the weekly standard

GEORGE H. W. BUSH, 1924-2018
ANDREW FERGUSON • PHILIP TERZIAN

DECEMBER 17, 2018 • $5.99

SENATOR SELFIE

Cory Booker wants to be all things to all people

BY ADAM RUBENSTEIN

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December 17, 2018 • Volume 24, Number 15

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COVER BY JASON SEILER

Medicare for Everybody Else

The American left, as we've had occasion to remark in these pages before, suffers from a paucity of new ideas. Or maybe it's truer to say it suffers from a surfeit of old ones. In any case, one old idea making the rounds among Democrats these days goes by the moniker "Medicare for All." The proposal, commonly associated with Sen. Bernie Sanders, involves the abolition of private-sector health insurance in favor of a single-payer system for all Americans like the one the federal government currently provides for Americans 65 and older. It is, in essence, a bigger, more coercive Obamacare.

Nonetheless a sizable number of the new Democratic majority in the House support the idea, as well as about a third of the Democratic caucus in the Senate.

There are at least two major problems with it. The first and most important is that it's utterly implausible. One study by the libertarian Mercatus Center at George Mason University estimated that expanding Medicare to the whole taxpaying population would cost an additional

And a unicorn in every pot

$32.6 trillion over 10 years. That is—how to put it?—not something the U.S. government, or any government, can afford. Progressives dispute the number but not convincingly.

The other problem with Medicare for All is rather more amusing. One of the Democratic party's most powerful and reliable constituencies—public-sector unions—is having second thoughts about it. In Albany, New York, state lawmakers are considering a bill that would in essence make the state the sole provider of health insurance to all New York residents—a kind of state-level Medicare for All. But it has suddenly dawned on unions representing government workers that if such a thing were put in place, they would no longer have the power to negotiate generous insurance plans from private-sector providers.

Of course the bill's supporters claim that under the New York Health Care Act, as it's called, health insurance benefits would be even more generous than they already are. But union officials are smart enough to know that the government can offer great benefits today and take them away tomorrow. And with no more private-sector providers for union negotiators to shake down and threaten—sorry, negotiate with—the state could unilaterally take away those benefits the next time there's a budget crunch. No more free massage therapy sessions for state employees, basically.

If there's one thing The Scrapbook loves, it's watching Democrats brawl with each other when the consequences of their dumb ideas become reality. Pass the popcorn. ♦

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortrump?

A recent piece in *New York* magazine caught our eye: "Michael Avenatti's Campaign Failed Because Democrats Don't Want Their Own Trump." Avenatti, as readers may wish to forget, is the trash-talking attorney and left-wing bad boy who made himself famous by representing the adult film actress Stormy Daniels and promoting the bogus sexual-assault allegations of Julie Swetnick against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. He then announced his intention to run for president and promptly got himself arrested for felony domestic violence against a girlfriend.

Jonathan Chait, the author of the *New York* piece, is perhaps best known as the author of *Audacity: How Barack Obama Defied His Critics and Created a Legacy That Will Prevail*, which hit bookstores just after Donald Trump won the presidency and began to slice Obama's legacy to shreds. We mention the book simply to point out that Chait has a special talent for bad timing, and when he says the Democrats won't find their own version of Trump, the careful observer may safely assume that the Democrats will find their own version of Trump any day now.

We won't burden readers by rehearsing Chait's self-flattering argument (in short: Liberals are too "intellectual" to want their own Trump). We would simply suggest that it may be someone other than Avenatti. We have in mind Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the feisty socialist who successfully challenged Democrat Joe Crowley and is soon to become the youngest member of the House of Representatives. Like Trump, Ocasio-Cortez has a special genius for drawing adoring crowds and for saying charmingly inane and easily falsifiable things: "Unemployment is low because everyone has two jobs," the Defense Department received "a $700 billion budget increase," etc., etc.

Watch out!

An ordinary person, having been ridiculed so many times for making wildly erroneous claims, would consider

TOP: ANDREW HARRER / BLOOMBERG / GETTY; BOTTOM: MELINA MARA / WASHINGTON POST / GETTY

being quiet for a time. Not Ocasio-Cortez. This week she declared (via Twitter) that the Defense Department has wasted "$21 TRILLION." This is supposed to compare favorably with the cost of Medicare for All, which she rightly notes would cost $32 trillion (see above), evidently forgetting that progressives are supposed to dispute that price tag. In fact, however, the article about the Pentagon she cited described $21 trillion in *transfers* between accounts from 1998 to 2015, not money spent. As the Manhattan Institute's Brian Riedl pointed out, the United States has spent only $18 trillion on the military from 1789 to 2018. It didn't matter. Her tweet, as of this writing, has been "liked" 26,000 times.

The outrageously false statements, the godlike status among a substantial minority of fiercely committed voters, the unorthodox capitalization on Twitter . . . Conservatives had better stop dismissing Ocasio-Cortez as a fool. She knows what she's doing. ♦

He Didn't Build That

Donald Trump is frequently faulted, and rightly so, for attempting to take credit for things he had nothing to do with. With Trump, though, you get the feeling it's the habit of the real-estate mogul and showbiz kingpin talking. He doesn't actually think (does he?) that the stock market goes up because of anything he did—it's part of his shtick.

With Barack Obama, one feels there's no shtick. He means it. At a recent speech at Rice University in Houston, the former president took credit for the current uptick in U.S. oil production. "You wouldn't always know it, but it went up every year I was president," he said to applause. "That whole—suddenly America's like the biggest oil producer and the biggest [in] gas—that was me, people." He went on to add, in that charmingly humble way of his, "It's a little like sometimes you go to Wall Street, and folks will be grumbling about anti-business, and I say, 'Have you checked where your stocks were when I came into office and where they are now? What are you complaining about?' Just say thank you, please."

MANDEL NGAN / GETTY

I did it all myself.

We have no interest in defending the honor of oil companies or Wall Street fund managers, but Obama's delusional bragging about oil production reminds us what we disliked most about him: his conviction that the good things in this life are mainly the product of smart politicians like himself and their noble-hearted public-sector underlings. The private sector, in his mind, mainly just takes advantage of the clever things government produced. If you remember his 2012 reelection campaign, the snappy version of this argument was "You didn't build that."

In the case of oil production, though, Obama's claim is spectacularly untrue. According to the Congressional Research Service, oil and gas production on federal lands—that's 28 percent of the area of the country—actually dropped while Obama was president. Production exploded everywhere that wasn't restricted by federal regulators. There were offshore

drilling moratoriums, onerous and pointless rules regulating fracking, the administration's stubborn refusal to permit construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, and too many egregious EPA crackdowns to name. Oil production soared, eventually—but despite Obama, not because of him.

Hey, President Obama. A message from the private sector: You're welcome. ♦

Make America Manly Again

For two years we've watched as highly educated liberals come up with one reason after another for Hillary Clinton's loss in the 2016 election. Russian trolls and hackers, James Comey's memo, hopelessness among white opioid addicts, Donald Trump's sophisticated use of a metaphorical "dog whistle," and on and on. Clinton's utterly dislikable personality, inveterate deceitfulness, and demonstrable corruption still haven't made it onto the list.

Secretly insecure: Studies show!

The latest theory is summed up in a headline on the *Washington Post*'s "Monkey Cage" blog: "How Donald Trump appeals to men secretly insecure about their manhood." The authors—Eric Knowles, a social psychologist, and Sarah DiMuccio, a doctoral student in psychology, both at New York University—have taken a look at the data and noticed something peculiar. Actually, reverse that: They knew what they were looking for and so found it in the data. They're social scientists, after all.

What they claim is that in places where voters largely chose Trump in 2016, and in places that similarly went for GOP candidates in 2018, there were high numbers of Google searches for topics such as "erectile dysfunction," "hair loss," "how to get girls," "steroids," "testosterone," "penis enlargement," and "Viagra." Ergo, a disproportionately high number of Trump supporters are insecure about their status as men. Naturally the highest concentrations of these search terms were in the Deep South and Appalachia, thus confirming what most readers of the *Washington Post* already believed, namely that people in the country's ickiest places voted for Trump.

Readers will want to raise obvious objections to the authors' conclusion. For instance: The search terms they mention are typical of low-income populations, and so perhaps income status had more to do with Trump support than embarrassment about bald spots and perceived manliness. Other mysteries: Why do they assume the people who searched for Viagra online (a) voted at all and (b) voted for Trump? It seems to us likely that plenty of men with toupees and middle-age dysfunctions voted for Hillary and that these are in any case not reliable indicators of what the authors glibly call "fragile masculinity."

Still, with silly and specious pseudo-findings like this one, Knowles and DiMuccio no doubt have stellar academic careers ahead of them. We await their study of how people who voted Democrat in '16 were more likely to Google "pantsuit" and "lesbian chic" and so must have plumped for Hillary out of some secret need to assert their true feminist sexuality. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Q. Why did you go to Venezuela? A. I moved to Venezuela a few months after graduating from college. I was fascinated by Hugo Chávez . . . " (*New York Times* interview with Meridith Kohut, "an independent journalist based in Caracas . . . who frequently photographs for The Times," November 30, 2018). ♦

TWINS OF SEDONA

the weekly Standard
www.weeklystandard.com

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except one week in March, one week in June, one week in August, and one week in December) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 85409, Big Sandy, TX 75755-9612. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 8549, Big Sandy, TX 75755-9612. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $5.99. Back issues, $5.99 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005.

BPA WORLDWIDE

Close Shave

The story goes that the head writer on *The Simpsons* television show walked into a meeting one morning, two small band-aids on the same cheek, another on his neck under his chin. "What kind of a country is this?" he exclaimed. "They can kill all the Kennedys, but they can't make a decent razor blade." A fine touch of anarchic humor, that, but with a low truth quotient.

My friend Edward Shils once asked the historian R.H. Tawney, author of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, if over his long lifetime he had noted any progress. "Yes," replied Professor Tawney, "in the deportment of dogs. Dogs are much better behaved today than when I was a boy." If I were asked the same question, my reply would be, "Yes, in gym shoes and in the manufacture of razor blades."

I am not old enough to have known anyone who, death-defyingly, daily shaved with a straight razor, though over the years I have had two professional shaves administered to me with that fierce weapon. My father shaved with a single-blade "safety razor," as they were called, often singing the British music hall song "Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?" as he did so. As a small boy, some mornings I would sit on the edge of the bathtub and watch him as he applied shaving cream out of a jar and wielded the blade, frequently running the razor under the tap and knocking it lightly against the sink to clear off the extra cream that had gathered on it. This was a manly rite, if ever there was one, and I was mildly impatient for the day when I might take part in it on my own.

That day was a touch slow in coming. On the hirsute front, I matured more slowly than some of my friends, a few of whom began shaving as early as 15. When I noted friends and acquaintances whose cheeks and chins began spouting hair earlier than mine, I felt a blip of envy. If there had been Rogaine for the face, I'd have dashed out to buy it. (Riddle: What do you get when you combine Rogaine with Viagra? Answer: Don King.) I had to wait until 19 or so before I needed to shave.

When my beard did finally arrive, it turned out to be a fairly strong one—too strong for me to use an electric razor. Of the two leading razors and blades then on the market, Gillette and Schick, I went for Gillette, in part because, a good liberal in those days, I had heard that Schick, whoever he was, backed the John Birch Society. Shaving cream now came in spray cans, and men went in for after-shave colognes of various kinds, Brut and Old Spice chief among them.

For many men shaving is a burden, and they tend to knock off shaving on weekends and holidays. I happen to enjoy shaving, view it as part of my regular hygiene, like the sound of the razor scraping against my cheeks and neck, feel cleaner, fresher, revived after having shaved. In recent years I have taken to shaving in the shower, without aid of a mirror, using soap instead of shaving cream, trimming the hair growing up to my sideburns in the bathroom mirror afterwards. While doing so, I have been known to do a turn on Petula Clark's "Don't Sleep in the Subway, Darling," changing the lyric to "Don't shave in the shower, darling."

Never for a moment has it occurred to me to grow a full beard. Any such beard I might grow now figures to come in white, and a white beard, in one stroke, adds roughly 10 years to one's actual age and, à la Colonel Sanders and Santa Claus, nicely desexualizes a man. One summer, vacationing in Wisconsin, I decided to grow a mustache. I was hoping for something decidedly English—Douglas Fairbanks Jr., say, or the young Ronald Colman. What grew in two weeks later was Guatemalan illegal alien. That mustache never crossed the border back into Illinois.

From soul patches to Fu Manchus to beards ranging in length from Hasidic to goatee, face hair for men today seems more common than not. The latest innovation in this realm has been the unshaved look, also known as "double-stubble" and "permastubble." I say latest, but the look began as long ago as the mid-1980s in the television program *Miami Vice* with a handsome actor named Don Johnson who wore it well. Unfortunately, if one is less good-looking than Señor Johnson, permastubble merely makes most men seem unclean, grubby, badly in need of, yep, a shave.

As for me, I'm the clean-shaven guy, neat, trim, impeccably kempt, with maybe just a touch of soap clinging to the lobe of my left ear.

Joseph Epstein

VIA WEGIAN WARRIOR'S WETSHAVING WEBLOG

the weekly Standard

Absentee Without Leave

Few political controversies have lent themselves more easily to stupid misrepresentation in recent years than voter fraud. On the one hand, Donald Trump and his most vocal followers claim "millions" vote illegally in the United States and that any close election that moves from the "R" column to the "D" column as votes are counted must be the result of fraud. On the other, an incurious news media respond by repeating the false claim that there is "no evidence" of voter fraud in the United States, even as they insist in other contexts that Russian bots managed to throw an entire presidential election.

Of course, neither of these unthinking reactions is anywhere near accurate, as a North Carolina congressional race reminds us. Republican Mark Harris and Democrat Dan McCready were competing for the state's Ninth Congressional District. Harris won the race by 905 votes—less than half of 1 percent of the votes cast. That's not such an unusual circumstance in House races, but election officials in one of the rural counties, Bladen—which is split between the Seventh and Ninth districts—noted an unusual spike in requests for absentee ballots. Bladenboro has only 1,700 people, but state records indicate that more than 700 of them requested absentee ballots by mail. Of those, 328 were returned.

It is unlikely that so many of Bladenboro's residents were traveling or otherwise unavailable on November 6. There was, rather, a concerted effort at "ballot harvesting"—operatives visiting potential voters, persuading them to fill out absentee votes for a favored candidate, and then mailing the ballots to the election board. In North Carolina, it's a felony for someone other than an election official or an immediate relative or guardian to deliver an absentee ballot to a voter or to take a ballot from a voter and mail or deliver it to the election board. Yet across the district, operatives of the Harris campaign aggressively urged residents to request absentee ballots and pushed them to vote for Harris (which is illegal) and even delivered ballots to the election board for them (also illegal).

Local media have interviewed dozens of residents—many, it's fair to say, otherwise unlikely voters—who allege they were visited by campaign operatives and pressed to vote absentee. One woman admitted to Charlotte's Channel 9 that a political consultant named Leslie McCrae Dowless paid her to pick up absentee ballots. Dowless, not coincidentally, ran Harris's get-out-the-vote efforts. He was also convicted of perjury in 1990 and served a prison sentence in 1995 for fraud. In last May's primary in N.C.-9, won by Harris over incumbent Robert Pittenger, a full 22 percent of Bladen voters mailed absentee ballots and almost all of those—96 percent—were votes for Harris.

In neighboring Robeson County, also part of the Ninth District, election officials were also overrun by requests for absentee ballots: 2,433 people in this rural county wanted them. Only 205 of those requests came from registered Republicans. That's not necessarily evidence of fraud—it's not illegal for a third party to deliver absentee ballot *requests*, just the ballots themselves—but it is an abuse of the system and lends itself easily to fraud.

By all appearances an election that went for Mark Harris might well have gone to McCready without the illegalities. North Carolina's Board of Elections has unanimously refused to certify the race. The news media and Democrats—their indignation piqued, a cynic might note, by the fact that a Democrat lost—are suddenly ready to acknowledge the reality of voter fraud.

Ballot harvesting, incidentally, has been legal in California since 2016. On election night, seven Republican-held seats in the state seemed to remain in the GOP column but in subsequent weeks flipped to the Democrats as extraordinary numbers of absentee and provisional ballots were counted. House speaker Paul Ryan scandalized Washington's press corps when he suggested California's system is "pretty loosey goose" and "bizarre," but he has a point.

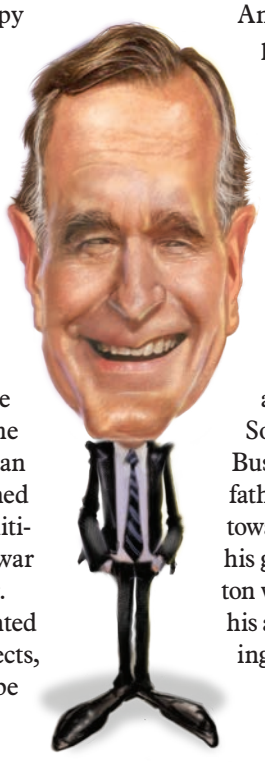
Some observers wish to draw a distinction between *voter fraud*—multiple votes by the same person or votes by dead or nonresident individuals—and *election fraud*, which usually involves the illegal manipulation of legal votes. This a distinction without a difference. While it's completely false that elections in the United States are routinely rigged by wholesale fraud, it's demonstrably true that hacks and operatives from both parties tamper with electoral processes when they can—sometimes illegally.

Elections aren't magically immune from the human tendency to bend the rules and cheat. Laws requiring valid identification and signatures are necessary, Democratic claims that they are "racist" to the contrary. Nor is it wise—as our Democratic friends often express enthusiasm for doing—to make voting easier and easier: absentee votes delivered by third parties, early voting, even proposals to vote online. To cast one's vote is a sacred privilege and should involve a little effort. A little effort, that is, on the part of the voter, not the campaign hack. ♦

A Nonpareil Public Servant

News of George H. W. Bush's death was not a surprise—he was 94—but Americans are saddened by it all the same. He was an effective leader, a dedicated and unpretentious public servant, and among the most upright and decent men ever to occupy the White House.

Bush left office 25 years ago, but his presidency feels as though it were from another epoch. He was the son of New England privilege: His father, Prescott, was a senator from Connecticut. Bush attended Phillips Academy and Yale, and he conducted himself with impeccably good manners and a marked tendency to downplay his own role in the great events of his life.



He joined the Navy in 1942, on his 18th birthday, and flew scores of combat missions in the Pacific. On one, his plane was shot down and he bailed over the Pacific, miraculously rescued by an American submarine. Bush won the Distinguished Flying Cross, among other medals, but in the political sphere he was reluctant to talk about his war record. It sounded, to him, too much like boasting.

At Yale, the lanky 6-foot-2 veteran was a talented first baseman. While a humble man in key respects, he was also a fierce competitor, as any man must be who goes as far as he did in politics. He served two terms as a congressman from Texas, was appointed by Richard Nixon to be ambassador to the U.N., chaired the Republican National Committee during the Watergate debacle, and served as our first envoy to the People's Republic of China and as director of the CIA.

Bush ran for the presidency in 1980. He won the Iowa caucuses but eventually lost the nomination to Ronald Reagan, who made Bush his running mate. The vice presidency is famously the last stop for many a would-be president—before Bush, the last serving vice president to run successfully for president was Martin Van Buren in 1836. Yet in 1988, Bush easily defeated Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis. A career of honorable public service was, in this instance, deservedly rewarded.

As president, Bush frequently disappointed conservatives. In 1990, he agreed with Democrats to increase marginal tax rates—he had memorably called Reagan's supply-side views "voodoo economics" in 1980—and so violated his own famous campaign pledge: "Read my lips: no new taxes." In 1990, seeking to avoid a repeat of the 1987 fight over the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork, he tapped the unknown David Souter, who quickly "grew" on the Court and became one of its reliable liberals. (He partially atoned for this mistake with the nomination of the great constitutionalist Clarence Thomas a year later.) Bush signed a variety of onerous regulatory bills—the Americans with Disabilities Act, for one—and his Points of Light initiative, a federal program celebrating volunteerism, was footling and misguided.

Yet on the largest matters, the 41st president was a wise and dependable leader. He presided over the fall of the Soviet Union with quiet strength. He negotiated the North America Free Trade Agreement. A weaker, less principled president would have allowed Saddam Hussein to take Kuwait on the promise that he take nothing more, but Bush understood the need to check the Iraqi dictator with a firm hand—and skillfully assembled bipartisan support at home and a multinational coalition abroad to oust Saddam's forces.

Democratic nations frequently do not reward leadership, and in 1992 voters denied Bush a second term on the grounds that the economy had faltered, the Cold War was over, and his opponent, a centrist Democrat from the South, had all the novelty the president lacked. Bush had always come across as a kind of grandfatherly figure, and the news media were merciless toward his age and stiffness—as when they pretended his glance at his watch during a debate with Bill Clinton was somehow a "gaffe" that reminded everyone of his advanced age. The voters were similarly unforgiving and chose charisma over character.

Bush's magnanimity of spirit was just as evident after his presidency as during it. He was satisfied with the influence he'd had and sought no extra glory. (This sense of propriety was handed down to his son, the 43rd president.) Bush spoke little in public, and virtually never about politics, after he left the Oval Office. He wasn't ashamed to join his old foe Clinton in charitable work. Another man might have taken shots at Barack Obama for taking shots at his son, but 41 showed nothing but respect for Obama.

Bush's acceptance speech at the 1988 convention contained the phrase "kinder and gentler," for which he was justifiably ridiculed: "I want a kinder and gentler nation," he said. He repeated the two adjectives in his first and only inaugural address and used them far more suitably. "America is never wholly herself," the new president said, "unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the nation and gentler the face of the world." In his own understated way, George H. W. Bush furthered that purpose beautifully. ♦

GARY LOCKE

FRED BARNES

The radio talker who surprised Washington

This is the saga of Jason Lewis. For a quarter-century, the Minnesota congressman was a talk-radio host. He started in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolis and did a spell in Charlotte before returning to the Twin Cities. I was a guest on his show a few times. As best I recall, they were frisky discussions of political issues, a notch or two livelier than the normal talk radio stuff.

In 2016, Lewis decided to run for the House of Representatives from Minnesota's Second District. It's a swing district that leans slightly Republican. It consists of the fast-growing suburbs south of the Twin Cities that meld into farmland. The seat was open. John Kline, the influential chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee, was retiring.

Then came the big shock. The Jason Lewis who showed up in Washington was not what the town expected. He declined to join the Freedom Caucus.

Kline wasn't keen on being succeeded by a rambunctious radio host like Lewis. "I liked to provoke," Lewis says. "I liked to raise eyebrows. I liked to tell them something they didn't already know." Kline backed businesswoman Darlene Miller. But Lewis had campaign experience, having run for a House seat in Colorado in 1990 (he lost badly), and Miller didn't. Lewis won the primary, 49 percent to 31 percent.

Democrats, it turned out, were ready for Lewis—or thought they were. He specialized in economic issues, but he was just as fluent on social issues like gay marriage. Lewis insisted marriage was a state matter and defended the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the effect of which was that same-sex marriage approved in one state wouldn't be recognized in other states. He continued to defend DOMA after it was nullified by the Supreme Court.

To put it mildly, that was controversial. Lewis says someone had obtained tapes of his radio broadcasts and taken them out of context to make them sound as shocking as possible.

Word of all this got back to Washington in a heartbeat. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee vowed to force Lewis to "defend every sexist, racist, misogynistic and outrageous comment he's ever made."

The *Atlantic* called him "Minnesota's Mini-Trump" and a "hard-right radio provocateur."

Lewis was unruffled, but Republican strategists and campaign staffers were shaken. They feared other GOP candidates would be tarnished and made to answer for his comments. Most of all, they didn't know how to handle him. But all that didn't matter. Democrats thought it wise to link Lewis to Trump. That didn't matter either.

Lewis won that fall. He beat Democrat Angie Craig, 47 percent to 45 percent, aided by an independent candidate who got 8 percent. (Craig had outspent Lewis by four-to-one.) Trump won the district too—running a percentage point behind Lewis.

Then came the big shock. The Jason Lewis who showed up in Washington in January 2017 was not what the town expected. He declined to join the Freedom Caucus, the two dozen or so members on the right who push conservative legislation that can't pass and give Republican leaders so much grief.

Lewis turned out to be a team player. He was willing to compromise if it moved the ball in a conservative direction. He's spent the last two years focused on results. He's worked to build coalitions broad enough to enact a Republican agenda, one that would by necessity be diluted. He's not a hard-right yahoo. Were he in the Senate, he'd gravitate toward Mitch McConnell.

Oh, and before I forget, he's read the conservative classics—Ayn Rand, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, Henry Hazlitt. The list goes on.

And here's the biggest surprise: Jason Lewis is a serious policy wonk. He was a leader in the battle to pass an imperfect health care bill that would have killed some but far from all of Obamacare. In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, he blamed the late senator John McCain for defeating the bill with his vote.

All of this would have been less of a surprise on Capitol Hill if the troops had listened to Lewis's colleague Tom Emmer, who represents the Minnesota House district once held by Michele Bachmann. Lewis, he says, "is unbelievably smart. . . . He's one of the top leaders among Republicans. Jason was one of the top on-air political voices we had in the Twin Cities for 20 years."

Lewis, 63, is critical of the sour, muted brand of political discourse today. It's no longer sharp and bold and outspoken. It's smothered by political correctness. "Don Rickles couldn't get a job today," he says. "*Blazing Saddles* wouldn't get out of the screening room."

The story doesn't have a happy ending. He lost his bid for reelection last month, but tired old tapes weren't the reason. The dark cloud spread by Trump was. Democrats tried again to make an issue out of tapes of Lewis in talk-radio action. They were a flop. But

LIKENESSES: DAVE CLEGG

the media wouldn't give up. Reporters demanded that House speaker Paul Ryan deal with the tapes as if they were a matter of compelling interest.

"He was a shock jock," Ryan said. "That was his job at the time. . . . I obviously don't support those comments. But the Jason Lewis I know here . . . is an extremely conscientious man, a very hardworking, a very effective member of Congress who has been nothing but an exemplary congressman who represents his constituents well." Amen. ♦

COMMENT ♦ PHILIP TERZIAN

Giving Bush his due—finally

To his credit, President Trump rose to the occasion on the death of George H.W. Bush. Among other things, his immediate response—on Twitter, of course—was a generous and eloquent tribute, mindful not only of the late president's distinction but of his own obligation to the office he now inhabits. Yet Trump must also have taken some measure of comfort from the obituaries. I was hardly the first or only observer to note that many of the statesmen and journalists who lined up to heap praise on the life and character of George Bush had not, to put it gently, felt quite the same way when he was in office.

Tributes have tended to emphasize Bush's kindness, generosity, and good manners. But no one in America gets elected president without a fearsome supply of ambition and guile.

To some degree, this is our modern equivalent of Dr. Johnson's maxim that "in lapidary inscriptions, a man is not upon oath." But it also reminds us that, death notwithstanding, the passage of time alters perspective. When Harry Truman left office (1953) his approval ratings were among the lowest of any modern president's; by the time he died (1972) he had become Give 'Em Hell Harry, the personification of integrity and plain speech.

Among the many pages of revisionist acclaim for Bush in the *Washington Post*, one errant headline stood out: "Is Trump the new McCarthy?" (Answer: Yes.) Well, once upon a time the same question was posed about George Bush—especially when he (slyly and accurately) described his 1988 rival, Michael Dukakis, as a "card-carrying member of the ACLU." Will posterity prove equally generous to Trump? We'll see.

In the meantime, I was surprised and gratified in equal measure by the kindly words and generous assessments of Bush the man and president. He was, by any reckoning, a faithful and consequential steward of the presidency and skillful practitioner of the diplomatic arts. I may also confess that, as one who tends to regard the presidency in sociological terms, Bush was a great enthusiasm of mine—much more to my personal taste than his iconic predecessor. This is a grand illusion, of course: Credentials are not all they're cracked up to be—in 1980 it took me a while to get used to the actor-candidate Ronald Reagan—and the old WASP ascendancy that produced George Bush has long since fallen into disrepair.

Still, the virulence of the media's contempt for Bush—in 1988 and, especially, in 1992—caught me off-guard at the time since he seemed to embody much of what Americans seek in political leaders. To be sure, in speech, he was not especially fluent or what we might regard as a natural politician. His syntax belied his Phi Beta Kappa key from Yale, and while I found his awkward courtliness endearing, we tend to expect our presidents to be smoothies on stage. Like Dean Acheson or Bush's great friend James Baker, Bush seemed suited more to appointive than elective office—and indeed had flourished in a number of them.

Yet he also had the requisite instinct for the jugular and, as wartime flyer, Texas oilman, and Senate candidate, even as a pioneering envoy to China, a taste for adventure, risk, and danger. The obituary tributes have tended to emphasize Bush's kindness, generosity, and good manners, all of which were abundant. But no one in America gets elected president without a fearsome supply of ambition and guile, which he also possessed. Bush was a gentleman in the old-fashioned sense of the term and appreciated the perquisites of a privileged life. But he played to win.

That may explain, perhaps, why an adversarial press was so delighted when Governor Ann Richards of Texas told the 1988 Democratic convention that Bush had been "born with a silver foot in his mouth." Or why *Newsweek* thought it plausible to suggest that the youngest American naval aviator in World War II was a "wimp."

What were they expressing? I suspect it was a combination of resentment and frustration. Bush was a storybook representative of what we might call the old Establishment, and his status as Reagan's predestined successor annoyed both right and left. Moreover, in 1988, veterans of the Second World War were considerably more numerous than they are now, and all seven of our previous commanders in chief had served in uniform during that war. The Bush presidency delayed a generational shift.

That delayed gratification, in turn, produced a kind of frenzy, the character of which may now seem familiar. George Bush, a longtime patron of the NAACP, was routinely accused of racism, along with contempt for women and "women's health," as well as indif-

ference to AIDS. I once sat through a lecture by the distinguished diplomatic historian Stanley Hoffmann, of Harvard, whose thesis was that Bush was "obsessed" with domestic politics at the expense of foreign policy. The *New Republic* explained that Bush, in his embrace of the radical right, had "destroyed . . . conservatism." Endorsing Bill Clinton, his successful rival for the presidency in 1992, the *Washington Post* complained that Bush had "long since squandered whatever claim he had to national leadership. . . . The country's present weakness is in part a reflection of his own."

No doubt, some of last week's retrospective admiration for President Bush reflected a consensus about the present incumbent. Which is understandable: In terms of character, if not politics, Trump and Bush are two different men. But sometimes, in history, comparisons are deceptive and the qualities we value in our presidents may be variable. A quarter-century ago George Bush was replaced in office by a serial philanderer and draft-dodger who was destined to be impeached, and his name was not Donald Trump. ♦

COMMENT ♦ ERIC FELTEN

Here's how to stop the showboating problem

The day before Thanksgiving, former FBI director James Comey was served a subpoena from House Judiciary Committee chairman Bob Goodlatte. Comey was called to be interviewed on Capitol Hill, behind closed doors, an arrangement to which he objected: "I worry, from the conduct we've seen, that it's more about trying to create some false narrative that the FBI was on Team Clinton and against Team Trump," Comey told Boston public radio station WGBH. "The best antidote to that kind of distortion is to have sunshine. Ask me questions and let all of America watch."

Who objects to sunshine? That metaphorical disinfectant has been lamentably lacking in the convoluted, overlapping, and intertwined investigations into Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. But it did not go unnoted that Comey's suggestion had a self-serving aspect: A seasoned performer with extensive experience testifying before congressional committees, Comey could count, with some confidence, on building his celebrity by battling and perhaps besting his interlocutors in a public brawl.

Trey Gowdy, chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, wasn't buying it. He told *Face the Nation*: "The remedy is not to have a professional wrestling-type carnival atmosphere, which is what congressional public hearings have become." What did Gowdy suggest? A hybrid approach in which the interview is conducted in private but videotaped for release after being scrubbed to remove classified information.

Five minutes of a Capitol Hill hearing is incompatible with any serious investigation—but it is just long enough for a spurt of speechifying, usually of the pose-striking variety.

It wasn't a bad idea, but the problem is not one to be solved with a tape delay. Turn on a camera and you can count on the usual subjects—both the congressmen and their prey—to strut and preen for the audience.

The standard procedure for a Capitol Hill hearing is incompatible with any serious investigation: a back-and-forth in which a member of the majority gets five minutes followed by five for someone from the minority, back to the majority, then minority, so forth and so on until every lawmaker has had his or her say. Five minutes isn't enough time for the average Foghorn Leghorn to clear his throat, let alone put together a coherent series of probing questions. It is just long enough for a spurt of speechifying, usually of the pose-striking variety. Which is why witnesses sometimes listen to a succession of pontificating lawmakers without ever being asked a question.

Even if one non-showboating questioner controls all the time for a given side, the fact that it comes in five-minute snippets is debilitating. Remember Arizona prosecutor Rachel Mitchell, called in by Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans to pose questions to Brett Kavanaugh's accuser? Mitchell was flummoxed by the start-and-stop. Accustomed to regular courthouse interview practices, she kept asking Christine Blasey Ford to review documents, which the witness did with all deliberate speed, burning up the questioner's limited segments of time. Told by Chairman Charles Grassley that she had run over her first five minutes, Mitchell nervously replied, "I'm sorry, I didn't see the light." She never did figure out how to get at the core of the controversy in short installments.

By contrast, behind closed doors on Capitol Hill the practice is for professional committee investigators to do the questioning, switching between the majority and minority staff not every five minutes, but every half-hour. It solves the showboat problem and the continuity problem. But an issue remains: The secrecy of the proceedings keeps the public from assessing the evidence for themselves, encouraging rumor and spin. This last defect can be repaired simply:

make interview transcripts public.

The model for this has been Grassley's practice at the Senate Judiciary Committee of distributing as many straightforward transcripts of important interviews as possible. For example, as each sexual misconduct/assault allegation was made against Kavanaugh, committee staff interviewed the judge in private and Grassley would then make available to the public transcripts of the interviews.

One thing we were told repeatedly during the Kavanaugh ordeal was that testimony to the committee is given under penalty of perjury—specifically, under 18 USC section 1001, which makes false statements a crime (punishable with five years imprisonment). But Section 1001 prosecutions tend to come from false statements to the FBI, not congressional testimony. That pattern changed last week, when former Donald Trump lawyer Michael Cohen pleaded guilty to making false statements to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Judiciary Committee. Significantly, it was not open hearings that elicited those false statements.

Those being interviewed behind closed doors are routinely warned about Section 1001, as was Donald Trump Jr. when he gave testimony to Senate Judiciary in September of last year. He was told the law "makes it a crime to make any materially false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representation in the course of a congressional investigation." The president's son acknowledged that he understood and proceeded to declare, "I did not collude with any foreign government and do not know of anyone who did."

As I have noted before in these pages, that statement stakes out an unambiguous, and legally risky, position for Don Jr., who "cannot now claim to have engaged in some sort of everybody-does-it noncriminal 'collusion' without running afoul of . . . Section 1001." Don Jr. also testified that he never told his father about the now-notorious Trump Tower meeting. That puts Junior one careless presidential tweet (if such a thing is imaginable) away from Section 1001 liability, which special counsel Robert Mueller might well prosecute.

If that were to happen, Americans would have a much greater opportunity to form opinions for themselves about the prosecution than they usually do with the opaque Special Counsel's office. The Senate Judiciary Committee long ago made the transcript of its interview with Donald J. Trump Jr. public, as it has the interviews with other participants in the Trump Tower meeting. Anyone who's interested in knowing in detail what happened at Trump Tower can go to the Senate Judiciary website and download the thorough questioning of such characters as Rob Goldstone, Ike Kaveladze, and Rinat Akhmetshin. The transcripts are well worth reading, and not just for the information they convey. The transcripts capture political staff of both parties in the act of asking thorough, sometimes tough questions with a professionalism and civility that had been thought to be lost in our fraught and ugly times.

Which brings us back to James Comey. "I'm still happy to sit in the light and answer all questions," Comey tweeted. "But I will resist a 'closed door' thing because I've seen enough of their selective leaking and distortion. Let's have a hearing and invite everyone to see."

Inviting everyone to see invites a debased circus. When it comes to investigations (as opposed to hearings on legislation and policy) it's best to take testimony off camera. But only if transcripts of that testimony are made available and easily accessible afterwards. No one, after all, can leak information that has officially been released. That's real sunshine, the sort that gets at crucial information rather than providing lawmakers and witnesses a platform for grandstanding.

Happily, after a week's worth of negotiation, that is the solution on which Goodlatte and Comey finally agreed. Let's hope that such procedures become standard practice rather than a negotiated rarity. ♦

COMMENT ♦ TERRY EASTLAND

The power of giving the right speech at the right time

Like not a few who've worked in political Washington, I went there to write speeches when a speech was still regarded as a potentially splendid form of rhetoric, before tweeting started to horn in. This was 1983, and I wrote for President Reagan's first attorney general, William French Smith. Smith left office late in the first term, and after Edwin Meese was confirmed as the new AG in February 1985, he called me about running the Justice Department's office of public affairs. And yes, I was interested. None of Reagan's top aides knew the president's mind better than Meese did. And I wanted to build a speechwriting unit within the office of public affairs that would work with him and also senior officers at Justice who gave speeches. Meese was agreeable to that. I moved into my new office in February 1985, thinking a rhetorical Justice Department was not out of the question.

Two years earlier I'd met Gary McDowell at a seminar on the Constitution. Gary was a constitutional scholar with a singular wit, a conservative clearly, an author and editor both, his books included the 1981 collection *Taking the Constitution Seriously*, to which Robert Bork, Henry Abraham, and Harvey Mansfield had contributed. Gary was director of the office of the Bicentennial of the Constitution at the National Endowment for the Humanities in May 1985 when I hired him as our chief speechwriter.

Meese's first major speech was scheduled for July 9, 1985, to the annual meeting of the House of Dele-

gates of the American Bar Association. We writers met briefly with Meese to talk about the speech, which we all thought should be about the Constitution and its interpretation by judges.

We sent him a draft that reviewed major decisions from the just-concluded term, on federalism, criminal law, and religion. Meese wasn't pleased with the approach to judging evident in some of those cases, and our draft made that clear. For example, regarding *Garcia* v. *San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority*, a case about federalism, the AG was prepared to say that the Court had inaccurately read the constitutional text and disregarded "the intention that state and local governments be a buffer against the centralizing tendencies" of the national government.

The draft said that "far too many" of the Court's opinions in the past term were "more policy choices than articulations of constitutional principle." It stated that the Court needed to adopt a more coherent jurisprudence, but that not just any would do. And what would? "A jurisprudence seriously aimed at the explication of original intention would produce defensible principles of government that would not be tainted by ideological predilection"—in sum, a jurisprudence of original intention. McDowell had come up with the phrase, and Meese was ready to use it.

We thought the AG would like the draft, especially since the department had recently adopted an important litigation policy: It would seek to apply in its filings, both as a party to cases and a friend of the court, "the original meaning of constitutional provisions." But we heard nothing from his office until a few days before the speech, when Meese summoned department heads to discuss it.

It was unusual to have so many top officials gathering in the AG's conference room to talk about an attorney general's *speech* as opposed, say, to some new law enforcement strategy. Hesitation seemed to grip those seated around the table. There was a suggestion that the speech should take up a different topic, such as the department's fight against international terrorism. Some were skittish about criticizing the Court. Meese decided to stay with the speech he had.

Within the department, there was almost immediate disagreement about original intention. According to some, not original intention but original meaning was the jurisprudence needed; it was the original meaning of the words at issue in a case that is the law and not the intentions of those who wrote them. In 1987 the department's Office of Legal Policy published a sourcebook on "original meaning jurisprudence," which said that this jurisprudence is "the enterprise of attempting to interpret the provisions of the Constitution as those provisions were generally understood at the time of their adoption by the society which framed and ratified them. . . . This does not entail ascertaining and obeying the private, inner intentions of the framers of a provision."

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As for how Meese himself saw the matter, the jurisprudence he called for in the ABA speech was unambiguously one of original intention. In his speeches, he used both terms. He was not dogmatic about originalism. As for McDowell, his understanding of original intention remained grounded in what the great Chief Justice John Marshall once said, that "the duty of a judge who construes an instrument is to find the intention of its makers."

This is the story of a speech of great consequence. "A Jurisprudence of Original Intention" did not fade away, as do most speeches by cabinet members and even presidents. As I had hoped from the beginning of our rhetorical undertaking, Meese gave a number of major speeches that were ambitious in their subject matter—on federalism, separation of powers, and the rule of law—and influential in legal circles. By the summer of 1988, according to liberal law professors Ronald K. L. Collins and David M. Skover, more than 50 law reviews had published articles on "Original Intention." Many, many more have been published since then.

Collins and Skover credit the Meese Justice Department with "redefining" constitutional discourse in a way that "put liberals in the precarious position of taking *public* stands against the interpretative legitimacy of the constitutional text and the framers intent—this while *publicly* deprecating the need to abide by the legislative will of democratic majorities." The department had challenged what might be called the jurisprudence of a living constitution, an approach to judging that seeks to keep the Constitution in tune with the times. The leading living constitutionalist on the Court was William Brennan, who gave a speech shortly after Meese's that defended his basically non-interpretive approach to judging and was seen as a response to "A Jurisprudence of Original Intention." Brennan didn't mention Meese by name, but Justice John Paul Stevens in similar speeches did so some 28 times.

In the summer of 1987 I was in my third year as head of the office of public affairs when I was asked to run the president's speechwriting team. I accepted the job, only to learn a day later that it had been given to a member of the speechwriting unit. That was fine by me. I'd miss working with the Great Communicator but the consolation prize, if you want to call it that, was getting to work on speeches like "A Jurisprudence of Original Intention." ♦

The Real China Threat

High-tech dominance won't be solved with tariffs.

BY TONY MECIA

The welcome news emerging from the G20 meeting in Argentina this month was that China and the United States had agreed to a truce in the escalating trade war the two sides have been fighting for the last year.

Yet a more worrisome question is what will become of the longer-term economic rivalry between the two. For the United States, the trend lines are troubling, particularly as China works methodically to become the world's technology leader. China's rise as a technological powerhouse isn't just a threat to U.S. national pride or jobs—it is becoming a big concern as well for the U.S. military. In some critical industries, the battle for technological dominance is a battle the United States is already losing.

Deng Xiaoping once famously counseled his countrymen to "hide our capacities and bide our time"—a nod to playing the long game for which China is famous. For the last few decades, China has followed Deng's advice, ramping up its manufacturing capacity with the help of state subsidies, foreign investment, and cheap labor. For years, China was thought of as the world's factory floor, exporting cheap sneakers, T-shirts, and plastic toys around the globe. Lately, though, China has set its sights on higher-tech industries. Its "Made in China 2025" plan calls for rapid development in 10 high-tech fields including robotics, artificial intelligence, telecommunications, and aerospace engineering.

Economists have long explained the virtues of free trade by pointing to the concept of comparative advantage, in which countries benefit by specializing. If Portugal excels at making wine and Britain excels at making cloth, both countries benefit by trading Portuguese wine for British cloth—more than they would if both produced wine and cloth. As applied to the United States and China, policymakers from both major parties have been until lately content to allow China to specialize in manufacturing—where it has advantages because of lower labor costs—while the United States focuses on developing an economy more rooted in higher-paying, knowledge-based services. George H. W. Bush's chief economist, Michael Boskin, is said to have quipped that there's no economic difference between making potato chips and computer chips. Former Obama economic adviser Christina Romer wrote in 2012 that "a government manufacturing policy has to go beyond the feeling that it's better to produce 'real things' than services. American consumers value health care and haircuts as much as washing machines and hair dryers."

The government's hands-off attitude reaped huge benefits for the U.S. economy, such as the ascendancy of Silicon Valley and the creation of whole industries that would have been unimaginable in earlier eras. But it's also becoming evident that this approach came with costs, too—chiefly, the loss of 7 million manufacturing jobs in the last 40 years and the concomitant political backlash in 2016 stemming from the perception that government inaction or mismanagement was to blame. More recently, the Pentagon has been sounding the alarm that in some areas, so much production has migrated overseas that it is tough to find materials for weapons systems made in the United States or by an ally.

"It's a problem—a big problem. And it has the potential to grow," says retired Air Force general Hawk Carlisle, who heads the National Defense Industrial Association, a trade association of defense contractors. "The reason it has arisen is because the Chinese are so much more aggressive about it. They continue to improve their capabilities, and we know what their intentions are. We know they would love to undermine our defense capabilities."

A September report from the Defense Department found a "surprising level of foreign dependence on competitor nations" for defense materials. The challenges of acquiring the needed high-tech goods from countries that are not adversaries "have the potential to result in limited capabilities, insecurity of supply, lack of R&D, program delays, and an inability to surge in times of crisis," it said.

Carlisle and others say dependence on foreign-made defense components isn't just a theoretical future danger. It is already happening in sectors including semiconductors, flat-panel

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aircraft displays, and solar panels. These are all what are known as "dual-use" technologies, with military and consumer applications. Each of these products is largely made in Asia in part because the Chinese market is far larger than the U.S. market. Fifty years ago, U.S. technology companies could rely on defense spending to bankroll research and provide financial support. For example, the Internet and global positioning systems were largely developed with defense funding. But now, the demand for consumer electronics is so large that private companies are the ones that tend to do the innovating, with consumers as the target market, and most of their production happens outside the United States.

"Say you're making the latest generation of a helicopter, and you want flat-panel displays for the cockpit. Where do they come from? From Asia. They all come from two time zones in Asia," says Willy Shih, a Harvard economist who studies technology and manufacturing. "I'd say 70 percent of the world's semiconductor foundry capacity is in three science parks in Taiwan. All of the small optical sensors come from Asia. Touchscreens—from Asia. Camera components, optical components—Asia."

Additionally, the Defense report found that there are other areas that are threatened, including machine tools, composite materials, and printed circuit boards. About 90 percent of the world's printed circuit boards are made in Asia, with more than half made in China—while the "U.S. printed circuit board sub-sector is aging, constricting, and failing to maintain the state of the art."

Chinese dominance in making high-tech equipment doesn't necessarily constitute a national security crisis. But the fear is that if tensions with China were to escalate, China could cut off the supply of critical U.S. military components. Recent sparring between the United States and China over technology equipment companies such as Huawei and ZTE reflects U.S. worries that China could try to gain a military advantage by designing electrical components that it secretly controls. In 2010, the U.S. Navy bought 59,000 computer chips destined for helicopters that were discovered to be counterfeits containing a "Trojan horse" or "kill switch" flaw that would have allowed an enemy to render the helicopter's weapons inoperable. In October of this year, *Bloomberg Businessweek* reported that the Chinese military had secretly inserted microchips the size of a grain of rice on server motherboards made in China that wound up in the mainframes of nearly 30 companies, including Apple, for the purpose of conducting industrial espionage.

China understands that dominating the international supply chains for high-tech products gives it power, Shih says: "They see the political leverage that comes from controlling sources of critical components." U.S. companies routinely complain that China has a number of unfair advantages in seeking to control high-tech industries. They say China steals proprietary information, fails to honor intellectual property rights, and requires American companies to share technology upon investing in the country.

Another area of concern is China's mining of what are known as rare-earth minerals, used in the production of batteries, lasers, radars, night-vision systems, and other electronics. In 2017, Chinese mines accounted for 81 percent of the world's rare-earth minerals—elements such as lithium, nickel, and cobalt—according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The United States hasn't mined any such minerals since 2015. The Pentagon report notes, "China has strategically flooded the global market with rare earths at subsidized prices, driven out competitors, and deterred new market entrants." In what U.S. planners see as a cautionary tale about Chinese dominance, in 2010, China halted shipments of rare-earth minerals to Japan following a maritime dispute.

Once these advanced industries migrate to another country, it becomes difficult for them to return. Most technological advances take place where the manufacturing takes place, says Rob Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a Washington think tank that focuses on science and technology.

"These industries are not like soybeans, where, if China puts big tariffs on our soybean farmers, then we have less soybeans for 10 years," he says. "You can turn that around in a couple growing seasons. . . . When you lose advanced technological industrial capability, it's very, very difficult to get it back. It's a complex recipe. You can't just buy a book or license a patent. It's pretty deep technical know-how."

He says the blame for the loss of high-tech manufacturing falls on presidential administrations dating back to Richard Nixon. Leaders, he says, failed to develop a comprehensive strategy to nurture critical technologies in this country. They believed that making overtures to China would prompt China to open its economy to the world, relax state control over industry, and favor the rule of law. "This was just a naïve view," Atkinson says. "It was fundamentally wrong."

He says the solution is for the government, finally, to develop a plan. In April, a bipartisan group of senators—Todd Young (R-Ind.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), and Chris Coons (D-Del.)—introduced a bill requiring the executive branch to develop a national economic security strategy to combat "predatory economic practices" of other countries. The bill went nowhere.

There are plenty of other tactics that could help, too, including spending more to boost potential military suppliers, training more workers for science and technology jobs, seeking new suppliers in friendly countries, re-engineering equipment to depend less on hostile foreign suppliers, and increasing stockpiles of critical elements. Yet those seem like band-aid solutions on a much larger wound.

Donald Trump and Xi Jinping might well resolve the tariff dispute. But the larger issue of high-tech dominance is far thornier. It doesn't lend itself to a handshake deal and a victorious tweet. ♦

You Can't Go Home Again

California's politicians dream of ecotopia, but fire victims just want to rebuild. BY DAVID DEVOSS

Ventura, Calif.

In most parts of the United States the holiday season brings snow, mistletoe, and mulled wine at office parties. But out here in California it's often the season of wildfires, flash floods, and mudslides.

Last month, Northern California's Camp Fire (wildfires are named after the area or location where they start) destroyed 14,000 homes in Butte County and left almost all of the 26,000 residents of Paradise homeless. In Southern California, the Woolsey Fire burned 1,200 structures in L.A. and Ventura Counties before raging through the coastal canyons into Malibu, where it torched an additional 443 homes collectively worth more than $1.6 billion.

Despite the best efforts of FEMA, state relief organizations, and local neighbors, many victims forced from their homes in more modest areas are fearful they soon may join the 134,000 or so Californians who go to bed homeless every night. California has 12 percent of the nation's population but 25 percent of its homeless, and their numbers have been increasing at a yearly rate of 14 percent.

Insurance policies in California normally pay for 12 months of temporary housing if a homeowner loses his primary residence in a natural disaster. The allowance doubles if Washington declares the event a major disaster. But based on the aftermath of recent disasters, even two years may not be enough time to complete the paperwork necessary for rebuilding here.

A year ago, the Tubbs Fire roared through Sonoma County, destroying more than 5,100 houses in the city of Santa Rosa. Fourteen months later, only 61 have been rebuilt. An additional 1,700 have construction permits, but many of the remaining 3,339 lots probably will end up in the hands of speculators. The situation is somewhat similar in the city of Ventura (pop. 111,000), where only 136 of the 524 single family homes burned in the December 2017 Thomas Fire have reconstruction permits. "Another 130 families are in plan check," says Jeffrey Lambert, Ventura's community development director, "but it's true that some people are selling their lots and moving away."

One reason for California's slow recovery is a lack of adequate insurance. Many of the people burned out in Santa Rosa and Ventura were escapees from San Francisco and Los Angeles looking for a simpler life. They were quite happy to see the value of their houses appreciate, but because many lived off pensions or income from small-town jobs, they were unable to pay higher insurance premiums that would have provided full replacement cost.

Above, the Ventura home of Maggie Bird before the 2017 fire; below, Bird and her '22-foot hole in the ground'

JOHN GIANNINI

But the real impediments to swift rebuilding after natural disasters are the state's famously progressive policies designed to protect the environment. The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, for example, requires detailed inspections of every new housing project. Because of time lost waiting for environmental impact studies and signoffs from building and safety officials, California's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office estimates it now takes an average of two and a half years to complete a housing project.

Residential landscaping should require nothing more than deciding between grass and drought-tolerant succulents, but the Model Water Official Landscape Ordinance of 2010 mandates that a registered landscape architect come up with a planting and irrigation plan that calculates "evapotranspiration" before a permit to rebuild can be issued. In Ventura the city charges $2,500 for a landscape permit; landscape architects demand $4,000.

Most of the state's environmental safeguards are well intentioned. Dual-pane energy-efficient windows are worth installing despite California's temperate Mediterranean climate.

David DeVoss is editor of the East-West News Service in Los Angeles.

It's just common sense to require fire-resistant roofs and fire-suppression sprinklers in new structures. The California Building Standards Commission recently recommended that larger water pipes and curbside meters be installed in every residence in the state, since larger pipes would increase the volume of water on tap and make fire sprinklers more efficient. In a city like Ventura, the upgrade can approach $30,000 once the permit fee, engineering documents, materials cost, and labor expense are totaled. Should people living in cars or cheap motels be forced to pay for a system that will be ineffective in the type of wildfires California has been experiencing? Perhaps. But for families who have lost everything in a firestorm, cost is paramount.

Some design professionals believe the enhanced regulations, repeated plan checks, and costly schematics imposed by bureaucrats seeking environmental perfection are unduly burdensome. "It was good intentions run amok," confides one Ventura architect, speaking off the record out of fear of retribution from city officials.

"You can't do anything without a permit, and there have been huge fee increases for every permit," says RE/MAX realtor Fred Evans. "Rebuilding the two houses I lost in the fire will take $400,000 more than I have." Evans says 80 families already have taken lowball offers from house-flippers and walked away. "Ventura was the last cheap beach town in Southern California," he sighs, "but now the retirees and kids are both leaving and nobody's ever coming back because the new housing will be too expensive."

California has been losing residents for years. Since 2007, the state has lost half a million net migrants to less regulated, lower-tax states like Texas, Arizona, and Nevada. According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the out-migration has almost tripled to 140,000 annually.

Those leaving California are relatively young, middle-class wage earners seeking affordable housing. Currently, the median home price in California is $535,000. The national median is just over $300,000. California's moderately priced "starter homes" cost 161 percent more than comparable structures in other states.

The regulations on building all but guarantee those trends will continue. The first step back to a normal life from a house destroyed by wildfire is the removal of charred rubble and toxic material, which in California is defined to include flecks of lead paint, traces of insecticide, and even nail polish remover. Those rebuilding from a fire do not have to pay if the job is done by CalRecycle, a department in the California Environmental Protection Agency. CalRecycle is paid by FEMA and private insurers based on the amount of debris removed. After the Ventura fire a year ago, more than 263,000 tons of contaminated soil were carted away.

But Maggie Bird, a former travel agent in Ventura who now sells real estate, thinks CalRecycle destroyed any chance she might have had to rebuild. "Before the fire I had a three-story, 4,000-square-foot house worth $1.9 million that was made of redwood and glass," she sighs wistfully. "The whole top floor was a master suite with an incredible view.

"Now all I have is a 22-foot hole in the ground."

Removed along with ash and contaminated soil were two retaining walls and nine concrete caissons she installed at a cost of $700,000 10 years ago to stabilize her sloping hillside lot. Bird says the concrete pillars now look like toothpicks. "Can any fire be hot enough to affect the structural integrity of concrete 60 feet deep in the ground?" she asks. "I thought heat from a fire went up."

Bird would like to rebuild but can't get a permit to do so until she stabilizes her lot—a task that will cost a minimum of $200,000. She briefly considered a class-action lawsuit but quickly realized a legal settlement would take years. Says Bird: "I guess I'm one of those who's ready to give up and let Ventura build a new city."

Wendell Cox, an expert on housing affordability and municipal policy who sits on the advisory board of the Center for Demographics and Policy at Chapman University, thinks California should make it as easy as possible for traumatized homeowners to replace what they lost at a reasonable cost. "Instead," he says, "the government is quite happy to force people into poverty if it helps create its desired urban form."

Some residents wiped out by the fires darkly mutter that the regulations that make rebuilding more expensive are designed to force them to walk away from properties that have a low tax assessment because of Proposition 13, which severely limits annual tax increases. The accusations are rooted in despair and are not supported by any objective proof, but the belief persists. "You'll never get an official to go on the record about limiting Prop 13," says Wendell Cox, "but there are incentives that make such a policy attractive."

The tax revolt of 1978 that produced Prop 13 was prompted by years of double-digit property tax increases that forced some elderly and working poor from their homes. The constitutional amendment was approved in the third year of Jerry Brown's first term as governor. It limited future property tax increases to 2 percent a year and said the value of private residences could not be reassessed until they were sold. Today similar homes in the same neighborhood can have vastly different tax rates.

Prop 13 protection remains in place if parents pass their house on to their children. Residents who lose their homes in a natural disaster can rebuild a comparable one without an increase in assessed value. They can even move to a new community and apply their Prop 13 assessment to a similar home they buy. But when they sell their charred property to a new buyer, the resulting house will be taxed on the market value—or sales price. A city will enjoy expanded property tax revenues if dozens of lots are simultaneously redeveloped by new owners and assessed at the higher market value.

Even if every home recently destroyed in fires and floods is rebuilt, California will still have an affordable housing crisis. There are no

medium-priced houses for people with a medium income. In Los Angeles and the Bay Area, a home mortgage typically consumes about 40 percent of a person's monthly income, compared with 15 percent nationally.

The solution to California's housing crisis is to build affordable homes, but the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, the California Coastal Act of 1976, the 1973 federal Endangered Species Act, and other environmental restrictions limit the amount of land that can be rezoned for housing. Environmental groups, public agencies, and nonprofits control 47 percent of California's total land area. This means almost 50 million acres are off-limits to development. Still, new housing developments should be considered on the edge of urban areas, despite the fear of creating urban sprawl.

California's wildfires are a grievous natural disaster. They destroy lives and property in the blink of an eye. The inability to rebuild afterwards is a slow-motion disaster that is very much man-made. ♦

Oversight Needed

The gene editors can't be trusted to self-regulate.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

Somewhere in the Great Beyond, Aldous Huxley must have been shaking his head and saying "I told you so" after Chinese scientist He Jiankui announced the birth of twin girls whose genes he claimed to have edited. If true, these are the first genetically engineered human babies. After creating the embryos via in vitro fertilization, He—known in the biotechnology research community by the initials JK—used the technology known as CRISPR to remove a gene associated with HIV infection, an alteration that the babies will pass to their children and their offspring through the generations.

He Jiankui

If JK imagined himself to be on the fast track to a Nobel, it quickly became clear that the only visit he's likely to make to Stockholm will be a personal vacation. Rather than bask in his peers' applause, he was branded a "rogue" by fellow scientists. He had committed a cardinal sin in the biotech world, and it wasn't so much the genetic alteration of the human germline. That has always been the ultimate goal of ongoing CRISPR research on human embryos, blessed, among others, by the influential National Academy of Sciences—an opinion to which JK pointed in his own defense. No, his great wrong was doing the inevitable deed rashly and prematurely, before the public had been properly anesthetized with soothing assurances from bioethicists that the moral, social, and safety implications of the technology have all been properly pondered. For example, George Daley, the dean of Harvard Medical School, argued in the wake of the announcement that scientists should continue to move into human germline engineering despite the furor unleashed by JK's jumping the gun.

Even China's Communist government recoiled—though given its infamous harnessing of the Internet to monitor its citizens' every move, Beijing must have been aware of JK's research beforehand. But after the uproar, official Chinese media accused JK of violating ethical rules and laws—awfully rich coming from a country that allows Falun Gong political prisoners to be tissue-typed before execution, with their organs sold to those with the money to jump the triage queue. JK may since have been arrested.

What are we to make of all this? At the very least, the JK mess exposed the folly of allowing the biotechnology-industrial complex to self-regulate. With technological prowess racing far ahead of existing government regulations, we are left relying on the self-restraint of researchers to follow the industry's agreed-upon best practices. Of course, most researchers want to benefit science and help humanity, but some also yearn for the fame and fortune that come from announcing the next big biotechnological breakthrough. In the end, though, self-regulation is only as strong as the lowest common ethical denominator.

This should alarm us all. Researchers are conjuring with the most powerful technologies since the splitting of the atom. The CRISPR technique used by JK can inexpensively and easily alter any cell or organism on the planet. This could lead to breakthrough genetic treatments for cancer or other diseases and the eradication of some truly awful maladies. It could just as easily—by, say, altering a bird flu—cause a deadly pandemic or permanently alter the human genome in unforeseeable ways.

This brings to mind the political conflagration that erupted in 2001, when President George W. Bush imposed federal funding restrictions on embryonic stem cell research. No other domestic issue so dominated the Bush presidency. The media (and the Hollywood left) used stem cells as a cudgel to depict Bush as uncompassionately impeding treatments for the suffering and supposedly imposing his Christian faith on science policy. Much of the public swallowed the biotech sector's mendacious hype about the immediate potential

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ZHANG WEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE / VCG / GETTY

for embryonic stem cells to liberate children from wheelchairs and heal Grandpa's Parkinson's disease (neither of which is even close to actualization many years later). Meanwhile, biotechnologists were hagiographically depicted in media profiles as modern-day Galileos striving against irrational opposition to bring miraculous cures to a wounded world.

Ironically, Bush's most controversial domestic policy was also one of his most successful. His policy focused attention on the moral importance of the human embryo, unleashing a burst of scientific creativity to find ways forward that would be less controversial but also medically efficacious. Those efforts bore fruit in the growth of the adult stem-cell sector and, most notably, the Nobel Prize-winning invention of induced pluripotent stem cells, a process that crafts embryonic-like stem cells from normal skin cells.

Unlike Bush, President Donald Trump has avoided engaging the portentous moral issues biotechnology forces upon us. He only recently recruited a White House science adviser and has shown zero interest in convening anything like a bioethics advisory commission. Indeed, the administration's only meaningful reaction to the birth of genetically engineered babies came from far down the political food chain: a statement opposing germline genetic engineering issued by Francis Collins, the head of the National Institutes of Health.

Congress has also been quiescent about biotech's growing potency. Indeed, even in a body whose members are known to dream up legislation in the wake of every provocative headline, there has been no discernible outcry or promise to update our archaic regulatory structures. To be sure, the media have covered the story prominently, but not at the decibel level that they did the Bush stem cell policy—despite the deeper and more profound stakes.

Every significant power sector requires meaningful checks and balances. Biotechnology is no exception, and, as related above, letting scientists regulate themselves through a system of voluntary self-restraint doesn't cut it.

What to do? Until now the inertia against regulation has been as thick as molasses. But the adverse headlines to JK's "rogue" act, and China's forceful rejection of its own scientist's conduct, present an opportunity for the Trump administration to engage the world in a robust conversation about what we want from biotechnology and where scientists should not be allowed to tread due to safety and ethical concerns. Perhaps the best place to start would be a legally enforceable international moratorium on further germline engineering in humans—say, for five years—while the world figures out how to deal with these powerful biotechnologies in a responsible manner. Violators could be denied patent protections. Suspending experimentation on human embryos in furtherance of germline engineering should also be on the table.

The problem is this is not the kind of issue that rings the president's bell. He prefers policies with the potential for immediately measurable impacts about which he can brag, e.g., the lowest African-American unemployment rate in history, the highest stock market prices, ISIS destroyed in Syria, and so on. Moreover, having seen the hysterical attacks on Bush's stem cell policy, he might reasonably anticipate that an even more hostile media would do worse to him.

Still, being a truly consequential president requires engaging crucial issues that one would rather avoid and that won't bear immediate fruit or accrue instant political credit. Other than avoiding nuclear war, what could be more important than grappling with the moral challenges presented by the potent power of biotechnology?

Here's a suggestion that might serve both the president's policy predilections and the urgently needed biotech policy prescriptions of the moment: He could hand the ball off like a good quarterback to Vice President Mike Pence and let Pence run with it. I can even suggest a slogan for the campaign: Make Biotech Ethical Again. ♦

His, Hers, Other

Whose bathroom is it anyway?

BY SOPHIA BUONO

Two years ago, Alexis Lightcap, then a student at Boyertown Area Senior High School in Pennsylvania, stumbled into a national debate when she walked into the girls' bathroom and saw a man. Shocked, Lightcap ran out. "We actually have video footage of her fleeing the restroom in fear," says Christiana Holcomb, legal counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), an advocacy group that defends religious freedom, in a video about school bathroom policies.

Sophia Buono is an editorial assistant at The Weekly Standard.

Another student at Boyertown had a similar experience in the boys' locker room. A girl who identified as a boy "was standing in her sports bra, [by] her locker," says Holcomb. The first student "was standing there in his underwear." When this student and Lightcap reported the incidents to the school's principal, he dismissed their concerns. They were "told they needed to tolerate it and make it as natural as possible," Holcomb says, because this was now the school's policy.

This was the first time Lightcap and other students had heard of any such policy. "I found out about the

[new school] policy after I encountered a male in the bathroom," Lightcap says. The school enacted the new policy—without notifying parents or students—allowing students to use the bathroom that aligned with their self-defined gender "identity" rather than their biological sex. With help from ADF, Lightcap and other students filed a lawsuit, *Doe* v. *Boyertown Area School District*, arguing that the new policy violated the privacy rights of non-transgender students. In July, the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit rejected their claim. But last week, Lightcap and her fellow plaintiffs petitioned the Supreme Court to hear the case.

At the heart of this case—as well as several transgender bathroom cases that have worked their way through the courts in recent years—lies the interpretation of Title VII and Title IX. These famous laws (the first from the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the second from the Education Amendments of 1972) prohibit employers and institutions that receive federal funds from discriminating on the basis of several qualities, including sex.

A bathroom-door sign in a Durham, North Carolina, restaurant

"For almost 20 years, courts have held that Title VII and Title IX protect trans people," says Josh Block, senior staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Block represented Gavin Grimm, a transgender student who in May won a case against a Virginia school board that prohibited Grimm from using the boys' bathroom. Last year, the Supreme Court remanded Grimm's case, since the Trump administration had just reversed an Obama-era notice for public schools to accept transgender students' preferences. But now, under the new policy and with a conservative majority on the bench, the *Boyertown* appeal has a chance of bringing the debate back to the High Court.

When it comes to preventing discrimination on the basis of sex, says Block, "The law needs to be interpreted according to its plain language." But the language at issue—namely, what the word "sex" means—is not at all plainly understood. Both Title VII and Title IX were passed long before some activists began arguing that "sex" is not limited to the biological distinction between male and female but includes "gender identity." Given the continuing controversy over the definition of sex in a transgender age, how should the courts navigate conflicts like the one that emerged in Boyertown?

In the past decade, according to the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the National Institutes of Health, the number of people who identify as transgender in the United States has risen to over one million. One clinic in the U.K. that specializes in treating transgender patients saw its child referrals quadruple between 2012 and 2017, and the approximately 40 "gender health facilities" in this country also report a significant rise in referrals.

The ACLU's Block thinks acceptance of transgenderism will follow a similar path to acceptance as the one the culture made with regard to gay rights. "As was the case with discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people," he says, "as people came to see more [of them] as people, as they came to understand them as their coworkers, as their friends . . . a lot of stereotypes and assumptions faded away."

But even if cultural norms change, extending Title IX to include transgender rights is far from a settled legal question. ADF's Holcomb notes, "There are only a couple of circuit-level decisions [that have granted] preliminary injunction. We're going to have to press forward, and the Supreme Court will ultimately have to resolve the issue," she says. "The definition of sex by Congress has always been clear, undisputed," she continues. "[It's] always been basic biological differences."

In their petition to the Supreme Court, the *Boyertown* plaintiffs have invoked the same logic. "The Third Circuit redefined 'sex' in the privacy and Title IX contexts as depending solely on a student's subjective perceptions and feelings," they argue. "Nothing in this Court's precedents or the plain language of Title IX supports such a redefinition."

Lightcap says cases such as hers aren't about transphobia or denying others their rights—they are about protecting the privacy and safety of all students. "I don't have a problem sharing a bathroom with someone who identifies as transgender—provided they are the same sex I am," Lightcap wrote in an opinion piece. "I do have trouble with a policy that says anyone who's in an opposite-sex mood today can stroll in and observe me in my intimate moments." The expansive bathroom policies of schools like Boyertown make it impossible to prevent that from happening.

Lightcap emphasizes just how young the students affected by these policies are. "There are 13-, 14-year-old girls in this school," Lightcap says. "I don't want them walking into a male in the bathroom."

"These are minors," Holcomb says. "However we might disagree more broadly, culturally, and perhaps in the college setting, that's one thing," she adds. "[But here] we're really talking about children." For her part, Lightcap remains optimistic. "I'm going wherever God leads me, and this is where he's led me," she says. "I'm going to continue fighting." ♦

SARA D. DAVIS / GETTY

Senator Selfie

Cory Booker thinks he can be all things to all people

By Adam Rubenstein

Hanover, N.H.

"This is before and this is after. Before and after," Cory Booker is saying on Snapchat. He's just met a young fan with an Afro and is drawing the contrast to his own shiny bald head. It's a routine he will repeat again later in the day and as he crisscrosses the country before the midterms. The New Jersey senator can't say no to a selfie. If you are standing around looking idle, he'll probably ask you to take one and upload the photo to his social media accounts for his millions of followers.

Supreme Court protester, December 5, 2017

Social media are Booker's bread and butter. They are good advertising, and they are free. But Booker senses that he's not so much giving something as getting it. Without fail, he asks the first name of everyone he meets and is almost certain to repeat it back at least once. Booker is fond of tweeting out Dale Carnegie quotations and makes good on one of the guru of self-improvement's famous rules: "Remember that a person's name is, to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language." Booker says that his favorite books are by Kurt Vonnegut and James Baldwin, but it's Carnegie who seems really to have stuck. He follows up most of these encounters with a "Booker bear hug." "I'm a hugger," he tells me, as if I hadn't already seen ample evidence of this fact.

Booker is spending a chilly, late-October day shuttling around New Hampshire stumping for Granite State Democrats. He visits the University of New Hampshire in Durham and a community center in Portsmouth with Chris Pappas and has a town hall at Dartmouth with Annie Kuster. (Both candidates will win easily on November 6.) There are photo-ops aplenty. Instagram posts are generated, tagged, and uploaded. The trip is a social-media success. Booker's presence is that much better known in New Hampshire.

In the run-up to Election Day, Booker visited 24 states on 39 trips. He went three times to Ohio for Sherrod Brown and three times to Florida for Bill Nelson. He flew to North Dakota to help Heidi Heitkamp and to Nevada to stump for Jacky Rosen (three times). Many of the states he hit are key to the 2020 presidential race, in which Booker says he is only "considering" throwing his hat. But he's out in these states seeing where his message sticks and where it needs work. His crowds are usually young and diverse—throngs of energetic progressivism—and they swarm him for photos. He loves every minute of it, documenting his travels stop by stop on Instagram. If Booker doesn't snap a selfie, was he really there?

The creative use of technology is at the core of Booker's political strategy. After campaign events with Democratic activists in Iowa in October, his staff scanned social media for photos with the boss and printed them out. Booker signed the images, adding personalized notes, and they were then mailed out to the folks who posted the pictures. It's something Donald Trump is known to do, to mark his approval of someone or something. But it's hard to imagine any other Democratic presidential hopeful—Julián Castro, for instance, or Elizabeth Warren—having the self-confidence to do it.

And Booker is nothing if not confident. He's almost vain in the certainty that he can win over an audience, and so certain that he often focuses on telling stories of his falling short. In Hanover, he describes an encounter with a homeless man in Newark. He and his driver, Kevin, are pulling out of a McDonald's. Booker's a vegan but can't resist the fries. "I'm thinking about putting a bill in to schedule McDonald's French fries because they're so addictive," he says. They see a homeless man rooting through the garbage, and, as Booker tells it,

CHIP SOMODEVILLA / GETTY

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I go, "Hey, man, you okay?" And he tries to brush me off. And I go, "Sir, hey, man, you all right, you need anything?" And he turns around and looks at me and he says, "I'm hungry." Now I don't know what faith anybody is here. For me and my faith, I think it says something in the Bible about if you have two McDonald's French fries and your neighbor has no McDonald's French fries. I think it was in the Sermon on the McMount. And so, I know what I have to do. So I open up these French fries and that aroma hits me and I suddenly lose a little bit of my will to give it up and my hand's shaking and I pull the fries out and I hand him the fries and he pries them out of my hands. I feel somewhat good; he feels happy. He looks good and then we're about to drive off again, but he looks at me and goes, "Hey, man, do you have any socks?" Now, for anybody here that's worked with the homeless, it's probably one of the hottest items. But I don't carry extra socks in my car so I look at the guy and I say, 'I'm sorry, man, I don't have any socks,' and I turn my head thinking that Kevin's going to drive off. But he doesn't. He puts the car in park, reaches between the steering wheel, kicks off his shoes, takes off the socks he's wearing, and hands them out the window. Now I'm the senator who talks about love and all this stuff. I'm three blocks from my house, where I have pairs of socks that I have never even worn yet. But in that moment I didn't have the moral imagination to see how I could live my values and love my neighbor. That's the rub, guys, that's where we are in America. That little bit extra. That little bit more.

Booker's freewheeling approach to campaigning is through stories, and it's not so much about electoral politics or specific policies as it is about weaving the events of his life into a "moral moment in America."

Another story Booker likes to tell is that of his parents, newly promoted executives at IBM in the late 1960s, trying to buy a house in New Jersey's upscale Harrington Park. They were repeatedly turned away by real-estate agents who tried to make it impossible for black families to purchase property in predominantly white neighborhoods. Agents would tell families like the Bookers that the houses they were interested in had already sold. When white couples inquired, the same houses would be for sale. Undeterred, his parents worked with activists and the Fair Housing Council to fight this system of discrimination. They sent a white couple in their stead to the house they wanted to make sure it was still for sale. It was. The white couple then pressed ahead with the purchase, but at closing time, Booker's father showed up with a lawyer to buy the place. After an altercation that included being attacked by a Doberman Pinscher, the Bookers got their house in Harrington Park.

Booker's mother, Carolyn, tells me that they took up this fight to make it "more difficult for someone to discriminate against other people." It was, she says, "the right thing to do." Booker, though, likes to riff on his late father's joke that with the family (which included his older brother Cary) moving into Harrington Park they became "the four raisins in a tub of sweet vanilla ice cream." The country's racial history is an ever-present issue for Booker, one of only three African-American senators, but he wants to see his complicated heritage as a source of communion rather than anger. Some of his ancestors were slaves but several were slave owners—and one was a Confederate soldier. A DNA test revealed that he's 47 percent African, 45 percent European, and 7 percent Native American (which is about 70 times more Native American than Elizabeth Warren).

What Booker likes best is to present himself as just like whomever he is talking to. At Dartmouth, he's a high achiever, just like his Ivy League-audience: "By the time

TOM WILLIAMS / CQ ROLL CALL / GETTY

Senators and Senate pages, January 28, 2016

I'm 18 years old, I'm, like, president of my class, high school All-American football player. That's how I got into Stanford: 4.0, 1,600—4.0 yards a carry, 1,600 receiving yards." At Stanford, he played football and got degrees in political science and sociology. He won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. There, the Baptist Booker became active in Jewish life—serving as co-president of the L'Chaim Society and studying Torah. When he enrolled at Yale law school, he founded a Jewish group. Jeffrey Goldberg once wrote that there's "a high degree of certainty that Booker knows more Torah than" anyone else in the Senate. Booker says that Judaic thought has contributed deeply to his worldview. It helps him communicate in terms of "goodness, kindness, decency to another," and "justice."

Yiddishisms and Jewish liturgy dot his speeches. At Dartmouth, he mistakes the day of the week. It's Sunday, but he thinks it's Saturday. After being corrected, he announces, "Okay, so it is not *Shabbat*, but I'd like to give a little *d'var Torah* anyway," he says referring to the Jewish equivalent of a homily. He launches into a discourse on Abraham's openness as represented by inviting strangers

Iowa Democrat, January 23, 2016

Texas Anti-Defamation League members, May 5, 2015

Alabama Democrats, December 9, 2017

to his tent. It is one of Booker's go-to stories. He talks about Abraham's circumcision ("Don't think about that for too long," he tells the Dartmouth crowd) and recites a Hebrew verse from the Book of Isaiah, which he translates: "May my house be a house of prayer for many nations." It is a compelling and practiced patter—and surely a strong asset in engaging one of the country's most vocal and generous group of supporters—but it seems to confuse his audience of college progressives. "Is Cory Booker Jewish?" I overhear one undergrad asking another.

He finds his feet with them with stories of his work in Newark. In his last year at Yale law school, Booker took up residence in the struggling city about 30 minutes south of where he grew up. Initially he lived across the street from a housing project called Brick Towers but eventually moved into the project itself. There, he befriended Jimmy Wright, a police officer. Wright says that Booker was always asking questions, "always wanting to know what was going on in Newark. He was sincere." Wright pegs this around 1997, about the time Booker took a fellowship with the white-shoe Manhattan law firm Skadden, Arps to do pro bono work in Newark.

In 1998, he mounted a successful campaign for the Newark city council. As a councilman, Booker burnished his pragmatist credentials by working with the right-of-center Manhattan Institute on a school-choice program for Newark's failing schools. "Being outcome-focused started to change my view in favor of options like charter schools, contract schools, and, yes, vouchers," Booker said at the time. And reflecting on his work with the Manhattan Institute today, he claims he always puts helping people above politics: "I'm just a fierce pragmatist." In 2014, he told the *New Yorker* that he "became a pariah in Democratic circles for taking on the party orthodoxy on education" but gained "all these Republican donors and donors from outside Newark, many of them motivated because we have an African-American urban Democrat telling the truth about education."

Newark was Booker's launching pad, and it's a place he continuously alludes to on the campaign trail. "I got my B.A. from Stanford," he likes to say, "but my Ph.D. from the streets of Newark." In 2002, he ran for mayor against the corrupt machine of four-term incumbent Sharpe James. The campaign is memorialized in the documentary *Street Fight*, which was nominated for an Academy Award. At Dartmouth, Booker laments its loss to *March of the Penguins*. "Penguins aren't cute," he jokes, "they're flightless rodents, people! I am a vegan, with the exception of penguin meat." The audience laughs.

Booker's mayoral bid brought him into circles important for his political future. He raised more than $2 million, and wealthy Manhattanites vied to have fundraisers for him in high-floor offices and full-floor apartments. Andrew Tisch, the co-chair of Loews, attended one at the Skadden, Arps offices in the Condé Nast building. He saw in Booker "a guy who can write his own ticket for whatever career he chooses. He has chosen politics. He has chosen Newark. He's genuine, he's plainspoken, he's

FROM TOP: AL DRAGO / CQ ROLL CALL / GETTY; TOM WILLIAMS / CQ ROLL CALL / GETTY; BILL CLARK / CQ ROLL CALL / GETTY

action-oriented. He's a real activist politician." Bill Ackman, the founder of the Pershing Square hedge fund, was another advocate. He wrote Booker a check after chatting with him for an hour and later held a fundraiser for the candidate at his Central Park West apartment.

Sharpe James fought back with a smear campaign. He called Booker a "carpetbagger" and the "faggot white boy" and attacked his campaign as, variously, a Republican plot, a Jewish plot, and a KKK plot to take over Newark. Booker lost in 2002, but with a stronger infrastructure, he won four years later. He was a hands-on mayor. He shoveled snow for constituents, saved a woman from a burning house—sustaining second-degree burns in the effort—and went on a food-stamp diet to bring attention to poverty in his city. Jimmy Wright, Booker's policeman friend, became his inspector general and says the new mayor really struggled to balance the city's budget and had to lay off police and city officials. But he points out Booker's success in bringing business to the city. "I know Trump says something to the effect that Cory ran Newark into the ground, I really don't know what he's looking at or what information he's referring to. Think about it, Cory came to Newark, and major businesses came to Newark."

And Booker's two terms did bring major investment into Newark. Amazon-owned Audible moved to the city, as did Panasonic, and Mark Zuckerberg gave $100 million to the city's schools. Zuckerberg and Booker first met in 2010 at the famous Allen & Company retreat in Sun Valley. With Zuck in his corner, other tech and business industry dollars soon followed; Laurene Powell Jobs and the Andreessens cohosted a fundraiser in 2013 when Booker ran for the Senate. Booker, recall, termed Obama's 2012 attacks on Mitt Romney and Bain Capital "nauseating."

Booker won the 2013 special election to fill Frank Lautenberg's Senate seat—and won a full term the next year. In his time on Capitol Hill, he says he has focused on "environmental justice" and "criminal justice reform." But any name he has made for himself has been in opposing President Trump's judicial nominations. His performance on the Judiciary Committee during Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings drew headlines and boosted his progressive cred. But his acts of "resistance" also had their comic moments. He said he risked expulsion from the Senate for releasing classified documents that he dramatically said showed Kavanaugh as an advocate of racial profiling. He called it his "'I am Spartacus' moment." But the documents had already been declassified, and he'd been told so by an attorney from the Bush library. For anyone not looking simply to defeat Kavanaugh by any means, Booker was just grandstanding, and the Spartacus moniker seems likely to stick.

Booker replays his opposition to Kavanaugh for the Dartmouth audience. He calls the nomination "a moment in our history that just made me so angry." "I sat in those . . . hearings, and I watched this brave, courageous woman come forward and tell *her* truth. And another one, named Ramirez. And the world's greatest deliberative body, the world's greatest deliberative body says we're not even going to go and examine the evidence. . . . We couldn't even listen," Booker laments, getting emotional. "I left the Senate floor. I took my vote. I didn't even stick around for the final vote. I got on the plane, and I flew to Iowa."

Booker replays his opposition to Kavanaugh, calling the nomination, 'a moment in our history that just made me so angry. . . . I left the Senate floor. I didn't even stick around for the final vote. I got on the plane, and I flew to Iowa.'

The national spectacle of opposing Kavanaugh also resurrected an incident from Booker's own past. In 1992, while at Stanford, Booker authored a newspaper column called "So much for stealing second," which recounted a New Year's kiss when he was 15. He admitted in the piece that he "slowly reached for her breast" and "after having my hand pushed away once, I reached my 'mark.'" The "groping ended soon," he wrote, but "next week in school she told me that she was drunk that night and didn't really know what she was doing." Booker's actions, his age, and the situation were all reminiscent of the charges brought against Brett Kavanaugh by Christine Blasey Ford. During the question-and-answer period at Dartmouth, one of the students thanks Booker for having been "wonderful in the Kavanaugh hearings." "You've really placed yourself at the forefront of advocacy for survivors of sexual assault," he says, but then asks about the old column. Booker ably wriggles out with a long-winded answer. "I'm this kid that grew up in a toxic . . . a culture of toxic masculinity," he says:

> I wrote an article trying to be very provocative as a campus leader to call … really a column speaking to men and knowing that as a ball player at Stanford that perhaps I could be a voice that people would listen to. Now what is outrageous to me is that that column could have been written today by someone on this campus. It's not dated. It's just not dated.

He ends by praising the questioner, "first of all it sounds like you're a pretty woke dude so God bless you for that,"

and condemning sexual violence. The response is hearty applause and flashing iPhones. Annie Kuster then offers her own thanks for his role in the Kavanaugh hearings. Opposition to the conservative justice supersedes all personal liability.

Yet Booker knows how fleeting such praise can be. In January 2017, his opposition to Trump's nomination of Jeff Sessions to the post of attorney general—Booker actually testified *against* Sessions, something that had never before happened in a Senate hearing—had the praise for his "resistance" pouring in. But before the week was out he was being hammered by the very same progressives for opposing a Bernie Sanders bill aimed at lowering prescription drug prices. *Vox* headlined a piece: "How Cory Booker went from progressive hero to traitor in under 2 days." Orthodoxy is everything in the new Democratic party.

'Cory Booker is running for president in New Hampshire," Kuster began her introduction of Booker at Dartmouth. He recoiled playfully, and everyone laughed. But everyone also understood that this was exactly why he was here. It was why the students were here, too. No one came for Kuster. Booker seemed to have no clue who she was until he was introduced to her by his staff. But so many students showed up to the lecture hall to see a future presidential candidate that local Democratic organizers had to turn some away.

Before visiting Dartmouth for the town-hall-esque campaign event, he joined Senator Jeanne Shaheen at the University of New Hampshire for a rally. Dartmouth got time for questions; the University of New Hampshire got pizza. But both got dozens and dozens of selfies, Snapchats, and sweaty Booker bear hugs.

And at both events Booker talks about his difficulty with some of the language in our founding documents: "Native Americans referred to as 'savages' in our Declaration of Independence," he says, recycling a refrain from his 2016 Democratic National Convention speech. He quotes (without attribution) founder of the Equal Justice Initiative Bryan Stevenson's line "We have a criminal justice system that treats you better if you're rich and guilty than poor and innocent" (also recycled from Booker's 2016 Democratic convention talk, though then with attribution). This line is applauded at University of New Hampshire but gets loud cheers at Dartmouth.

He comes off well, as a moderate who's trying to navigate the politically turbulent waters of the Democratic party. During the question-and-answer time, the Dartmouth students put Booker through the progressive wringer. "Katie from New York" asks him how he can regulate Facebook when he's so friendly with Zuckerberg. "José from New Jersey" asks about teacher compensation and "Kos from Maine" presses him about fake news. This is a politically engaged generation hungry not just for authenticity but for purity. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speaks to them and for them. And so does Cory Booker. But I wonder what this cheering crowd would think about the fundraiser that Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump threw for Booker at their apartment on Park Avenue in 2013. Would they be impressed or pissed off by the who's who of Wall Streeters that he thanks in the back of *United: Thoughts on Finding Common Ground and Advancing the Common Good*. Marv McMoore, 25, a former president of College Democrats of America, acknowledges that Booker has been a "progressive champion in the Senate" but says "there are some tough questions he'll have to answer, should he decide to run. Many progressives have real questions about his record on prescription drug prices and his reflexive support for Wall Street."

Marv McMoore, 25, a former president of College Democrats of America, acknowledges that Booker has been a 'progressive champion in the Senate' but says 'many progressives have real questions about his record on prescription drug prices and his reflexive support for Wall Street.'

And there are other things he'll have to answer for, too. There's the 1992 *Stanford Daily* column about how "I hated gays." "While I was highly adroit at maintaining an air of acceptance," Booker wrote, "I couldn't betray my feelings. I was disgusted by gays. The thought of two men kissing each other was about as appealing as a frontal lobotomy." He writes that conversations with Daniel Bao at Stanford's peer-to-peer counseling group, The Bridge, helped to "move me past tolerance." And to show just how far he's come, during Mike Pompeo's hearings for confirmation as secretary of state, Booker grilled him: "Do you believe that gay sex is a perversion: yes or no? Yes or no, sir? Do you believe that gay sex is a perversion, because that's what you said here in one of your speeches. Yes or no: Do you believe gay sex is a perversion?"

Booker, an unwed man nearing 50, is himself sometimes accused of being homosexual. His mother told Oprah that her son is just waiting to find "a woman like her." But Booker prefers to meet the charge head on with rejoinders like "So what does it matter if I am?" He's been in and out of his fair share of heterosexual relationships,

including with prominent women like the poet Cleo Wade, and the charge hardly sticks. Steve Lonegan, the longshot Republican challenger for the Lautenberg seat in 2013, nonetheless tried to make Booker's marital status a campaign issue. He accused Booker of "acting ambiguous" to attract gay voters and of liking "to go out at 3 o'clock in the morning for a manicure and a pedicure." Booker didn't fire back at Lonegan, and he keeps his cool at such trolling today. Were he not to, he would undercut the amiable presentation that he see as his presidential calling card.

Booker claims to see a path forward in "small acts of kindness, decency, and love." When he hears the "moral vandalism coming from the highest offices in the land," he tells the crowd at Dartmouth, "it's not time to curse another human being or descend into hateful rhetoric. It's time to decide that I'm going to be light in this darkness, I'm going to be love, I'm going to be a part of a revival of civic grace in America." And he tells me, "There are a lot of incredible Americans who supported Donald Trump. . . . I say time and time again we've got to stop vilifying each other because we're in different parties."

TV audience member, March 11, 2016

It would be hard to get farther from Hillary Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comment. But it is also hardly the message the Democratic party is buying. These days it's the party of Eric Holder's "when they go low, we kick them" and Michael Avenatti's mudslinging on cable news. It is a party whose brightest star, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, recently joined a sit-in out front of Nancy Pelosi's office. Booker may preach love and understanding, but the party faithful want a fully credible progressive, one who's willing to weather the rough and tumble of Trumpian politics and fight fire with fire. Booker's message seems too much, too soon. When we retake power, Hillary Clinton neatly summed it up in October, then "civility can start again." ♦

Hondurans at the Gate

The caravan is overwhelmingly made up of young men looking for work—not women and children

By Grant Wishard

Tijuana, Mexico

By the time we catch up with the migrant caravan, the group has already spent 10 weeks in the media spotlight and played a starring role in the midterms. Yet we are still unprepared for what we find—5,000 Central Americans camped in a small neighborhood rec center that reporters like to refer to over and over again as a "stadium."

Keith Bowden and I had met up in San Diego and headed south to the border. Keith, 61, has lived on it for three decades—in Langtry, Texas, a town of 13. His *Tecate Journals* is an epic border tale, a chronicle of his canoe adventure down the Rio Grande. I got to know him early this year while I was traveling the U.S.-Mexico border by bicycle for this magazine. When I asked him in November if he wanted to go down and see the caravan first-hand, Keith responded within hours, "When do we go?"

We park on the American side early in the morning, change our dollars into pesos, and head for the San Ysidro Port of Entry. This is the most heavily trafficked border crossing in the world: a hectic labyrinth of converging highways and footbridges. Hundreds of cars inch through security checkpoints and are routed around enormous construction projects as the crossing expands to catch up with the daily crush of commuters. Everything is shoved up against fences from several different eras of border security, topped by halos of razor wire just installed by the troops sent to the border by President Trump. Three days earlier migrants attempted to charge the border here and were met by tear gas. As we wind our way through the different barriers and turnstiles, military helicopters fly overhead, and dozens of Mexican and American officers stand by in full riot gear.

A Tijuana taxi driver says he knows where the migrants are camped, and he has us there in 10 minutes. The Benito Juárez Sports Complex shares half a city block with an elementary school. Only a two-lane highway separates it from the border fence, but the closeness of the United States is an illusion. If you were to dodge the traffic and somehow climb over the 15-foot fence, there would be two more barriers even before you reach the stinking Tijuana River. Cross the river, and there are two more fences between you and American soil.

A block from the wall surrounding the sports complex, the Mexican police have set up a perimeter to keep out the Tijuana locals. Hundreds of people mill about between the two perimeters. There are medical tents, and the Mexican marines run kitchens at one end of the street to feed the migrants, who kill time in makeshift shelters on the sidewalk or simply stand around. Men crowd around a crate to gamble Honduran currency or cigarettes. Children chase each other, weaving between the aimless adults.

The scams start almost immediately. Keith breaks one of his cardinal rules ("When a guy comes up to you and

Grant Wishard, a former editorial assistant at The Weekly Standard*, bicycled the U.S.-Mexico border, from San Diego to Brownsville, early this year.*

ALL PHOTOS: GRANT WISHARD / THE WEEKLY STANDARD

starts with 'Hey, my friend'—run") and gives a Honduran man enough pesos to call his mother back home. He claims to have a 2-year-old son and to have been on the road north for 45 days, 12 of which he has spent in the Tijuana camp. We never see him use the payphone, and we spend a lot of time standing around studying the crowd as the compound we're waiting to get into is only open to the press between 2 and 3 P.M.

Trash litters the streets. Filthy water streams along the curb. Knowing how many miles the migrants walked to get here, I am curious what kinds of shoes had brought them this far. Crocs seem the overwhelming favorite. We begin to notice the almost comic number of reporters amongst the crowd, as well as San Diego couples on some sort of "slum safari." The migrants are remarkably young, most under 30. The longer we wait, the more Keith seems distressed. "What are they gonna do? How are they gonna get back? How are they gonna get across? They're just kids."

The origins of the caravan remain a bit murky, but it is thought that a group of 160 people agreed to head north together from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on October 12. Grouping together seemed safer than walking or hitchhiking alone. On October 13, the Associated Press was reporting that a "spontaneous caravan" of 1,000 migrants was en route through Mexico to the United States. It seems to have formed through word of mouth—many people say they heard about the group on Facebook and made the decision to join in minutes. Now they're here in Tijuana, more than 2,000 miles away.

At top, vehicles waiting to cross the border at the San Ysidro Port of Entry; center, Keith Bowden talking to one of the migrants at the Benito Juárez complex; bottom, the lines at the portable toilets at the same complex

Cars sporadically squeeze their way through the police checkpoint, and the listless scene at the sports complex snaps into life. People are lined up 50 yards deep long before the driver has time to open the door. If it's common items like bottles of juice or slices of pizza coming out of the trunk, the line stays neat and organized. If it's rarer goods like coats or blankets, a riot ensues.

Keith strikes up a conversation with a police officer in desert fatigues and a beret. He's from Mexico City and his frustration boils over into a thoughtful, well-spoken dissertation on the scene we've been watching all morning. The police have a simple mission—keep the locals outside the perimeters and maintain an orderly environment within. The migrants, he says, shaking his head, "just won't listen to anything." They throw their trash in the streets. They urinate and defecate on the sidewalks. The police ask them not to stray outside the perimeter, but they roam Tijuana to panhandle or steal. It hasn't been widely reported, but these behaviors led the parents' association to close down the elementary school next door. "Whatever you do don't come here when the sun is down," the officer tells us. "Every night there are fights." He says drugs are rampant inside the perimeter.

A man walks past our sidewalk huddle, and the officer recognizes a repeat offender. He stops what he is saying to lecture him against panhandling. "They don't feed me," the migrant complains. "I get in line, but they don't feed me." "That's because you don't stay in line," the officer explains. "I got in line but it was taking too long so I just said 'No, I'm not doing it,'" the migrant snaps back. "Just because you get in line doesn't mean you are going to immediately get service," says the officer, clearly bewildered to be explaining how to wait in line to an adult. "You see what I'm dealing with?" he asks us.

Just after 2 o'clock, we pass through a metal turnstile into the sports complex with a group of reporters. The four-acre space is made up of a basketball court, two baseball diamonds, and a small soccer field surrounded by bleachers. But we are weaving through narrow lanes between tents. Every facility except the soccer field, which was being used for a pickup game, is covered with tents or makeshift tarps. In some places, large billboard advertisements and garbage bags propped up by bits of wood sub for tents. Laundry and shoes are hung to dry from every conceivable protrusion. If it weren't for the scoreboard in center field, the larger of the two baseball fields would be unrecognizable. Its outfield is given over to showers and portable toilets. We count three outdoor showers with three dripping spigots each—two for men, one for women. Lines of people wait for each of the dozen toilets. It all seems pathetically little for 5,000 people.

A boy, probably 4 or 5 years old, runs up to us. As Keith talks to him, a young man in his mid-20s joins the conversation. Keith asks the newcomer—I'll call him

"Danny"—why he came to Tijuana. Danny says he came for a better job. Work in Honduras is scarce and often doesn't pay enough to support a family. "If you have children, you have a real problem," he explains. Keith asks if he plans to stay in Mexico, and Danny says, "Oh, yeah, I'm happy here. I'm fine here. I don't need to go anywhere else." The source of his joy is having earned $60 that week at a restaurant in the city. As they talk, other young men join the circle. Danny wants to know if acquiring legal work papers could jeopardize his asylum claim. Keith says he isn't sure, but most likely yes. Questions start to pour in from the half-dozen men suddenly listening:

"If I get the interview what do I say?"

"There's a lot of political problems in Honduras, should I tell them about those?"

"What's the probability that we're going to get in?"

This back and forth goes on and on, as a crowd gathers to hear what Keith is saying. The problem is horrifying and obvious. Asylum is intended for people who fear persecution for their race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion, but the Hondurans are telling us about their desire for jobs. "I can't believe you don't know," Keith says to Danny, trying to explain that asylum has nothing to do with work visas. "We're in the dark," he says, and it's been that way from the beginning. Rumor and speculation carried them thousands of miles to Tijuana, but now the dream is starting to fade. Pressed up against the U.S.-Mexico border, with the asylum-interview system backlogged for weeks, most of the migrants are beginning to realize how small their chance is of getting it. There really are only three choices: crossing the border illegally, accepting the work permits being offered by the Mexican government and finding a job in Tijuana, or climbing on one of free buses back to the Guatemalan border, courtesy of Mexico.

News reports, often studded with pictures of activists in neon vests, have given the impression that the caravan is an organized effort. But based on what we observe and our conversations with some of those who walked north, nobody was ever in charge or took on the responsibility of educating the migrants about just what they were headed for.

After an hour inside the camp, Keith and I walk several blocks to catch a taxi back to San Ysidro. We ask our driver, a Tijuana resident, about his thoughts on the caravan. "Trump's policy on this issue may be the only sane policy he has," he admits with reluctance. "According to Trump if he lets them in there's going to be a flood of people that follows. I'm in agreement with that idea. Of course if they get in, it will inspire others." He describes the migrants as "vulgar" and is irritated by their lack of gratitude for what the Mexican government is doing for them.

On November 19, a crowd of angry Tijuanans marched through the city protesting the caravan. The mayor has been especially outspoken, claiming that the city cannot afford to keep spending $30,000 a day on the camp. Our cabbie was frustrated but wanted to be clear that normally he'd be sympathetic to their plight. "I'm a moral person. I'm a conscientious person. I care about people, and I don't feel good about agreeing with Trump," he says. Mexico has a new president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Keith asks the cabbie what he expects of the new leader. "We never know that," the driver sighs. He says every candidate for office promises to represent the people but becomes part of the corruption as soon as he is elected. Perhaps this new president will be different: "My only hope," he says, gesturing dramatically while steering through city traffic.

Back in San Diego, we settle down in our hotel. Heavy rain is predicted for the next day, which will surely flood the already saturated Benito Juárez fields. The medical tents are taxed as it is treating respiratory infections, and there are reports of chickenpox and HIV/AIDS. Hotel luxury feels shamefully far away from sleeping and coughing on a flooded baseball field.

Instead of sloshing around Tijuana again, we drive up to Los Angeles. According to the 2010 census, 633,401 Hondurans are living in the United States and 42,901 of them live in L.A. We want to talk to some Hondurans who have made it to the States and try the restaurant Dona Bibi's, which sits in an edgy neighborhood directly across from MacArthur Park. There's a giant map of Honduras chalked on one wall, and we're the only gringos in the place. It's a simple spot with wobbly tables and scuffed chairs, but nearly full at lunchtime and humming with conversation.

Keith tries to talk with two men at the table next to us. One outright refuses to talk. Many of the people we met on this trip were reluctant to talk to reporters, and a high percentage of those who would refused to give their names. Our less taciturn neighbor is originally from Honduras but now lives permanently in Los Angeles. He is full of despair about the caravan. "Didn't they know that no matter where they came that was going to have to be the end of it?" he asks in a low voice between sips of coffee. "It's no secret your president has been saying for weeks what's going to happen when they get here." It is an uncomfortable conversation. We are very much not wanted here. We pay and leave, stepping back out into the drizzling rain.

The Honduran consulate occupies a small suite in a tall downtown office building. There are people waiting in the hallway outside, but that's nothing compared with the dozens sitting in a waiting room. The staff work quickly behind a glass window. The consul general, Pablo Mario Ordóñez, graciously agrees to see us.

Ordóñez is in his early 30s, dressed in a navy suit and a light blue and white tie that perfectly match his country's

flag. He's says he's just returned from Tijuana, where he's been working with the Mexican government to handle the migrant situation. "First of all I would like to say that contrary to a lot of opinions, our government is not promoting the caravan," he tells us. It's a ridiculous theory, he says, but reporters keep asking him to validate it. He acknowledges that Honduras has problems and that a lot of Hondurans have been misled into thinking that asylum is possible in the United States. "It gives a bad perception that we're basically living in a jungle or something."

He is very frustrated by Hondurans' ignorance of the U.S. asylum process and tells me about a man he interviewed on his recent trip. He made it past the first interview, which established that he may have a "credible fear" claim. But he's now been held in a detention facility in Calexico, the U.S. city directly across the border from Mexicali, for two months waiting for the second, much more comprehensive interview that will decide whether he receives permanent asylum. He told Ordóñez that he wants to return to Honduras and try to apply at a U.S. embassy because he is tired of being in "jail." None of the migrants Keith and I talked with understood the asylum process and certainly didn't know they might spend months in a detention center as their claims are investigated.

At top, a crowd of migrants join in the singing of hymns at the new Tijuana camp; below, a young woman crying as she waits for the bus that will take her back to Honduras

The next day we head back across the border into Tijuana and learn that the migrants are moving to a new camp. The Benito Juárez complex is being shut down due to poor sanitary conditions. The new camp, an open-air concert venue, is on the outskirts of Tijuana past miles and miles of shacks and trash heaps where the city's very poorest residents live. It's in a small neighborhood at the base of a mountain ridge. Buses arrive at regular intervals to drop off the migrants. As before, the police have set up an exterior perimeter of chain-link fences to separate the migrants from the locals. The new camp has the appearance of a Spanish fort—high, whitewashed walls, accessible only through a pair of tall, rust-colored gates. Inside, the ground is entirely concrete. Those without tents have grabbed coveted spots in the porticos along the wall. The location seems almost ideal for the purpose—far bigger than Benito Juárez and guaranteed to be cleaner.

Keith and I talk to some of the locals. "They're just looking for a better life," says the owner of a hardware store. "In every group, there are bad ones and good ones, and you can't judge the group by one or the other." Yet young men waving a Honduran flag are already slowing down traffic to panhandle. Eating tacos in a restaurant the size of a walk-in closet, we chat with the owner. He strikes similar notes to so many of the other Tijuanans we have encountered: compassion for those seeking a better life followed by resentment of these particular people who are causing so much trouble and bad press. The Mexicans we talk to put a high value on their country's generosity and willingness to accept so many newcomers. But they have drawn a line at the recent caravan. The migrants' attacking Mexican police officers during their ill-fated charge on the border was the nail in the coffin.

We head back across the street to see more of the interior of the compound. Keith strikes up a conversation with two young men, cousins, who say their only shelter during last night's rainstorm was their backpacks. Why did they come and what do they hope for? The talkative one admits, "the only reason we came is to work," and says that they will stay in Tijuana if they can't enter the United States.

A large crowd gathers to sing hymns and line up for dinner. But a dozen people sit separately, heads in their hands, many of them crying. They are waiting to board a bus back to Honduras. Teenagers kick a soccer ball around on the far side of the courtyard, and a truck full of wooden cargo pallets pulls in through the gate, setting off a mad dash. We call it a wrap after a man calling himself Alvarez passionately describes his daughter's need for surgery and then sneers at the peso notes we offer him.

It is dark by the time we get back to San Diego. Widespread misinformation and naïveté have caused 5,000 people to uproot their lives to walk to the U.S. border. The caravan is overwhelmingly made up of young men looking for work, not women and children as we'd been told to expect. A large percentage of the men, as Keith sees it, are just "punks" he wouldn't trust to rake the leaves in his yard. "There is an insolence about them. . . . I think they were worthless in Honduras. They're going to be worthless in Mexico. They're going to be worthless wherever they end up." Even the idea of a "caravan," with a beginning and an end, is misleading. Two weeks after it supposedly reached Tijuana, a steady flow of migrants arrives each day without fanfare or press coverage. We met good people among the migrants, people we hope can succeed and who through no fault of their own have attached themselves to a naïve and dangerous group. ♦

Cowboy in the Shade

Why John Wayne is still an icon while Gary Cooper is forgotten.

BY TERRY TEACHOUT

Every year, the Harris Poll used to ask Americans to name their favorite movie star. In 2016, the last year poll results were announced, John Wayne ranked No. 4—the only actor no longer living who made the top 10. He has done so for as long as Harris has been asking the question, and there is no reason to suppose that he will drop off the list any time soon, for he is one of a bare handful of golden-age film stars whose names and faces are generally known to ordinary Americans under the age of 50. Not only are Wayne's movies still shown on cable TV and available on streaming services, but his critical standing has risen slowly but surely since his death in 1979. Starting in 1952 and at decade-long intervals thereafter, *Sight & Sound*, the British film magazine, invited prominent critics to name the 10 greatest films of all time. John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), in which Wayne gave what is universally regarded as his greatest performance, ranked No. 5 in 1992 and No. 7 in 2012—the only western to have made any of *Sight & Sound*'s seven lists.

In his lifetime, though, Gary Cooper was at least as big a star as Wayne. He made the Quigley Publishing Company's "Top 10 Money Making Stars Poll" of movie-theater owners 18 times between 1936 and 1957, a record bettered only by Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Tom Cruise. Moreover, he was widely thought to be a much better actor than Wayne. Charles Laughton, who knew a thing or two about acting, went so far as to call him "the greatest actor in Hollywood." And unlike Wayne, who is now remembered exclusively as a western hero who made war movies on the side, Cooper, a dashing clothes horse who was catnip to his female co-stars, was also at home in costume dramas, screwball comedies, and such sophisticated fare as Ernst Lubitsch's 1933 screen version of Noël Coward's *Design for Living*.

Yet Wayne remains a present-tense pop-culture icon, while Cooper is essentially unknown except to film buffs. Save for *High Noon*, none of his movies now has any more name recognition than the man himself. Few millennials who happen to hear Fred Astaire sing Irving Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz" in *Blue Skies* understand the meaning of the stanza in which Astaire imagines himself "dressed up like a million-dollar trouper / Trying hard to look like Gary Cooper, / Super duper." For them, his once-ubiquitous name is a stone-dead metaphor.

What happened to Cooper has happened to the vast majority of movie stars of the thirties and forties. Only a handful, among them Astaire, Humphrey Bogart, and Cary Grant, are known to the public at large. A few others, like Clark Gable, are remembered for having appeared in specific films that have retained their pop-culture currency. The rest have vanished into the memory hole. Mention Jimmy Cagney, Olivia de Havilland, or Spencer Tracy to the average American under the age of 40 and all you'll get in return is a blank stare … but John Wayne abides.

Taken together, the reasons why Wayne is remembered and Cooper forgotten say much about the condition of American culture today. Some of them are, of course, entirely intuitive. *The Naked Edge*, Cooper's last film, was released shortly after his death in 1961; Wayne's *The Shootist* came out in 1976, and he made his final public appearances three years later. Not only is he closer to us in time, but many of the films for which he is now best known—*She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *The Searchers*, *Rio Bravo*, *El Dorado*, *True Grit*—were shot in color, while virtually all of Cooper's major films were in black and white. It is a truth

IMAGES: THOMAS FLUHARTY

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universally acknowledged by anyone who spends even a modest amount of time with young people that they shy away from black-and-white movies, which they mostly find "unrelatable."

Nevertheless, Cooper and Wayne are likely to strike the casual observer as having been cut from the same bolt of cloth. Tony Soprano described its pattern in the first episode of *The Sopranos* when he asked his psychotherapist, "Whatever happened to Gary Cooper? The strong, silent type. *That* was an American. He wasn't in touch with his feelings—he just did what he had to do." Both men were not so much performers as presences, rugged-looking outdoor types who were capable of dominating the frame simply by striding into it, and when they got around to saying something, it was in craggy baritone voices that matched their weather-whacked faces.

Cooper, who was six years older than Wayne, had gotten his start in silent pictures, and by the time the talkies came along, he knew he didn't have to say much to seize and hold an audience's attention. All he needed was a handful of monosyllables to turn the trick. A case in point was "You want to call me that, smile," the only well-remembered line that he ever spoke on screen. It comes from *The Virginian*, Victor Fleming's 1929 film version of Owen Wister's western novel and Cooper's first all-talking film, and it summed up his on-screen personality so completely that he would be identified with it forever after.

Wayne is just as closely associated with a line that he never actually spoke on camera, "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do." But he did say "There are some things a man just can't run away from" in John Ford's *Stagecoach*, the 1939 film that made him a star, and that closely similar sentiment is an apt summing-up of the two men's screen personas: They played men who knew what they had to do and did it. It is no less revealing that they both knew how to act with a smile, even when the joke was on them. Because their masculinity was so completely of a piece, they didn't mind being teased.

Above all, Cooper and Wayne were leading men *pur sang*, the kind of personalities to whom your eyes reflexively shift whenever they're in a shot. What a star is, they were. As Howard Hawks said, "If you don't get a damn good actor with Wayne, he's going to blow him right off the screen, not just by the fact that he's good, but by his power, his strength." Cooper was no less potently endowed with the same quality. When

Niven Busch was wrestling with one of his scripts, Cooper told him, "Well, Niven, seems to me if you make me the hero it usually comes out right." Nothing else worked for either man, which is why they were still playing leads long after their contemporaries had shifted into supporting parts.

All this notwithstanding, the differences between Cooper and Wayne are more salient than their similarities. Wayne knew what he did best and kept on doing it throughout his career. When he expressed a brief desire to branch out from the stereotypical roles that made him rich and famous, a shrewd friend told him, "You big dumb son of a bitch. … The American public decided to take you into their homes and their hearts. They like the man they see. Forget all this other junk." So he did and never regretted having done so. Moreover, his iron determination to stick to his last would serve him as well posthumously as it did during his lifetime. Some of Wayne's films are, to say the least, better than others, but his performances are all perfectly known quantities: Even now, you still watch him in order to satisfy the same robust appetite that might lead you to order a T-bone for dinner instead of a chef salad.

Not so Cooper. While he always played the hero, he did so in a wide variety of dramatic contexts, giving identically convincing performances in *Ball of Fire*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Friendly Persuasion*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *The Westerner*, and—yes—*The Fountainhead*. To be sure, he did make some 20-odd westerns (not counting silents). Surprisingly few of them, however, are distinguished, and no more than a half-dozen, including *The Westerner*, *Garden of Evil*, *The Hanging Tree*, *They Came to Cordura*, *The Virginian*, and the now-iconic *High Noon*, are first-rate. Whether or not Cooper's range made him a better actor than Wayne is a matter of opinion, but it definitely makes it that much harder for today's filmgoers to get a fix on him, which has surely contributed to his comparative obscurity.

Nor was Wayne nearly so much of a "strong, silent type" as Cooper, whose roles are noteworthy without exception for how little he says in them. Similarly, his line readings are always admirably direct and straightforward, but hardly ever distinctive. Wayne, by contrast, never failed to put an indelibly personal spin on his lines. "You want that gun? Pick it up. I wish you would," he says to one of the bad guys in *Rio Bravo*, and no sooner do you hear him say it than the way in which he speaks the last four words, at once threatening and amused, is permanently etched into your memory.

Above all, Cooper had access to an

emotion from which Wayne consistently steered clear: self-doubt. It is his ability to project doubt that is at the heart of *High Noon* (1952), in which he plays a small-town marshal who, faced with a crisis, gradually realizes that no one in town will help him. At no point does he succumb to fear—he is, after all, Gary Cooper—but when the clock runs out, it becomes shockingly clear that he doubts both his ability to live through the day and, more disturbingly, the wisdom of his decision to stand up for what he knows is right.

The subtlety with which Cooper conveys Will Kane's cold-sweat fear is part and parcel of his minimalistic approach to film acting, which never failed to mystify those who shared the screen with him. As Brian Garfield has written in *Western Films*, which contains one of the most penetrating appreciations of Cooper's art to appear in print:

> There were actors who at first didn't want to work with him because they felt he didn't give them enough; he directed his entire performance toward the camera and quite often his movements and expressions were so understated that the other actors in the scene would think he was woodenly neglecting to react. Only later, when they saw the footage of the day's shoot, would they realize how expert his performance had been: what a wealth of expression there was in his face and the graceful little inclinations of his body.

Wayne was a minimalist, too, one who famously summed up his approach to acting in three words: "Don't act. React." Nor were his characters afraid to admit their fears: he was never more moving than when, in *The Shootist* (1976), he played a gunfighter dying of cancer who called himself "a dying man, scared of the dark." But the strong, not-so-silent men he played were never in doubt, not about anything at all. Small wonder that Wayne briefly lost his temper when his secretary praised a screenplay to him as being full of ambiguity. "Screw ambiguity," he replied. (One may take leave to doubt that she quoted him precisely.) "Perversion and corruption masquerade as ambiguity. I don't like ambiguity. I don't trust ambiguity." Small wonder, too, that he hated *High Noon*, which he correctly interpreted as an anti-anti-Communist parable, though he liked and admired Cooper, so much so that he made the characteristically gracious gesture of accepting the older man's Oscar for *High Noon*—Cooper was in Europe the night of the 1953 awards ceremony—calling him "one of the nicest fellas I know" and joking that he was now going to ask his manager "why I didn't get *High Noon* instead of Cooper!"

It is no accident that the two Wayne performances most admired by critics are in *Red River* (1948) and *The Searchers*, in which he plays strong but misguided men who are tempted to commit acts of great evil. But the fact that he so rarely played such men goes a long way toward explaining his enduring popularity. Unlike Cooper, Wayne was almost always forthrightly heroic, which is why his films are so comforting to watch at a time when such heroism is viewed askance by the culture in which we live. Our antiheroes are dark knights who are too deeply wounded to be fully trusted, just as our psychopathic villains are too sympathetic to be unequivocally hated. "You're just a freak—like me!" the Joker tells Batman in *The Dark Knight*, and we're expected to believe him. No doubt we should, but I find it hard not to be seduced by the siren song of the tall-in-the-saddle hero who in 1971 told a newspaper reporter, "Some people tell me everything isn't black and white. But I say why the hell not?" At the very least, it's pretty to think so. ♦

B&A

Lubitsch in Our Day

Judging a classic Hollywood director by the standards of the wrong era. **BY JAMES BOWMAN**

How Did Lubitsch Do It?
by Joseph McBride
Columbia, 561 pp., $40

There were two things wrong with the headline on the *Washington Post*'s review of Joseph McBride's *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*: "A forgotten filmmaker who influenced Alfred Hitchcock and Billy Wilder gets his due." One is that if ever a filmmaker who died 71 years ago was *not* forgotten, Ernst Lubitsch is that filmmaker. McBride's is only the latest in a series of biographies and critical studies that have come out since the great man died (you could consult McBride's own extensive bibliography), and the films themselves, especially *Trouble in Paradise*, *The Shop Around the Corner*, *Ninotchka*, *To Be or Not to Be*, and *Heaven Can Wait* continue to sell in DVD and streaming formats and to be rebroadcast on cable TV as gems of the Hollywood Golden Age.

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The more egregious mistake, however, is to suggest that one of the half-dozen greatest directors ever to take up a camera "gets his due" by being reduced to an "influence" on others. Fortunately, this is the headline-writer's mistake, not McBride's. Yet the latter does seem to me to share with the former a degree of inability to understand or appreciate the past on its own terms, rather than through the retrospective lens of a later period. As a result, although McBride's critical study is chock-full of the fruits of the author's lifelong interest in his subject, it seems to me that Lubitsch, who died in 1947 at age 55, gets somewhat less than his due from the latest of his many posthumous students.

Consider the example of Maurice Chevalier, the male lead in several Lubitsch musicals of the late 1920s and early 1930s. These films—all made within a dozen years of Lubitsch's immigration to America from Germany, where he was already an established director of very popular silent films—have worn less well than those mentioned above and also suffer from the tinniness of the sound and the poor quality of the black-and-white prints of so many of the early talkies. These are limitations that particularly compromise the longevity of the musicals of that period. Yet what seems to McBride the most dated thing about them is the political incorrectness, by present-day standards, of their long-dead star.

These films—*The Love Parade*, *The Smiling Lieutenant*, *One Hour with You*, and *The Merry Widow*, all but one of them costarring Jeannette MacDonald—were much admired at the time, but instead of trying to understand why, McBride is more interested in Chevalier's scandalous (as he sees it) playing up to the stereotype of the debonair French playboy and "ladies' man," as such creatures once were called. What, we may wonder, is the point of complaining at this distance of time about "a display of male chauvinism at its most flagrantly self-regarding" in *The Smiling Lieutenant* or Chevalier's "exuberant sexism" elsewhere when neither he, nor Lubitsch, nor the contemporary audience had ever heard of such things and wouldn't have understood them if they had?

Similar ideological anachronisms in this book are constantly getting in the way of our ability to see and appreciate Lubitsch's work on its own terms—and those of the audience for which they were made. For example, in one section, headed "Lubitsch and the Double Standard," we learn far more about McBride's and the right-thinking left's problems with the sexual double standard than we do about Lubitsch's. He, like just about everybody else of his time, took the double standard for granted and found endless comic potential in it. Too often, though, McBride simply assumes that his subject must have taken the same view of the world that he does—or, what's worse, that he *should* have done so and thus have been more like the 21st-century critic than the early-20th-century filmmaker he was.

That must be why McBride writes about the reestablishment of "the dominant patriarchal order" in *The Smiling Lieutenant* and "the limitations of gender power roles" in *Design for Living* and "the imbalances and injustices of capitalism" in *Trouble in Paradise*. Meanwhile, *The Shop Around the Corner* is commended for being ahead of its time by showing "gender tensions" in a workplace setting involving a male authority figure (an exceptionally mild-mannered Jimmy Stewart), which are said to make the movie "fully cognizant of feminist concerns." It's possible that what he means is *feminine* concerns, rather than *feminist* ones, but the point is that one suspects he doesn't see any difference between the two. In McBride's account, if ever Lubitsch falls short of his own politically enlightened standards it must be because of the commercial considerations to which even he had occasionally to bow or else those of the "bourgeois morality" to which the Hays Code demanded he and every other director, writer, and producer defer.

Lubitsch is said to have "played a form of jiujitsu with the Hays Office by bouncing off any compromises they demanded so that he could implicitly mock the whole system of censorship." I guess what's implicit must be in the eye of the beholder, but why mockery? Why not a compliment to the whole system of censorship that had been the spur and the inspiration to his triumphs of subtlety—so much more charming than they could have been otherwise. McBride congratulates Lubitsch for his cleverness in "outwitting" the "puritanical" censors of the Hays Office by his subtle introduction of sexual themes—and in the next breath, McBride takes such subtlety to be the measure of Lubitsch's greatness. If that's the case, shouldn't the censors get some credit, too, for his achievements?

Ernst Lubitsch directs Marlene Dietrich on the set of Angel *(1937).*

ALAMY

Towards the end McBride acknowledges that "Lubitsch was stimulated creatively by the way the Code forced filmmakers to avoid blatant displays of vulgarity and to find other ways of expressing sexual themes," but for much of what precedes this admission, he writes as if the great man were not so much a filmmaker as a battler for free speech and against "censorship." One has the impression here and elsewhere that McBride feels he has to reduce Lubitsch's oeuvre to terms that an imaginatively stunted but politically attuned audience can understand,

and that this has ended by limiting his own imaginative compass. Someone who can write ruefully that "the collapse of the old system of film censorship … has not led to a greater maturity in American filmmaking" is someone who has chosen to blind himself to the role of what he calls "censorship" in producing the much greater maturity of the films of Lubitsch's era.

Of the musicals of the 1930s McBride writes:

> Lubitsch and his writers make many telling satirical points about power relations between men and women while also giving the scenes some emotional weight, but the highly artificial stories tend to be resolved in awkwardly overdetermined, simplistic ways. This problem reveals conflicts between the films' more complex ambitions and the genre conventions that even Lubitsch's films had to follow to be viable in the Hollywood commercial marketplace of that period.

In other words, McBride wants the movies to be something other than what they are and so assumes that Lubitsch must have wanted them to be so as well. Yet for all his political preoccupations, McBride never seems to notice the class element in the musicals or how Lubitsch projects the sexual naughtiness in the musicals onto aristocratic and even royal milieus because that's where the 1920s bourgeoisie imagined such licentiousness went on—or wanted to imagine they did.

Such incuriosity about the way that contemporary audiences would have seen the films is itself curious to me. About *To Be or Not to Be*, made before Pearl Harbor but released shortly after it, McBride writes that it "assails all the audience's preconceptions about how such a momentous political subject as Nazism should be treated on-screen." Note the present tense. He must have been thinking of a 21st-century audience. But did an audience in 1942, only weeks after America's declaration of war, have any such preconceptions? If so, were they anything like our own, present-tense, preconceptions? And if not, isn't this a matter of some relevance to our understanding of the film? These are not questions that interest Joseph McBride.

Instead, he seems to feel it necessary to make Lubitsch seem "relevant" to an audience that has grown up with very different expectations about what movies, or entertainment generally, should be like. McBride tells us that Lubitsch, toward the end of his life, began to feel that his time was past, and this may have something to do with the generally agreed-upon opinion that his final films, made after he suffered a serious heart attack in 1943, soon after the release of the last really good one, *Heaven Can Wait*, were not up to his earlier standards. But isn't that all the more reason why we should make the effort to understand him as a man of his time, rather than of ours? ♦

B&A

Soldier-Philosopher

The project to see Xenophon alongside his peers.

BY DAVID BAHR

Xenophon
The Shorter Writings
edited by Gregory A. McBrayer
Cornell, 404 pp., $24.95

The Socratic Way of Life
Xenophon's Memorabilia
by Thomas L. Pangle
Chicago, 288 pp., $35

In his "Restatement on Xenophon's *Hiero*," Leo Strauss, the 20th-century political philosopher credited with reviving Xenophon's status as a philosopher on par with thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, observed that modern readers who incline to the prose of Jane Austen would have an easier time accessing Xenophon than, say, those who naturally delight in Dostoyevsky. To discover what Strauss meant playfully is to understand why Xenophon is not better known: Namely, his syntax and subject matter, especially measured against those of his more famous peers, seem uninspired, overly simplistic; his oeuvre appears to lack anything approaching the philosophical depth of the *Republic* or *De Anima*. Thus, for quite some time Xenophon simply failed to ascend to the rank of philosopher. He was a figure better left to some spelunking classicist in need of a dissertation topic.

The waning of Xenophon's philosophical reputation makes for an interesting case study. He produced some of the oldest surviving examples of a genre sometimes referred to as "mirrors for princes." His works, especially *The Education of Cyrus* and the *Anabasis*, came to be seen as necessary reading for would-be leaders hoping to master the arts of war and ruling. Modern thinkers like Machiavelli, Nietzsche, and some of the American Founders revered and relied upon him for his understanding of statecraft. A useful modern analogue to Xenophon is Winston Churchill: a statesman-philosopher; a prolific historian; a man with long and intimate involvement in military matters; and a keen observer of greatness (see his *Marlborough* for work deserving shelf space right next to Xenophon's *Cyrus*).

And here is where some of the reputational imbalance can be found. Like Churchill, the more Xenophon became remembered for his military chronicles, to say nothing of the leadership role he took in many of his recorded exploits, the easier it became to forget that he was also a prominent student of Socrates, with much to share about the life and times of his great teacher—and much to teach of his own thought

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besides. Such was the fame of Xenophon's martial writings that his more philosophic fare was obscured.

The poor quality of translations of his work has also contributed to Xenophon's modest reputation as a philosopher. As Gregory A. McBrayer, professor of political science at Ashland University and editor of the magnificent new *Xenophon: The Shorter Writings*, describes in his introduction, previous translations tended to play fast and loose with the original language, likely in the mistaken belief that the old general, when he employed key terms, did not give two Greek olives whether *politeia* was understood to mean regime or constitution.

The book brings together eight of Xenophon's short works, accompanied by interpretive essays by leading political theorists. The translators and commentators assembled by McBrayer approach Xenophon with a prudence and care that would have made the Athenian smile. Several of the texts show Xenophon's philosophical chops in ways that are immediately obvious. There is a new translation of the *Hiero*, a dialogue between a tyrant and a poet over whether the private life is superior to the political one. There is also a kind of backhanded encomium of the Spartan king, *Agesilaus*—a fine work to read alongside Machiavelli's "Epistle Dedicatory" to Lorenzo de' Medici in *The Prince* for those interested in learning how to appear obsequious while still retaining one's philosophic dignity. There is also a pair of treatises on the nature of the Athenian and Spartan regimes.

Rounding out the volume are four pieces with names that sound like the titles of instruction manuals—things that a beardless Greek youth would have to master during the ancient equivalent of boy scout training: *The Skilled Cavalry Commander*, *On Horsemanship*, *On Revenues*, and *The One Skilled at Hunting with Dogs*. But even these works are more philosophically serious than the titles might imply. The last text, for example, begins by connecting the activity of hunting to the gods, to the success of the Greek tradition, and thus to private virtue, and ends by tying hunting to theoretical inquiry, the life of philosophy, and the health of the community. As Xenophon notes, he undertook the writing of the text in order to make men "wise and good." Yet Xenophon's education in hunting, as Michael Ehrmantraut playfully hints in his accompanying essay, includes components of deception, defense, and attack. These tactics also of course relate to the life of the mind and the role of the philosopher in the city, hinting at just how deeply Xenophon thought—and wrote—about even seemingly day-to-day matters.

Statue of Xenophon near the Austrian parliament

JOHN ROCHA / AUSTRIA / ALAMY

Xenophon: The Shorter Writings is the latest in Cornell University Press's Agora Editions, an imprint that has already produced faithful renderings of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, *The Education of Cyrus*, the *Shorter Socratic Writings*, and the *Memorabilia*. With the exception of the *Hellenica*, Xenophon's magisterial history of the conclusion and aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, we now have all of Xenophon under one sturdy roof.

The imprint's general editor, Thomas L. Pangle, has his own new book about Xenophon out. A professor of political philosophy at the University of Texas, Pangle is well known for his first-rate translations of Plato, Aristophanes, and Sophocles, to say nothing of his manifold interpretations of foundational texts in political philosophy. In his new study of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the influence of Leo Strauss is evident throughout.

The *Memorabilia* is the longest of Xenophon's four Socratic works. Unlike that other Socratic star pupil, Plato, Xenophon here slips in and out of the first person, frequently providing commentary on the scene being described. Thus, throughout the *Memorabilia*, we are treated to a highly personal depiction of Socrates and his environs that is absent from the Platonic and Aristophanic accounts. It is one of the first examples in Western thought of the firsthand impression one first-rate philosopher had of another.

But what we are *not* provided with in the *Memorabilia*, and here it is important to tread carefully, is the unvarnished Socrates, the Socrates of infinite jest—we get only a peculiar version of the gadfly's life. The Socrates presented by Xenophon is shaded by philosophic conservatism. He does not examine the hides of gnats (as Socrates does in Aristophanes). He does not delve into the big metaphysical questions (as he does in Plato). As Pangle makes clear, Xenophon's Socrates has much smoother, conventionally respectful philosophic contours than Plato's.

Pangle's book is especially impressive in its portrayal of the Xenophontic Socrates' understanding of the divine and the role of the gods in the city. It is difficult to overstate the importance to philosophy's understanding of itself of the differences here between Plato's Socrates and Xenophon's. Pangle is to be applauded for grappling with this subject. May Zeus grant us more edifying commentaries from Pangle in this vein—and more work on Xenophon by any and all newcomers wishing to read him not just as a statesman but as a philosopher. ♦

B&A

Life Begins at Baron

Marcel Proust among the grand women of the belle époque. **BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN**

Proust's Duchess
How Three Celebrated Women Captured the Imagination of Fin-de-Siècle Paris
by Caroline Weber
Knopf, 736 pp., $35

At the center of *In Search of Lost Time*, Marcel Proust's masterwork, a novel of seven volumes, more than 3,000 pages, roughly 1.5 million words, and 400 or so characters, is the Duchesse de Guermantes. In Proust's portrayal of her, the duchesse is a woman at the zenith of *belle époque* social life. The *belle époque*, that period in France bounded by the end of the Franco-Prussian War (1871) and the beginning of the First World War (1914), wasn't *belle* for everyone, as Captain Alfred Dreyfus would have been the first to attest, though it did witness the final flowering of French aristocracy, also known as *le monde*, *le gratin*, the "born."

Marcel Proust

In one of the novel's crucial scenes, the Duchesse de Guermantes is told by her friend Charles Swann that he has only a few months to live. A moment later her husband, the duc, points out that she is wearing black shoes with her red dress and insists she return to her room to put on red shoes. Riven between compassion for Swann's impending death and the need to coordinate her outfit for the evening, she chooses to return for the matching shoes, thus revealing a heartless superficiality that anyone who has read the scene does not soon forget.

Caroline Weber, a professor of French and comparative literature at Columbia University, certainly hasn't forgotten it. The cover of her *Proust's Duchess* has a single high-heeled red slipper under the book's title. A triple biography of three women—Geneviève Halévy Bizet Straus (1849-1926), Laure de Sade, Comtesse Adhéaume de Chevigné (1859-1936), and Élisabeth de Riquet de Caraman-Chimay, Vicomtesse (later Comtesse) Greffulhe (1860-1952)—Weber's book recounts the conquest by these women "of a world where projecting an image was the precondition, and the price, of belonging." *Proust's Duchess* also chronicles the salon culture of aristocratic France between the years 1870 and 1890. This was a culture whose ethos is nicely captured in a remark by the Duc de Doudeauville upon his blackballing the writer Paul Bourget from membership in the Jockey Club: "I'd like to think there's still one place in Paris where individual merit doesn't count for anything."

Proust's Duchess is a handsome piece of bookmaking, elegantly printed, with photographs in both color and black-and-white, set out on the pages to which they are most relevant, a book with a substantial look and comfortable feel in the hand. Caroline Weber has supplied her book with more than 100 pages of back-matter—footnotes, bibliography, appendices—making it, as its author hoped it would be, a work both of scholarship and of compelling storytelling. She notes that the completion of her book was slowed by her relentless search for "*le mot juste*," a largely successful search, for her writing is admirably clear, often amusing, and precise in its formulations of matters of considerable subtlety. In her next book, though, I hope she will eliminate those less than *juste* words "gender norms," "feedback," and "mindset" and take a pass, too, on the much overworked "icon," "lifestyle," and "charisma."

The three women at the center of Weber's study—the Mesdames Greffulhe, Straus, and Chevigné—all married badly. Élisabeth Greffulhe, easily the most beautiful of the three, married a brute, a wealthy, deeply philistine man thought to have had affairs with no fewer than 300 women while remaining jealous of his wife and who saw no breach in etiquette in bringing some of these mistresses to dine at his wife's table. Geneviève Straus, Jewish, of Sephardic lineage, was born a Halévy; her father was a composer famous in his day; and after her first husband, Georges Bizet, the composer of *Carmen*, died at 36, she married a well-to-do bore, a Rothschild lawyer named Émile Straus. (Famous for her witticisms, when asked why she married the dullard Straus, she replied, "It was the only way I could get rid of him.") Laure de Chevigné, born a Sade, of the Marquis de Sade Sades, was the least physically attractive of the three women, but hers was the most secure pedigree. Her husband, thought to be homosexual, was among those aristocrats in the retinue gathered around Henri d'Artois, putatively Henry V, last Bourbon pretender to the throne of France, then living in exile in Austria.

These three women operated in a society that Lord Lytton called "brilliantly superficial." It was a society where, in Maupassant's words, "laughter is never genuine," one in which intelligence was not valued, striving was thought vulgar, and the only ignorance that counted was ignorance of dress, pronunciation, and the pecking order. This society in the middle of Paris, as Princesse Marthe Bibesco notes in her novel *Égalité*, "formed a world as distant

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from ordinary people on the streets as the moon is from the earth."

For people on the outside, mere earthlings, the members of the *monde* radiated a powerful, almost magical attraction. A young Englishwoman named Barbara Lister, mentioned in another of Princesse Bibesco's books, happened to be in a Parisian bookstore when Laure de Chevigné and her mother were in the shop. "When they left the shop," Miss Lister afterwards wrote, "I thought the sun had gone in."

Proust's Duchess describes the world of the *gratin* of the *belle époque* and along the way reveals how thin, how shallow, how nearly bogus it all was. "Life," said Bismarck, "begins at baron," meaning that in 19th-century Europe, without a title one was rabble, rubbish, scarcely existent. Theatergoing, boxes at the opera, elaborate costume balls—these were the events in which the *gratin* appeared outside the social fortresses of their homes and salons. Summer months they spent under the roofs of grand mansions in the country; parts of the autumn and winter were given over to shooting foxes and pheasants. A sycophantic press chronicled their comings and goings. The *monde*, in Caroline Weber's phrase, "existed in a time warp."

A woman in this select inner circle, Weber informs us, required as many as seven or eight changes of clothes daily, which of course implied a cadre of servants. "The 'born' Parisienne's golden rule: always look perfect, no matter how shaky one's finances or one's marriage," she writes. The game of keeping up was costly. The dirty little secret among the born was not sex, Weber notes, but finances.

The men in this strange world seemed, most of them, to have little to do other than fill up the salons and kill afternoons in this matriarchal, entirely self-enclosed society. Their numbers included retired military men, superannuated political figures, heirs aspirant. The Prince of Wales, awaiting the long-delayed death of his mother, Queen Victoria, would put in an occasional appearance. Geneviève Straus's salon, the one into which Proust first gained entry, was unusual in having among its denizens painters, writers, and composers, lending it a vaguely bohemian air.

Easily the most exotic among the male salon frequenters of the *belle époque* salons was Robert de Montesquiou, uncle to Mme. de Greffulhe, who would later serve Proust as his model for the Baron de Charlus. Ardent for gossip, Montesquiou was a snob of the first order and said to be the soul of indiscretion. Sarah Bernhardt, the actress of the age, was the only woman Montesquiou claimed ever to have made love to, and he remarked that for fully a week afterward he vomited continuously.

From left: the Mesdames Greffulhe, Straus, and Chevigné

For those who seek living parallels for the characters in Proust's novel, the leading candidate for the Duchesse de Guermantes is probably Élisabeth de Greffulhe. Certainly she looked most like the duchesse Proust describes in *In Search of Lost Time*. Tall, blonde, blue-eyed, always strikingly turned out, wealthy through marriage, the Duchesse de Guermantes at Proust's narrator's first sight of her seems "a whole poem of elegant refinement and the loveliest ornament, the rarest flower of the season." On the other hand, perhaps the model for Proust's Duchess was Mme. de Chevigné—"the woman in whom," wrote Princesse Bibesco, "the genius of Marcel Proust, divining her perfect essence by the light of his worship, found the archetype of his Duchesse de Guermantes." What seems most likely is that, as Caroline Weber suggests, Proust's duchesse is an amalgam of all three women.

Marcel Proust, the better part of whose own life—born 1871, died 1922—was lived in the *belle époque*, was its great, its unsurpassable chronicler and the Duchesse de Guermantes among his most memorable creations. The character Charles Swann remarks of the duchesse that "she is one of the noblest souls in Paris, the cream of the most refined, the choicest society." But as the novel plays out, the Duchesse de Guermantes proves simultaneously bewitching and bitchy, clever and shallow, generous and malicious, charming and anti-Semitic, a snob whose chief pretense is that she values talent and intellect over birth and breeding, which in all her actions she clearly does not.

As a young man, Proust knew the three women at the center of Caroline Weber's book, but just as he knew their world generally: from the outside looking in, nose pressed against the glass. Half Jewish, on his mother's side, his only connection with the world described in *Proust's Duchess* was his schoolmate Jacques Bizet, son of Geneviève Halévy Bizet Straus. When older, Proust implored Robert de Montesquiou to help him gain entrance to Mme. de Greffulhe's salon. "Do you not

see," Montesquiou told him, "that your presence in her salon would rid it of the very grandeur you hope to find there?" He would eventually come to know Mme. Greffulhe quite well. As for her, when much older she recalled Proust as "a displeasing little man who was forever skulking about in doorways."

Groucho Marx famously said that he wouldn't care to join any club that would have him as a member. Poor Proust was never able to test the Groucho rule, for he was never extended a full invitation to the club to which as a young man he so yearned to belong. The earlier rap on Proust was that he was little more than a social climber. When he published his first book, *Pleasures and Days* (1896), a reviewer described its contents, not mistakenly, as "little nothings about elegance." The young Proust's excessive flattery, applied not with a trowel but a backhoe, came to be known as "Proustifying."

The luster of the *gratin* would soon enough wear off for Proust. The dandiacal dilettante would soon turn into the penetrating social observer. Through his novel he would explode the pretensions of a society that would rank a young duc higher in importance than an octogenarian Victor Hugo. Weber writes that her three disdainful subjects would live to see the day that their prestige-laden but utterly artificial world would "fall to pieces under the deft, merciless touch of a (half-) Jew" named Marcel Proust.

Marcel Proust, who began life as a snob, soon became the great anatomist and equally great contemner of snobbery. "The juxtaposition of surface elegance and hidden corruption," as Caroline Weber writes, "would become a defining feature of his portrayal of the *monde*." Princesse Bibesco takes the Duchesse de Guermantes to be the heroine of Proust's novel. She turns out to be quite the reverse. Proust's narrator begins "genuinely in love with" the duchesse. As the novel proceeds, her flaws are ticked off and their number mounts. In the third volume, *The Guermantes Way*, Proust writes that she "despised rank in her speech while ready to honor it by her actions." Her put-downs of others, famous in her circle as evidence of wit, he, the narrator, views as fired by "genuine malice" by which "I was revolted." Her pretense to culture turns out to be just that—pretense, little more. This noble soul, human poem, rare flower, the Duchesse de Guermantes, with her taste for provocation, can say of the Dreyfus Affair: "I think you're all equally tiresome about this wretched case. It can't make any difference to me as far as the Jews are concerned, for the simple reason that I don't know any of them and I intend to remain in that state of blissful ignorance." In *Time Regained*, his novel's final volume, Proust describes the duchesse as having "more head than heart," which is distinctly no compliment. "You're entirely wrong," Proust once told an admiring reader, "if you think the Duchesse de Guermantes a good-hearted woman."

All paradises, as Proust taught, are lost paradises. Many among them are mistaken for paradise to begin with. That of the *belle époque*, as every reader of *In Search of Lost Time* discovers, and will now have reinforced by Caroline Weber's excellent book, was prominent among them. ♦

B&A

Manners Maketh

From insults to mobs to cross-dressing, a look at misbehavior in Shakespeare's day. **BY PAUL DEAN**

Every reader of Shakespeare knows a few things about Tudor etiquette. We learn from *Romeo and Juliet* that it is offensive to bite one's thumb at someone, and from numerous places in the canon that there is a *thou/you* distinction corresponding to that between *tu* and *vous* in French. In this rigidly hierarchical society, minute distinctions of precedence, dress, speech, gesture, and expression assume major importance. They are a means of preserving harmony. "Take but degree away, untune that string," as Ulysses warns in *Troilus and Cressida*, "and hark what discord follows." Ruth Goodman's entertaining book offers us a cacophony of solecisms: studied insults, contemptuous postures, open subversions of the norm, physical violence, and disgusting habits. She has researched numerous Elizabethan guidebooks to acceptable behavior and gaily turns their prescriptions upside down. Anyone following her advice will be well prepared to be thrown out of practically any social occasion.

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How to Behave Badly in Elizabethan England
A Guide for Knaves, Fools, Harlots, Cuckolds, Drunkards, Liars, Thieves, and Braggarts
by Ruth Goodman
Liveright, 314 pp., $28.95

Of course, the rules had to be learned before they were broken. To master the correct ceremonial bow was no light matter: How far apart do you keep your feet? What do you do with your knees? Only after extensive practice could you make an inappropriate bow that would really insult the recipient. (It could work the other way, too; Goodman notes that Queen Elizabeth once kept the French ambassador with his head nearly to the floor for 15 minutes as a sign of her displeasure.) There was a bewildering choice of possible ways to walk: the military swagger, the clerical shuffle, the laborer's plod, not to mention the bizarre gaits of foreigners. To strut where you were supposed to stroll could get you into trouble. Monty Python's Ministry of Silly Walks would

have been much admired in certain Elizabethan circles.

Meanwhile, the strict sumptuary laws, which regulated the dress proper to the various social classes, dictated that ruffs were for courtiers only, hats were for men but caps for women, and green was an immodest color for anyone to wear. To sport the "wrong" attire posed a direct challenge to authority. Goodman devotes some space to Mary Frith, "Moll Cutpurse," the most celebrated cross-dresser of the period, who figures in the play *The Roaring Girl* (1611) by Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker and even appeared as herself in one performance. She was a scandal in her day but would pass unnoticed in ours.

Foremost among the kinds of bad behavior for which Shakespeare provides a rich source of information is the elaborate insult. Kent's virtuoso denunciation of the steward Oswald in *King Lear* is hard to beat; it runs, in part, "a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue," culminating in the magnificent "nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch." What makes it worse is that Kent, who as an earl is actually Oswald's social superior, is disguised as a rough serving-man and therefore apparently beneath him in degree. Kent boasts of his plain speaking; it lands him in the stocks, as it would have done in reality. Goodman tells us that some insults were even decibel-specific; to shout "blockhead" at someone in the street was over the top, since the term was customarily used in private conversation. For public consumption "clown" or "ass" would be better.

Probably the most serious accusation was "liar." We remember Touchstone in *As You Like It*, who, having analyzed insults into various categories, ranging from the mild Retort Courteous to the more ominous Countercheck Quarrelsome, goes on to enumerate five other varieties of lie, the last of which, the Lie Direct, is the worst; yet all of these could be avoided by making the accusation hypothetical, with an "if." "Your if is the only peacemaker," he concludes, "much virtue in if." Without an "if," however, "liar" would automatically prompt a duel, at least among gentlemen—women and those of low social standing could have their veracity questioned with impunity.

Indeed, insults directed against women reached a virulence that would cause a riot in contemporary society. Male honor was bound up with courage, female honor with sexual continence. Thus, a complex register of insults for unchaste women developed, such words as "waggletail," "quean," and "trull" implying different kinds of impropriety. The public "flytyng" or slanging-match was a minor spectator sport, like rap battles or Twitter-trolling before their time. Not surprisingly, given the premium placed on one's reputation, cases of defamation were frequently brought before the courts. Goodman thinks that times have changed, that we judge social standing more by the acquisition of material objects than by deferential behavior. I'm not so sure; social media are a powder keg, and in certain contexts and on certain subjects you have to watch what you say to others more than was the case 20 or 30 years ago.

A night watchman—with a lantern, bell, spear, and dog—looks out for troublemakers.

ANN RONAN PICTURES / GETTY

Verbal insult could quickly turn physical. Brawls and assaults—Goodman documents several cases—frequently led to injury or even death. Christopher Marlowe was famously killed after a quarrel over a tavern bill and Ben Jonson was briefly imprisoned for killing a fellow actor in a duel. It was crucial to be adept at the use of weaponry, and here again there were grades of implement for each class: swords for soldiers, courtiers, and gentry; staves or clubs for common citizens. With no standing army or police force, and with a high risk of being attacked by thieves or footpads, it was important to be well armed. Goodman provides a handy explanation of how to fell an opponent with a hardwood staff (shod with iron at the bottom end). As with the other customs described in the book, abuse of the correct procedure was widespread. Some men carried weapons to show off their virility, making menacing passes at the air but too timid to inflict real damage. (So Hotspur, in *Henry IV, Part 1*, refers scornfully to Prince Hal as "that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales.")

Attendants on the nobility were customarily armed and, in obedience to the sumptuary laws, wore the livery of their masters. This survival of medieval feudalism, Goodman observes, was in decline under the Tudors as power was centralized in the court. Aggression could be channeled into more formal sports such as prize-fighting. Henry VIII set up a scheme of instruction in such arts, taught by Masters of Defence, who themselves had to qualify by seven years' apprenticeship. Bouts were strictly regulated, all-out violence being against the rules. However, as Goodman explains, towards the end of the 16th century these activities were displaced by fencing, an Italian import that became all the rage. Elite fencing schools replaced the academies of the Masters of Defence, and the new sport brought with it new fashions and new body language. None of this put a stop to the "roaring boys" or street gangs, whose sporadic mob violence is invariably condemned in Shakespeare's

plays: Some ways of hurting other people were simply unacceptable.

Goodman's chapter on "Disgusting Habits" is the most shamelessly enjoyable—and not for the faint-hearted. It is packed with tips, many drawn from Thomas Dekker's *Guls Hornbook* (1609), on how to eat badly, how to offend your fellow diners by various bodily emissions, and how to get drunk (not difficult, given that water was—not without reason—thought to be unhealthy). We hear of one epic drinking session in Essex, for which Goodman unfortunately provides no date, that lasted 48 hours. All five senses could be troublesome, according to your inclination; if we were to be transported to Elizabethan England we would probably faint from the smell. The body was ideally a private place, and its exposure in any form was potentially offensive (Falstaff's unabashed carnality is a positive take on this idea). The medical remedies for bodily ailments were often little better than the ailments themselves. Dr. John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, recorded his consultations with numerous female patients, and his treatment of choice was purging. Goodman notes our continuing awkwardness about genitalia and bodily functions; arguably we have overcompensated by insisting upon talking about them.

Goodman concludes her survey by observing that "bad" behavior was differently defined as fashions changed and that, even today, we adjust our habits of speech and body language according to circumstances and the company. The young continue to be self-consciously provocative while older generations continue to tut-tut at declining standards. Random violence is, alas, still with us. The differences, though, are obvious. Attitudes toward sexuality have changed with dizzying speed. The whole concept of a hierarchically or divinely ordered universe has receded dramatically. And the Elizabethans, Goodman believes, "valued reputation and respect far, far more strongly than we do." That is likely to become still more the case in the future, no matter what new ways we find in which to behave badly. ♦

B&A

For Love of Broadway

The technologies that brought show tunes to the masses.

BY AMY HENDERSON

Is the success of Hamilton a one-off or does it betoken a happy future for Broadway and Main Street?

America's musical theater emerged from the commotion of immigrant cultures that packed New York's Lower East Side in the late 19th century. Curbsides and storefronts reverberated with songs of newly arrived Irish, German, and Italian immigrants, and their music mixed with Yiddish theater, Gilbert and Sullivan, and African-American minstrelsy—a musical melting pot.

By the early years of the 20th century, the theaters strung along Broadway were providing the words and music to the American Dream. George M. Cohan, the child of Irish immigrants, sang that he was a "Yankee Doodle Dandy" (1904). Russian-born Irving Berlin captured the syncopated city's pulse in an instrumental vaudeville number that became a hit on Broadway after he added lyrics: "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (1911). Audience demand for "owning" the Broadway experience went beyond live performance, and shops in the theater district sprang up to sell sheet music so people could sing and play show tunes at home.

Laurence Maslon is a Broadway

Broadway to Main Street
How Show Tunes Enchanted America
by Laurence Maslon
Oxford, 252 pp., $34.95

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JOHN PAUL FILO / CBS / GETTY

historian and the host of a weekly radio program called *Broadway to Main Street*—also the title of his new book exploring how musical theater became America's voice. "The pioneers of Tin Pan Alley," Maslon writes, "set up shop in New York City, the logical epicenter for the popular music publishing business." Not only was their new habitat the site of flourishing music halls, vaudeville and burlesque houses, and nickelodeons, it was the home of the ancillary industries of performance—the managers, booking agents, and costumers who sent musical tours from New York "into the front parlors of Appleton, Wisconsin, or Lancaster, Pennsylvania."

Maslon goes on to examine chronologically the effects of the technologies that brought Broadway to ever-bigger audiences. When Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877 he conceived only of its business applications; it took other companies—especially Victor and Columbia—to move records and record players into the mainstream. In 1902, Victor hired the great tenor Enrico Caruso to record opera arias; Caruso's recordings over the next two decades made him "the medium's first commercial superstar and name celebrity" and established recordings as a prototypical consumer industry of contemporary life. In 1921, the year Caruso died, the U.S. recording industry sold more than 100 million records.

In the 1920s, recording stars like Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson popularized Broadway tunes and a new generation of songwriters—Cole Porter, the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart—arrived on the scene. Maslon credits big bands like Paul Whiteman's with boosting the popularity of Broadway music; Whiteman's crooner Bing Crosby sparked his career singing hits from such musicals as *Show Boat*.

But the recording boom didn't last; Maslon notes that in 1926, fewer than 60 million records were sold. Commercial radio was gobbling up market share from the record industry. Radio programming, which often spotlighted show tunes, gave consumers a whole new Broadway experience—"and they didn't have to venture outside to hear it or purchase it."

The recording industry began its real comeback after World War II. Maslon's account of the rise of LPs—"long-playing" records—is riveting. He describes how Goddard Lieberson, an executive at Columbia, embraced LPs to make the company an iconic Broadway industry. LPs proved to be an excellent medium for cast albums, and Lieberson saw Columbia LPs "as a way of reclaiming a national musical heritage" of Broadway productions from the 1920s, '30s, and early '40s that had been ill served by extant recording technology.

Of course, Lieberson's focus was not only on neglected Broadway classics; he was also a master of recording cast albums of current shows. *My Fair Lady* was his greatest achievement: The show was a smash hit when it opened on March 15, 1956, and Lieberson produced a cast album within 10 days. This album was "Fort Knox on wax," *Variety* reported at the time, and became the fastest to sell one million copies; by 1965 it was the most successful album of all time; by 1976 it had racked up eight million copies.

Lieberson continued to produce successful cast albums of such shows as *Flower Drum Song*, *West Side Story*, and *The Sound of Music*, but by the 1960s Broadway's heyday was ending. Maslon describes how television kept Broadway before a national audience via such programs as *The Ed Sullivan Show*—broadcast from studios on Broadway—which had a Sunday-night audience of between 40 and 50 million people. But by 1971, *The Ed Sullivan Show* was over and musical theater was being ushered to the cultural exit. "Broadway and Main Street were no longer singing from the same hymnal," Maslon writes. When the cast album for *Hair* disappeared from the charts in October 1969, it was "the last time any cast album would ever appear in the Top 10 for the next five decades." Not even the big Broadway spectacles of the 1980s—*Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*—had that distinction.

You can probably guess what show brought Broadway to its greatest point of mainstream cultural relevance since the 1960s. Lin-Manuel Miranda began writing *Hamilton* in 2009; it was partly rooted, he has said, in "that holy trinity: *Les Miz*, *Cats*, *Phantom*" from the 1980s, but also in the hip-hop music that has captivated new generations. When the cast album for *Hamilton* was released in 2015 shortly after the show's Broadway premiere, "It debuted at No. 12, the highest debut for a cast recording since the original Broadway cast recording of *Camelot* debuted at No. 4 in January 1961," Maslon writes. Moreover, *Hamilton* also "hit an unprecedented trifecta": landing near the top of *Billboard*'s cast-album chart, hip-hop chart, and overall album chart.

The ubiquity of technology for listening to and sharing music has allowed Broadway tunes to "go anywhere," Maslon concludes. But Maslon fails to take the point further—to recall that Broadway is not just about listening to recordings but about the theatrical experience as well, and that, too, is an important part of the "Main Street" story he wants to tell. Much as earlier Broadway classics like *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man* are still performed by American theater companies big and small, *Hamilton* is rapidly becoming a performance favorite and creating new audiences. It is playing indefinitely on Broadway and in Chicago and there are *two* touring companies in the United States—and the show is finding its way into classrooms as well.

Maslon's emphasis on technology and sales means that his interpretation of social developments is sometimes dry and that his book misses out on much of the drama of creativity and personality present in other books about Broadway. But it is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the rise and importance of Broadway in American culture. And it's more than just a book: Notations scattered throughout the text direct readers to visit a companion website that includes performances by artists from Jolson to Jay-Z. Anyone interested in American popular culture will be able to appreciate Maslon's virtual libretto for giving our regards to Broadway. ♦

The Last of His Kind

George H.W. Bush, 1924-2018.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

George H.W. Bush at a ceremony at the Marine Corps War Memorial marking the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal, August 7, 1992

We are each of us a black box, and I scarcely knew him, but even I could see there were many keys to George H.W. Bush. There was his personal graciousness and his upbringing in the long-vanished world of the Yankee ascendancy; his background in business and his conflicted feelings toward the grimier machinery of politicking (they were, in this order: distaste, revulsion, and eventual surrender); his unresting ambition and his hard work. What was most important for me, though, was that he was our last president to have been born before World War II, and the last to have lived through it, and to have nobly served in it.

It's hard to believe now, but we weren't supposed to talk about that in the election year of 1992. President Bush was running for a second term, and I worked for him as a speechwriter. The president's popularity had hit a new low. (I once mentioned that when I went to work for him, in January, his approval rating was in the mid-40s, and by March I had managed to get it down to 35. "I think I might have given you a little help," he said.) At age 68, Bush was facing a mortal threat from a young, audacious Southern governor who, among other achievements along a slippery career path, had dodged the draft in the 1960s. To those of us who worked for Bush and admired him without limit, it seemed absurd, simply unimaginable, that a Vaseline-voiced politician with a personal hairdresser could knock off, politically anyway, a hero of World War II.

But the decision came down from the pollsters and strategists who were running the campaign: Bush's speechwriters and the surrogates campaigning for him were not to touch on the war or make reference to his service as the youngest Navy pilot of his generation, on the grounds that such loose talk could only remind voters that he was 68 and Bill Clinton wasn't. The focus groups had rendered their judgment, apparently, and there was no point arguing: This was a "change election," and the country wanted a fresh face, young blood. We who worked on the campaign did what we were told, but none of us liked it.

As it happened, Bush never wanted to talk about the war anyway, especially not in public. An accurate account of his service—you can look up the details—would sound like bragging. Also, mentions of the war and the men who fought it tended to choke him up. The month before I went to work for him the country had marked the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The speechwriters turned out a set of speeches steeped in encomiums to the Greatest Generation—to Bush's generation. The speech drafts, a friend told me later, came back from the Oval Office with whole sections crossed out. Anything purple, anything wistful or sentimental, was gone. "Not gonna make me cry!" Bush told one of my colleagues, in mock anguish. In the event, when it came time to deliver the speeches, he puddled up anyway.

So the winter ended and the campaign limped through the spring into the summer of 1992 with no mention of the war or the Greatest Generation. The poll numbers sank further.

Then, suddenly, another decision was handed down: We could talk about the war! I never knew why the embargo was lifted—probably a focus group in a swing state had a change of heart and decreed that maturity and experience and courage were good qualities to have in a president. I learned about the reversal in the most unnerving way possible. Late one afternoon I got a call from a higher-up in the White House (I had lots of higher-ups).

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IMAGES: J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE / AP

"What do you know about the Battle of Guadalcanal?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"I figured," he said. He told me a gathering of Marines who had fought at Guadalcanal was to be held the next morning at the Iwo Jima memorial, across the river in Arlington, to mark the 50th anniversary of the battle. Campaign strategists had grabbed onto the ceremony as a fitting occasion to reacquaint Americans with the fact that their president was a war hero. And I was to write his remarks.

One of the White House's tireless, endlessly resourceful researchers came to my rescue. Deep into the night we learned everything we could about the Battle of Guadalcanal. The first thing we learned was that it wasn't a battle—more like a campaign, six months long, to dislodge an entrenched army from an island the Japanese saw, correctly, as the key to their defense of the Pacific. No sooner had the Marines landed than the American fleet was hammered by the Japanese from the sea and air, forcing a hasty retreat and leaving the Marines with only sporadic resupply as they engaged the enemy. Our attacks involved not only air assaults but episodes of savage hand-to-hand combat in the steaming jungles and along the jagged hillsides. As the months wore on, as their fellow soldiers watched from around the world, the scope of the fighting grew to legendary proportions. The researcher unearthed a bit of doggerel that had circulated among troops in the Pacific and even Europe: "Say a prayer for your pal / on Guadalcanal."

My higher-up had told me the speech had two requirements. The first was political. The campaign strategists insisted it contain a reference to the heroes of the Gulf War—the year before Bush had commanded the war with great subtlety and courage, but voters seemed to have forgotten it and they needed reminding. The second condition came from the president himself: no sentimental stuff. Not gonna make me cry! I didn't know whether "say a prayer" would make the cut.

The president arrived in Arlington the next morning. Under a brilliant sun hundreds of Marine veterans were spread across the hillside that slopes gently away from the statue of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima. They gave Bush a splendid ovation. For 40 years, much longer than my (then) lifetime, the president of the United States had been a veteran of World War II. No matter what happened in November, Bush would be the last of them, and the thought lent a special poignancy to the event.

Guadalcanal veterans at the 50th anniversary ceremony

"Men who had fought [at Guadalcanal]," John Keegan wrote in his history of the war, "bore an aura of endurance which veterans of almost no other Pacific campaign acquired."

And here they were, 50 years on, a stalwart sampling of the generation that saved the world—old men now, slathered in sunblock against the glare, dressed in shorts and Hawaiian shirts, others in Izod and Dockers, gray or mostly balding, wearing gimme caps and shades and flipflops or sneakers, pot bellies much in evidence. There was lots of facial hair, rarely seen in the 1940s, to compensate for what had gone missing up top. They were seated in lawn chairs or sprawling with their grandkids on blankets.

Bush had revised the remarks that morning and worked on them some more on the drive from the White House. The aide who rode with him in the limousine told me the president liked the speech, including the old bit of doggerel. "It doesn't get too emotional," the aide said.

Bush delivered it with a few of his usual improvisations—shout-outs to a clergy member, hat tips to other honored guests. He praised the courage of the men who hadn't made it off the island 50 years earlier and, by implication, the courage of the men who sat before him now, who had survived, only to continue the bloody hopscotch from island to island for three more years.

"There was a rhyme passed around during those dark months that I'm sure many of the Marines here remember. . . . Every Marine who wasn't fighting on the island knew the lines. 'Say a prayer for your pal on Guadalcanal.'"

At the words most of the men roared approval; some rose and applauded, obviously pleased. I stood off to the side behind a rope line, feeling an intruder.

They are nearly all of them gone now, of course. And Bush joins them. No one could ask for a greater honor than serving such a man and by extension serving them too.

Bush wrapped up the speech with the usual "God bless the United States of America." He did the ritual handshakes, and with his crooked grin and a wave quickly headed back to the car. A quarter of a century later, I like to think that as he ducked into the backseat I saw him dab his eye. ♦

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Payless fools influencers with a fake store

By Jordan Valinsky, CNN Business

Updated 2:34 PM ET, Thu November 29, 2018


Payless dupes fashion influencers into buying $640 shoes

Lowe's is closing 47 stores


Believe it or not, Sears once revolutionized retail


Sears closed its last Chicago store

The truth about the retail apocalypse

New York (CNN Business) – Who would be willing to pay upward of $500 for Payless shoes?

Hoodwinked social media influencers, that's who.

Payless, a brand known for budget-friendly shoes, opened a fake pop-up store called "Palessi" in a Los Angeles mall and invited influencers to the grand opening. The store was stocked with Payless shoes in disguise.

"I would pay $400 or $500," a woman says in a TV ad, holding a pair of $19.99 sneakers. Another shopper calls the Payless shoes "elegant and sophisticated."

The stunt even included a sleek website and an Instagram account.