the city, however, he immediately made his presence known, and by dawn the crowds were already gathering on the streets and calling his name. Before long, inevitably, they went on the rampage.

The rapid rhythm ("dark, moonless . . . good following") catches the wind that drives the ship up the Hellespont. As the deposed emperor, seeking to recover his throne, slips lightly into Constantinople, the dependent clause "still under cover of darkness" carries the factual load. A Latinate construction ("Once inside the city") pivots effortlessly on "however" and concludes with a colloquial pattern ("he immediately made his presence known"). This descent from high written style to the pattern of ordinary speech narrates the emperor's descent into the divided city—remember, he sailed "up the Hellespont"—and into urban politics. The "inevitably" that precedes the "rampage" could be Cicero or Livy or Gibbon.

When, turning the page, we learn that the imperial usurper John VI Cantacuzenus has retired to a monastery, Norwich gently corrects Gibbon's doubts about the sincerity of the conversion. Thus Norwich, who claims only to entertain, adds new facts. Then he prompts us to consider the man, not the monarch or the monk: "It is hard not to feel sorry for John Cantacuzenus." Finally, he fires a double-barreled verdict from Gibbon's arsenal: "Few emperors had worked harder for the imperial good; few had possessed less personal ambition."

Only the best historians can manage this kind of writing. Norwich weaves the facts into the drama and exposes the accidental elements of historical experience without losing the overall perspective. Anything can happen; it is as though the past is unwritten. Norwich sustains his dramas across hundreds of years and pages. And all of it is true.

DAVID LEVENSON / GETTY

“He grew up with history,” Norwich’s daughter the biographer Artemis Cooper tells me on the telephone from London. “He was one of those people who, because they’re drenched in history, see the present as informed by the past.”

Born in 1929, John Julius Cooper was the only child of the Conservative politician Duff Cooper, who was to become a minister in Churchill’s wartime cabinet, and the society beauty Lady Diana Manners. Both parents were accomplished diarists. Duff Cooper’s diaries, edited by John Julius in 2005, record his athletic program of adultery. But Diana Cooper, her son recalled, was “quite glad that other women were taking the weight off her, as it were.”

“Diana Cooper was remarkable,” Artemis Cooper says of her grandmother. “Like most girls of her time, she had precious little education, but she was absolutely steeped in poetry and literature.” Evelyn Waugh immortalized her as Mrs. Algernon Stitch in *Scoop* (1938) and *Men at Arms* (1952), and Nancy Mitford, less flatteringly, as Lady Leone in *Don’t Tell Alfred* (1960).

John Julius and his mother were closer than was typical for the times and she remained, he said, “my greatest influence.” She taught him to read at 4 and introduced him to French by taking him to France at 5. In *Scoop*, one of Mrs. Stitch’s friends finds Josephine, the “eight-year-old Stitch prodigy,” construing Virgil. “Show him your imitation of the Prime Minister,” Mrs. Stitch asks. “Sing him your Neapolitan song. . . . Stand on your head.”

“Wherever you went with Diana Cooper, it was a lesson,” Artemis Cooper recalls. “You had to shine, you had to know your stuff. On every shopping expedition, she would grill you about the capitals of the world or your time-tables, or tell you stories from the Greek myths.” Duff Cooper’s teaching method, taking turns to read aloud from books, further prepared John Julius for public life.

“It was the sort of family where if you passed a statue, you’d look at who it was and talk about the stories of that time,”

Artemis Cooper says. “As a child, John Julius had Eleanor Farjeon’s *Kings and Queens of England*, which had simple illustrations and a little poem about each monarch, on a screen in his room. He could see it graphically in his mind.”

Evacuated to the United States in 1940 and partly schooled in Canada, John Julius returned to Eton and then read French and Russian at New College, Oxford. After national service in the Royal Navy, he followed his father’s path into the Foreign Office, serving at the British embassies in Belgrade and Beirut. In 1961, he returned to London fascinated by the Norman monuments he had seen during a two-week holiday in Sicily, only to find that there was “practically nothing in English” on the subject.

“There was nothing for it but to resign from the Foreign Office,” he wrote in *Sicily: A Short History* (2015), “and to take up the pen in earnest.” The two volumes of Norwich’s *The Normans in Sicily* (1967, 1970) remain the standard work. So do the two volumes of *A History of Venice* (1977, 1981) and the three volumes of *Byzantium* (1988, 1992, 1995).

“A publisher asked him to write a history of Florence,” Artemis Cooper remembers. “But he said, ‘I hate Florence, I hate those bloody bankers, I’m fed up with all those Medici. I want to write about Venice.’ ‘Well, okay,’ the publisher said, ‘that’s fine.’”

Norwich loved Venice. He visited it some 200 times and was chairman of the Venice in Peril Fund. But the history of Venice is a history of faceless councils and powerless doges. “Anyone who looked like they were going to turn into a good story got their heads chopped off,” Artemis Cooper says. “The checks and balances were designed to cut out the story so that the republic could go serenely on.” The absence in Venice of characters like Frederick Barbarossa or Roger II in *The Normans in Sicily* challenged Norwich’s narrative skills.

“I remember him at the time wondering, ‘How am I ever going to make this into an interesting story?’ Artemis

Cooper recalls. “It was a hard book to write. It was a series of stories, but not about individuals.” It reads, though, like a human drama. So does the *Byzantium* trilogy. But that, she notes, was “one grisly murder and plot after another, so he wasn’t short of stories.” The difficulty, rather, was to continue the work of Robert Byron and Steven Runciman, and extricate Byzantium from the contempt of earlier historians.

“He had always loved Byzantium. He said that Paddy Leigh Fermor had introduced him to the Eastern Mediterranean, which he always thought of as his spiritual home.” In 1956, Leigh Fermor guided John Julius, his mother, and his wife Anne on a Greek island sailing trip. “Nobody has ever carried his knowledge so lightly,” Norwich said at Leigh Fermor’s memorial service in 2011, “nobody has ever seemed less like a scholar.”

Cooper, Leigh Fermor’s biographer, sees a kinship of “ebullience” and enthusiasm between the two. “John Julius worked very, very hard. Played pretty hard, too. He was always at his desk, reading, but he wasn’t a scholar. A lot of what I wrote about Paddy could apply to John Julius. And maybe John Julius informed what I wrote about Paddy, insofar as the secret of happiness is to be constantly looking outwards, having enormous curiosity, wanting to talk and meet with people.”

The monument to Norwich’s relationship with his readers is their collaboration on *Christmas Crackers*, pamphlets he produced every year starting in the 1970s. “He’d been keeping these little commonplace books forever and sending out little booklets to friends as a little gift for Christmas,” Cooper says. “And then it grew into a lovely unofficial club, which anyone who wanted to join could join. People sent stories and suggestions, and he welcomed it all. Elizabeth David said that the best writers always address their readers as equals. John Julius was like that. It was so engaging, so generous and enthusiastic. He said, ‘I get this stuff from all over the place. It comes out of the ether. Isn’t it wonderful?’” ♦



CONFIDENTIAL

From: John M. Dowd, Attorney at Law
Washington, D.C. 20015

To: Robert S. Mueller
Special Counsel, United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20024

Addenda Re: Request for Testimony on Alleged Obstruction of Justice

Sir:

This letter expands upon our letter of January 29, 2018. All claims of executive power and privilege therein are restated and realleged here.

Futhermore, and in the interests of foreclosing possible future disputes, we hereby aver and assert that pursuant to Article II of the United States Constitution:

- When issuing statements—verbally, in writing, or on social media—the President is assumed at all times to have one hand behind his back, with the index and middle finger crossed, thereby rendering all such statements, whether made under oath or otherwise, subject to nullification at his sole discretion at any point thereafter.
- When playing board games in which an element of chance is involved, the President has the power to extend his “turn” for as many iterations as he may deem fit in order to produce a favorable outcome. E.g., when rolling dice, the President may announce that his most recent roll does not count and roll again.
- In any social gathering involving the use of broadcast, cable, or streaming media, the President retains command of the remote control at all times.
- The President hereby and forever calls shotgun.
- The President shall have access to all “cheat codes” for both the desktop PC and platform console versions of all newly released MMORPG, FPS, and hand-to-hand combat video games.
- The President may cut in line. No other person may cut in front of the President.
- The President shall have access to root code for the Kobiyashi Maru test.
- The President is rubber. You’re glue. Whatever you say bounces off him and sticks to you.