Liberty

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by David Ramsay Steele

Henry Ford: Nazi Dupe?

by Bruce Ramsey

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by Ralph Reiland

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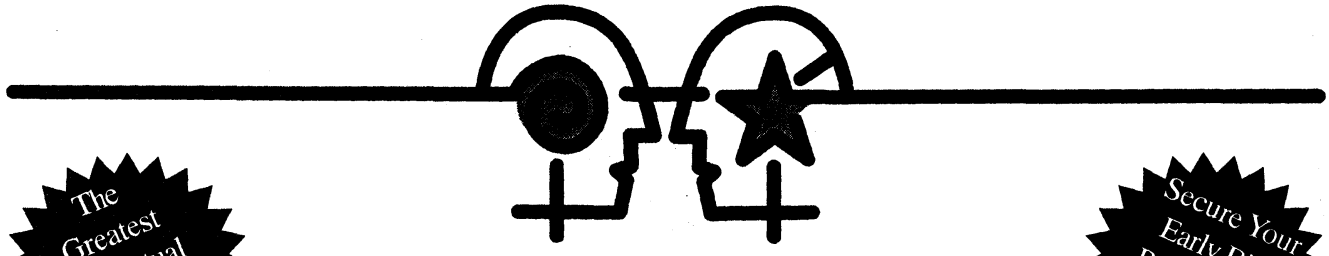

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Inside Liberty

November 2003
Volume 17, Number 11

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Letters

Nowhere Else to Go

In your Sept./Oct. issue ("Liberty and the Right"), R.W. Bradford asks why libertarians have identified themselves with the Right. What else could they identify themselves with: the Left and socialism, or the center and creeping socialism?

D. G. Lesvic
Pacoima, Calif.

Go Right, Young Man

R. W. Bradford is correct when he points out the move toward "big government" by congressional Republicans. In my opinion, they certainly don't represent the thinking of most Republicans, but politicians will be politicians. They will do and say anything they think will get them elected or re-elected!

The GOP consists of liberals, moderates, and conservatives and even some libertarians. I am a registered Republican but strongly express my libertarian views. The Democratic party has communists, collectivists, moderates, and very, very few conservatives. (And no libertarians that I know of.) *Both* parties have large numbers who support heavy taxation and spending.

It seems to me that since the GOP is slightly more freedom-oriented than the Democratic party, it is natural that libertarians would ally more often with Republicans. I think that the reason libertarians appear to ally with the Right is because the Left rarely supports private property and freedom. Except for the clothes on your back, intellectual property rights, and the freedom to "talk dirty and smoke pot," the Left only occasionally embraces the essential elements of freedom.

I think Bradford's call to "renounce" our alliance with the Right is slightly misplaced. Instead, we should make sure the public and our "allies" understand that we support *only* the libertarian, freedom-oriented portions of their platforms. We should specifically renounce and reject the collectivist portions. We should ally with either the Left or the Right whenever either supports liberty. And we should condemn the excursions into collectivism.

The Libertarian Party, in my opinion, is not worth the bother and effort. This country has fully embraced only one new party, the Republicans in the 1850s. The GOP attained majority status and drove out the existing Whigs. No other "third" parties that I know of have had any significant success.

Let's forget about the Libertarian Party. Let's concentrate our efforts and money on the Republican Party. And let's return it to strict adherence to the liberty-based, freedom-oriented Constitution. The Christian Right is trying to do this with "pro-life." Let's do it with *pro-freedom and liberty!* (And keep the extremists in line.)

David Michael Myers
Martinsburg, W. Va.

A Strategic Alliance With the Greens

R.W. Bradford in "Liberty and the Right" proposes strategic coalitions between Libertarians and the Left. Greens, defined as Leftists by some, run local governments in Arcata, Calif. and New Paltz, N.Y., and are active in 28 states. We are going through a particularly heart-rending, soul-searching period. A minority feels the revolution for environmental and social justice should come first; reform will only

Erratum

In the August *Liberty*, we incorrectly listed Alec Mouhibian's first name as "Alex." We apologize for this error.

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buttress a flawed system. Naderites, who are in the majority among Greens, feel environmental survival, corporate reform, and fighting militarism are so pressing that reform initiatives must have priority. With a coalition of leftists, libertarians, and clergy, I organized New York state against the death penalty.

Today, Libertarians and Greens share more issues. Immigrant and privacy rights, the PATRIOT Act, and freedom of speech, thought, and religion are some. Decentralization, a fundamental Green value, becomes critical in a post-power failure America. Decentralized, alternative energy is more meaningful than ever. Libertarians and Greens support candidates on shared issues. Greens would welcome Libertarians to discuss common goals and agendas. Unique identities can be preserved. Such relationships would result in an energizing shot-in-the-arm, and benefit both Libertarians and Greens.

Joe Dubovy
Putnam County, N.Y.

Bradford responds: Lesvic somehow missed the point of my article, namely that while politically active libertarians may have good reasons to form strategic alliances with Left or Right from time to time, there is no good reason why we ought to identify ourselves with either.

I agree with the thrust of both Myers' and Dubovy's letters: libertarians should form alliances with anyone with whom they think will advance liberty. It is patently obvious that neither Left nor Right are particularly committed to liberty, but that people of the Left and the Right sometimes favor liberty in the context of certain issues. So long as libertarians are a tiny minority, it makes sense to form alliances with others.

We invite readers to comment on articles that have appeared in the pages of *Liberty*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct letters are preferred. *Please include your address and phone number so that we can verify your identity.*

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Our Living-Dead Letter

Timothy Sandefur's advisory that it is not the Constitution that has reduced us to our present state, "but our own failure to keep it" ("The Virtue of Provincialism," Sept./Oct.), neglects to acknowledge that our failure was implicit in the contract. The Constitution enabled the creation of government courts, along with government judges empowered to interpret the Constitution itself — with a "supreme" court given the last word — such that peaceful appeal yields a government-controlled conclusion.

This reality, slyly dismissed nowadays as "fashionable myth," was recognized 150 years ago in "Disquisition on Government," where John C. Calhoun wrote: "The end of the contest would be the subversion of the constitution . . . the restrictions would be ultimately annulled and the government be converted into one of unlimited powers. . . . " In other words, the ink was barely dry when Calhoun recognized that the Constitution had initiated the American people into a game of "heads I win, tails you lose."

Jack Dennon
Warrenton, Ore.

Boing! Twang!

In "A License to Discriminate" (August), Robert Levy refers to the June 23 Supreme Court ruling that allows universities to extend preferential treatment to dumber non-white applicants, as long as they don't link "dumber" to non-white races.

Such "affirmative action" was originally based upon the premise that blacks, Mexicans, and Native Americans were only less intelligent because of past white abuses — the politically correct foundation belief being that all humans would demonstrate equal intelligence if exposed to the same environment.

But why must all humans be the same? If the environment and elements in Africa went *boing!* and formed a black couple with small brains, why couldn't conditions and elements in Europe go *twang!* and spew out a white couple with larger brains? Why must we believe all humans had a common, simultaneous

origin when all the evidence points to separate origins — especially in the time-span order of their appearance?

James Harrold, Sr.
Springdale, Ariz.

With Friends Like Ramsey . . .

Several readings of Bruce Ramsey's attack on libertarian absolutism ("Dialog With an Absolutist") in your July issue left this 24-year member of the Libertarian Party not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

I mean really. Here is a self-styled practicality advocate who can't seem to distinguish between peaceably individualist lib discipline and that numbers-driven brand of coercive collectivism commonly called utilitarianism.

A prime example: a little slavery early (that's Ramsey on military conscription) to prevent a lot of slavery later on? Poppycock! If nothing else, this leaves it to government to define what "national emergencies" are, and awards them the talent of reading the future.

More, it violates the number one rule for recognizing legitimate government for us libs — one that's more practical than any other in history. As the late Robert Nozick put it so well, the only acceptable government is one practicing *strict neutrality* among all those peaceable persons swearing it their allegiance. And of course there is absolutely nothing neutral about drafting young men — it has always been young men — while the rest of us stay home in relative safety and comfort.

Now having said all that I must admit there is a certain attraction, from a taxpaying point of view, to government-on-the-cheap via conscription. So my number one question to Ramsey is this: if conscription is so damn practical, why aren't you out there endorsing more of it? Cops, firemen, medical personnel, whatever (my personal favorite would be public schoolteachers), why not draft them all for, say, three-year hitches at a private's wages?

But enough. All I can add in closing is that, with "friends" such as Ramsey, genuine libertarianism never will lack for a sufficient number of enemies.

John M. Simons
Sheffield, Vt.

At the Fringe or Beyond the Pale?

I feel compelled to comment upon Bruce Ramsey's "Dialog With an Absolutist" (July). He explains that he is for two things: 1) liberty, and 2) what works. But these two concepts can be mutually exclusive. For example, Adolf Hitler dealt liberty a severe setback during his reign of terror, but what he did worked — he successfully almost wiped out European Jewry.

That having been said, I don't believe that, at least in the cases that Ramsey cites, liberty doesn't work. Ramsey says, first, that liberty, as evinced by the non-coercion principle, doesn't work and leads to anarchism. Ramsey says anarchism doesn't work, but what about Iceland, where civilization existed with no central government for generations? What about the miners' camps in California during the gold rush, which were very peaceful because the miners packed heat, which was why the six-shooter became known as "the great equalizer"?

The general principle is this: where the government doesn't interfere, we have order. Where the government interferes — education, police, environment, drugs, etc., we have disorder.

Ramsey wonders about the children and who should control them — the parents or the state. If one believes in liberty, the parents own the children; if one believes in slavery, the state owns the children. Since there shouldn't be any government rules or regulations, the parents tell the children what to do. I'm glad I've been able to help Ramsey with this problem, even though he said that "libertarianism doesn't say" who should control the children. Well, yes, it does.

Ramsey argues that government is needed in times of national defense, and that during those times, it must "suspend personal freedom" and resort to "temporary enslavement." Not true. Voluntary defense of the country would suffice to keep any armed intruder at bay. Americans are the most heavily armed people in the world, and it is literally inconceivable that any army, anywhere, could overcome a determined guerrilla resistance here. Of course, in such a society Americans wouldn't be patrolling the world and getting killed inconsequentially, but that's a different issue. Though Ramsey argues that a draft kept the Swiss free in World War II, what really kept them free was their guns — they were all armed, and the Nazis simply didn't want to take the tremendous casualties entailed in going door to door trying to enslave them all.

Ramsey questions whether a free society can "deal adequately with questions of public health." Well, yes, it can. People who engage in risky behavior and contract HIV do so voluntarily, either through drugs or sex. This is what freedom is all about: make your decisions and then take responsibility for them. Ramsey admits himself that this disease was "being spread by consenting adults," so what's the problem? With SARS, people have a right to defend themselves against physical harm, and thus against SARS. Libertarianism handles these problems quite nicely, thank you.

There is a libertarian solution to every one of the problems Ramsey mentions. True, some of the solutions haven't been tried, but that's only because people such as Ramsey are afraid to try them. But that doesn't mean that liberty is not the right way to go or that it wouldn't work. Ramsey doesn't believe in liberty enough to give it a chance under all circumstances. And that's true of most people, which is why we have never had a libertarian society and never will. Despite R.W. Bradford's endless search for libertarian failures every election year, we all know that most people can't handle much freedom at all, which is why we are about 40–50% free, at best. This is the "as much [freedom] as people can stand" that Ramsey mentioned that Mencken spoke of.

As a newspaperman, Ramsey needs to write for *Ramparts*, rather than *Liberty*. Calling himself a libertarian, when he doesn't want to apply libertarian principles and is too lazy to learn how they operate, is really beyond the pale.

David Pearse
Santa Monica, Calif.

Ramsey responds: John Simons and David Pearse are prime examples of

continued on page 18

Reflections

Lights, camera, recall — Recalling H.L. Mencken's appreciation of the comedy of American politics, the thought occurs to me: has he returned to be casting director for the California gubernatorial election?

— Richard Kostelanetz

Deficits, good and bad — I grew up during a time when Democrats ran the government and Republicans were constantly railing against the Democrats' huge budget deficits. As the deficits skyrocket under George W. Bush and the first GOP-controlled Congress in more than a half century, it is interesting to see the left-wing Democrats wailing about Bush's awful budget deficits.

There's no mystery to this: the party in power wants big deficits because increased spending gets them more votes and raising taxes gets them fewer votes. So the party in power has an agenda of more spending and lower taxes.

The only time the budget is balanced is when there is an economic boom that increases income — and therefore income taxes — so fast that the politicians can't figure out how to spend the money fast enough.

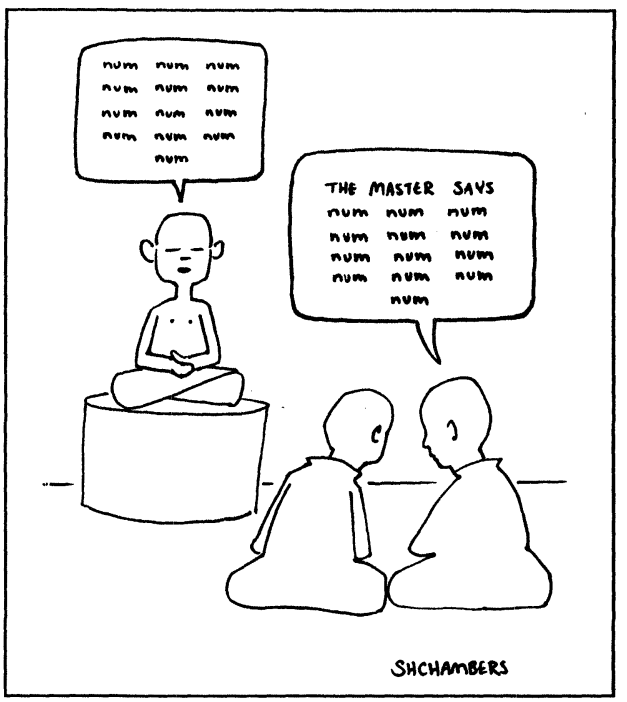
— R. W. Bradford

Sensitize this! — News reports of the recent tragedy in Mississippi where an irate white shot to death five of his coworkers consistently mentioned the shooter's alleged strong biases against blacks (four of his victims were African-Americans). Only a few reports mentioned that the individual was in the midst of company-mandated sensitivity training when he grabbed a shotgun and blasted away at his classmates. Maybe there is something wrong with the idea of coercing everyone into a PC utopia. — Fred Smith

Is that the Fourth Amendment in your pocket, or . . . ? — Down here in Bamaland we libertarians guard the ramparts of freedom with all the vigilance of an Alabama coach scouting the Auburn–Southern Cal game. Our ramparts, as we speak, are under siege by a governor — a "conservative" Republican who is proposing an amendment to the state constitution. It is all about taxes, as usual. He wants to lift a billion and a half bucks from our wallets. And he's billed as a penny-pinching Republican! Good lord, what would a Democrat do to our wallets, purses, and bank accounts? Of course, in California terms this is small potatoes, but we Alabamians hate taxes worse than sin. In fact, we say taxation *is* sin.

So we're under stress here in Bamaland. Auburn lost to Southern Cal last week and Alabama has a new coach who looks and talks like an honest man. That's bad news, gridiron-wise. How's he gonna win if he don't cheat? Maybe the guv should coach the football team and let our new coach run the state.

Like I say, we're under stress. So, one of my local libertarian friends, trying to stay afloat in this fiscal and football maelstrom, has come up with an idea worthy of imitation. He has printed the Bill of Rights on a small thin metal plate that fits in your shirt or coat pocket. (Are you getting it yet?)



You book a flight. (Has the light bulb flashed yet?)

You go to the airport with that tell-tale metallic freedom bell in your pocket. (Get it now?)

You jump in the line and, uh-oh, *the alarm goes off!*

"Oh, it must be my Bill of Rights accorded me by the U.S. Constitution," you remark with an ingratiating smile. You pull it out and hold it under the nose of your inquisitor. You point to Amendment Four, which is highlighted in red. Naturally, it decries "unreasonable searches and seizures."

The rest of the script, after your brief pedagogic lecture, is up to your passion and belligerency and your dread of small confined spaces. — Ted Roberts

The art of politics — My goofy friend Kenny, who gets his news from talk radio, is all upset about a report that Cruz Bustamante was once a member of some sort of radical Chicano outfit that favors returning California to Mexico, and that California's Lieutenant Governor (and likely successor to Gray Davis) refuses to renounce his youthful affiliation.

I'm not particularly upset. Kenny has fallen prey to the oldest fallacy in politics, one so widespread that relatively few people realize that it's a fallacy. He believes that what a politician says in some way reflects his beliefs. In fact, almost all successful politicians say what they think will enhance their power, in the form of gaining them higher office, getting them more money or influence, or perhaps only keeping

them in their awesome position.

What Bustamante is after right now is the California governorship, either on Oct. 7 if the voters of California recall his boss Gray Davis, or when Davis' term eventually expires. Among his staunchest supporters are his old radical Chicano buddies, and he is loath to diminish their support or lose it altogether by renouncing his old beliefs, at least so long as no one except a few right-wing Republicans like Kenny cares one whit about the indiscretions of his radical Chicano youth.

Americans have always harbored a host of beliefs that are absurdly false. For centuries most believed that snakes grew from horsehairs left in water, and that walking under a ladder brought bad luck. Most Americans today believe that America is somehow divinely blessed with a political system that always provides them with a Great Leader whenever a crisis occurs: how else can one explain the popular belief that Franklin Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln were great men?

Americans realize, of course, that salesmen aren't likely to be fountains of truth when they describe what they're selling, and, if pressed, they'll admit that politicians are always selling themselves. This dissonance is pervasive: it's tough, to cite a trivial example, to pick up an issue of *Consumer Reports* without noticing the dissonances between the universal doubt that the dowdy publication extends to all commercial products and its belief that almost any problem can be solved by a government managed by politicians.

But the normal American seldom makes this connection. For one thing, he gets comfort from believing that his government (i.e. the complex concatenation of con men who have control of the state) is actually a good thing. Admitting that it is a gallery of rogues is, well, very uncomfortable. For another, he is more or less continuously taught that politicians more or less tell the truth — taught by a politician-controlled educational system and politician-regulated news media — and he accepts that proposition in the same way in which his ancestors accepted the notion that labor unions bring prosperity and that World War II was a good war.

Please don't get me wrong. I am not saying that every politician lies all the time. I merely observe that politicians' behavior is obviously a product of their pursuit of their own interests more than the pursuit of any actual political agenda, and that what they say and write is very much a part of their political behavior.

"How can you tell whether a politician is lying?" the old joke asks. "See whether his lips are moving." But the old joke has it wrong, at least in the case of successful politicians. To lie is to assert the truth of something one believes to be false, and the most successful politicians are so finely tuned to chasing votes, money, and power that they reach a point where truth or falsity is simply meaningless.

It's not that successful politicians are liars. It's that only liars succeed in politics.

Anyway, I am tempted to offer

The Market for Terror

"The Pentagon's new terrorism futures market is suddenly a thing of the past," wrote the *New York Times* on July 30. "Only a day after it was disclosed, outraged senators of both parties asked today for an immediate end to the online trading bazaar that would have rewarded investors able to predict terror attacks and other global unrest." But you may have missed the follow-up story, buried deep in the business section a few days later.

— *Eric Kenning*

GU Cuts 200,000 Jobs Stock Drops 47¢

Global Unrest, the multinational mayhem giant (formerly Sporadic Looting Inc.), announced yesterday that it had dropped plans for a merger with Consolidated Apocalypse in view of the Pentagon's unexpected termination of its terrorism futures market after a federal judge ruled that it was kind of weird. GU stock immediately dropped 47 cents a share, losing 30 percent of its value by closing, which was still better than some analysts had been predicting. "It's not the end of the world," said one broker, "unfortunately for several of my clients."

GU also announced that it would cut 200,000 jobs worldwide, most of them in its troubled angry mob and rabid soccer fan divisions, but claimed that this downsizing would protect its core terrorist, protracted ethnic strife, and no-exit quagmire operations. The bad news left investors reeling even though many had never reeled before and fell down several times before getting it right. Some contemplated suicide until they realized that a state-sponsored personal-misfortune futures market did not yet exist, making it a high-risk strategy. One disconsolate investor learned that a camel had fallen through a roof in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan, setting off riots and ruining a government-run vendetta market there, just as he had guessed it would, only to find out that the roof had also fallen in on the Pentagon project before his camel-calamity order could be placed. The Bush administration is said to be considering other federally operated investment opportunities, including a Smart Pie Exchange in which financial speculation would focus on which federal officeholder, bureaucrat, or retired admiral would be hit most frequently by high-tech custard pies with electronic idiocy-sensing homing devices in regularly scheduled daily melees, and the Lead Balloon Index, in which smart money would follow provocative out-of-the-box ideas that immediately had to be put back into the box.

In a related development, the SEC said it was investigating reports that Martha Stewart had used inside information to sell her stock in Implode, a company that supplies advanced weaponry to the Pentagon that allows federal officials to shoot themselves in the foot with 99 percent accuracy, the day before the futures project debacle, which prompted congressional demands to place government foot-shooting on a more competitive footing and caused Implode stock prices to implode, injuring several bystanders and fogging windows and mussing curtains as far away as Westport, Conn. In a statement Ms. Stewart said that "insider trading would be tacky in summer, when with a little planning it could be done outdoors under canopies decorated with bright, colorful arrangements of subpoenas."

Kenny a wager that if Bustamante ascends to the throne of the Golden State he will take not the remotest action to remove his fief from the U.S.A. and return it to los Estados Unidos de México. I haven't done it because it would only cause Kenny to fume that I do not care for the fate of the Republic and reinforce his opinion that I am not a good American. Just maybe, I fear, he'll implore Attorney General Ashcroft to find a way to toss me in the hoosegow. And under the PATRIOT Act or some Bush administration edict, General Ashcroft just might be able to do it. —R. W. Bradford

Everybody wants to get into the act! — The Constitution of the United States was established to carefully separate powers so that the various branches would act as checks and balances on one another. The legislative branch was to enact laws, the executive branch was to administer those laws, and the judicial branch was to ensure the constitutional soundness of such laws.

Today, however, all three bodies wish to enact legislation to solve all the problems of mankind. The executive branch, since the Progressive Era, has been granted an amazing array of regulatory powers that allow it to pass laws with no review by Congress and little by the Supreme Court. Wayne Crews' annual publication, *Ten Thousand Commandments*, details the growth of the regulatory state, noting that its edicts now cost the citizenry (you and me) almost $900 billion per year. Executive "legislation" is a form of taxation without representation!

And now the justices of the Supreme Court have decided on a legislation-through-jurisdiction approach. They seem to have accepted the premise that if legislation can't be enacted by Congress, someone ("Why not us?") should step up and do the job. Policies seen as essential by the PC crowd (legitimizing racial quotas is the most recent example) must be legitimized by the court, and so, voilà!, become law!

But, with all three branches competing for legislative powers, what prospects exist for economic liberty? Efforts to restore the legitimacy and force of the Constitution are critical. Recall the comment by Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw: "The Constitution may not be perfect, but it is a hell of a lot better than what we have now!" We should try to get it back.
—Fred Smith

Lights out — When, on Aug. 14, the great blackout hit the Northeast and upper Midwest, I was visiting a friend who does not have cable TV. For the first time in years, I was forced to watch extended coverage from the three state-licensed networks, and it was even worse than I remembered. It would be cruel to discuss this coverage in detail. I'll just mention three salient points, three heaps of slag that towered above the ocean of goop.

The first was Dan Rather, whose idea of reporting on the problems of New York was to query a correspondent in California about whether President Bush, who, he emphasized, was visiting the Golden State to attend a fund-raising event, had any intention of breaking off his trip to deal with the crisis in the East. By the time Rather got to the end of his question, he seemed to be implying that the president was personally keeping the light switch off. The correspondent seemed confused by this line of attack, but he mumbled something that, I gathered, meant No, the president did not plan to land in Ohio and try to get the juice flowing again — for which I breathed a hearty prayer of thanks. The last thing we need is George Bush the Energy Expert.

The second protrusion of piffle was provided by yet another correspondent from California, a dopey-looking guy who reported that there were no blackouts in *those* parts, then discoursed at length, in response to nobody's question, about the supposed success of Governor Davis' energy program. He didn't mention the fact that Davis, a modern liberal Democrat, is facing a recall election prompted in large part by his ham-handed attempts to deal with the energy issue.

One more piece of slag — and this time it wasn't just a single heap; it was a mountain range. Throughout the blackout, and for days thereafter, the major theme of network TV news was how wonderful the whole thing was. Sure, there were some inconveniences, but the sight of New Yorkers pulling together, helping and loving one another, as they always do when the going gets tough and the tough get going, it was all so . . . so . . . so *New Yorkish* that everything else seemed somehow worthwhile. Listening to this crap, I felt that I had returned to the theater for another bout with *Seabiscuit*, a nice little movie that shows you how thankful you should be for the Great Depression, because without it there would have been no New Deal.

Maybe, I thought, if a mere two-day blackout makes New Yorkers such exemplary people, they'd be even more brilliantly and wonderfully themselves if America went back to the stone age. —Stephen Cox

Blackout of rationality — The power was barely back on before America's left-liberal media blamed the blackout that darkened a quarter of the country on deregulation. Typical was the article in the *Village Voice* "It's Deregulation, Stupid." Some journalists, author Cynthia Cotts writes, have already decided that deregulation is the root cause of the blackout. Counting herself among those journalists, she writes: "It's convenient for Bush to say now that the interstate power grid needs to be modernized, but

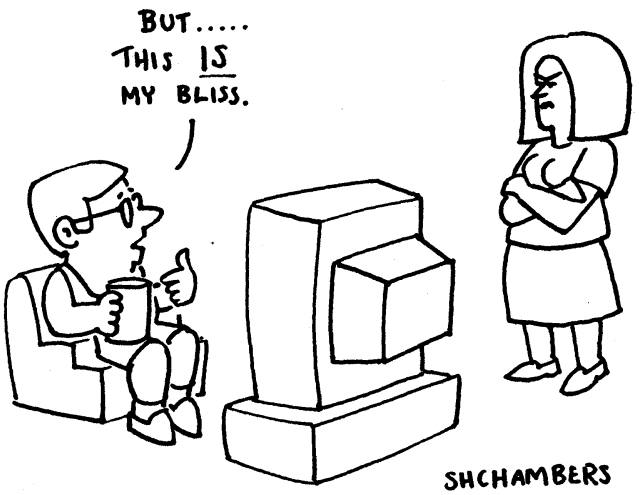
where is the evidence that that will happen in a free market dominated by private energy companies?"

What free market? The one tiny bit of information that Ms. Cotts and the journalists she mentions failed to uncover in building their incisive analysis, is that the now-controversial deregulation measures of the 1990s only affected the production and sales ends of the power industry. The transmission sector, clearly the origin of the recent catastrophe, has been regulated just as strictly if not more so over the past decade. This fact goes unacknowledged. Recognizing it would mean recognizing that capitalism never ran amok; it was hamstrung from the get-go.

Anti-market politicians quickly joined in. Sen. Maria Cantwell (Idiot-Wash.) claimed the power failure occurred because "deregulation has left us without adequate consumer protection and safeguards like reliable service and protection from market manipulation." New Mexico governor Bill Richardson fondly recalled, in a *New York Times* editorial, the time "[b]efore the 1990s when the lines of regulatory responsibility were clearly drawn." But it was Sen. Charles Schumer (Demagogue-New York) who took the charges to laughable extremes, claiming "[t]he Bush administration, with its doctrinal commitment to unfettered deregulation, has insisted that this situation can be resolved by allowing the states and utility industry to deal with it by themselves."

In a *Times* article centered on the evils of deregulation, David Firestone and Andrew C. Revkin point out that in deregulated states, plant owners tend to focus on supplying the most profitable electricity produced during periods of peak demand, while owners of distribution systems, experts say, have to pare costs and keep cables and other equipment running. It didn't occur to them that this disparity may have arisen from the fact that energy producers have been given the freedom of deregulation while the distributors are bound by government rules which give them no leeway to adjust to the market demand.

Not only is the heavily regulated transmission grid simply unable to meet public demand, it is prone to blackouts of unprecedented proportion. When it failed, the regulators demanded that they be given control over power production as well. In their fantasy, we Americans should literally hand over our *power* to them, ignoring that they themselves are the cause of the problem. — Nicholas Louras



Liars, damned liars, and Democrats — The problem with California's Democratic Party, the problem that has produced the unprecedented recall election of the Democratic governor, is that the Democratic hacks, long impregnable in this state, simply cannot resist an opportunity to lie.

Joseph "Gray" Davis, the so-called governor, has taken lying to virtually incredible extremes. Davis insists on referring to the "8 million" people who went to the polls last November and "made [him] governor." In fact, the total vote for governor was closer to 7 million, about one-third of the state's registered voters. But the cream of the jest is that only a minority of those voters, about 3.5 million, cast their votes for Davis. He ran only five points ahead of the weakest Republican candidate in ages, and the presence of other candidates denied him the majority.

Then, on Sept. 5, Arnold Schwarzenegger unleashed an ad in which he recited the accepted financial figures: "California is spending 29 million dollars a day more than it takes in." That sounds about right. After all, the state has a 38 billion dollar deficit. But here's Davis' rejoinder. Arnold's statement, he proclaimed, was "a bald-faced lie. . . . We have a balanced budget!"

Sure it's "balanced" — because the state borrows 29 million dollars a day to keep enough scratch in the credit column to fund its never-ending torrent of checks.

Actually, I must confess, Davis may have fumbled his cliche and branded Arnold a "bold-faced," not a "bald-faced," liar. Davis talks like Howdy Doody, and it's sometimes hard to tell what he's saying. But it's clear that Davis has a diseased attachment to lies and now to the word "lie."

As for the budget. . . . You can be sure that if Davis' former toady Cruz Bustamante wins in the recall election, the state will immediately have a surplus. — Stephen Cox

O-besity, for purple skies, for fat-free waves of grain — There is no greater illustration of the destructive effects of out-of-control government than the obesity epidemic in America. We are now the fattest nation on earth, and for the first time in history, even children are suffering from adult onset diabetes due to being overweight. While experts ponder the whys of this bizarre situation, there is really no great mystery.

Some 20 years ago, the health establishment in the form of government bureaucrats, mega non-profits like the American Heart Association, and various assorted sycophants concluded from a few controversial studies that fat was the nutritional equivalent of the devil. With little evidence these "experts" ringingly proclaimed the dietary hell that awaited anyone not obeying the commandment "thou shalt not eat fat."

In perfect lockstep, the media obediently began publishing stories showing how fat and its evil twin cholesterol were at the root of all of our health problems. If any in the medical field dared to question the anti-fat party line, they were immediately branded by the establishment and the media as misguided at best, and quacks at worst.

Americans heard, and quickly abandoning their own

common sense, obediently began observing the new dietary rules. So bad was fat alleged to be that anything without fat was automatically considered to be good, and accordingly people began stuffing themselves with the low-fat junk food that the food industry obligingly provided.

After a couple of decades of fat-free cookies, cakes, ice cream, and muffins, the truth is slowly seeping through the exploding American waistline. The health establishment is now scrambling to revise its edicts without, of course, admitting its guilt.

The worst part of this mess, however, is not the wrongheaded theories, but the fact that we have learned so well how not to trust ourselves, and to accept without question government intrusion into something so personal and so basic as eating. Indeed, despite the criticism and ridicule often heaped upon government, most still believe unerringly in governmental wisdom. How many continued to cling to the fat-free faith even as it became obvious that it wasn't working? Now these same folks are waiting with childlike trust for officials to tell them what next to put on their plates!

In the coming years, we will almost certainly see a huge increase in all the attendant ills of obesity, including heart disease and some forms of cancer. These will most probably inspire new proclamations from on high, along with new laws, rules, and regulations to help us cope with the health crisis that the government helped create.

Those who have chosen not to listen to the din are no doubt the healthier for it. They understand that good eating habits aren't obtained through the advice of the surgeon general or some federal commissioner. Let's hope that more folks start seeing the truth. Once upon a time, we Americans were able to eat breakfast without first consulting the government food pyramid. Surely we can learn to do so again. — Lori Miles

What you talkin' about, guv? — Grown-up child star Gary Coleman has gotten a little attention in his quest for Gray Davis' job. I note that he is pro-gun, pro-marijuana, and anti-income tax. Maybe we should start a movement to draft Gary Coleman as the Libertarian presidential candidate. I know we had all been hoping for someone like Clint Eastwood, a little more, you know, capable of getting on a roller coaster, but what the heck. — Tim Slagle

Eau de Satan — It was a large public gathering, and stationed at the gate was Billy the dog. The "head of event security" told the press why Billy was there: "He's trained to sniff out eight kinds of narcotics and gun powder. . . . There could be a terrorist threat."

Well, yes, there could be a threat — at any place and at any time. But the event thus jeopardized by America's foes was a Christian rock concert in South Bend, Ind.

According to the *South Bend Tribune* (Aug. 17, 2003), the only security problem was posed by a man who showed up with "satanic inscriptions on his hands." Apparently, Billy can sniff out gun powder, but he can't sniff out Satan: the guy with the inscriptions got through the gate and had to be tossed out later. As for the terrorists . . . maybe Billy scared them away. Or maybe my Midwestern relative was right when he said that he wasn't afraid of terrorists turning up in his hometown — "not until they get interested in corn, or soybeans, or idiots." — Stephen Cox

Left coast follies — The challenge to the legality of the California recall election is based on the theory that a handful of counties still use punchcard ballots, which is unfair to voters who happen to be senile or moronic. The challengers, supporters of incompetentísimo incumbent Gray Davis, didn't challenge the election that put California in the thrall of Davis in the first place, presumably on the theory that the polls in that election showed Davis would win even without the votes of every last moron and victim of dementia. This time it's different. Twenty-two days before the election, a federal court ruled that ascertaining the sentiments of every last moron in the state is more important than holding the election when it is specified by law, thereby giving Gray Davis a reprieve of at least five months. One wonders whether the decision would have been the same if, say, the lawsuit would have kept George W. on his throne for an extra five months. Or five years. — R. W. Bradford

9/11, goats, and atonement — It is September 11 and, predictably, all the networks are replaying the shocking events of two years ago. Somber newscasters interview family members of those who died in the attacks, asking how they have coped. More than one newscaster has intoned, "We must make certain that not one of their children lacks tuition money for college, that none of their widows has to worry about how to pay the rent." My response is an outraged "Why?" Why are the survivors of this attack entitled to millions in financial support? Is it because death has caused them financial hardship? Is it because their loved ones endured a horrific death?

A dear friend of mine just endured the death of her husband from brain cancer. She took an unpaid leave of absence to nurse him during his illness. Who is going to pay her mortgage this month? Her granddaughters are heartsick at the loss of their beloved Papa. Where is their tuition guarantee? They feel shock and inertia as life goes on around them. Where is their national outpouring of sympathy and shared

grief?

As I write this, children are somberly reading the names of all those who died on September 11, 2001. Correction: all those who died in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Many hundreds of others died of various causes that same day, unsung deaths whose losses are felt just as deeply by their survivors. Where is their tribute? It is where it should be: at home, or at gravesides, or in quiet walks — in private.

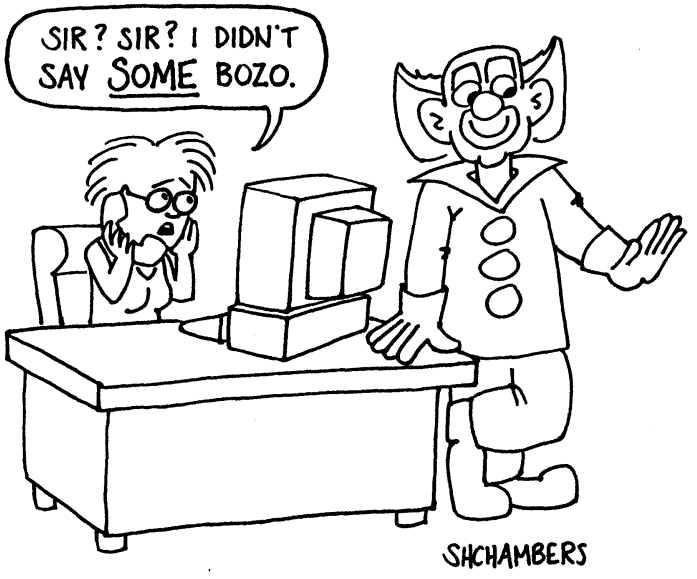
Somber-faced newscasters call those who died in the Twin Towers and at the Pentagon "heroes." They are no such thing. A hero is one who courageously chooses to risk his or her own safety to rescue or protect another. Certainly some of those who died in the attacks were true heroes. The firefighters, the police officers, and many individuals who delayed their own rush to safety in order to help another are indeed heroes. But most of those who died were victims, not heroes, people who unwittingly went to glory by being in their usual places at the wrong time.

The real reason that we as a nation are lionizing those who died in the terrorist attacks is because subconsciously we have made them our scapegoats.

Call them heroes if you must, but the real reason that we as a nation are lionizing those who died in the terrorist attacks is because subconsciously we have made them our scapegoats. In Biblical times, on the Day of Atonement the Israelites would put "all their transgressions in all their sins . . . upon the head of the goat, and send him away . . . into the wilderness." The goat was not guilty of the sins he carried, but he wasn't a hero, either. He just happened to be standing in the wrong part of the pen when the priest was choosing the scapegoat. And in that sense, I suppose, he was a hero to all the other goats, the ones who weren't "chosen."

Later, the priest would burn "the fat of the sin offering . . . upon the altar," celebrating the community's escape from the consequences of their actions during the year. Could our rush to award millions of dollars to the family members of those who died be a similar burning of "the fat of the sin offering"? Are we assuaging our guilt that it was them, and not us? In so doing, are we not mimicking the attackers themselves, who promised the suicide bombers that their families will be cared for financially for the rest of their lives?

— Jo Ann Skousen



A tale of two tombs — A colleague recently visited the graves of Adam Smith and Karl Marx. "I was amazed," he said. "Smith in death is scarcely appreciated compared to Marx." No notice directs you to Smith's grave, and the cemetery (Canongate Kirk in old Edinburgh) is sprinkled with broken beer bottles, plastic caps from syringes, and the remains of drunks and junkies. "Nobody gives a damn that Adam Smith is buried there."

Things are different at Marx's huge tomb at London's Highgate Cemetery. Finding it is easy because there are entrepreneurs inside the gate directing you to his grave and selling postcards and pamphlets. My friend added, "You don't really need to follow the instructions to the grave because you just follow the stream of people who arrive with fresh flowers, linger beyond the time for photographs, and then trudge away." He offers this paradox: Smith and capitalism have triumphed in the world of ideas, and Marxism has been declared dead following the collapse of Soviet communism. Yet Marx's grave is honored, while Smith's is neglected. Shouldn't it be the other way around?

— Mark Skousen

Closet full of contradictions — If Jesus had said it'd be easier for a gay guy to sashay through the eye of a needle than to get into heaven, we'd understand why social conservatives become unhinged at the thought of gays having constitutional rights. If he had said that, it'd be inscribed over courthouse doors and chiseled in concrete. Ann Coulter would cash in on a best-seller called *Deportation*.

When it comes to gays, conservatives offer a closet full of contradictions. What Jesus said was that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven, but as we know, conservatives have no problems with the rich lifestyle.

Jesus never mentioned gays at all, but they make Pat Buchanan crazy. It seems like only yesterday he declared a culture war on cross-dressers at the Republican National Convention. Now Buchanan is calling the Rev. Gene Robinson, the gay bishop-elect in the Episcopal Church, a "flaming fraud" who "dumped his wife" and was "faithless to every vow he ever made," and advised the bishop's "boyfriend" to "have his eminence fitted with an ankle bracelet that lets you know where the suspect is at all times."

If I didn't know better, I'd think Buchanan was a moral relativist. I don't recall him telling Mrs. Gingrich to fit Newt with an ankle bracelet — though he dumped two wives. Did he advise Nancy Reagan to fit Ronnie with an ankle bracelet since he had dumped his first wife along with a child or two? Somehow or other, Pat recognized that the shades of gray in

these men and their marriages didn't prevent them from being valuable members of society.

A few years ago, a lesbian couple, Brenda and Wanda Henson, purchased some farmland in Ovett, Miss., and named it Camp Sister Spirit. They were met with threats of violence and a mud slinging onslaught from the "Christian" Right. Pat Buchanan wrote that the women, both Mississippi natives, were "in-your-face lesbians with no claim to be treated as good neighbors." Hey boys, property rights are one thing but this is about lesbians!

Adding to the mud pile, syndicated columnist Sam Francis declared that the "real people" of Ovett have a "right to defend themselves against the lesbian invaders. Appropriately, the place used to be a pig farm," he wrote, and suggested that locals might "burn the whole weird bunch of them back to Castro Street."

For social conservatives, when it comes to gays, most other principles go out the window. Rick Santorum, as a follow-up to his Magoo-like contention that he couldn't find any right to privacy in the Constitution, recently indulged in more contortionist thinking in his effort to bring the esoterica of Catholic theology into American government, declaring that the key reason for marriage is the production of children, not the union of a loving couple. With adultery, divorce, and child abandonment the clear and obvious threats to traditional heterosexual marriage, Santorum focuses on homosexuals as "a threat to the family." In his bend-over-backwards attempt to justify his disdain for gays, the senator advocates a political philosophy that denies that a right to privacy exists, and devalues marital love.

Though all of our constitutional rights, including speech, are limited, Santorum argues that a right to privacy opens the floodgates to include rights to anything — adultery, polygamy, sex with beagles. But, just as speech rights don't include the right to stampede a crowd by yelling fire in a crowded theater, privacy rights do not imply the removal of consent laws, or of laws protecting a spouse victimized by adultery.

If social conservatives are to convince us that their disdain for gays is in some sense rational, they need to consider the contradictions in their arguments. Sinners of every stripe walk the earth — the greedy, the vain, the prideful, the selfish, the sanctimonious, the promiscuous, as well as liars, gluttons, and the uncharitable — but all have redeeming social value. Few are singled out as categorically unworthy of participation in mainstream life — banished from becoming a minister, having a sex life, or even buying a pig farm.

— Sarah J. McCarthy

Get real — When I was 16, I searched in vain for some political movement with which to identify. Joining the Democrats was out of the question; even then, it was apparent to me that an ever-growing body of laws, and the apparatus to enforce them, were not the path to a better world. The Republican Party, too, was out: too moralistic, too willing to regulate private behavior, and dreadfully dull in general, lacking vision and passion.

Then I ran across the website of the Libertarian Party, and I was home. These guys are *perfect*, I thought. So consistently in favor of liberty! They'll stay out of my bedroom, out of my wallet, out of my life!

Within a few years, my passion had faded. Staying out of my bedroom and my wallet was all well and good, but I realized Libertarians stayed out of the real world, too.

Don't get me wrong. I love the LP. It needs to exist, just on principle. There ought always to be a party that stands for what is right, not what is popular and easy. But politically, the LP is irrelevant — which is fine, as long as all of its members understand that and don't expect to change the political landscape appreciably.

After all, we can't really intend to win over Americans by proclaiming, in the first line of our statement of principles, that we "challenge the cult of the omnipotent state." We may as well say, "Screw the Man! Down with government!" for all the political points that will win us.

Sometimes, central planning and statism and force make life better for people. That doesn't mean legislation is the *best* solution to the problem, but anyone who doesn't admit that sometimes government does an okay job of running things will rightly be regarded as out of touch. It's not that much of an admission. You don't have to paint the government as a complete failure at everything in order to justifiably oppose government.

For those who joined the LP just to show their support for its principles, more power to you! But for those who joined with the intention of playing a meaningful role in the political process, here's some advice.

You are not going to get heroin and cocaine legalized anytime soon, and you're not going to win elections by telling people that's your intent. Fight the marijuana decriminal-

ization battle first. Talk about "regulating marijuana the same as cigarettes." Get pot on par with alcohol and tobacco: taxed, regulated, available for controlled consumption in select locations. Decriminalizing pot is at least better than the all-out War on Drugs, and it could even be, as some have suggested, the issue that lets the LP make a name for itself.

You're not going to cut the income tax to zero. Promising to cut it significantly, and never to increase it, is a sensible

Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

I'm sure that sometime, probably when you were about 8 years old, you had a fight with some kids at school, and when you got home you were trying not to cry, but your mother wanted to know why you looked so sad, so finally you blurted out, "They all hate me!"

Then she grabbed you by one arm and held you and demanded to know exactly whom you meant by "they." So you muttered, "I dunno."

"That's right," she said. "And neither do I. And if we don't know who 'they' are, we won't have to worry about them, will we?"

"No . . . I . . . I guess not," you sniffed.

You were still a little confused, but you could understand her reasoning. And that was the last time you mentioned "they" — at least until you tried to get your folks to buy you that expensive bike that all of "them" were riding to school. Again your parents wondered, "Who are 'they'?" Everybody? Anybody? The rich kids down the block?

By the time you reached your majority, "they" had become a very trite topic. But maybe there's still room for some brief strictures on a related issue — "we."

"We" and "they" are twins. They do a lot of the same mischief, but "they" is the one that tends to be caught and punished. "We" is the respectable one, the one that gets away with it.

"We," as you recall, was the teacher's pet. There is a certain kind of teacher who, rather than just telling the kids to stop horsing around in the hallway, or, God forbid, hauling off and swatting one of them, likes to pop the challenging ethical question: "That's not the way we behave in the corridor, is it?"

This is what one calls the insinuational use of the pronoun. A little later in life, one encounters the inspirational use — as, for example, when one finds oneself in a high school pep rally, listening to delirious airheads chanting:

Trojans, Trojans, we're the best!
Way ahead of all the rest!

Suddenly, one discovers, one is something called a "Trojan," and one is expected to live up to one's name.

Both the inspirational and the insinuational uses of "we" are essentially transformative. They transform their referents from rowdy little kids and alienated youths into Good Hallway Citizens and Members of the Winning Team. In each case, the purpose is the conversion of random individuals into rule-bound collectivists. It's a neat trick, when it works, and it often does work. The difference between "we" and "they" is that "we" generally makes its objects look better, according to some socially accepted standard, while "they" often makes them look worse: "seems like all they want to do is smoke another joint."

Unlike "they," "we" is a trick that goes over as well with adults as it does with kids — better, perhaps, because most adults actually *want* to be regarded as rule-bound communitarians. (There are people in this world who even *want* to be called "senior citizens.") The adultifying functions of "we" are virtually without limit. "We" and "our" are at home in almost every place where people hunker down and Get Serious.

We Americans have always been a caring people.
We Americans have always been a warlike people.

Clever sleight of hand, eh? You can put both those sentences in the same paragraph, and many Americans will come away from it feeling honored. They will take almost anything seriously, so long as it involves an adroitly deployed "we" or "our":

We at Acme Widgets take pride in our commitment to excellence.

Buckle Up! It's Our Law!

Some of "we's" most audacious tricks appear in political discourse, where we as Americans are constantly being described as yearning, working, struggling, and promising to fulfill "commitments" that no sane individual would ever dream of undertaking. In times of war and civil distress, "we" becomes increasingly prominent, and increasingly hard to define. When people say that "we" were attacked on 9/11, I can readily understand and (almost readily) agree. The 9/11 terrorists didn't care about the individual people who worked in the World Trade Center; they were attacking America and, by a slight extension, Americans in general. So they were attacking "us." But when someone says, as many people are saying right now, "We created Liberia, and we have a duty to take care of it," I know I have reached the far end of the meaning spectrum.

The truth is that Liberia was created, not by "us," but by Henry Clay and the other members of the American Colonization Society who, in the 1820s, targeted that God-forsaken place as a homeland for freed American slaves. You might argue, as some idle phrasemakers claim, that Liberia was "America's first colony"; but if you did so you would be wrong. The colonization of Liberia was never the nation's official purpose; in fact, it was resolutely opposed by many individuals, both black and white.

But whoever it was who came up with the idea of Liberia, I know that it wasn't Stephen Cox. That *we* somehow omitted *me*. And I know that it wasn't my 23-year-old cousin, the one who recently told me that he hates everything that "Bush" has ever done, including "sending those troops to Lithuania." My cousin is a little confused about geography. But at least he got the sender right.

thing to sell to voters. But calling for the end of income taxes, and even "the eventual repeal of all taxation"? I promise you, for every person that proposal attracts, it drives 50 others away.

Supporting strong gun rights is great, but there are better ways to reach out to the soccer moms of America than, for example, the Manhattan Libertarian Party's "Guns for Tots" campaign. We can speak out against absurd laws without seeming obtuse and mean-spirited by handing out toy guns to kids in a low-income, high-crime area.

Utilities and airlines can be entirely privately owned and operated and virtually unregulated. Environmental issues can be addressed with little regulation under a strong system of private property. Imperfect and asymmetric information in consumer and financial markets can be addressed without government intervention. The government can be entirely removed from the health-care equation. In theory, all of this is true, but it's not as simple as pulling a lot of laws off the books. There's a complex system of regulations and laws and custom that keeps these things functioning now, such as they do, and change is going to come slowly, if at all. Accept that. Compromise on some of these issues in order to make progress . . . or else remain irrelevant. I don't like having to choose between these alternatives, but they are the only realistic alternatives.

Supporting strong gun rights is great, but there are better ways to reach out to the soccer moms of America than, for example, the Libertarian Party's "Guns for Tots" campaign.

Libertarian-minded people who want to change things need something real to offer voters, something tangible — something that is exciting, but familiar enough for voters to get their heads around. Libertarianism can be exciting, and a realistic political program can come from it, but only if libertarians offer Americans a program that is not alien to their values and experience. Precisely because the LP is the party of principle, it may not be the place for people who want to get things done. — Patrick Quealy

I survived Marxism and all I got was the back of Congress' hand — The totalitarian Left celebrated the withdrawal of Miguel Estrada from consideration for the federal bench. It's easy to see why they feared him. His family fled from a region threatened by the Sandinistas, so he knows the danger of Marxist philosophy. As a naturalized citizen, he has actually studied the Constitution. And as a former resident of a Central American country, he knows what kind of chaos can be caused by ignoring a constitution. — Tim Slagle

The hermeneutics of the Hulk — As a kid in the '80s, I liked to watch professional wrestling: The Iron Sheik, Big John Studd, George "The Animal" Steele, Rowdy Roddy Piper, Andre the Giant, and, of course, Hulk Hogan. At first, I believed the action in the ring was real. Then, when that became unbelievable, I started telling myself that only the "bad guys'" matches were faked. But it was incredible to me — impossible — that Hulk Hogan would ever wrestle in a fixed bout. No way.

I was so loyal to the Hulkster because he was a hero. He didn't cheat, didn't quit, and didn't lose. You could count on him. Every Wrestlemania, no matter the odds, one way or another, he'd come out on top. And he didn't do it with drugs, or with brass knuckles hidden in his boot. No. By God, Old Glory, and Apple Pie, he did it with grit. And with his 24" pythons.

In those days, the world of pro wrestling was Manichean. Hogan was unambiguously good, strong, and brave. His enemies, though possessed of low cunning they sometimes used to don a guise of virtue, were unambiguously evil. Each week, when Hogan came from behind to beat those thugs, it was a moral victory.

I'm convinced now that '80s wrestling, like so much of '80s pop culture aimed at boys and young men, was a microcosm of the Cold War. The bad guys represented the Soviets and their satellites. The good guys were NATO. Hogan himself was emblematic of the indomitable spirit of the U.S.A. Part refashioned Vietnam vet, fighting down the ghost of that war again and again, part everyman, part prefigured phoenix, clad in yellow and red like flame, symbolizing both the fear of nuclear annihilation and the fantasy that America would rise from the ashes of any ballistic holocaust, Hulk Hogan was unstoppable by necessity.

In fact, by the end of his reign in the World Wrestling Federation, fans were beginning to turn against Hogan, largely because of his very invincibility. That he never lost (except as the prequel to some more spectacular victory) began to wear away at the illusion in the ring. No *real* warrior is that powerful, fans viscerated. Therefore Hogan cannot be a real warrior. Therefore his battles cannot be real. Therefore . . . none of it is real. Hogan had to go, and he did — to a rival wrestling company, where he became a bad guy.

Luckily for my sense of order in the universe, I stopped watching wrestling before Hogan's fall. It wasn't a conscious decision, just the natural result of waning interest and waxing incredulity.

Then, a couple of years ago, I started watching pro wrestling again. The world had changed. Only one of the wrestlers I recognized from childhood was still working, and he was a villain. Sort of. It didn't take me long watching 21st-

"Now that we've learned to talk, we'd better establish some local community standards."

century wrestling to realize that the battle lines were no longer clearly drawn. Villains were more sympathetic characters than I was used to. Heroes weren't heroes because of their character, their fighting spirit, or anything like that. They were heroes, as far as I could tell, just because they beat up on women less often, looked prettier while slamming people through tables, and had the crowd behind them. In other words, the good guys were just the wrestlers the mob cheered for that week.

As a wrestling fan returning from the golden era of the '80s, I found it hard to root for anyone, which made watching wrestling a lot less fun. But the crowds of people in the arenas didn't seem to share my ambivalence. Their unmitigated enthusiasm for the amoral avatars of postmodern wrestling at first struck me as odd, then intriguing, and now has become a little unsettling.

Why has the world of professional wrestling changed so much? I can think of two possible explanations:

1) Postmodern wrestling fans are participating in the show more actively than their '80s counterparts. They know it's all a fantasy, and they're perfectly willing for their fantasy to be morally ambiguous. They neither desire nor need virtuous heroes because, rather than suspending their disbelief, they're lucidly playing with it. If this is the case, there's no ill omen to be augured here.

2) That pro wrestling is as popular as it is, even though it now functions without reference to traditional moral categories, indicates American virtue is dead. Jefferson and Frederick Jackson Turner were right. Modern and postmodern life have taken us beyond some point of no return. Nothing that mattered to the Founders matters to these Last Men. There will be no rebuilding the institutions of liberty, because the foundation has rotted out. Orwell, socialist that he was, was far too generous when he suggested, "If there is hope . . . it lies in the proles."

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Well . . . there is a third possibility. Perhaps I'm taking World Wrestling Entertainment a bit too seriously.

— Thomas Fuller

To the sidewalk, go! — Since Mayor Mike Bloomberg's New Yorkers can no longer smoke in bars or restaurants, addicted puffers now take their cigarettes out to the street, often in groups numbering a dozen or more, especially in warm weather. Street crowding in Manhattan isn't a problem if a public premises is isolated among trees, but can be an awesome intimidation if several restaurants and/or bars are congregated together on narrow sidewalks, as in Greenwich Village near my home, where sometimes the gaggle of smokers is so thick that a walking path from one corner to another resembles an obstacle course. Though I suppose smoke outdoors is probably less dangerous to others than smoke behind closed doors, I'd rather encourage puffers to take their carcinogens back inside where they threaten only those entering the premises' doors. End the ban. The only other solution is to ban cars with their carcinogens from neighborhoods with an abundance of public places, making the streets and only the streets safe, so to speak, for nonsmokers trying to get from one corner to another.

— Richard Kostelanetz

A Lib of their own — Maybe the reason Lyndon LaRouche wasn't allowed to participate in the Democratic debates is that the Democrats still want everybody to think LaRouche is a Libertarian.

— Tim Slagle

By any other name — The Left is finally learning that the term "liberal" is not a compliment. So it has been seeking an alternative and may have settled on "progressive." I heard an NPR commentator call Howard Dean the most "progressive" of the Democratic candidates. In August, *Time* magazine, explaining Howard Dean's fiscal frugality as governor, said that he "alienated progressives" by cutting taxes. One of these days, of course, liberals may learn that the original American progressives were socialists. Whether they will like that or not, I don't know; but perhaps they can hand the venerable word liberal back to those of us who believe in liberty.

— Jane S. Shaw

The ultimate rejection — The most insulting "rejection" letter I've ever received in a lifetime of radical writing was the CIA's claim that it had no file on me. Nothing, nada, in spite of all my attempts to be provocative, as in challenging the Fulbright fakery. How could these guys have missed me, I had to ask? I lived in the East Village in the 1960s; I've written strong stuff. Don't the CIA paper-clippers read magazines? Just to recheck the integrity of their FOIA processes, I asked the CIA again several years later, only to be told that the single piece of paper by me in their files was my previous request! How deflating.

— Richard Kostelanetz

Destination: Bulgaria — When I received an invitation to an Institute for Economic Studies seminar in Bulgaria this summer, I immediately accepted it. For one, the symposium boasted a group of world-class professors of economics, law, history, and philosophy. Then there was the Bulgaria factor: going to a new place on my own, away from the oligarchy of family life — an opportunity that most teenagers can appreciate.

After a 15-minute layover in Moscow — all of which was spent dashing through an unfamiliar airport in a desperate search for my gate — and the short flight that followed, I arrived at the contemporary Sofia Airport. A small, orange-haired man approached me and, in a quiet, secretive tone, asked, "Taxi?" I consented.

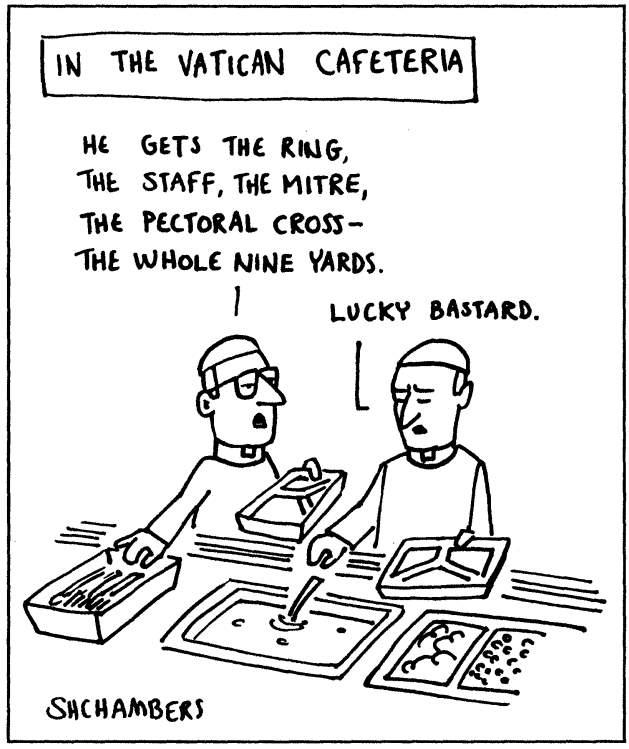
When we got into the car, he broke the ice professionally, "You come for girls, eh?" It would be a lie to claim that the thought had never crossed my mind, but surely it wasn't my main purpose. Yet I didn't feel like explaining to this taxi driver that I was in fact here to attend an interdisciplinary conference on classical liberal thought. So I chuckled,

confessing. That was my first mistake in Bulgaria. The driver shook his head and continued, "Hee hee. For $45 you get nice, nice, girl. For $35 . . . "

Good thing the hotel was only a few minutes away. I unpacked, took a shower, and started my day. The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, a gigantic Byzantine-styled church located in the center of Sofia, was my first destination. It represents the Bulgarian people's gratitude for the 200,000 Russian soldiers who, in the Russo-Turkish Liberation War of 1877, unshackled the Bulgarian people from Ottoman Turkish bondage. To the west of the cathedral, one can find a chain of shopping stands, selling everything from pocket watches to embroidery to cigarette cases with swastika etchings on them.

I continued on that street, observing the colonial-style homes to my right and the National Assembly and the series of parks to my left. At 5:00 in the afternoon, the park benches are all occupied by couples who have forgotten both the use of cars and beds in an intimate relationship . . . and along with that, the existence of the world around them.

One Pizza Hut, four McDonald's, and a few hotels later, I reached the main shopping street. At the northernmost end of the boulevard is the stunning Bulgarian Cultural Center, surrounded by thriving cafés and restaurants. At the southernmost end of it is the huge railway station with trains leaving every ten minutes. But being a person who has been warned to stay away from the fringes, I naturally found myself in the center of the strip, where a swarm of gypsy beggars jump mercilessly upon every tourist they spot.



The next morning, I woke up to loud ringing from the room phone and the irksome voice of the hotel receptionist: "The train to Plovdiv leaves in one hour, sir." I rushed to the train station where I purchased a ticket for 5 Lev ($2.50). One problem: I didn't know where to go. There are 20 platforms in the train station, so I picked one at random. At Platform 4, there stood a train. And in front of the entrance to the train, there stood a ticket-collector. So I pointed to the train and asked him, "Plovdiv?" He nodded and replied, "Ne, ne." As I started to walk through the door, the man gave a violent shove to my chest. Confused, I asked again, "Plovdiv?" Again, he nodded.

I had learned the hard way that the Bulgarians nod their heads when they mean "no" and shake their heads when they mean "yes." But this is no universal rule. If someone suspects that you are in fact a foreigner, he will switch the head movements. To put it simply, if you neither understand nor look Bulgarian, you're in for a tough ride.

Plovdiv is a beautiful city, cut in half by Independence Street — a promenade of sorts, filled with boutiques, restaurants, cafés, and Internet clubs. But tourists visit Plovdiv mainly because it is home to a 19th-century Renaissance town, dubbed "Old Plovdiv" by the locals. This area is like an expansive, outdoor, architectural museum. It embraces a Roman coliseum, Baroque-style buildings and museums, and lovely gardens — all of this with scenic cobbled streets. Bulgarians regard Old Plovdiv as a sacred testament to their culture.

Back in Sofia the next morning, I stood at the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral waiting for the IES bus that would take us students to Jundola. I soon found out that Jundola is a small, sparsely populated town, a couple of hours from Sofia. One of the seminar participants joked, "We probably doubled the population of Jundola by coming here." I don't know that he was wrong.

The one-week seminar went wonderfully — the lectures ranged from informative to inspiring, the participants were intelligent and friendly, and green, scenic Jundola provided the perfect setting for long walks and philosophical discussions. It was during this seminar — an English-speaking environment — that I found out, much to my delight, that most people here — whether Bulgarians, Moldovans, or Romanians — are fierce anti-communists.

After one short week we returned to Sofia, said our goodbyes, and went our separate ways. It was my last day in Bulgaria, so I had a close friend's relative drive me to Vidushi Hill. I enjoyed the fresh air, the vast forests, the great view of Sofia, and, most notably, the men and women 50 years my senior who walked around in Speedos and bikinis.

I could have done something better my last night in Sofia, I admit, but I hadn't seen a movie in English in months. So I went to Arena, a top-of-the line movie theater in the center of the city and watched *Terminator 3: The Rise of the Machines*.

It was a terrible movie, I thought, a stupid product of Hollywood . . . but I stopped myself. It would be rather disrespectful, if not totally bizarre, to criticize my impending governor's newest movie from a comfortable seat, conveniently far away from California.

In the airport the following day, I bumped into the taxi driver that had entertained me ten days prior. He asked, "So, how were the girls, eh?"

I chuckled. This time, I rushed away.

— Garin K. Hovannisian

Letters, from page 6

the sort of libertarian I was trying to annoy, and I guess I succeeded.

How does it work? That's what they ought to ask themselves. Pearse writes about the AIDS epidemic. All those guys infecting each other in the San Francisco bathhouses were engaging in consensual sex, so Pearse says, "What's the problem?" The problem, David, is that they were spreading a deadly disease that now infests the entire planet. That's a big problem, and *you* ignore it.

David, you say parents "own" their children. Oh?

You dispute my argument (from Angelo Codevilla) that conscription helped save Switzerland. You say that it was ownership of guns. Well, they were government guns, in the hands of conscripted and trained reserves. Secondly, the doctrine was that the army would retreat to fortified positions in the Alps and fight with tanks, artillery and aircraft. The Swiss were not hoping to hold off Panzer divisions with shotguns and deer rifles, and I wouldn't count on defending my country that way.

Simons seems to think that the biggest problem with conscription is not being able to tell a genuine life-or-death crisis from a false one. Well, people will have to figure that out. They could be wrong. That is a lesser problem than annihilation.

I am *not* arguing for conscription now or later. I have never favored it. I am against the damn war. In my list of 10 problems with libertarianism, I was mainly arguing for an understanding that there are emergency situations and hard cases, and that you can't blow past them by citing medieval Iceland.

Premises? Checked.

I enjoyed the debate between Aeon Skoble and Bruce Ramsey (Sept./Oct.) about libertarianism, but it seems clear that they were debating two different political criteria. Skoble was trying to apply a definition of "liberty" (which I think Ramsey had previously termed a theory of "non-coercion") consistently to the theory of social organization which we usually think of as politics. Skoble assumed that his idea of "liberty" was the most fundamental premise in a theory of politics. Ramsey applied a different fundamental criterion, arguing (if I understand him correctly) that non-coercion applies in most areas of politics, but that the application of such a principle breaks down in certain contexts. He says, "I want to use the principle where it works, which is most of the time."

So clearly Ramsey has an "if it works" political premise which he holds is more fundamental (in politics) than Skoble's idea of "non-coercion." His principle tells him when "non-coercion theory" applies and when it does not. This is fine, except he never explains of what his "if it works" principle consists. At the very least some definition of "what works" is needed if we are even to really understand Ramsey. Either it's a principle which can be stated in so many words and then rationally debated, or it's an esthetic — perhaps subjective — criterion. It sounds very close to pragmatism, but I would not like to tar anyone with that label without a great deal of further data (since that philosophical position is highly debatable).

Wendl Thomis
Acton, Mass.

Bricks in the Wall

It was bad enough to read Ramsey arguing that libertarianism "doesn't say" anything about children, and his truly ignorant assertion that "most" libertarians don't have children; but Skoble's (Sept./Oct.) reply utterly ignores the rich history of anarchist and libertarian schoolmen and their schools.

A purist would likely exclude Makarenko's *The Road to Life* and his schools given the Soviet adoption of him; but there is always A.S. Neill and his *Summerhill.* Simply because a schoolman was not a follower of Ayn Rand does not exclude him from anarcho-libertarianism. This is explicitly true for Paul Goodman, whose *The Community of Scholars* and *Growing Up Absurd* are explicitly libertarian, and his ideas were fleshed out in the alternate school movement of the 1960s. Hasn't Skoble read *anything* of the alternate school movement?

George von Hilsheimer
Maitland, Fla.

Admitting Obsolescence

Concerning "Admitting Stupidity," August 2003:

Colleges are becoming obsolete. Their purpose used to be to provide higher learning, the skill and information one needs to solve difficult problems. A college degree was needed if one was to become part of the management team in industry.

But colleges no longer serve that purpose. Alec Mouhibian describes the wrong roads colleges are following. To get into a college you must have survived an assortment of privations, none of which qualifies you as ready to absorb higher knowledge.

A kid in high school today who wants to get ahead has a problem. The higher learning he will need is available cheaply, and he can get it that way, or he can go to college, spend thousands, and sort out the useful from the junk.

When colleges complete the job of making themselves obsolete, people who want to become leaders in industry will find better ways of learning what they need. They will find all they need at very low prices in libraries and on the Internet.

I suggest that in about 20 years the colleges will vanish. The free market always finds the best and eliminates the rest.

Everett DeJager
Cincinnati, Ohio

Negative Interest Rates Reconsidered

I disagree with R.W. Bradford's statement, in "Praise the Lord and cut the interest rates" (Reflections, August), that "[e]ven the Fed cannot cut interest rates to less than zero." I don't see why it cannot: there is no law against it. The Japanese Central Bank has toyed with the idea and at least one semi-private transaction provided for negative interest, i.e., the lending party paid the borrower to take out the loan.

Robert J. O'Donnell
San Rafael, Calif.

Bradford responds: And I suppose if a semi-private government agency pays people to accept food, we can conclude that the price of food is negative.

Paging Dagny Taggart

Please stop trains from making so much noise!

People rules.

James Watt Heater
Dalhart, Tex.

Inquiry

Libertarian Interventionism: Will It Liberate?

by Gene Healy

Iraq is free from the dictatorship of Hussein, and Iraqis may be much better off in the long run. Does that justify U.S. intervention?

September 11th didn't "change everything," as the cliche has it. But it did change George W. Bush's approach to foreign policy.

On the campaign trail, candidate Bush disparaged nation-building and called for a foreign policy based on American national interest.s But in the aftershock of Sept. 11, the Bush administration has embraced an ambitious set of foreign policy goals that goes far beyond eradicating the al Qaeda threat. The National Security Strategy adopted by the administration last year proclaims that "the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe." The war with Iraq, as it has played out, is of a piece with that strategy. Sold to the American people as a vital matter of national security, the Iraq invasion quickly morphed into "Operation Iraqi Freedom" — a project to remake Iraq as a City on a Hill for the Middle East. And we now have Marine peacekeepers at work in Liberia, where there is nothing that even remotely resembles a national security interest for the U.S.

Advocates and opponents of the new policy are calling it "imperialism," but the irreplaceable Michael Kelly, killed in Iraq last April while working as an embedded reporter, coined a more accurate term. Kelly called the new approach "armed evangelism for the freedom of men."

President Bush isn't alone in his post-September 11th penchant for armed evangelism. Many libertarians are publicly and privately warming up to an aggressive foreign policy aimed at "building a free world sooner rather than later," as *Reason's* Ron Bailey puts it.

It's not hard to understand why armed evangelism might appeal to libertarians. If we hold it to be a self-evident truth that all men are created equal, then why should some men have their faces ground into the dirt based on accident of birth? Even if, like me, you're convinced that Saddam Hussein was never a threat to the United States, you'd have to have a cold, dead heart not to thrill when the bastard's statues came down.

But even though armed evangelism aims at the freedom of men, it's not libertarian, and libertarians should be loathe to embrace it. It departs from the libertarian tradition in many important respects. I'll trace several of those departures, any one of which should be sufficient to establish that libertarian interventionism is an oxymoron.

The Lockean Bargain

For libertarians, the first question of political philosophy is, why have a state at all? Can a territorial monopoly of force be justified, and if so, how? Non-anarchist libertarians usually follow Locke and the Declaration of Independence — answering that governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Legitimate government, the argument goes, is a protective association founded on a social contract.*

In the American context, you can identify that contract as the Constitution of 1789. Because of it, we Americans are pledged to assist each other in the defense of our liberties from enemies foreign and domestic. As Article I, Section 8 reflects, we've set up a government to provide for "the common defense" of the United States, not the defense or liberation of oppressed people throughout the world. Thus, when the North Koreans land in San Francisco, those of us on the East Coast can't say to California "tough break, but you're on your own." We're part of a mutual protection pact requiring us to be there for the Californians so they'll be there for us when legions of crack Eurotroopers descend on Washington, bent on forcing us to take a month's vacation every year and drive around in poky little fuel-efficient cars. We Americans pay into a common system for our mutual protection. We're all in it together, in that sense.

Sold to the American people as a vital matter of national security, the Iraq invasion quickly morphed into "Operation Iraqi Freedom" — a project to remake Iraq as a City on a Hill for the Middle East.

But we're in a different position with regard to oppressed citizens of other countries. We are not pledged to defend their lives, liberty, and property — they're not part of the pact. Consider Iraq: assume for the sake of argument what appears to be the case, that the Baathist regime was no threat to American national security. If so, then going to war to liberate Iraq was an act of *foreign policy altruism*, coercively funded, like all acts of state altruism. Like other forms of foreign aid, armed evangelism depends on unauthorized, involuntary transfers from those within the protective association to those outside. And, say what you will about other, more conventional kinds of foreign aid: at least they don't involve American soldiers getting killed.

We can speak out against the crimes of an oppressive regime, we can urge our fellow citizens to give to the cause of the oppressed — we can even join libertarian Lincoln Brigades and march to war (right behind Bill Kristol, Max Boot, and other neoconservative hawks, no doubt). But taxing Americans or otherwise restricting their liberty in order to protect those outside of the social contract violates our fellow citizens' rights.

*Some libertarians, of course, reject the social contract entirely, like Lysander Spooner. "What social contract? I never signed any contract." Which is fair enough. But it doesn't get you to a libertarian justification for altruistic regime change. If anything, it proves too much by implying that even taxing Americans for the defense of America is illegitimate — let alone taxing us for the liberation and transformation of the Middle East. Having debunked the moral foundation of even a limited state that wages war only for defense, the libertarian interventionist can't go from there to arguing for a more ambitious form of government bent on spreading liberty abroad. He'll need another justification for the state, and other reasons to say that non-defensive war to spread liberty is libertarian. And there are powerful reasons to think it's not.

The Non-Aggression Axiom

Bush's armed evangelism also runs afoul of the non-aggression axiom: the libertarian prescription against the non-defensive use of force. Attacking regimes that don't threaten us violates this principle. I don't mean to anthropomorphize states — to suggest that in the absence of a threat, attacking Iraq violates Iraq's "rights." "Iraq" is not a person, and neither is "the United States," so the aggression I'm concerned with isn't aggression against a country; it's aggression against individuals. When the U.S. launches an unprovoked military assault on Iraq, that action violates individual rights on a massive scale. War — even modern war with laser-guided bombs and air-dropped care packages — means rampant destruction and coercion. For that reason and others, libertarians have generally held that self-defense is the only legitimate reason for letting slip the dogs of war.

Even in a justified war of self-defense, innocents inevitably die and rights are inevitably trampled. In such a war — a necessary war — those deaths are unavoidable. If Saddam Hussein actually had the ability and the inclination to level an American city, then we'd have to regret the loss of innocent life that comes with overthrowing him, while recognizing that we had no choice but to defend ourselves. We'd be in the position of the fellow in that "lifeboat ethics" scenario getting shot at by a madman with a machine gun in a crowd. We don't want to hit the bystanders when firing back, but in such cases, the battle has been imposed on us and we're following the first law of nature, self-preservation.

In the case of non-defensive wars of liberation, however, we're making a very different moral choice. We're saying, let's kill *this* group of people, so that *this other*, larger group of people may be free. Now, if group A is made up solely of Baath party higher-ups implicated in abuses, then that sounds like a fair trade: killing the guilty to free the guiltless. But our munitions aren't nearly that accurate. The *Associated Press* reported in June that over 3,000 Iraqi civilians died in the month-long war against the Baathist regime. Civilian body counts are, of course, subject to manipulation by activists and advocacy groups. But one thing is clear — even a just war is a terrible engine of destruction and a threat to innocent life.

Even though armed evangelism aims at the freedom of men, it's not libertarian, and libertarians should be loathe to embrace it.

If individuals have rights, and if there are things no person or group may do to them without violating their rights, then how can it be legitimate for the United States government to "collaterally damage" hundreds or thousands of Iraqi civilians into oblivion because of the benefits our

action may confer on the survivors? Who anointed us the world's godlike utility-maximizer — empowered to stride across the globe extinguishing some innocent lives so that other innocents might flourish?

Skepticism About Power

Even if one believes that it's moral to spill American blood and (forcibly extracted) American treasure to destroy evil regimes that do not threaten us, killing many of their innocent subjects in the process, one cannot embrace war-for-liberation without abandoning the libertarian's skepticism about power. Libertarian interventionism — unlike libertarianism proper — requires one to place an extraordinary degree of trust in government's competence and benevolence.

In the case of Iraq, libertarian interventionists trust the government to perform social engineering alchemy — to transform a tribal despotism into a commercial republic. But how can one sneer at the U.S. government's inability to get kids to say "no" to drugs or fight a successful "war on poverty" yet expect the same institution to establish constitutional democracy and the rule of law in a society where the necessary preconditions don't exist? And where no more than a handful of the nation-builders currently on staff speak the nation's language or even know the alphabet?

Libertarian interventionists also trust the government to remain faithful to the rights-maximization project across successive presidential administrations, and not to warp the project to unlibertarian ends. But we ought to remember how quickly armed evangelism can turn into contempt when the objects of our charity resist. In 1899, President William McKinley explained his decision to annex the Philippines, saying he wanted "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died." Soon enough, the United States was embroiled in guerrilla warfare that killed some 200,000 objects-of-uplift. Mark Twain suggested that the new Filipino flag should copy the stars and stripes, but replace the white stripes with black and the stars with skulls and crossbones. Is it so far-fetched to envision a similar shift occurring in our current struggle to liberalize Islamic theology through force of arms?

Moreover, libertarian interventionists trust the government to manage successfully the rights-maximization project in the face of more uncertainty even than that which confronts a domestic central planner. But the one certain thing about any war is that the unintended consequences dwarf the intended ones. Of course, that's as true of defensive wars as non-defensive ones. But a government that fights only defensive wars will fight fewer wars, of narrower scope, than a crusading government that fights successive wars of liberation.

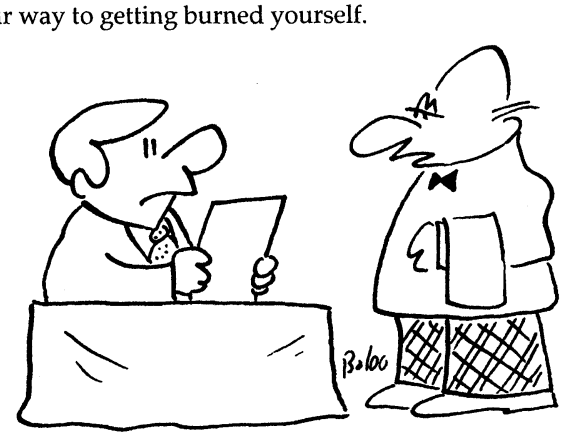
The unplanned aftereffects of past crusades have been horrific enough to counsel against fighting unnecessary wars. Woodrow Wilson took us into World War I, as he put it in his 1917 war message to Congress, "to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life." He ended up creating the conditions for a punitive peace that would help give rise to Adolf Hitler and the next "war to end all wars." What rough beast will our latter-day Wilsonians incubate? I dearly hope we don't get the chance to find out.

Finally, libertarian interventionists trust the government to restrain itself at home while it's unleashed abroad. But an outlook that says it's our mission to overthrow tyrants, regardless of whether they threaten us, is a prescription for permanent war and a recipe for state empowerment. Perhaps we can have a night-watchman state with a half-a-trillion-dollar defense budget — a government big enough to liberate the world, yet small enough to mind its business at home. But taking that bet would reflect the triumph of hope over experience.

Libertarian interventionism — unlike libertarianism proper — requires one to place an extraordinary degree of trust in government's competence and benevolence.

"Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other," wrote James Madison in 1795. Sadly, the course of American history has borne out Madison's warning. As Robert Higgs documents in *Crisis and Leviathan*, today's enormous administrative state is largely a product of power seized under claims of wartime necessity. What new powers will be seized under such claims if more terrorist blowback ensues from armed evangelism abroad?

A philosophy that places so much faith in government may aim at liberty, but it's not libertarian. Libertarianism views the state, in the phrase attributed to George Washington, as "like fire . . . a dangerous servant and a fearsome master." As David Boaz has suggested, the libertarian's rules for government echo Smokey the Bear's rules for fire safety: keep it small, keep an eye on it and keep it contained. Libertarian interventionism sets government free, hoping liberty will emerge from the blaze. But once you've stopped viewing war as — like the state — a necessary evil, and started to view it as a force for good, you're well on your way to getting burned yourself. ❑



"I don't recommend anything, M'sieur — it's *your* life."

Perversion of Justice

by Ralph R. Reiland

Too often, in America's prisons, the guards are criminals and the criminals are victims.

When it furthers the U.S. government's interest, it will "protect" its citizens aggressively, like a cloying wet nurse. But when protecting its subjects would entail restraining its own power, the state is far more lax. For example, the government has two very different policies on hostile environments and sex.

Consider the recent murder of John Geoghan, the defrocked priest who was murdered in his prison cell on August 23. Reporter Meghan Dorney of *The Pilot*, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Boston, reported that "ongoing investigation into his death revealed that his killer might have plotted his murder for over a month. According to authorities, Geoghan, 68, was attacked by John Druce, 37, a fellow inmate, in his cell at Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley, just before noontime. Druce reportedly followed Geoghan into his cell after lunch and jammed the electronic cell door to prevent guards from opening it. He then tied Geoghan's hands behind his back and gagged him before repeatedly jumping onto his body from a bed. He also beat him with his fists before strangling him with a stretched out sock."

An autopsy showed that Geoghan's ribs were broken, his lung punctured, and that he'd died of strangulation and blunt trauma.

"Geoghan's attacker, a reputed racist and member of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nation, was serving a life sentence for the 1988 murder of George Rollo, a bus driver from Gloucester," reports Dorney. "When Rollo made what Druce felt was a sexual advance, he reportedly attacked and beat Rollo, who had picked him up hitchhiking, before stuffing him in the trunk of the car. Druce then drove to a wooded area in Beverly, where he strangled Rollo."

Mr. Druce, in short, may simply have executed his passions in prison in much the same way he did on the outside, only this time around with a more well-known and tarnished target. Dorney quotes Worcester District Attorney John Conte as saying that Druce had "a long-standing phobia, it appears, towards homosexuals of any kind." In addition, Druce seemed proud of the murder, said Conte, and "looked upon Geoghan as a prize."

Dorney concludes by suggesting that mismanagement had turned Geoghan's 9- to 10-year jail term into a death sentence: "Robert Assad, an inmate who was in the same unit as Geoghan, claims that he warned prison guards twice that the former priest was in danger, but his warnings were ignored. Reports have also surfaced that another inmate may have offered to pay Druce to kill Geoghan. Geoghan had been moved from the state prison in Concord to protective custody at the Shirley facility in April because he feared for his safety. He had reportedly told prison officials that inmates had been urinating and defecating on his pillow and tampering with his food."

Double Standard

When I heard about Geoghan's murder, I was reminded of the Goya controversy at Penn State. A female professor charged that the mere presence on a classroom wall of a copy of Francisco de Goya's painting "Naked Maja" constituted a "hostile environment," i.e., an actionable level of discrimination and sexual harassment. "What I am saying," she explained, "is that it's a nude picture of a woman, which encourages males to make remarks about body parts." The school, knowing how McDonald's gets sued by fat kids who've downed too many Quarter Pounders, and knowing how easily pockets have been emptied at the courthouse for the alleged creation or toleration of a "hostile environment," took down the painting.

At night in bed, with his rapist in the bunk above, he thought, "I could cut his throat. Then it would be over. But it wouldn't have been. I'd have been in there for life, for murder."

The same government that's turning a blind eye to much of the violence and depravity that goes on in its own institutions is telling the rest of us not to tell too many jokes at the water cooler. Rodney Hulin, for instance, a 17-year-old, was incarcerated after setting a Dumpster on fire. After being raped repeatedly while housed in an adult prison, he committed suicide. At around the same time, a Minneapolis woman who took a job at a sex-toy shop filed a lawsuit. Seeking a sizable transfer from her employer's wallet, she claimed a "hostile environment" because of all the off-color talk that somehow happened to crop up during the workday.

Death Sentence

A few days after I heard that Geoghan had been killed, I spoke with Keith DeBlasio, who had served time in federal prison for a nonviolent securities offense. Part of his punishment was being raped 30 times or so over a four-month period in the Federal Correctional Institution in Milan, Mich. "I'm HIV positive," he explained. "I'm okay, so far. There are times when my hands give out and I can't hold a pen or a glass. I was helping my mother paint when I got out, and I couldn't hold the paintbrush. I just sat down and cried. At times, my legs give out, not being able to hold my weight. There are side effects from the medicine, and I worry about my immune system."

DeBlasio began his jail time at the Federal Correctional Institution in Morgantown, W.Va., a minimum security facility. He says his trouble started when he reported that corrections officials were breaking the rules of the institution. "They were in charge, and they were doing worse things, financially, than what I was in for. One guy was billing the institution for materials and having them delivered to his landscaping business on the outside. They ended up charging me with misconduct, a charge I was later cleared of, and transferring me to Michigan.

"I told the prison officials even before the rapes began that I felt threatened by this certain person, a leader in a gang called the Vice Lords, when he started to harass and threaten me. Instead of doing anything, they ignored the warning. They put him in the bunk above me! I couldn't stop the attacks. His gang members would stand watch. If I said anything, there'd be repercussions. I'd seen officers tip off my attacker about pending searches, etc. He was dealing drugs, and he had AIDS. In the end, I got sick, HIV positive. I'm left with something I can't get rid of."

DeBlasio, in short, got a life sentence. He explains that his assailant got off with a plea agreement and that nothing was done to the prison staff. "Basically, they have immunity, the whole system. They're not accountable, unless they're directly involved. I've seen officials stand by and watch the assaults. I've seen them wait and watch in their booths until it's over. Some of them think the person being attacked deserves it.

"With mandatory minimums, there are 16- and 17-year-old kids going into the prison system, a lot of them for nonviolent drug offenses. We're bringing in kids, and they're being subjected to this. You have 17- and 19-year-old kids being traded for cigarettes. It's ridiculous to say they deserve this for what they've done. In hearings I attended at the General Assembly in Virginia, it was reported that 85 percent of Virginia's prisoners are in for nonviolent offenses. The system's doing more violence than they did."

Now an advocate for prison reform, DeBlasio told me what he remembers thinking, at night in bed, with his rapist in the bunk above. "I'm thinking, I could cut his throat; then it would be over. But it wouldn't have been. I'd have been in there for life, for murder. The biggest thing for me is that this happens so often."

The numbers aren't easy to come by. Vincent Schiraldi, president of the Justice Policy Institute and past president of the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, estimates that some 175,000 inmates in the U.S. prison system are sexually assaulted each year.

Here's one example, one story, provided by the mother of an ex-prisoner after I'd written about prison rapes: "My son, in 1976, when he was 19, committed an armed robbery. I'll never understand why. I don't think he did either and he was sent to prison. He was a kid from the suburbs, and he was thrown to the wolves. The first night he was put in with

"His grandma and I actually paid a member of a gang when he was in one prison for his protection. When he was moved and threatened with pain (rape, death, who knows), he got us a name and we sent money to that prisoner's family in Indianapolis. In another prison, he was able to hook up with the white Nazi group that protected him."

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Surf, Turf, and Hard Time

by Bo Keely

The day my morning exercise went terribly wrong.

I was in Florida to teach racquetball and coordinate the paddleball division of the Legends (over 35 years old) pro tour. I'd walked from the local outdoor paddleball courts along the beach for six miles, entered a picnic area busy with weekend tourists and fishermen, and continued for another hour before turning around. A uniformed man on a quad pulled up next to me.

"Where'd you pay?" he opened gruffly.

"Pay what?" I replied bewildered.

"Smart aleck!"

I refused to produce an ID and gave him my nickname, Bo Keely, thinking to escape with a citation that wouldn't be followed up. But he called my nickname into the station, which returned unrecognized.

His rage grew and I fell silent. "I'm a schoolteacher. If a student conducted himself as you have, I'd send him to the principal. And now I'm going to conduct you directly to jail," growled the big Ft. Lauderdale cop.

He cuffed me roughly behind the back and laid me in the sand on my back under the noon summer sun for 45 minutes. A cruiser arrived, and I was shoveled into the back and driven to the Broward County jail. Two hours later the cuffs were released and, dizzy with dry heaves and shoulder cramps, I asked for medical attention. A jail nurse declared that I'd eat and drink later with everyone else in booking.

The booking area was the size of a basketball court, with a dozen deputy-manned computers surrounded by 10' x 10' ice-cold cells. The prisoners looked comical, with arms and heads ducked inside shirts for warmth and only their eyes showing above their collars. Half were black; the rest were equally divided among Caucasians, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans. They shivered and cussed for hours before being called individually to the computers for fingerprints, mug shots, and booking.

One by one, as if by ritual, the half-dozen men in our cell rose from the cold metal bench and described their arrest. "The police dog got me by the leg and I kept runnin' and he kept chewin'!" Another, "I was with my three girls when they raided the place. I was doin' my job, an' they were doin' theirs, so I got no complaint." The next, "They caught my partner and me after the heist, an' cuffed us together. I sprinted and would have gotten away if he coulda stayed on his feet!"

A graying black man about my age approached my side and raised his hand. "Pop, I ain't gonna fuck with you." He placed his hand on my head, let it remain a second, then jumped back and began punching the cell wall. A jailhouse laying-on-of-hands.

I was miserable with nausea, headache, hypothermia, and leg cramps, my feet squishing in high-top black converse tennis shoes still wet from the surf. After nine more hours in the 50-degree booking cell, a nurse pronounced me sunburned but cold, and provided a cup of warm water and a bologna sandwich. Finally, I was photographed, finger-

printed, and marched before the computer for booking.

"The charges are trespassing, obstruction of justice with disguise, and petty theft for not paying the entrance fee to a state park." I had entered a park unaware. "The bond is $100. You may use the phone now." It was after midnight,

"The charges are trespassing, obstruction of justice with disguise, and petty theft for not paying the entrance fee to a state park." I had entered a park unaware.

and it was too late to call anyone. After booking, I was searched, cuffed to another prisoner, and taken to the second floor with other similarly restrained prisoners.

There were no cells available, thanks to overcrowding, so we were bedded down on pads and given a blanket each on the concrete floor. We sprawled about the floor like farm animals, but sleep came easily. We had breakfast at 5 a.m. of hard-boiled eggs and cereal, then more sleep. At 9 a.m. the house deputy announced that we were to ready ourselves to walk to the magistrate in an annex building. One hundred prisoners filed into a large room with church-like pews.

"All rise." But I saw no judge. A screen the size of a bedsheet took his place. Shortly, a broadcast of the bearded judge began and he nodded briefly at our lot over live camera. "Good morning, gentlemen. As your name is called, approach the podium to hear the charges against you and the bond. Don't say anything; it can only hurt you." Each case lasted 30 seconds, and the judge was strict in disallowing response. Only a quick-tongued Cuban next to me, up for urinating off a dock, uttered so quickly to surprise the judge, "I took care of it [an earlier warrant] already."

"Then you'll take care of it again!" stormed the judge.

Reseated next to me, the Cuban whispered, "The other thing was pissing in the street."

The charges within the group ran from DUIs to domestic violence to robbery. A handful of females were up for solicitation, and blew kisses to the hundred men and raised their shirts on passing. We coursed out the courtroom and back to the holding cells. I felt better after the night's sleep and breakfast, and decided to bond out with half the $200 checked into personal property yesterday. They'd also taken into property my clothes (except wet tennis shoes and socks) in exchange for the beige jailhouse pants and shirt.

The day was spent listening to inmates' anecdotes, watching cartoons, and waiting in line to phone my outside contact. I never got to the phone. I requested, per procedure, that the house deputy pull bond money from my property. This exact plea was repeated three times to different deputies during the next eight hours with no visible result. I lay on a bunk gazing through a six-inch window pane at a palm tree, waiting for birds.

The first hot meal of chicken and rice came 30 hours after entering the jail, and after we paraded to a long-term cell bank on another floor. I philosophically accepted that no outsider knew of my whereabouts, and that I'd be in the clink for ten working days until arraignment. Suddenly, the last deputy I'd asked about bond said to me, "What are you still doing here? You were bonded out eight hours ago." I didn't let myself believe him until everyone else was assigned a bed in the dorm. I settled on the hard floor of the common area as the other prisoners showered, made their beds and returned to watch TV. As one black man watched *The Simpsons*, a Cuban changed the channel to the movie *Perfect Storm*. "I control the TV," yelled the black. "I been here five days, so I own the TV," retaliated the other, and they swatted each other as my heart sank in anticipation of a lockdown that would cancel my release.

Things quieted down until "Keely, grab your blanket and report to the door," boomed over the loud speaker. I'd chatted the past five minutes with a criminal attorney who told me that he was there to build a case against the city police.

"All rise." But I saw no judge. A screen the size of a bedsheet took his place, and the bearded judge nodded briefly at our lot over live camera.

He'd just won a separate $300,000 suit for mistreatment during arrest. He explained that regardless of bond posted, new arrivals are held for three meals in order for the jail to collect its $168 per head. "Good luck!" he yelled as my name was called. I waved back and replied, "It's been a fine weekend seminar for 100 bucks." I was giddy at exiting.

The Computer Ate My Shorts

Down a long hallway we snaked to the property station. "You didn't wear no pants to the jail, or it'd be in the computer." I couldn't convince the property deputy that the jail had lost my gym shorts. "We can't let you out in jail trousers, an' the computer says you didn't wear nothin' in," he repeated. I tried to buy pants from other nearby releasees to no avail. Finally, a supervisor produced a pair of children's jeans that ran to the shins. I hotfooted from that jail fast.

The next day, my racquetball host secured a top criminal defense attorney, who pronounced the case ridiculous and said that with my résumé and his contacts the charges would disappear. Racquetball champ Marty Hogan told me that he'd send me a "get out of jail free" card from his Monopoly set. I practiced paddleball for three hours in a different kind of court, and felt free. ❑

"No, make the dominant race out of placental mammals — marsupials would cause all kinds of abortion controversies."

Splish, Splash, I Was Taken to Jail

by Jo Ann Skousen

In Florida, a kid tossing a water balloon is liable to be charged with a felony, especially if the kid mentions her constitutional rights.

From the *Orlando Sentinel*, August 8, 2003 — "Attorney General John Ashcroft wants prosecutors to monitor closely which judges impose more lenient sentences than federal guidelines recommend, . . . direct[ing] U.S. Attorneys nationwide to report promptly to Justice Department headquarters when a sentence is a 'downward departure' from guidelines." I find this particularly chilling. Here's why:

I just spent a night at the county jail.

My teenage daughter and two friends wanted to do something besides sit at home watching television. They don't party, drink, or take drugs, and it was too dark for wakeboarding on our lake, so they turned to silly pranks. Lobbing water balloons at parked cars, to be precise. Unfortunately, five burly men wearing white polo shirts and bicycle helmets were standing on the corner nearby, and one of them got splashed. Not struck with the water balloon, which hit the side of a parked pickup truck, but splashed with some of the water from across the bed of the truck.

Even more unfortunately, the men turned out to be bicycle cops. Minutes later, a dozen police officers were swarming the car. They dragged the kids from their car, pointed guns directly in their faces, handcuffed them, cursed at them continuously, held them overnight without letting them speak to a parent or an attorney, and charged them with *felony battery* on a police officer. With a water balloon.

I realize that the men might have initially worried that the liquid was something besides water, but they knew within moments that this was a teenage prank. They didn't even bother to test the substance inside the balloons. Moreover, after tearing our car apart, they found no drugs, alcohol, or any other contraband, and they knew from the registration that the car was not stolen. The kids didn't even speed away. This may have made the cops madder.

This all occurred before midnight. Eight hours later, I still had not been allowed to speak with my daughter, even though her two friends had already been processed and released. When I read the police report of one of the other teens, I understood why my daughter was still being detained and harassed: unlike the other two, she had exercised her Miranda rights and refused to answer questions until she talked with her parents or an attorney. They were "teaching her a lesson." As upset as I was, I had to admire her gutsiness in standing up (or sitting down) for her rights.

Evidently, police don't like it when you exercise your rights. They don't like "perps" to establish any control over their situation. So they put her last on the list to be processed. They continued to question her, harass her, lie to her, and threaten her. She was the only one who had to take a drug test. They made her talk to a suicide prevention counselor, promising her (falsely) that she would be allowed to see her mother afterward. (She has now been recom-

mended to seek counseling for "unmet emotional needs" and "anger management," despite circling "no" to every question.) They even made her cross out part of her statement (the part that described how the cops treated her). When she asked, "Is this [making me give you a statement] legal?" The haranguing officer sneered, "All of what we do is legal." So much for her "right to speak to an attorney."

Of course, I know this is all part of the game they play. They think it is the way to scare us into never breaking the law or doing anything wrong again. In reality, at midnight I was ready to ground the girls for at least a month. By the time they were finished with this ordeal, I wanted to hug them close and take them out for ice cream.

The police dragged the kids from their car, pointed guns directly in their faces, handcuffed them, cursed at them continuously, and charged them with felony battery on a police officer. With a water balloon.

All three teens have been fingerprinted and charged with felony battery of a police officer, even the one who was simply a passenger in the car. We were offered a diversionary program that would have the charges "dismissed," and their records "expunged and sealed." But I was wary, and rightly so. They would first have to plead guilty to the felony! Evidently, there's a difference between "dismissed" and "dropped." And in this environment of Homeland Security, "sealed" records are about as difficult to open as a licked envelope, especially when they proclaim felony battery of a police officer. This man was offering a life sentence for a thrown water balloon that damaged nothing. Try getting a job as a teacher or a skating coach, as my daughter wants to do, with a felony battery on your record. We opted to face the judge in the courtroom.

The judge was a reasonable man, who read the report and exercised his right to override the detainment guidelines recommended for a "9-point" felony charge. He seems to know the difference between a water balloon and a battery. The girls were given a straight release and have no restrictions beyond those placed on them by their own parents, which is as it should be. They have another court date in 30 days, and our attorney is working with the state's attorney to have the charge dropped or reduced to a misdemeanor.

But if John Ashcroft has his way, judges will be afraid to exercise this right. Rather than risk his own career, this judge might have sent our girls in shackles to a detention center for the next 30 days. We cannot let Homeland Security take control of our judicial system, with judges who are afraid of being put on lists and watched. What we need is fair, competent, wise, intelligent judges who are allowed to do just that: judge. ❑

The Perversion of Justice, *from page 24*

a man who was serving a prison term for murder. He was raped at Joliet prison in Illinois. I had always hoped he had been lucky and escaped this kind of torture, but I found out just a few months before his death that he had not escaped this horror. He told me how when we would deposit money for him to buy cigarettes and junk food, the gangs would come around to his cell for whatever he had bought. The prisons are controlled by the inmates.

"He was released after two and a half years and struggled for a few more years with alcoholism, and finally turned it around and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, and went on to receive a master's. He was an artist and taught part time at the Milwaukee School of Art and Design.

"It took my son 20 years to die from his experiences in our prisons. He killed himself at the age of 40. He was accountable for his crime, but no one is accountable for the heinous crime against him and so many others."

Some people feel that prisoners are getting what they deserve. Here, for example, is an email I received, a classic blame-the-victim take on things: "I was incarcerated for eleven years, began my sentence as a juvenile offender certified as an adult, and placed in a brand-new super-max with some of the most violent offenders in the world. I was never raped. These men who are raped, and I've seen it firsthand, are raped because they're cowards. That may sound mean, but it is true. I have limited compassion for these men. They could've stopped what happened."

Another reader, describing her ex-prisoner son as "a Grateful Dead-type who thought everyone was wonderful and we should all just get high together," took a more libertarian approach: "Good Americans who want to use drugs that are not 'government-sanctioned' are spending precious years of their lives in prison for no reason other than using their supposed freedom to control their own state of mind. My son spent five of his 27 God-given years in prison. He went to prison for only consensual drug use (never committed a 'crime') and did not come out a nicer guy.

"His grandma and I actually paid a member of a gang when he was in one prison for his protection. When he was moved and threatened with pain (rape, death, who knows), he got us a name and we sent money to that prisoner's family in Indianapolis. In another prison, he was able to hook up with the white Nazi group that protected him

"How can they ever think they can stop personal drug use in a free society? Even if they manage to turn our wonderful country into a police state in the misguided attempt to make us a 'drug-free America' (and further their own careers), drug use will continue just as today. But America won't."

Meanwhile, back at a place a bit safer, the University of Nebraska, seeking to steer clear of the justice system, ordered a graduate student to remove a photo of his bikini-clad wife from his desk because several of his more easily offended co-workers said they felt the picture was creating a "hostile environment." ❑

The Mob, the CIA, LBJ, and Castro: Wasn't It a Little Crowded on that Grassy Knoll?

by David Ramsay Steele

The Lone Nut theory is unpopular, but it has the advantage of being right.

Thousands of books have been published on the Kennedy assassination, and about 99% of them argue for a Conspiracy. The House Select Committee on Assassinations (1978) concluded there had been a Conspiracy. The successful movie *JFK* (1991) laid out an imaginative Conspiracy scenario as history. Not surprisingly, most people now believe there was a Conspiracy.

A vast amount of evidence has been marshalled in support of the Conspiracy theory, and I admit I cannot refute it. Yet I maintain that Kennedy was killed by the Lone Nut Lee Oswald,* roughly as determined by the Warren Commission report in 1964, by Jim Moore in his book *Conspiracy of One* (1990), and by Gerald Posner in *Case Closed* (1993).[1] I have become steadily more convinced of this over recent years, and here I want to explain why, despite all the arguments of the Conspiracy theorists, many of them unanswerable, the Lone Nut theory is the better theory.†

John Kennedy was fatally shot in Dallas at 12:30 p.m. on November 22, 1963. Many concluded, especially following the shooting of Oswald by Ruby two days later, that there had been a Conspiracy, but after publication of *The Warren Commission Report* (1964) the Lone Nut theory became widely accepted. This acceptance began to be seriously eroded by 1966, which saw the publication of the best-selling *Rush to Judgment*.[2] As the Vietnam war got worse and the Watergate scandal came to the boil, majority opinion swung heavily back to the Conspiracy theory.

The Conspiracy Theory Transformed

At times popular support for the Conspiracy theory has exceeded 85%. Today the Conspiracy theory is not as popular as it was 20 years ago, but still far more popular than it was 39 years ago, immediately following publication of *The Warren Commission Report*. Meanwhile the factual arguments for a Conspiracy have been utterly transformed.

In the early years, Conspiracy theorists appealed to the publicly recognized evidence. They contended that if all this evidence were made available and properly interpreted, it would prove a Conspiracy. Some details of this evidence may have been tampered with, but most of it was assumed to be rock solid. Now, Conspiracy theorists generally maintain that the evidence itself was almost entirely fabricated by the Conspirators.

*The Mel Gibson character in *Conspiracy Theory* wonders why assassins always have three names. The answer seems to be that police and other bureaucratic reports tend to rehabilitate disused middle names. Lee Harvey Oswald was commonly known as Lee Oswald.

†Predisposed to distrust the government, I tended to assume until 1992 that there had been a Conspiracy. I was wakened from my dogmatic slumber by Sheldon Richman's review of *JFK* (*Liberty*, March 1992) and then started to look into the subject.

The two biggest examples of this radical change of approach are the autopsy pictures and the Zapruder film. Early Conspiracy theorists demanded the release of the autopsy photographs and x-rays, withheld from the public by request of the Kennedy family, but when these pictures were released in the 1970s they corroborated the Lone Nut theory. Conspiracy theorists then concluded that either the pictures or the wounds themselves, or both, must have been falsified.

The Zapruder film, a 26-second movie of the assassination made by a spectator, Abraham Zapruder, used to be regarded on all sides as a record of fact. Aspects of this film were frequently employed to advance a Conspiracy theory. Now it is accepted by almost everyone that the Zapruder film, taken at face value, corroborates the Lone Nut theory. Most Conspiracy theorists therefore claim the film to be either altered in detail or a complete fabrication.

Most Conspiracy theory books since the 1970s have simultaneously relied upon the Zapruder film and alleged it has been tampered with.[3] In successive books, the trend has been to gradually rely less on the film as evidence and give more weight to tampering, culminating in recent allegations that Zapruder never made the Zapruder film but was paid by the Conspiracy to pretend that he had made it.[4]

The Body Snatchers

David Lifton's enormously successful 1988 book, *Best Evidence*, showed the way to rescue the Conspiracy theory from the evidence. Lifton maintains that Kennedy's body was stolen on the plane between Parkland Hospital, Dallas, and Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, and elaborate alterations made in the corpse's wounds (in less than a couple of hours) so that the autopsy would be looking at reconstructed and therefore faked wounds.[5] Since the official coffin was now empty, there had to be a further elaborately-planned conjuring trick, to get the body into Bethesda Naval Hospital for the autopsy. The body was then altered again for the autopsy photographs. This second alteration involved, not additional cutting or tissue damage, but extensive rebuilding and remodelling, to replace large areas of skull which had been missing before.[6]

Lifton realized that if this were true, the Zapruder film must have been seriously falsified.[7] The Conspirators must have doctored the film to repair and conceal the enormous damage to the back of the head and add the eruption at the top right side of the head. Since the ballistics evidence is compatible only with a scenario of two hits from behind and none from anywhere else, the Conspirators must also have replaced the actual bullet fragments with planted fragments prior to analysis.[8] This might be a more challenging task than Lifton appears to recognize: the bullet which was designated by the Conspirators as the one which would appear to have hit both Kennedy and Connally would have to have been fired, and minuscule flakes extruded from it on impact would have had to be recovered and each separately planted somehow in Kennedy's body. Lifton's theory also requires that Kennedy's jacket, shirt, and necktie be faked to produce a false entry wound at the back and exit wound at the front.

High Treason by Groden and Livingstone appeared the following year and also became a best-seller. The authors scornfully dismiss Lifton's account for various reasons, including the impossibility of performing the surgery in the limited time and testimony that Kennedy's casket was always under observation.[9] Instead they propose that the body of someone else was substituted for Kennedy's just before the autopsy. The Conspirators faked the head and neck x-rays "by shooting a body in the manner in which they wished to have it appear that the President was killed." The Conspirators faked the autopsy photographs at a different time, and "No one among the conspirators realized the photographs were incompatible with the forged x-rays."[10]

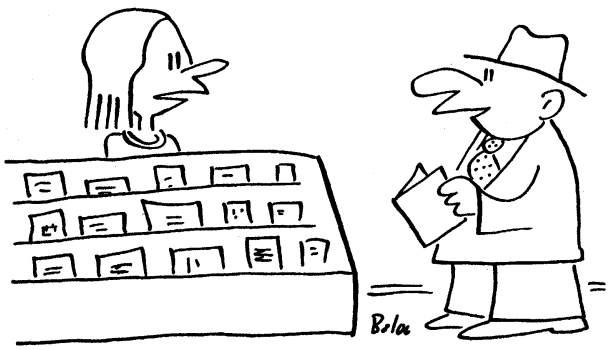
Witnesses Against Oswald

I have said that I cannot answer many of the arguments for a Conspiracy. I am referring here to highly technical arguments involving medicine, ballistics, and photography.[11] Of course these physical arguments deserve to be addressed and answered by technical experts, and I am confident that in due course they will be.

Why am I so confident? Because of other arguments which trump the anomalies in the physical evidence. But before I get to those, it's worth pointing out that not all of the publicly recognized evidence can easily be dismissed as fraudulent, and much of this evidence favors the Lone Nut theory.

The Lone Nut theory requires that three and only three shots were fired from the sixth floor window of the Book Depository. If there were more than three shots, or if any shots came from some other location, then the Lone Nut theory is refuted: there must have been a multi-shooter Conspiracy or at least a coincidence of two separate assassination attempts, with a Conspiracy to cover up one of these.[12]

The evidence for precisely three shots from that location, and the evidence for Oswald's involvement, is quite powerful.* Though the many witnesses differed in the number of shots they thought they had heard and where they thought these shots had come from, the biggest number of witnesses who had decided views on the matter favored three shots,



"You've bought your wife a get-well card every day this month — isn't that awfully *expensive?*"

"Yeah, but it's still cheaper than sending her to a doctor."

*There is a difference between the views of most of the public and those of the active Conspiracy theorists. The former believe Oswald was part of the Conspiracy, that he "must've had help," while the latter maintain that Oswald was innocent.

and a plurality also favored the direction of the Depository.*

The ceiling of the fifth story and floorboards on the sixth story were in disrepair, with actual gaps between the two floors. Three men working on the fifth floor, immediately underneath the sniper's nest, heard three very loud explosions directly above them, followed by the sound of the bolt action, and one of the three heard the cartridge cases landing on the floor. Several witnesses in the street saw the rifle sticking out of the sixth floor window, one actually saw it

I want to explain why, despite all the arguments of the Conspiracy theorists, many of them unanswerable, the Lone Nut theory is the better theory.

fire, and another saw the shooter's face and gave a description to the police, which may have led to the police picking Oswald up. Others saw a face like Oswald's in the window before the shooting, without seeing anything at the time of the shooting. Testimony as to shots from other locations tends to be a lot less definite, or to have become more sharply defined only years after the event.†

Conspiracy theorists have a difficult time with the eyewitnesses, notably Howard Brennan, who immediately following the shooting gave the shooter's description to the police. A few hours later Brennan failed to positively identify Oswald in a line-up, though he did say that Oswald most closely resembled the shooter. Brennan subsequently stated that he had really been in no doubt that the Oswald he saw in the line-up was the shooter but that he had been in fear for his life and the lives of his family from the presumed organized assassins, and annoyed with the authorities for allowing his own identity, as apparently the only witness to have seen the assassin, to become public knowledge. Therefore he had pretended to be unable to make a definite identification.

Stewart Galanor, in his beautifully succinct and predominantly fair statement of the case for Conspiracy, implies that the notion Brennan had refrained from making a positive identification when he could have done so originated from a Secret Service agent, who fed this suggestion to Brennan.[13] But let's get this in perspective. By Brennan's own account, a police officer suggested to Brennan at the line-up who the suspect was. In any case, Brennan had just seen the arrested Oswald on TV.[14] For both these reasons, any identification at the line-up would have been of small value. We do have Brennan's recollection that when he saw Oswald on TV he knew they had the right man. All this is precisely the kind of messy, unsatisfactory outcome you don't expect from a superbly orchestrated Conspiracy.

The fact remains that Brennan did report what he claimed to have seen to the police immediately after the shooting, giving a description of the sixth-floor shooter that led directly to a police radio bulletin incorporating that description, and thus perhaps to Oswald's apprehension.[15] If Brennan had just been making it up, what are the odds that someone conforming to the description, and arrested in Oak Cliff, over two miles from Dealey Plaza, would turn out to have been a Depository employee who frequently worked alone on the sixth floor? Alternatively, if Brennan were in the pay of the Conspiracy, then surely his eyewitness evidence could have been made airtight.

There is considerable additional evidence implicating Oswald, beginning with the simple fact that he, alone of all Depository employees, left the building within a few minutes of the assassination. He took a taxi to his rented room in Oak Cliff, changed his clothes, and picked up his revolver. Conspiracy theorists usually feel compelled to deny that Oswald then shot a police officer who approached him on the street, though a dozen eyewitnesses positively identified Oswald for this shooting.[16] And, to mention a circumstance no one disputes, what was Oswald doing, with a recently-fired revolver, sitting in a movie theater he had just run into without buying a ticket?

What we have learned of Oswald's life, outlook, and behavior fits the Lone Nut theory. Norman Mailer, an early proponent of the Conspiracy theory, more recently wrote a "novelized" life of Oswald which purports to avoid taking any position on whether he was the assassin, sticking to those facts about Oswald which can be verified by biographical research. Whether intentionally or inadvertently, Mailer's account leaves an overwhelming impression of Oswald's guilt.[17]

Most Conspiracy theory books since the 1970s have simultaneously relied upon the Zapruder film and alleged it has been tampered with.

Oswald's failed assassination attempt on General Edwin Walker, the photographs of him with a rifle, a pistol, and a leftist paper taken by his wife Marina, and his unprecedented behavior the morning of the assassination, leaving his savings and wedding ring behind, were all corroborated by Marina. As soon as she heard that the assassination shots had come from the Depository where Oswald worked, she thought her husband had probably done it, and she accepted this for years, later becoming an adherent of David Lifton's conspiracy theory. After her conversion to the Conspiracy theory, Marina stated she had been afraid of deportation to Russia, and eager to tell her interrogators what she thought they wanted to hear. She did not however claim that they had given her an elaborate structure of lies

*Ninety-eight percent of the hundreds of ear-witnesses thought that the shots they had heard had come from just one location. While witnesses unused to gunfire might easily get the direction of shots wrong, it seems unlikely that they would think that shots from different directions all came from the same place.

†After the shots rang out, some people started running. To a hardened cynic like me, one of the amusing aspects of Conspiracy speculations is the notion that these people would be running *toward* the sniper's perceived location, with the intention of "catching" him.

to memorize and repeat back to them.* Marina's story fluctuated in details; she was a quirky and unpredictable witness. But there is all the difference in the world, for instance, between telling varying stories about Oswald's rifle and making up the very existence of a rifle if she had not known he possessed one.[18]

A Colossal Conspiracy

In the early years, Conspiracy theorists used to argue that the Conspiracy need not have been on a vast scale. They maintained that it could possibly have involved as few as a dozen people. This claim has gradually been abandoned. Years of close attention to all the details of the assassination have made it clear that if Oswald alone did not kill Kennedy then the majority of the physical and other evidence must have been systematically doctored or replaced, by advanced techniques not available to ordinary people, over a period of decades. This requires an immense and permanent Conspiracy.

Lifton maintains that Kennedy's body was stolen on the plane, and elaborate alterations were made in the corpse's wounds (in less than a couple of hours), so that the autopsy would be looking at reconstructed and therefore faked wounds.

Some Conspiracy theorists now hold that ever since the assassination there has been continual surveillance of conversations in Dealey Plaza, and continuous movement of such objects as lampposts in order to confuse researchers.[19] Conspiracy theorists usually assume that the Conspiracy is still at work, and many believe that November 22, 1963 was a *coup d'état* which installed what is now the real government of the United States, though why this inscrutable despotism should don the masks of Nixon, Carter, Reagan, and Clinton is one of its many unfathomable secrets.

Conspiracy theorists reasonably point out that not all participants in the Conspiracy would have to be aware of its real purpose. For example, some lower-level people working for the Conspiracy might have been told that Kennedy had been killed by a Communist plot, and that this had to be covered up to avoid a thermonuclear war. But then you would expect that as inquiries into the assassination progressed and became public, and as the Soviet Union staggered to its ignominious collapse, some individuals would realize they had been deceived, and would go public with any relevant information they might possess.† The rewards available for Conspiracy advocates greatly dwarf those of Lone Nut theorists. Fame and riches would accrue to anyone who produced a halfway plausible story about his personal involvement in the Conspiracy.

Because of the transformation of the Conspiracy theory, the idea that the Mafia was a leading player in the Conspiracy has now gone out of fashion.[20] If almost all the physical and photographic evidence is a fabrication, this is obviously something way beyond the Mafia's capacities, though Conspiracy theorists usually still accord the Mafia a subordinate role.

My reproach to the Conspiracy theorists is that they don't take the Conspiracy seriously. They rarely make any sustained attempt to look at things from the Conspirators' point of view, and imagine how the Conspirators would rationally have executed their plan. Once we do this, we find that the hypothetical Conspiracy makes little sense.[21]

Typically, Conspiracy theorists chalk up any anomalies in the Lone Nut theory as plusses for the Conspiracy theory, but they are not interested in anomalies in the Conspiracy theory. The strategy of Conspiracy theorists is similar to that of defense attorneys in high-profile murder trials. Any discrepancies in the prosecution's case are given maximum emphasis, while the defense theory of what happened is not subject to the same scrutiny. The defense theory flows like wax into the cracks in the prosecution theory, and no one demands that it possess any inherent coherence comparable to that expected of a prosecution theory. In the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition, such a bias is to some extent justified, to protect the rights of the accused by the doctrine of "beyond reasonable doubt." But in historical enquiry, any such bias has no place. The only issue is which theory is best, and any theory can be evaluated only by comparing it with its strongest competitor. Both theories ought then to be given the same critical scrutiny.

Two related arguments convince me of the truth of the Lone Nut theory: (1) There was no sufficient motive for a Conspiracy to kill Kennedy, and (2) Assuming that there were such a Conspiracy, it makes no sense to conduct the assassination in the way that the Conspirators must have done. Why kill Kennedy at all, and why do it by such a risky and gratuitously complicated method?

Where's the Motive?

Kennedy was not a wild radical and was not a serious threat to any major interest. His policies did not mark a sharp break from those of Eisenhower. He tried to invade Cuba, bungled it, and then denied it. He went to Berlin and proclaimed: "I'm a jam donut," an eccentric remark, but not dangerous.* In the Cuban Missile Crisis he took the middle course favored by the majority of his cabinet, which paid off

*Over the years Marina — remarried, older, wiser, in no fear of deportation, and aware that our culture favors the Conspiracy theorists — has many times been questioned about whether she was pressured into saying anything that wasn't true to the Warren Commission. She has always firmly denied this, despite her latterly acquired belief that Oswald was innocent of the killings.

†Many have confessed to being part of the Conspiracy, of course, just as many have confessed to being abducted by aliens, but none has produced names, dates, places, and other plausible touches.

*In German, if you want to describe your profession or your citizenship, you do not use the article. "I am a Berliner" would be "Ich bin Berliner." Upon hearing someone assert "Ich bin ein Berliner," the assumption would be that the speaker was claiming to be an object called a "Berliner," which happens to be a jam donut. Kennedy's posthumous admirers frequently dispute this serious charge of Quaylism, but they are wrong. It's clear from the context that Kennedy's speechwriter meant the sentence to be taken as "I am a citizen of Berlin," and to render this as "Ich bin ein Berliner" is most assuredly a comical error.

in a kind of public victory. He talked of desegregation but shrank from doing much about it.

The usual claim is that Kennedy wanted to stop the U.S. intervention in Vietnam but the evidence points the other way.* Aside from that factual question, people who make such a claim look at history as though the historical actors had the benefit of later hindsight. Proponents of the Vietnam war did not aim for long-drawn-out slaughter, with eventual humiliating withdrawal. If what ultimately happened in Vietnam could have been foreseen, some proponents of the war would have opposed it, while others would have argued for a radically different manner of waging it. Vietnam became highly divisive in American politics later; it was not highly divisive in 1963, and nobody knew that it would become so, any more than people today suppose that Liberia will be the dominant American political issue in 2008.

Though the many witnesses differed in where they thought the shots had come from, a plurality favored the direction of the Depository.

When Kennedy was killed, the presidential election was less than a year away, and it was entirely possible he would not be re-elected. What was so urgent about immediately getting rid of Kennedy, who might lose the election in 1964? Why not wait and see? And if some policy of Kennedy's really were felt to be so appalling, why wouldn't an immensely powerful Conspiracy instead blackmail this eminently blackmailable politician — or, rather than blackmail him, simply terminate his political career by making some of his private life public? Twyman argues (*Bloody Treason*, p. 34) that exposure could not be used because this "would have brought down both Lyndon Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover along with the Kennedys." So, if the public had been made aware of Kennedy's sexual activities in the White House, the Kennedys would have retaliated by publicizing, for example, Hoover's homosexuality and ties to organized crime, but the Kennedys would *not* retaliate in this way if Jack were murdered? And Hoover's control of files and agents sufficient to falsify almost all the evidence in the assassination case would not have enabled him to eliminate evidence of his active homosexuality (evidence which has still not turned up, this being a matter of surmise) and suitably doctor the records of his contacts with organized crime?

Twyman's implicit counter to this line of reasoning is to lay all the emphasis on the supposition that with Kennedy's re-election, Hoover and Johnson would be out of office and therefore impotent. But does this really work? A re-elected Kennedy asks for Hoover's resignation and Hoover (with all his loyal people in the upper echelons of the FBI, beginning with his presumed lover Assistant Director Clyde Tolson) responds that if he does not keep his job, items x, y, and z will be fed to the press. At that point Kennedy holds no cards, and withdraws the request for resignation. The Kennedy White House could never take on the FBI in a blackmailing contest. Furthermore, as Twyman fully acknowledges, Hoover and Johnson are not enough: other powerful interests have to be in the Conspiracy.

Judging by what actually occurred following the assassination, the likely political motive for a Conspiracy would have been to ensure that civil rights and racial integration were rammed through by the more resolute Johnson. But this motive is not popular with Conspiracy theorists, and it is, of course, preposterous. Why would high-level intelligence operatives favor acceleration of these policies so strongly that they would be willing to kill the president?

There did not exist a sufficiently powerful motive for the killing of Kennedy. There are always people who want the president out of the way, and Lyndon Johnson is the natural suspect, especially as the Kennedys might have succeeded in replacing him as vice president. But mere personal ambition or animus cannot account for a Conspiracy on so huge a scale. If Johnson were behind the hypothetical Conspiracy, he would need the collaboration of highly-placed intelligence chiefs, and no one has suggested a credible motive for such people to want Kennedy replaced with Johnson, and to want this so desperately they would kill the president.

The Conspiracy theorists don't take the Conspiracy seriously. They rarely make any sustained attempt to look at things from the Conspirators' point of view, and imagine how the Conspirators would rationally have executed their plan.

Mark Lane has proposed that Kennedy planned to dismantle the Central Intelligence Agency, and that therefore the CIA had him killed.[22] The direct evidence that this was Kennedy's intention is flimsy,* and Kennedy took no steps

*There are still a few historians who oppose this conclusion, and the issue has some nuances we cannot explore here. Kennedy rapidly built up the number of "military advisers" in Vietnam from a few hundred to 16,000, then shortly before his assassination, he hesitantly agreed to the withdrawal of 1,000 of these, based on the mistaken premise that the South Vietnamese government (which had of course just been replaced in a Kennedy-instigated coup) was successfully subduing the insurgents. The general view, shared by Kennedy, Johnson, and nearly everyone else in ruling circles, was that it would be desirable to pull U.S. troops out of Vietnam provided that the South Vietnamese regime could crush the Vietcong rebels. Some maintain that, faced with the new situation encountered by Johnson, which posed the no-longer-avoidable choice of either hugely increasing American military commitment or acquiescing in the loss of South Vietnam to the Communists, Kennedy would have made the latter choice whereas we know that Johnson did make the former. But the Conspirators could not have known either of these decisions (the actual or the counterfactual) in advance. We do know that Johnson's advisors who favored escalation of the war when that situation arose (including McNamara, Rusk, and McGeorge Bundy) were without exception Kennedy men.

*It largely consists of the uncorroborated reminiscences of the fanciful L. Fletcher Prouty, former Pentagon liaison officer to the CIA and the real-life model for the Donald Sutherland character in *JFK*.

to accomplish it, which presumably explains why those who advance this theory believe that he was planning to do it only after the 1964 election.[23] Again, the CIA would merely have had to make public one percent of what was known by insiders about Kennedy's private life to render him instantly un-re-electable.

An Over-complex Plot

Let's now assume that a sufficient motive existed and that a Conspiracy to kill Kennedy was indeed planned.

There is considerable additional evidence implicating Oswald, beginning with the simple fact that he, alone of all Depository employees, left the building within a few minutes of the assassination.

Why, on those assumptions, would the Conspirators choose to conduct the assassination in the manner in which it was supposedly conducted?

If we assume that all the evidence which seems to point to Oswald is faked, that Oswald was entirely innocent,* we can develop a scenario which explains the apparent evidence against Oswald as the work of the Conspirators. We can always do this with any crime, provided we postulate a Conspiracy sufficiently powerful. All difficulties can be dissolved by asserting that the available evidence has been falsified, even if the means to do so would border on the supernatural.

But if we begin differently, assume that there was a powerful and far-sighted Conspiracy to kill Kennedy, and then ask how the Conspirators would set about their task, we encounter serious problems in explaining why they would decide to handle things the way they are supposed to have done.

Take Lifton's theory that Kennedy's body was stolen and the wounds altered, so that front-entry wounds were made to look like rear-entry wounds. (Some such theory is essential for a Conspiracy, because the autopsy pictures are incompatible with anything other than two shots hitting Kennedy from the rear.) Lifton volunteers that the alteration of the dead man's wounds could only have been planned well ahead of time. Surgical teams had to be standing by ready to alter the wounds. The body had to be stolen and then switched back, and despite the fact that, according to Lifton, it arrived at Bethesda with different wrappings and in a different coffin, all the people most directly involved had to be made to swear that the body, its wrappings, and its casket were exactly the same when they arrived at Bethesda as when they had left Parkland. This prodigy of prestidigitation, worthy of an army of Houdinis, must have been planned with extraordinary precision, and with innumerable alternative plans to take account of the various uncontrollable twists and turns that events might take.

Yet it could not avoid being risky. And it was all required for one reason and one reason only: to make front-entry wounds look like rear-entry wounds. But why would intelligent conspirators take this tack at all? They must have planned the operation so that they would be compelled to accomplish the extraordinary feat of snitching the cadaver and altering the wounds, not to mention falsifying all the film, photographic, and ballistics evidence, when they could far more easily have planned it so that this problem just didn't arise.

If you're writing a murder mystery, it's good to construct a deceptive *mise en scène* which baffles the reader, but you have to guard against the narrative weakness of having the murderer do things just to make the story more engrossing. What the murderer does has to be credible given the murderer's aims and beliefs, and it's a badly constructed mystery story in which the murderer betrays the altruistic aim of helping the author by executing an ingenious plot purely for its entertainment value.

Making Things Difficult

Why did the Conspirators decide to shoot the president from a different direction than the one posited in the official public account? The Conspirators would not want to mislead us about the direction of the shots, except as this furthered their Conspiracy, but to read the Conspiracy theorists you might think that misleading us about the direction of the shots was an evil end in itself. If the Conspirators did mislead us about the direction of the shots, this must have been because they freely chose to plan the assassination in such a way that they would *have* to mislead us about the direction of the shots, and there is no credible reason for them to make this choice, as they could have much more easily arranged to allow the shots to appear to come from the direction they did in fact come from.*

*When arrested, Oswald claimed to be "a patsy." Whatever his motive for saying this, it should be considered along with uncontroversially false statements he made at the same time: for example that he had not used an assumed name when renting a room in Oak Cliff.

"These, you realize, are just the *high* points . . ."

*Twyman claims that in order to persuade the real assassins that they would be able to escape alive, it was necessary for the shots of the decoy or patsy to come from somewhere else. But a little thought will show that this is not the case. After all, Oswald left the Depository and got well away, despite Twyman's belief that the Conspirators planned to have him bumped off at that point. If Oswald had kept away from his known haunts, and acquired a suit, a hat, and $50, this rank amateur would probably have made it as far as Mexico. How much easier it would have been to secure the escape of the assassins if there had been a faked gunfight, leading to the patsy's immediate death and therefore the speedy public acceptance that the sniper was no longer at large. The obvious disguise for the real assassins would have been as police or Secret Service, and getting them away would have been fairly straightforward.

Similarly, Conspiracy theorists assume that there were numerous shooters in Dealey Plaza. To intelligent Conspirators possessed of vast resources, this would have appeared as a stupidly redundant complication. One well-aimed shot is all it takes, or two or three indifferently aimed ones. Fictional assassinations inspired by the Conspiracy theory, such as *The Parallax View*, generally involve just one shot, revealing the filmmaker's intuitive grasp of what makes for a believable assassination Conspiracy.

The method of reconstructing what would be likely to happen given the Conspiracy theorists' assumptions can be applied to minor details as well as to the broad framework of the assassination. We then see that flaws in the evidence which supposedly point to a Conspiracy would never have been permitted to appear if there really had been a Conspiracy. For example, Conspiracy theorists have always made much of the fact that pathologist Dr. James Humes copied out his original autopsy notes and then burned them. Humes says that the notes were covered with Kennedy's blood. Anxious to avoid sensational exploitation, he made a copy and destroyed the original. If Humes were lying about the copy being true to the original, because the original contained material pointing to a Conspiracy, why would Humes admit the copy was not the original? Why let on that the original had been burned?

The biologist J.B.S. Haldane was asked what he had learned from a lifetime's study of the natural world about the mind and character of its Creator. He gave the unexpected reply: "An inordinate fondness for beetles." If we ask ourselves what we can discern about the motives and aptitudes of the Conspirators from studying their handiwork, the answer must be: an all-consuming passion for doing everything in the most difficult and costly way imaginable.

Picture the first planning meeting of the Conspirators. "So that's carried then, nem. con. We'll kill the president. Please come to order; we have a lot of business to get through. Thank you. Next item, gentlemen, how do we do it? Anyone got any ideas? Chair recognizes the gentleman from Langley."

"Well, we could kill him, as the motorcade comes through Dealey Plaza. This would be real neat* because we would do it in full view of hundreds of people. Just for the hell of it, we could place several shooters in positions where they might be easily spotted, and put our non-shooting patsy in a terrific concealed position where he could hardly miss. Then we could have our patsy run around all over the place, trusting to luck that he would not do anything which would give him an alibi, have him shoot a policeman and then have him picked up, and shot later by a loony strip-club owner. Meanwhile, we would be stealing the body of the president, having a crack team of surgeons alter the wounds so that the shots would seem to have come from the patsy's location. We would also make sure we got our hands on the hundreds of still photographs and the several movies of this event, and substitute fakes which we would have prudently concocted in advance, and we would remove all the real bullets and substitute fake ones. . . . How am I doing?"

*This is around 1962, remember.

Surely this guy's career as a Conspirator would be over at that point. I have heard some dumb suggestions in meetings, but this one fairly bristles with absurdities. If you're going to shoot the president in public and frame an innocent patsy, you obviously have the patsy killed right away, in fact probably before the assassination, though the story would be that he was killed in an exchange of fire immediately afterwards. The public would readily have accepted that it was necessary to shoot the sniper. The mere fact that Oswald was free to move around at will at the time of the assassination goes against the hypothesis that he was a preselected fall guy. The actual shooting of the president would of course be done from the patsy's real location (or at least what could be represented as such), and if for some unknown reason you wanted the real assassins to be somewhere else, you wouldn't put them in an exposed public place like the Grassy Knoll, where anyone might stumble upon them.

A well-conducted Conspiracy would not merely plan for what actually happened, since this would be uncertain before the event. The Conspiracy would plan for what conceivably might happen. For example, if there had been a sniper on the Grassy Knoll, he might so easily have been caught unambiguously on film, and the filmer might have published the film before it could be intercepted by the FBI or Secret Service.[24] This is just one of many possible accidents which could not be ruled out. Their possibility would occur to any prudent Conspirator and this would guarantee that he would never be so careless as to put a shooter on the Knoll.

The Conspiracy must have included highly placed people in intelligence and law enforcement. These would naturally tend to come up with a scenario where intelligence and law enforcement personnel would look at least competent. Confusion, sloppiness, and lack of direction on the parts of the FBI, the Secret Service, and even the police would tend to be eliminated at the planning stage. But all these are rife in the actual playing out of the events in Dallas 40 years ago.*

Why a Public Shooting?

If we accept the premise that a public shooting might be the Conspirators' chosen method, many of the details are

*One of the more general conclusions arising from my rejection of the Assassination Conspiracy is that any high-level Conspiracy to create an enormous web of falsehood about specific, concrete occurrences is by no means child's play. When the U.S. invaded Iraq this year, Bush asserted that Iraq possessed newly developed weapons of mass destruction ready for immediate delivery against other countries. This was a calculated lie, but the administration probably supposed that these imaginary WMD would be forgotten after a brief and successful war, as the nonexistent Kosovo "mass graves" were forgotten after NATO's occupation of Kosovo, and as Bush's other big lie, that Saddam Hussein had something to do with 9/11, was in fact forgotten. When the issue wouldn't go away after the American occupation of Iraq, the question arises why the administration didn't simply plant some of its own WMD in Iraq. The answer is that this would be difficult and risky: it could not be done without quite a number of people knowing that the object was public deception, and this operation might later be exposed. This doesn't, of course, imply that such a massive operation of deception could never happen or never has happened, merely that it would be difficult and risky, and less likely under a liberal-democratic than under a totalitarian political system.

incomprehensible. But why would the Conspirators opt for a public shooting?

In the movie *Godfather III*, Pope John Paul I is assassinated. I don't know whether he really was or not, but the depicted method of the assassination is highly plausible. Something was slipped into his morning coffee and the public never learned that the death was other than natural. Surely this is the kind of thing we expect from a formidable, intelligently conducted Conspiracy.

Kennedy was not a wild radical and was not a serious threat to any major interest. His policies did not mark a sharp break from those of Eisenhower.

One assassin acting alone is a Lone Nut. Two or three assassins acting together is a weak Conspiracy. Even a much larger number can still be judged weak if the Conspiracy has little or no access to people in political administration, police, or intelligence. A public shooting is the preferred method of a Lone Nut or a weak Conspiracy. This method might therefore be selected by a powerful Conspiracy which wished to represent the killing as done by a Lone Nut or a weak Conspiracy.

Twyman conjectures that the Conspirators wanted to lay the blame for the assassination on Cuban Communists,[25] but there are two difficulties with that hypothesis. Granted that the Conspirators would like to incriminate Castro in some way, it doesn't follow that they would make the assassination thousands of times more costly by tying it to this incrimination exercise. And if they were setting up Oswald as a Cuban agent, why is there no *prima facie* evidence of this Oswald role? The paper trail indicates that Oswald was pro-Castro and at one point wanted to move to Cuba, but was rebuffed by the Cuban authorities. The Oswald-Cuba relationship was entirely one-sided. The Conspirators oddly failed to plant any evidence showing Oswald's links with the Cuban government, or for that matter his involvement in any type of Conspiracy. In an elementary oversight, the Conspirators did not even ensure that Oswald came into any money; he was always close to broke.

Kennedy had fleeting sexual encounters with hundreds of partners and longer-term sexual relationships with a dozen more. It would have been a simple matter to supply him with an attractive and willing woman in the pay of the Conspiracy.* He took drugs for his complicated and dangerous medical conditions, as well as for recreational purposes. There are poisons which mimic the effects of natural diseases, and which would not be detected unless foul play were suspected and a deliberate search for traces of those specific poisons were made. If Kennedy had really been murdered by an immensely powerful Conspiracy, he would have passed away serenely in his sleep from seemingly natural causes, and we would never have heard of Lee Oswald or Jack Ruby, let alone Clay Shaw and David Ferrie.

Editor's Note: The above article purports to be the work of the Lone Nut David Ramsay Steele (notice the three names). Some allege there is evidence of a Second Writer, who wrote parts of the article from a diametrically opposite direction. The article was then intercepted while on its way to *Liberty* by email, and surgically modified by skillful insertion of the opposing arguments. Skeptics retort that Steele's troubled history of confused and contradictory reasoning is notorious. We take no position on the matter, but we do feel obliged to point out that on the day this article was submitted, one of our editors had a bad cold. The odds against this being pure coincidence have been estimated at 800 trillion to one. If you look closely at a photograph of Steele, you will eventually begin to notice a striking resemblance to the foliage at the top of the Grassy Knoll. Evidently there is much more here than meets the eye, and the case is still wide open. ❑

Endnotes:

1. *The Warren Commission Report: Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy* (St. Martin's Press, undated [1964]); Jim Moore, *Conspiracy of One: The Definitive Book on the Kennedy Assassination* (Summit, 1990); Gerald Posner, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK* (Random House, 1993; revised edition Anchor Books, 1994).

2. Mark Lane, *Rush to Judgment* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston). Other Conspiracy-theory works published in 1966 include Edward Jay Epstein, *Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth* (Bantam) and Richard H. Popkin, *The Second Oswald* (Avon). Popkin is the outstanding historian of philosophical thought, author of *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* and *The High Road to Pyrrhonism*. My theory is that *The Second Oswald* was really written by a second Popkin, who however was devious enough to make sure the royalties were mailed to the first Popkin.

3. Among numerous examples see Groden and Livingstone, *High Treason: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the New Evidence of Conspiracy* (Berkley, 1990 [1989]), pp. 117–18; Jim Marrs, *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy* (Carroll and Graf, 1989), pp. 64–69, 86; Noel Twyman, *Bloody Treason: On Solving History's Greatest Murder Mystery, the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Laurel, 1997), pp. 117–166.

4. James H. Fetzer, ed., *Murder in Dealey Plaza: What We Know Now that We Didn't Know Then about the Death of JFK* (Catfeet Press, 2000); Fetzer, ed., *The Great Zapruder Film Hoax: Deceit and Deception in the Death of JFK* (Catfeet Press, 2003). A few

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*Kennedy's henchmen would not permit the Secret Service even to quickly check the purses of the new prostitutes who were supplied to Kennedy daily. Seymour M. Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot* (Little, Brown, 1997), p. 229. But even without such lax security, getting a female assassin into close personal contact with Kennedy would have been many times less costly than arranging for a shooter on the Grassy Knoll. An incidental benefit of the former method is that if assassination were ever suspected, the White House staff would have had a powerful self-interested motive to cover up the circumstances of the killing, to protect themselves from public disgrace.

The Color of Your Point of View

by Garin K. Hovannisian

The debate about affirmative action isn't just about injustice, past or present.

The debate about affirmative action is not so much fueled by political wars, ideological rivalries, and conflicting cost-benefit analyses, as it is by the clash of two radically different perceptions of identity, culture, and humanity. The battle is being fought between two camps of incompatible social visions.

On the one side we have Americans, those who uphold the basic guiding principles of their country. I don't mean "life, liberty, and property." I don't even mean "a government of laws and not of men" or "capitalism, individualism, and justice." I am talking about a perception of society — one that subordinates the role of culture to the grand scheme of things, to industry, human contact, government. It is a perception that recognizes the almost total irrelevance of ethnic heritage to the function of public life.

On the other side we have confused mutts, crossed between old and new generations, lost in history. They try to reconcile two irreconcilable fields of life: that of identity, custom, and home and that of human action, communication, and society. Their perception of the world betrays an unhealthy "double consciousness" — the injection of race into every aspect of every sphere of existence. They seek unrelentingly to elevate race consciousness in the public arena. Their coalition is made up of minorities of the "double consciousness" persuasion and guilt-stricken whites who will tag along blindly.

Yet the members of both groups are beyond conventional categorization. Both span the scale of creed, color, and ethnicity. So it isn't enough to draw the lines at conservative against liberal, or black against white, or moralist against pragmatist. The discord here is rooted in two diametrically opposite readings of society.

One, for example, never hears the utterance of terms like "white leadership" or "white intellectuals" and seldom comes across "white pride groups" or "white studies courses." That line of thinking is quite plainly nonexistent in the American consciousness. But it pervades among those who subscribe to the double consciousness. Pundits often call for a resurgence of "black leadership" and "black intellectuals," universities flaunt "black clubs" and "Chicano studies courses."

Similarly, no claims regarding disproportionate racial representation are made against the NFL and NBA. But modern "civil rights" leaders jump upon every fact or figure that might indicate the defrauding or disenfranchisement of a minority person. One social group sees people as people. The other sees them as colors.

But it gets far worse, this collage of black and white, for you see color isn't enough. Blacks must be referred to as "African Americans." Why? Because, I guess, that's where

most blacks came from. But we rarely hear whites introducing themselves as "Irish-Americans" or "Caucasian-Americans." For one camp, the common denominator is humanity. For the other, it is race.

Ward Connerly has observed:

> I find it interesting that a nation which claims to have the heart to solve an ethnic war in Bosnia shouldn't have the stomach to prevent one here at home. If there is any lesson that we can learn from the rest of the world, it is that America's experiment with democracy will fail if we divide our people into racial enclaves and allocate jobs, contracts, and college educations on the basis of group identity. . . .

This topic is entirely appropriate and timely because the Supreme Court of the United States has just endorsed the use of affirmative action in colleges and universities, citing a compelling national interest in diversity.

I asked one of my black friends, "Can you give me one example of an incident in which you have been discriminated against?" He answered, "I can't think of one particular incident but it happens all the time."

What does "affirmative action" mean anyway? Only an affiliate of the "double consciousness" mentality would concoct such a term. It's like a capitalist calling school vouchers a "great plan." But what we are debating here is neither a great plan nor an affirmative action. We are talking about preferential treatment.

Arguments have been made that preferential treatment actually hurts minorities, that preferential treatment is an insult to the intelligence of minorities, and that preferential treatment strikes at the very root of Americanism.

But it wasn't until a frenzied debate in government class in which I exposed the moral bankruptcy and impracticality of affirmative action (and witnessed the almost zero change of opinion that followed) that I realized that the proponents of affirmative action have found their source and support not in morality or practicality, but in a vast, befuddled racial view of the world.

"Will you *please* stop yelling 'whiplash'?"

Note the dissenting opinion of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in *Gratz* v. *Bollinger*:

> Bias both conscious and unconscious, reflecting traditional and unexamined habits of thought, keeps up barriers that must come down if equal opportunity and nondiscrimination are ever genuinely to become this country's law and practice . . .
>
> Racial and ethnic groups to which the college accords special consideration historically have been relegated to inferior status by law and social practice; their members continue to experience class-based discrimination to this day.

It must have been awkward conceiving that opinion while being in the company of Justice Clarence Thomas, who voted against affirmative action in Michigan's undergraduate program. Forget being blinded by ideology. How about blinded — in the strictest sense of the word — by unreality?

I asked one of my black friends, "Can you give me one example of an incident in which you have been discriminated against?" He answered, "I can't think of one particular incident but it happens all the time." Really? Today, racism is punished by the free market, by loss in profits for those who practice it. America's capitalist core cannot possibly coexist with racism.

Slavery, then legal discrimination, then *de facto* racism have, in the past, taken hold in America solely because of a form of today's "double consciousness" — a vision held by many whites that blacks were inferior to them. It was the manifestation of an American vision — one that discounts race as a factor of judgment and that is most consistent with Dr. King's dream of a "color-blind society" — that the racial struggles of the past were resolved. The current advocates of preferential treatment stand in menacing parallel with those who preached and practiced slavery 200 years ago.

But the rising tide presses on. It is daunting because it is so different from any other struggle. What sort of arguments could stem the advance of the new racists' vision?

If their arguments were practical, we could argue that minorities do better in a merit-based system.

If they were moral, we could argue that adopting preferential treatment to destroy preferential treatment is ludicrous and contradictory.

If they were misinformed about real status of the races in the United States, we could point to a black community (*Do you ever hear of a "white community"?*) that is successful and that has produced some of the world's best scholars, historians, athletes, businessmen, and politicians.

One never hears the utterance of terms like "white leadership" or "white intellectuals" and seldom comes across "white pride groups" or "white studies courses."

But they are none of the above. Today's advocates of affirmative action skulk in the crevices of the past. In these subterranean strongholds they plot to benight the world. They live, talk, and breathe race. Led by egotistic minorities and hotshot victimologists, encouraged by white condescension, and sustained by a self-perpetuating, degenerate outlook on society, they are beneath the reach of reason.

In its recent ruling, the Supreme Court has sanctioned not only a wholly unjustifiable system of admissions, but a categorically reprehensible vision of life. ❑

Diversifying for Freedom

by Sarah J. McCarthy

Color blindness should not be an ideal for an enlightened society; with diversity as the goal, there is no reason whatever to strive for color blindness.

If I had participated at the debates over the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, I'd have argued for the inclusion of this amendment: diversity of thought being vital to the people's enlightenment, the right of the people to attain diversity of thought shall not be infringed.

Though the concept of diversity is implicit in the First Amendment, it is not overtly stated there: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Despite the dangers to a fledgling republic from the discord of free speech, a free press, and diverse religions, the Founders adopted the First Amendment to provide constitutional guarantees that beliefs other than their own would thrive unfettered.

Undeniably, these men were lovers of liberty and individual rights, but they were so blinded by their own unconscious ideology — the product of their gender, race, and culture — that they considered human beings standing right next to them as property. They excluded women and blacks from their midst, denied women the right to vote, and acquiesced to the enslavement of Africans. Such is the power of an unconscious ideology. These men of unquestionable intent and intelligence were apparently oblivious to the fact that blacks and women would bring invaluable ideas to the crafting of the Constitution, views strongly influenced by their divergent biologies and by cultural realities and beliefs deeply rooted in those biologies.

Who would argue that skin color would not affect one's views on slavery? On legal matters such as employment law, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, childbirth, abortion, reproductive rights, and divorce, recent American law recognizes that a "reasonable man" and a "reasonable woman" might have differing standards based on their differing biologies. Sigmund Freud wrote that biology is destiny. To one degree or another, that will always be true.

Freedom and its resulting diversity are the primary reasons that Western democracies are culturally and economically superior to the Islamic theocracies that are stagnating under codified ancient rulings that subvert law and science and suffocate human behavior within the narrow requirements of medieval Koranic codes.

Despite the cornucopia of blessings America has gained from its diverse populace, overreaching affirmative action policies have turned the word "diversity" into a pejorative. People scoff at the mention of diversity as just the buzzword of race hustlers and victim-mongers, a tool in their unfair ploy to grab power and money from white guys. In this context, the negative reaction to the 2003 decision by the U.S.

Supreme Court in *Grutter* v. *Bollinger* permitting the University of Michigan Law School to consider race as one factor in the admission of students into its law school, was predictable.

Rather than using past discrimination as the basis for its approval of the law school's affirmative action program, the Court based its decision on the value of diversity to the student body and to society at large. The Court upheld the constitutionality of the law school's affirmative action program, building on the position staked out by Justice Lewis Powell in the 1978 *Bakke* decision, which stated that student body diversity is in itself a compelling state interest that can justify the consideration of race in university admissions.

"Today we hold," wrote Justice Sandra O'Connor in the majority opinion, "that the law school has a compelling interest in attaining a diverse student body" and continued to advance the ideas offered by Justice Powell that a university's freedom to "make its own judgments as to education includes the selection of its student body," and that universities have "the right to select those students who will contribute the most to the robust exchange of ideas."

In *On Liberty*, published in England in 1859, John Stuart Mill wrote that:

> It will not be denied by anybody, that originality is a valuable element in human affairs. There is always need of persons not only to discover new truths, and point out when what were once truths are true no longer, but also to commence new practices. But these few are the salt of the earth; without them, human life would be a stagnant pool.

Mill credited Europe's diversity for its success as a thriving culture:

> What has made the European family of nations an improving, instead of a stationary portion of mankind? Not any superior excellence in them, which, when it exists, exists as the effect, not as the cause; but their remarkable diversity of character and culture. Individuals, classes, nations, have been extremely unlike one another; they have struck out a great variety of paths, each leading to something valuable; and although at every period those who traveled in different paths have been intolerant of one another, and each would have thought it an excellent thing if all the rest could have been compelled to travel his road, their attempts to thwart each other's development have rarely had any permanent success, and each has in time endured to receive the good which the others have offered. Europe is, in my judgment, wholly indebted to this plurality of paths for its progressive and many-sided development.

Echoing Mill's thinking, Justice O'Connor reasoned that classroom discussions are "livelier, more spirited, and more enlightening and interesting" when students have the "greatest possible variety of backgrounds." Furthermore, she wrote, "individuals with law degrees occupy nearly half the state governorships, more than half the seats in the United States Senate and more than a third of the seats in the United States House of Representatives," and "all members of our heterogeneous society must have confidence in the openness and integrity of the educational institutions that provide this training."

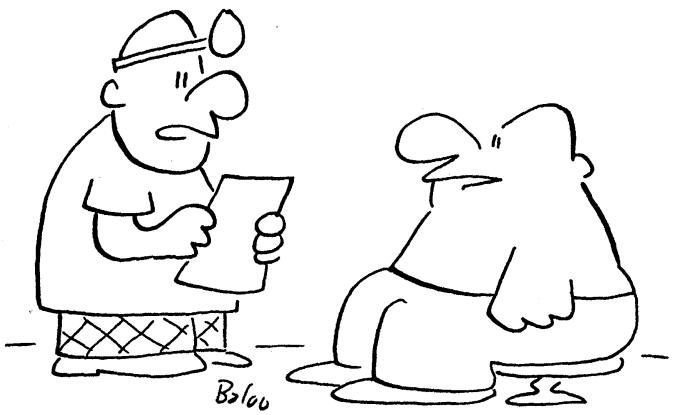
General Motors, Microsoft, and 65 other corporations as well as 30 retired officers — mostly generals and admirals — from the U.S. military signed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the University of Michigan's affirmative action program, stating that businesses and the military want to consider race as a factor in minority hiring and recruitment in order to be more competitive in the global marketplace, and to have more racial cohesion through the promotion of minorities in the armed forces.

The brilliance of O'Connor's position is that it provides a bridge for society to move beyond affirmative action programs based on past discrimination, to the more progressive goal of diversity.

The brilliance of O'Connor's position is that it provides a bridge for society to move beyond affirmative action programs based on past discrimination, to the more progressive goal of diversity. Conservatives and libertarians who view the Court decision as a setback fail to recognize that a diversity standard does not exclude them. A reemphasis on diversity will likely motivate future university administrators to recognize that standards require not only a variety of races and genders, but the seeking out of differing political, religious, and economic viewpoints.

Following the Supreme Court ruling, the Bush administration, which had opposed the University's affirmative action program, issued a statement praising the court for "recognizing the value of diversity on our nation's campuses." Bush said that "like the court, I look forward to the day when America will truly be a color-blind society."

Color blindness should not be an ideal for an enlightened society; with diversity as the goal, there is no reason whatever to strive for color blindness. Blindness to the value of diverse colors and genders were blind spots in the thinking of the Founding Fathers, and self-imposed blindness to racial and gender disparities is a mere pretense that will only lead to more blind alleys today. With diversity as a worthy goal, the Court has simply ruled that color and gender may be factors justifiably considered along with many others in selecting a student body or a work force. ❑



"Have you been eating properly?"

"Well, I'm real careful not to *spill* anything."

Proposal

Palestinian Vouchers

by Bart Kosko

Let's take study abroad programs to a new level.

Mideast peace talks have again given way to violence: the militant Palestinian group Hamas has resumed sending young suicide bombers into Israel. Israel has retaliated by bombing Hamas sites in Gaza and killing Hamas leaders wherever they can find them. Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas has resigned after only four months in office. The Israeli government has said that it will not deal with any Palestinian government that gives de facto control to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. And so it goes.

This latest cycle of mortal conflict has also once again pushed aside a key question of long-term stability in the region: who will *teach* the best and brightest among the Palestinian youth?

Palestinian schools are too poorly staffed and funded for the task. The local economy has collapsed and violence permeates the culture. Cash gifts from Arab states and radical Islamic groups still tend to come with religious fanaticism attached despite repeated efforts to stem the flow. Iraq no longer sends such money but Muslim anger over the Iraq War may well lead to more net cash for terror.

And the plain evidence of the past suggests that the conflict with the Israelis may take years or even decades to resolve. Islamic militants still want to destroy Israel and "drive the Jews into the sea." But the Israelis have over 200 Jericho ballistic nuclear missiles that can incinerate all the Arab palaces and Iranian command bunkers. Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres summed up this strategic stalemate: "Give me peace and I will relinquish the atom."

The result is bleak for young Palestinians. Half the population is no older than 17. These young people are far more likely to waste their precious human capital than receive a quality education by Western standards.

So why not give the very brightest Palestinian teens a quality Western education?

Educational vouchers can serve this end. They are tuition-and-costs coupons made of tax dollars. A pure principle of non-aggression (all initiation of force is wrong) will not support this or any voucher proposal because of the coercive nature of taxes — even taxes that pay for public goods such as national defense. But rule utilitarianism can support targeted vouchers if the expected long-term benefits clearly outweigh the long-term costs.

Palestinian vouchers would pay for a complete Western education. Only teens who scored highest on an entrance exam could receive a voucher package. It would allow them to live in the United States and study at an accredited college or university. The package might also include support for learning English and advanced high-school training.

Successful graduates would have the training to be leaders in their homeland or in this country. They would carry with them the law-and-markets stamp of modern Western

liberalism just as do many Arab elites who used oil wealth to attend our top universities. These Westernized leaders would stand at the troubled intersection of two cultures and could help each side adapt to the other.

The graduates would also have valuable human capital to invest in their homeland and abroad. Their training would let them start companies and improve Palestinian hospitals and schools and strengthen the infrastructure on which civil society rests.

Palestinians now export less than a half billion dollars in goods each year. The Israelis export more than 50 times that. Israel's economic miracle in the desert does not stem from oil reserves or from religious nonsense about God's "chosen people." It stems from the vigorous practice of Western law and markets and secular education despite the labor socialism of Israel's founders and the ongoing religious dogmatism of the ultra-orthodox. The same social principles can produce a like economic miracle for a Palestinian state.

Security is the clear problem with any such voucher system. The scheme has the potential to place Islamic terrorists in our midst and make us pay for the privilege.

But voucher students would be aliens and not citizens. This is a subtle point with potent constitutional consequences. Article I of the Constitution gives Congress express plenary power to regulate alien immigration: "Congress shall have power . . . to establish a uniform rule of naturalization." The Necessary and Proper Clause of the same Article gives Congress broad implied powers that are reasonably necessary to carry out its express immigration and naturalization power: "Congress shall have power . . . to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers."

This federal power over aliens is extensive. The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the Article I express and implied federal powers over aliens exceed any implied powers over aliens that the 50 states may have retained under the 10th Amendment's Reserved Powers Clause. That is why an immigration law can be unconstitutional if California passes the law or adopts it by ballot measure but the same law can be constitutional if Congress passes it and the president signs it. This holds in turn because 20th-century jurisprudence produced different and controversial tests of constitutionality that all laws must pass if someone or some agency challenges them in court. The tests depend both on the content of the law and on the state or federal status of the lawmaker. The California state law must pass the usually fatal test of so-called "strict scrutiny" (the law must be *necessary* to achieve a *compelling* government interest and there can be no less severe remedies available) while the same federal law need pass only the usually successful means-end test of so-called "rational basis" (there must be a mere *legitimate* government purpose that the law could at least *conceivably* advance).

The upshot is that the federal government has more than adequate constitutional powers to put stringent safety conditions on an alien voucher program — even if Congress had not passed the USA PATRIOT Act. The federal government could screen and monitor these Palestinian-voucher aliens as intrusively as it pleases and could deport them for cause.

A pure principle of non-aggression will not support this or any voucher proposal because of the coercive nature of taxes.

The full cost of a large-scale voucher and security system could exceed $100 million a year. But that is a small fraction of the billions that each year we give Israel and Egypt.

There is also the problem of funding. The full cost of a large-scale voucher and security system could exceed a hundred million dollars a year. But that is a small fraction of the billions that each year we give Israel and Egypt and the many billions more we pay for defense related to the Mideast. Such a voucher investment might well reduce the long-term cost of Mideast foreign aid and defense. And targeted voucher funds would go directly to the poorest members of society and not go in bulk to the strongman of the day. So the total expected costs appear small compared to the total expected benefits.

The least problem is the old political controversy over vouchers themselves. Many on the political Right have arguably pushed vouchers to attack public schools and to promote religious education. And many on the political Left have arguably opposed vouchers to protect teachers' unions and to promote an outmoded anti-market ideology. Both sides can view Palestinian vouchers as a form of national defense or foreign aid and as a new social investment in domestic education. Palestinian vouchers would be focused and secular. They would pose no threat to teachers' unions or to the separation of mosque and state. So either major political party could in principle support such targeted vouchers even though they would likely do so for different reasons.

A more vexing problem is what psychologists call *omission neglect*: we tend to discount or ignore relevant data that we do not see. This is an unintended consequence of TV and print media that focus on Mideast violence and on the clashing views of political leaders. A bloody suicide bombing will always produce more gripping images than will the abstract supply and demand structure of the Palestinian education market.

But even media-induced omission neglect cannot change the facts: someone will train the intellectual elite among the young Palestinians. Someone is training them right now. Vouchers would let the West compete with Islamic radicals for that defining task. ❑

Reviews

Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right, by Al Franken. Dutton, 2003, 379 pages.

Al Franken Is a Big, Boring Hypocrite

Tim Slagle

Since Rush Limbaugh ushered in the age of talk radio, there has been a remarkable change in the political landscape. Leftist politics have been suffering a slow, agonizing death. The two-way nature of the medium has destroyed the separation of speaker and audience that leftist policy requires. Leftist ideas have retreated to places where one-way communication is still the order of the day, such as college campuses, where the threat of a bad grade suppresses contrary ideas as well as the KGB ever did. Whether in television shows like *The West Wing* or in movie excreta "starring" Warren Beatty, opposition to socialist thought is strictly controlled. The script ensures that only straw men can ever attack the dominant ideals.

Among the few comforts left — such as they are — for people who still believe that socialism can work is the comedian Al Franken. Franken sifts through right-wing books, newspapers, and broadcasts looking for apparent errors, then compiles these errors in easy-to-read books. Leftist readers are happy to learn that they are still on the proper side, without having to go through the arduous process of evaluating any arguments on their own. Actually, it's pretty easy for Franken, too: he researched this book with a staff of 14 student volunteers and an office provided, gratis, by the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy at (you will never guess) the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University! Somehow I doubt that such a fellowship has ever been granted to anyone, let alone a television comic, who wanted to write a book debunking Noam Chomsky.

Franken's intellectual level is curiously worthy of Harvard. According to him, the Confederacy fought the Civil War just "so they could whip and torture black people." So much for history. As for economics: "Capital gains come from money making money without anyone actually working. Thus our nation's most generous tax laws will now apply to the children of the very rich inheriting money even their parents didn't earn." Or try this: "Very generally speaking [tax cuts] happen to hurt black people and help rich people. Who tend to be white."

Franken epitomizes everything I hate about leftists. He is smug and arrogant and, of course, a left-liberal, because he's smarter than you. He believes that such people as himself love America "like grown-ups," unlike conservatives who love America as a child loves his mommy. He is unaware that this is, well, a tad ironic, coming from a man who devotes a whole chapter to a fictional dialogue involving a waitress who learns that her $365 dollar tax cut will cost her close to $5,000 in entitlements.

He attributes the perceived leftist bias in the press to the fact that most journalists have "an advanced power of discernment," so naturally they lean that way. He then proceeds to prove that the media is not liberal after all. Quite an accomplishment, eh? Media liberals behave like members of communist cells, each of which operated independently, so if one cell was detected it would not bring down the others. Part of the creed is, you never identify a fellow traveler as such. For instance, at one point Franken cites a study done by the The Project for Excellence in Journalism, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. He then goes on to describe Pew as "totally mainstream" and "without a political axe to grind." Please. As any NPR listener will tell you, the contributions of Pew to public discourse are not distributed without prejudice.

Franken gets great joy out of transcribing phone and television inter-

views where he's come off as superior and reminding people that he was a writer for *Saturday Night Live* back when it was funny. He spends a good portion of his time name-dropping, and he brags about how he smarted off to people like Barbara Bush and Karl Rove. He cites his USO tours with John Glenn as definitive proof that he is patriotic.

Those who are looking for actual lies told by the Right are going to be greatly disappointed. A lie is a purposeful misrepresentation: "Leftists tend to be smarter than the general population," or "I never had sex with that woman, Miss Lewinsky," or "Al Franken is amusing." Most of the lies Franken identifies appear to be honest mistakes. For example, he identifies Bill O'Reilly's statement that "58% of all single mom homes are on welfare" as a lie. But it's pretty plain that O'Reilly was just confused, as men his age have a tendency to get. With close to 60% of all out-of-wedlock births ending up on AFDC, and 53% of those on welfare being single mothers who never married, it's easy to see how O'Reilly might be confused. It's also easy to see that O'Reilly had no need to fabricate.

Hypocrisy abounds. After mocking Ann Coulter (p. 9) for pointing out that the Washington bureau chief of *Newsweek*, Evan Thomas, was related to Norman Thomas, the six-time Socialist Party candidate for president, Franken stoops to the same depths (166) by mentioning that the father of *Washington Times* editor Wesley Pruden was a chaplain for the KKK.

Franken catches the Wascawy Wepubwicans in a terrible *lie:* Dick Cheney reflected on his regular helicopter commute over Arlington Cemetery, where he would look at the "crosses row on row" (218). Franken takes an unnatural delight in pointing out that the headstones in Arlington are rectangular, rather than crosses, and that Cheney was just lifting a line from "Flanders Field [sic]." Well, I think we all know where the line came from, and I suspect that Cheney was quoting rather than plagiarizing. And most of the headstones have crosses carved into the stone. So what?

With 379 pages to work with, Franken was unable to draw even a chuckle out of me.

Al Franken discounts the Linda Ives case, one of the centerpieces of the "Mena Conspiracy" in Clintonian Arkansas (135). Linda Ives had to get a grand jury order to have the bodies of her son Kevin and his friend Don Henry exhumed and shipped out of the state before discovering they were murdered. Witnesses suggested the crimes were perpetrated by state troopers, one of whom was later indicted for drug trafficking. No formal investigation was ever completed, and the case remains open 16 years later. Bill Clinton was governor at the time, and he refused to fire the coroner, Fahmy Malek, instead shifting him to another state job (incidentally, the same coroner had, previously and erroneously, found Clinton's mother innocent of negligent homicide). In 1992 Linda Ives' name curiously surfaced on a White House attack list of right-wing conspiracy nuts. That discovery inspired *The Wall Street Journal* article that Franken references.

Ignoring the facts of this case would probably be called a lie by Al's standards, but I'll chalk it up to simple apathy and blind, ignorant love of Clinton. You think I'm exaggerating? On page 140 he quotes Hillary's description of Bill Clinton as his own: "he was tall and handsome [and] had a vitality that seemed to shoot out of his pores." How could anyone dislike such a man? Well . . . "The Clintons' energy, their intellectual intensity, their compassion for those on the margins of society, their fundamental belief that the world could be made a better place — the right found all of these extremely irritating."

Let me say what I had against Bill Clinton: I thought he was clever enough to convince people that he really cared, when his only motivations were to nail anything that moved and to satisfy his megalomaniacal wife's insatiable lust for power. I hated the way he would run over anything that got in his path, like the lowly travel office employees who had their lives destroyed by an unwarranted FBI investigation. Most of all, I hated the fact that the Clintons loathed the Constitution, regarding it as a contemptible barrier on the way to their better dream for America.

But the "lie" that Franken is proudest of having found is that a National Security Council spokesperson gave *Time* magazine an account of a meeting with Sandy Berger that differed from the account that Condoleezza Rice gave the *New York Times*. (Are you still following this?) Discovery of this typical bureaucratic snafu, Franken says,

Among the few comforts left — such as they are — for people who still believe that socialism can work is the comedian Al Franken.

caused him to "shout for joy and dance around the room naked, celebrating the finding of a lie . . . embarrassing my wife and her bridge group."

That is, indeed, embarrassing. But what's most embarrassing about it, and the book as a whole, is its lack of humor. With 379 pages to work with, Franken was unable to draw even a chuckle out of me. Most of his ostensible humor is in the "they're so stupid, or they're so racist, or they're so homophobic" vein. That's humor? Another gimmick is to fictionalize a conversation. For instance, when some of Sean Hannity's numbers don't seem to add up: "I faxed the table over to some good friends, and Ken Lay, former CEO of Enron, got back to me in a jiff." Ha ha. There follows a sophomoric "dialogue" with Lay.

Then there's the ironic thrust that doesn't hit the mark: "At each [USO] stop, I entertained the troops with anti-American jokes." In a comic-book-style chapter called "Supply Side Jesus," a biblical character travels the Holy Land dressed in finery and riding on a camel. He tells the multitudes how being rich helps the poor, and how giving to lepers encourages leprosy. It is a great illustration of how the Left views itself, as genuinely Christlike. It invites someone to write a story called "Socialist Jesus," in which Jesus uses tax collectors and centurions to loot

and pillage in the name of the halt and blind.

I've never been a big fan of what I call comedy of ignorance, the comic's pretense that he doesn't know something and is therefore puzzled by it. This technique was practically trademarked by Jerry Seinfeld. (Why do they call it *Safe*way? What would be the *dangerous* way to shop for groceries?) Franken follows by writing about "Porn Bombing" — about how the departing staff of the Clinton White House inserted pornographic images into copy machines, so that someone might print a document over a naked girl and end up sending it out accidentally. By now, we are all familiar with that prank; some of us even found it a little funny. But Franken feigns ignorance: "Unlike Matt Drudge I've never experienced a porn bombing. I can only imagine that a porn bomb is a form of a 'dirty bomb,' consisting of a conventional explosive surrounded by a thick coating of dirty books and pictures. When the bomb goes off, the filth, either images or bits of text could contaminate schoolyards, churches, even John Ashcroft's morning prayer meeting." Clearly, this is supposed to be funny. It's just not. More amusing, though unconsciously so, is Franken's claim that the Right fabricated "vandalism" rumors to discredit the departing Democrats. He quotes "a 217 page report that found no damage to the White House nor to the Executive Office building." According to the *Washington Post*, the report found $19,000 in damages. To me, that's a substantial amount of vandalism. But Al Franken makes a lot more money than I do.

The subtitle, "A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right," was selected to get under the skin of Fox News. It did. Fox filed a trademark infringement lawsuit (and lost). But alas, Franken's balance is as far off as he believes Fox News' is. His 14 interns somehow weren't as interested in checking the claims of the Left as they were in checking the claims of the Right. Consider the book's reporting of a 2001 confrontation between Bill O'Reilly and the editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, Melissa Payton. O'Reilly claimed that the *Times* never once mentioned the name of Juanita Broaddrick, and he was corrected: "her paper's archives contained twenty-one articles mentioning Broaddrick." Easy enough to check. Ms. Payton must have been aware of the topic and had obviously done an Internet search right before the interview. There were *exactly* 21 mentions. I'm not sure that you can call them "articles," however. Two mentions were jokes in Laugh Lines, two were reviews, two were letters to the editor, four were TV listings, three were editorials, and one was an editorial about TV listings. Of the seven remaining, three were about negative accounts of Republican strategy for the upcoming election or the budget battle, one was a legal analysis of the statute of limitations, one was Clinton's denial, one was about his legacy; and the one remaining was originally published back on page B7: "Accuser's Claim Has Ring of Credibility," by Michael Kelley. Unbiased? You be the judge.

But let's look, in more detail, at Franken's treatment of a more important episode. A long chapter discusses how the Right used a raucous moment during solemn memorial services for Sen. Paul Wellstone to win control of the Senate in 2002. According to Franken, a brief moment of exuberance towards the close of the event was broadcast repeatedly to give the impression that it was more like a rally. Now, my friend Louis, who is a club owner in Minneapolis, sat through most of the memorial. Louis is by no means a Republican, and had even hosted fund-raisers for Wellstone. He assures me that it was a grossly premature Democratic victory rally. So certain were the Democrats that the people of Minnesota would never vote for a Republican during the Wellstone mourning period that they started celebrating a week early. So exuberant, and so polemical, did they become that the governor of the state, an independent, walked out of the ceremony in disgust. When I got to Minneapolis five days later, you could tell that something had happened. People were walking the streets carrying Mondale signs, and on their faces were looks of remorse. I recognized that expression well; it was the same look I always have after I've been really drunk, have done something exceedingly stupid, and want somebody to believe I'm sorry. Louis said that the mood of Minneapolis was visibly changed the day after the memorial. People in the hippie coffee shop where he gets his morning beverage were saying that there was no excuse for that kind of behavior, and they could not vote for Mondale.

In Louis' words: "Here is another thing about the Wellstone memorial: I wasn't offended that much by the guy [Rick Kahn] who took all the blame. He was just doing his job as a worker for the Democrats. It was Wellstone's son that pissed me off the most. He was screaming, 'Vote for Mondale, that's what my father wants!'" The biggest indicator of what really happened at the service was that Minnesota voted overwhelmingly Republican. Besides Wellstone's Senate seat, the governor's office, the majority of U.S. House seats, and a lot of the state House and Senate seats went to the GOP. Franken claims that the right-wing *Minneapolis Star Tribune* misrepresented the event. I think he's been living in New York too long. The *Star Tribune* is one of the most liberal newspapers in America, and the fact that it thought the service got out of hand was indicative of what really happened. Most Minnesotans relied on their own opinion anyway, as they had seen all four hours of the service; it was covered by all the local stations in Minnesota.

At the end of the book, Franken outlines his strategy for the Democrats in the upcoming election. In an uncharacteristically odd recognition of the free market of ideas, he admits that Rush and Fox are popular because they are entertaining. "But a part of their entertainment value comes from their willingness to lie and distort. . . . We can't do that. We have to fight them with the truth. Our added entertainment will have to come from being funny and attractive."

Most of his ostensible humor is in the "they're so stupid, or they're so racist, or they're so homophobic" vein.

Truthful, funny, attractive. That's three strikes against Franken. ❑

What Went Wrong?: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response, **by Bernard Lewis. Oxford University Press, 2002, 192 pages.**

The Lost Civilization

Stephen Cox

Bernard Lewis is the most distinguished Western historian of Islam and Islamic nations. Since objective, self-critical scholarship seems to be at a low ebb in Islam itself, he may be the most distinguished historian of that subject in the world. Now in his late eighties, he stands serenely above his colleagues, looking down with a gracious smile. Asked in a recent C-Span interview to say whom he expected to inherit his legacy, he replied that he was too young to worry about legacies. Certainly he wastes no time on the little gods of the academic left, such as Edward Said, who once attacked Lewis for writing an article called "The Roots of Muslim Rage."

Once, when measured by most standards of high civilization, Islam was far ahead of Christendom. Then came centuries of changes in the West.

Said claimed that Lewis's "ideological colors are manifest in [that] title." All one can say is, "Where?"

Lewis is far too skeptical and ironical, and also far too elegant, to manifest any belligerent "ideology." The title of his new book, *What Went Wrong?*, has a polemical quality that finds few echoes in the book itself. The work is a carefully balanced and moderated discussion of a complex (and fascinating) topic — the process by which a culture that once was "far ahead" has somehow become "far behind."

I've placed those two phrases in quotation marks, to satisfy all those people who refuse to believe that cultures can ever be judged or ranked. Lewis believes that they can. His criteria, however, cannot be accused of stringency. He merely assumes that cultures that encourage education and the arts, that practice a modicum of tolerance and generosity, and that are alive to the benefits of new technology are in those respects demonstrably "ahead" of other cultures. It's a modest assumption, and it works a good deal better, as a tool of cultural analysis, than the radical relativist assumptions that are currently more popular in the academic world.

Everyone knows, or thinks he knows, that while the medieval West was boring and tyrannizing itself to death, Islamic civilization was practicing religious toleration, exploring science, maintaining graceful urban environments, and perpetuating the learning of the ancient world. There is some truth to that picture, although the tints are usually too rosy. Lewis points out, for instance, that Islam revealed no interest in perpetuating the literary or humanistic achievements of the Greeks; when it came to copying or translating Greek manuscripts, only directly useful (e.g., scientific) material was chosen. And when it came to tolerance for other people, nothing like equality was accorded to professors of non-Islamic religions; they suffered grosser discrimination under Islam than any group now suffers in the Western world. But when measured by most standards of high civilization, Islam was still far ahead of Christendom.

Then came the changes in the West, centuries of change: the reform of religion, the invention of alternative ways of practicing it, and finally the separation of religion from the state; the development of political systems in which parties could contest for power while respecting basic rules of decency, order, and fairness; the scientific revolution and all that it continues to portend; the abolition of slavery; the achievement of civil equality between men and women; enormous revolutions in literary and artistic methods, expanding the power of individuals to express themselves; a multitude of new ways of enjoying life and promoting its dignity.

So much for the West. In Islam, no such innovations occurred. The Islamic regions of the world steadily lost wealth, power, and influence. In some regions, even the wheel lost out to the camel. While the West's knowledge of Islam was often ludicrously small, Islam's knowledge of the West remained, for centuries, still more limited. Islam's learned men knew nothing about the Reformation, the Renaissance, or the scientific revolution. Printing established itself in most areas two or three centuries after it had spread throughout the West. It took until the 1960s for Saudi Arabia to follow the West and outlaw slavery. Modern Islamic contributions to science, technology, and constructive political action have been minimal. Even symphonic music has been naturalized only in Turkey.

Surveying this bleak cultural landscape, Islamic intellectuals have often reacted (as Lewis indicates) by asking, "Who has done this to us?" Sometimes that question has been appropriate. It was from the West that Islam imported nationalism, socialism, and the technical means of political repression, none of which did anything good for their Eastern customers. What is at least equally notable, however, is the list of beneficial items that have not

been widely imported: separation of state from religion, equal rights for women and minorities, patterns of personal identification that are not purely religious or local or ethnic.

Many Islamic thinkers, not all of them currently residing west of the Bosporus, understand these problems. They no longer ask "Who has done this to us?" but "What has happened?" and "What can be done about it?" Their influence, however, has not been sufficient to alter a seemingly intractable cultural gestalt. Neither in Lewis's book nor in the daily news does "What can be done?" receive its answer.

But though he offers no solution, he does provide a superbly clear and intelligent analysis of the shape and origins of the problem. His book is perhaps the most accessible introduction to the history, especially the cultural history, of the Islamic world; and it says much of interest about the cultural history of the West as well. Lewis has the gift of stepping back and seeing each culture, as if for the first time, noticing features that people immersed in either Christendom or Islam ordinarily cannot see for themselves. And perhaps that's where solutions start. . . . ❑

***The American Axis: Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh and the Rise of the Third Reich,* by Max Wallace. St. Martin's Press, 2003, 416 pages.**

Nazi Dupes?

Bruce Ramsey

The lives and beliefs of Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh intersected in certain ways with the German National Socialists. Ford believed in a Jewish banking conspiracy; Lindbergh admired the technical and organizational achievements of the late-1930s German state. But *The American Axis* claims far more. It argues that Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford are partly responsible for the rise of Hitler. The book's cover art shows Ford, Lindbergh, and a backdrop of a Nazi concentration camp.

This is the first political history by Max Wallace, whose previous books were *Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight* and *Who Killed Kurt Cobain?* Wallace has been industrious in digging for dirt on Ford and Lindbergh, and fills his book with a heap of it, much of which he immediately exaggerates.

The exaggeration starts in the first sentence: "The process that brought Henry Ford's portrait to a prominent position behind Hitler's desk began during the summer of 1919, when Ford made the first public sortie in a hate-filled but distinctly American campaign that was to dominate his attention for the next eight years."

This was a campaign in Ford's *Dearborn Independent* newspaper to vilify international Jewish bankers. Hate-filled it was, but it is an exaggeration to say that it "was to dominate his attention for the next eight years." It was a sideline. Ford's attention was dominated by the Ford Motor Company, and when, in 1927, his railing at Jewish bankers began to hurt the sales of his cars, he shut down the paper and promised never to attack Jews again.

Ford was a self-made man, an industrial genius who never graduated from high school and famously said, "History is bunk." He had two political crusades in his life, one against Jewish bankers and the other against war, neither of which Wallace takes much effort to understand.

Ford hated bankers because they lent money to companies like his and took the companies away in hard times. He had lost a company to bankruptcy around the turn of the century, and vowed that that would never happen to Ford Motor. He was determined not to borrow bankers' money, but to create his own capital. He did it, and counted it as a win against the moneychangers.

Ford did more than just oppose World War I. He chartered a "peace ship" to carry antiwar protesters to Europe. Wallace recounts this, but has no appreciation of why anyone would object to fighting German "aggression." Wallace also recounts that Ford, as well as Lindbergh's father, believed that Wall Street financiers had entangled America with Britain and helped drag the country into the war. He presents this as a crank belief, but it was not. President Wilson asked for war because German U-boats were sinking American merchant ships. The ships were carrying goods that the British had bought with money raised on Wall Street.

None of which is explained in this book.

Some of those Wall Street financiers were Jewish, though the most prominent of them, J.P. Morgan, Jr., was not. Anyway, Ford did become fixated on Jews, and after World War I had published a scurrilous book, *The International Jew*. It was translated into several languages, including German, which apparently was why the young Hitler had a picture of Ford on his wall. (But Ford did not have a picture of Hitler on *his* wall.)

Wallace has been industrious in digging for dirt on Ford and Lindbergh, and fills his book with a heap of it, much of which he immediately exaggerates.

Wallace leaves certain things out of his narrative that ought to be there, and adds others that ought to have been edited out.

There is an accusation that Ford gave money to the Nazis in 1922, eleven years before the Nazis took power. It is not Wallace's accusation. The accuser was a German politician. Wallace repeats it, quotes a historian who says there is no evidence of its truth, and then undermines the historian by saying, "A significant amount of archival materials from the company's early days . . . has been 'discarded.'"

Not discarded, but "discarded," with sneer quotes.

In 1924, a Nazi arranged a meal with Ford by tagging along with Seigfried Wagner, composer Richard Wagner's son, and his wife Winifred. The purpose was to ask Ford for money. The Nazi sprung his question and later (in a book) complained that Ford was a tightwad, and wouldn't contribute a nickel. But Wallace reports that Winifred Wagner, still alive in 1977, told a researcher that Ford said he had helped Hitler. When? How? How much? We don't know. Wallace says, "Whether or not Ford actually financed Hitler, there can be no doubt about his ideological sway over the fuehrer-in-waiting."

Wallace has been trying to say that Hitler got some of his *money* from Ford, and, failing that, says it doesn't matter because Hitler was "swayed" by Ford.

Swayed to what?

But back to the original charge: giving money. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that Ford had given some money. This was 1922. Even if Ford had been talked into making a donation to the Nazis — because they were critics of Jewish bankers, or just to get a pest away from his dinner table — it is unlikely in 1922 that any American who had never been to Germany (or to high school) understood the National Socialist German Workers Party. Ford abhorred both socialism and war, and was never in favor of killing an entire race of people.

In another innuendo, Wallace quotes a historian who asserts that Hitler got the idea of industrial killing from Ford's production line. Wallace offers no proof of this, but even if it were so, would that tarnish Ford? Wallace doesn't say it does; he just reports it and moves on. He follows the conventions of an objective historian while producing a biased account — and he does this over and over again.

Another of Wallace's hits is his recounting of a statement by Ernest Liebold, a pro-German who was Ford's longtime assistant, that Ford received a shipment of swastika pins in the 1920s and encouraged some people to wear them. Wallace notes that Liebold is not a trustworthy witness, and that his memoirs are "filled with exaggerated, self-serving and sometimes blatantly false accounts" — but he likes this story about the swastika pins enough to use it.

Again, what if it were true? A swastika pin has ominous meaning today, but what meaning would it have had in Detroit, U.S.A., in 1925?

Fast forward a few years. Hitler is in power. He has persecuted Jews but is not killing them, and he is making territorial demands on his neighbors but has not yet begun the war. Germany is at peace with the United States, though none too popular here. Ford has a factory in Germany called Ford-Werke. The factory has a few military contracts with Berlin.

In July 1938, a couple of months before the Munich crisis, the German consuls of Detroit and Cleveland offer to award the Grand Cross of the German Eagle to Ford. There is a famous picture of him in white suit and sash accepting the medal, looking somewhat bemused.

What to make of this? Well, *they* are sucking up to *him*. He might have refused the award if he understood the Nazi doctrine and disapproved of it. Then again, he had a factory in Germany, and his inclination as an investor in Germany would be to avoid an insult to the German government. Immediately, he was denounced in the United States. Challenged to give the medal back, Ford said that he did not agree with the persecution of the Jews and was willing to hire Jewish refugees. But he kept the medal and did not criticize Hitler directly.

I can't claim that everything that Henry Ford did was good. But wandering through all Max Wallace's smoke is no way to get a clear or fair picture of his subject.

To Wallace, this shows that Ford was an Axis sympathizer. To me, it looks as if he was trying to stay out of public positions that could hurt his business.

Germany and Russia began World War II in September 1939, and in May 1940 Germany invaded France. The U.S. policy was to be officially neutral but to sell war materials to the Allies for cash. The interventionists supported sales because they said it would help defeat Hitler while keeping America out of the war, and the isolationists, like Ford, opposed sales because they believed they would get America into the war.

In June 1940, Ford was offered a contract to build 3,000 Rolls Royce aircraft engines for the United States and 6,000 of them for Britain, with the latter engines to be paid for by Britain. Ford refused the second contract. "We are not doing business with the British or any other foreign government," he said. "If we make 6,000 Rolls Royce Merlin engines, it will be on an order from the United States Government."

Ford did not want to entangle America in the war. Wallace quotes Ford production chief Charles Sorensen, speaking in September 1940 about Ford's political hot buttons: "His pet peeve was Franklin Roosevelt, but any mention of the war in Europe or this country's involvement upset him almost to incoherence."

"You're free to get a second opinion, but it looks like something's wrong with that green thingie right over your liver."

Wallace makes it sound as if Ford were an Axis sympathizer because he refused to make engines for the British while Ford-Werke was making trucks for the Germans. He *never mentions* that Ford also had a subsidiary in Britain that was available to the British government. The Ford factory at Dagenham would produce 360,000 military vehicles and 250,000 V-8 aircraft engines for the British in World War II. Ford would also set up a plant at Manchester that would produce 34,000 of the Rolls-Royce aircraft engines.

Wallace does mention, in passing, that General Motors had a subsidiary in Germany — Opel — and it also made trucks for the German army. He mentions that Ford had a subsidiary in France that made trucks for the French army, and when the Germans came it made trucks for the German army. There is a pattern here: a factory supports the government of the country it is in. If it refused, it would be seized, and it would still support the government of the country it was in.

Wallace sees a great moral problem in Ford-Werke. He says it "amassed huge profits without interruption." In his book, he throws around the phrases "unfettered corporate profits" (p. 227), "huge profits" (329) and "massive profits" (351) for their rhetorical odor, showing no sign that he understands what a profit actually is, of the distinction between an accounting profit and cash, or between a currency that is convertible and one that is blocked. He does report that Ford-Werke accounted for less than 2 percent of U.S. investment in Germany at the outbreak of war, and that when the war ended the cumulative cash dividend from Ford-Werke, translated into dollars and made available to the American owners, amounted to just $60,000.

He also presents evidence that Ford-Werke used slave labor in the latter part of the war. But Ford-Werke was not under control of its American parent during the war.

And so it goes. I can't claim that everything that Henry Ford did was good. But wandering through all Max Wallace's smoke is no way to get a clear or fair picture of his subject.

Wallace's treatment of Lindbergh is similar, but he makes a somewhat stronger case. Wallace does show that Lindbergh was fascinated by the Nazis in the late 1930s, that to some extent he admired them, that he toured their aircraft plants and accepted the same medal Ford did, and that one of his reasons for opposing American entry into World War II was that he thought Germany would win the war. As with Ford, the Nazis tried to use Lindbergh, and apparently had some success at it. But it does not make him a Nazi, or responsible for Nazism.

I thought, while reading this book, how a right-winger might write the same book about various liberal heroes of the 1930s and 1940s cooperating with Stalin and with communism. It would be a much longer book than this, with more smoke *and* more fire; and if anybody would offer it for review, how the righteous progressives would denounce it in one voice as intolerable and outrageous McCarthyism. ❑

***The Illusion of Victory*, by Thomas Fleming. Basic Books, 2003, 543 pages.**

The Professor's Deadly Dream

Clark Stooksbury

Thomas Fleming, who shattered the FDR icon in *The New Dealer's War*, has returned with a similar treatment of Woodrow Wilson's handling of World War I in *The Illusion of Victory*. The Great War has not been mythologized the way that the Second World War has been by Tom Brokaw and the late Stephen Ambrose. It is unsentimentally recalled as a monstrous bloodletting for all parties involved. The United States entered the fighting late and consequently paid a comparatively small price in blood. Still, more than 100,000 doughboys died from war and disease. Many others came home physically and psychologically shattered.

Fleming notes an influence on Wilson's thinking in a novel written by one of his top aides. Colonel Edward House was a close Wilson adviser during most of his presidency. Prior to serving the president, he had written *Philip Dru, Administrator*, a fictional account of a "military and political genius who took over a wealthy, disordered, quarrelsome nation and led it into an era of almost superhuman contentment by persuading the people to make him their supreme autocrat." This is a pretty fair representation of Woodrow Wilson's second term, except, of course, for the superhuman contentment.

At first the Great War was strictly a war among European powers. But the British sought America as an ally, and got a tremendous leg up in the information war against Germany by cutting Germany's undersea cables which were used to communicate with the Western Hemisphere, reducing their information flow to a trickle.

Britain scored early propaganda coups by spreading lurid tales of supposed German atrocities in Belgium, including the amputation of women's breasts and of babies being speared on German bayonets. The British even sponsored a tour of Belgians to spread the stories. Fleming points to the irony of these defenses of "poor little Belgium," which had actually committed shameful crimes against humanity in the Congo a few years earlier. "The Congo's blacks had been routinely starved, beaten, and shot for trivial offenses while being forced to labor. . . . Behind a screen of unctuous lies about bringing Christianity to the dark continent, an estimated 10 million natives had died."

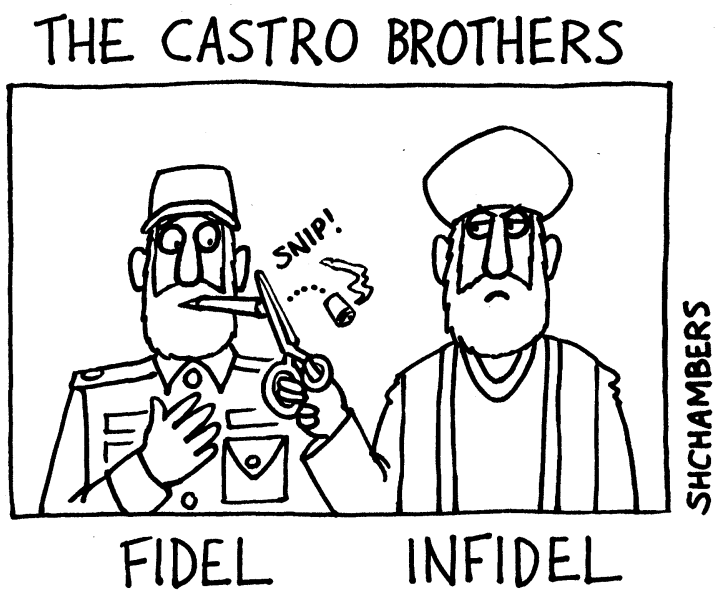
The pro-war crowd in the United States received a boost when a German U-boat sank the British liner, the *Lusitania,* off the coast of Ireland on May 7, 1915, killing more than 1,198 people, including 128 Americans. Although the German government publicly warned in newspaper ads that the British ship was carrying munitions and other war materiel, and thus was a legitimate and legal target, the Wilson administration insisted that Americans had the right to travel on belligerents' ships into a war zone.

Teddy Roosevelt was among those calling for an immediate declaration of war. Woodrow Wilson demanded that the Germans cease their unrestricted submarine warfare, which they did for almost two years. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan refused to sign off on the demand, and resigned, insisting that it would lead to war with Germany.

Another characteristic of the road to war was the repression of critics of the government and Americans of German and Irish descent, who were generally opposed to going to war as an ally of Britain. The repressive atmosphere of the Wilson years makes anything that happened in the McCarthy era seem trivial. Wilson's repression permeated the country and was reflected even in the pages of elite media such as the *New York Times* and *The Atlantic Monthly.* Fleming reports that even before U.S. troops were committed to battle, "Lutheran schools were described as hotbeds of disloyalty, where 'The Star Spangled Banner' was never played and German heroes such as Bismark displaced Washington and Lincoln." In October of 1917 Wilson signed legislation requiring German language newspapers to provide English translation of any commentary on the government or the war effort.

The British scored early propaganda coups by spreading lurid tales of supposed German atrocities in Belgium, including the amputation of women's breasts and of babies being speared on German bayonets.

Non-German Americans were free of this repression so long as they marched in unison with the Wilson administration. One American who failed to do so was Eugene Debs. The Socialist leader was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison after an incendiary speech in Ohio. Debs was pardoned by President Harding in 1921.



Fleming recounts perhaps the most egregious violation of freedom of speech in American history. Even a movie about the Revolutionary War was targeted. Producer Robert Goldstein, who had worked with D.W. Griffith on *The Birth of a Nation,* produced a film called *The Spirit of '76* that was attacked because his film cast the British in a negative light. He was allowed to exhibit the film in Los Angeles after cutting some scenes objected to by local censors. But he restored the scenes for exhibition elsewhere. "The film was seized and Goldstein was soon in court. The docket read *United States vs the Motion Picture Film The Spirit of '76.* In the prevailing atmosphere of war rage, no one regarded this listing as even slightly ironic. The judge found Goldstein guilty of exhibiting 'exaggerated scenes of British Cruelty,' which might make people 'question the good faith of our ally, Great Britain.'" Like Debs, he was sentenced to ten years in prison.

Goldstein's saga, which was highlighted three years ago by Bill Kauffman in *The Wall Street Journal* and Timothy Noah in *Slate,* puts into perspective the recent frenzy over the dissent by celebrities against George W. Bush and the war in Iraq. The most notorious example was that of the country music group, the Dixie Chicks, one of whom mildly insulted President Bush during a London concert in March. While Natalie Maines' lack of servility cost the Dixie Chicks airplay and CD sales, the wound is superficial, roughly equivalent to the attacks on the Beatles in 1966 when John Lennon said that he and his band mates were bigger than Jesus Christ. Had Natalie Maines tepidly insulted Woodrow Wilson in 1917, she might have gone to prison.

The Wilson administration was better at repressing dissent than it was at preparing the country for war. The Senate majority leader, Thomas Martin, exclaimed to an Army major testifying shortly after war was declared, "Good Lord! You're not going to send soldiers over there, are

you?" At the time he spoke, the U.S., with an army the size of Chile's, barely had a force to send.

The Wilson administration dithered in preparing to send Americans to war for months after the declaration. Among the results were poorly fed and equipped troops, often freezing and succumbing to disease because they had no winter uniforms. Theodore Roosevelt's son Quentin died while flying a second-rate French aircraft, because, as Fleming explains, "Woodrow Wilson's administration had refused to prepare for war and after war was declared the president's appointees had failed to produce a single aircraft, in spite of spending almost a billion dollars."

In the end, more than 100,000 Americans paid with their lives for a victory that was, as Fleming's title suggests, illusory. Germany had agreed to an armistice on the basis of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, a document with several concrete elements such as the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France and independence for Poland as well as high-minded calls for democracy and openness in international dealings.

But Wilson' Fourteen Points were not palatable with America's French and British allies, who insisted on divvying up the German and Ottoman empires, often on the basis of previous secret agreements, inserting a clause in the treaty placing sole blame for the war on Germany, and insisting that Germany pay them crippling reparations.

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After compromising on a peace settlement that made a mockery of his principles, Wilson arrogantly insisted that the U.S. Senate ratify the Versailles and the League of Nations treaties with no changes. He called for making the 1920 election a referendum on the treaties, and was soundly defeated. U.S. ratification of the two treaties was dead.

Fleming briefly speculates about what might have occurred had Wilson chosen another course. The best plausible course, he suggests, would have been to pursue the genuine neutrality favored by Wilson's first secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan. "Without the backing of American weaponry, munitions, and loans, the Allies would have been forced to abandon their goal of a knockout blow. The war might have ended in 1916 with a negotiated peace based on the mutual admission that the conflict had become a stalemate. As a genuine neutral, Wilson might even have persuaded both sides to let him be a mediator." The British would have been offended at such a cold shoulder proffered by their American "cousins," but they would have been better off.

Instead the world Wilson helped bring about included the two greatest criminal regimes in history, jury-rigged countries such as Yugoslavia and Iraq, and another war on a scale so great that it would have been difficult to imagine in 1918.

If there are any worthwhile lessons from Thomas Fleming's study of Wilson's failures, they are lessons as old as King Pyrrhus. When you open Pandora's box of war, you never know what is waiting inside, and "victory" requires much more than success on the battlefield. ❑

Notes on Contributors

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The Slaughter of Cities: Urban Renewal as Ethnic Cleansing, **by E. Michael Jones. St. Augustine's Press, 2003, 700 pages.**

The Decline & Fall of Motown

Greg Kaza

At World War II's end the area along Theodore Street on Detroit's East Side was a bustling neighborhood of Eastern European Slavs, anchored by St. Hyacinth Catholic Church. The small-frame bungalows housed families, many led by Polish workers employed at nearby Dodge Main and other automotive production plants. Their children attended the parish school. Numerous small shops and groceries, operated by family entrepreneurs, dotted neighborhood street corners. Detroit was a boomtown, the 4th most populous U.S. city.

At the turn of the 21st century vast sections of Detroit resembled a post-industrial wasteland. Ze'ev Chafets termed it "post colonial" in his 1990 book, *Devil's Night & Other True Tales of Detroit*. (Devil's Night, for the uninitiated, refers to the once-common practice of spontaneous arson in hundreds of abandoned buildings on Halloween Eve.) Entire Detroit neighborhoods — private homes, stores, churches, and schools built by immigrants to America — were destroyed through federal housing, transportation and urban renewal programs. Today, Detroit ranks 7th in population. In the last half century, Detroit lost nearly half its population, while U.S. population as a whole rose nearly 85%. It was not supposed to end this way: in the 1960s Detroit was *the* model city of liberalism.

In the last half century, Detroit lost nearly half its population, while U.S. population as a whole rose nearly 85%. It was not supposed to end this way: in the 1960s Detroit was the model city of liberalism.

Author E. Michael Jones describes the federal government's expanding role in the 20th century, a process that led to the destruction of neighborhoods in large northern cities like Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago. Federal programs contributed to the postwar exodus to suburbia. Washington's main instrument for suburban development was the Federal Housing Authority (1934), part of FDR's New Deal. The FHA and Serviceman's Readjustment Act, known as the GI Bill (1944), "not only provided the wherewithal to help the 16 million soldiers who returned from World War II buy a house, it also determined," Jones notes, "what kind of home he would buy and where it would be located. That meant, to a large extent, a house in the suburbs," not on Theodore Street. They were carried to suburbia by the Interstate Highway Act (1954), which destroyed a black Detroit neighborhood (Black Bottom) when a freeway was built through it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's creation (1964) accelerated the process. Urban planners destroyed the predominantly Irish neighborhood of Corktown. Jones contends urban renewal shifted blue-collar ethnic immigrants from northern cities into new suburbs where ethnicity and political power were dispersed. His thesis is that foundations played an important quiet role in this process. Impatient readers will find his search tedious. But freedom advocates will be rewarded elsewhere in this work: attacks on private property under corporate statism are only possible through the visible hand of Big Government. "In addition to being the antithesis of *laissez-faire* economics," Jones writes, "'planning' was a code word for the antithesis of limited government as well."

In the case of Poletown, a neighborhood a half-mile north of Theodore Street, government urban renewal constituted "ethnic cleansing." Government eminent domain laws and HUD grants engineered the largest urban land clearance project in U.S. history to build a new General Motors assembly plant during the 1981–82 recession. Private property destroyed tallied 1,400 homes, 144 businesses and 16 churches. Jones identifies *government* as the culprit, whose paramount role in the destruction has been obscured by liberals and socialists writing about Poletown. Poletown's demolition "took place not because it was rational," Jones writes, "but because it could benefit the individuals and groups who were powerful enough to manipulate the political process in their own self-interest."

Jones' target audience will likely be more interested by his clash of religious cultures. It is beyond his work to analyze today's sterile policy landscape: Republican "compassionate conservatism" of the Jack Kemp Ladies Garden Club competing with suburban Democratic paternalism that winces at the thought of unlicensed vendors selling Polish sausages with beer and sauerkraut. Who can show greater *empathy* for abandoned urban neighborhoods destroyed by the state? The side that makes the most voters "feel good" wins the game show. The libertarian alternative is highly relevant in this policy vacuum. The tax-free zone concept, debated by libertarians, was enacted in Detroit in the mid-

1990s. But it is, at best, a tentative response to a problem that demands solutions like licensing deregulation, private schools, and HUD's abolition. The issue is not which major political party staffs the government bureaucracy. In the case of Poletown, the issue was the evil nature of the bureaucracy itself.

Government is not a positive institution in American society. Historians will judge those who destroyed Poletown through a harsh lens. A society is judged by how it treats its weakest members. Poletown's weak were subjected to the state's iron fist. The Democratic-controlled Michigan legislature passed "quick-take" legislation supported by liberal Republican Gov. William Milliken that allowed rapid confiscation of Poletown private property. The state did not protect Poletown's weak. It augmented the power of GM — the largest U.S. industrial corporation.

Thankfully the story is being told to a new generation as the 25th anniversary approaches. Poletown's poor and elderly black and white residents who resisted were driven from their homes by organized arson and looting. There were 607 fires in Poletown in the first six months of 1981 yet only a handful of arrests. The final battle pitted a Detroit SWAT team against elderly Polish women who chained themselves to the altar of Immaculate Conception Church. Police physically dragged the crying seniors from the church. Some elderly who did move died from the trauma of being forced from their homes. Immaculate Conception's Fr. Joseph Karasiewicz, 59, took up residence at St. Hyacinth's after being forced from his parish. He died at the church near Theodore Street 11 days before Christmas 1981. Those who knew him say he perished from a broken heart. ❑

The Crowd on the Grassy Knoll, *from page 36*

Conspiracy theorists, notably Josiah Thompson, still insist on the reliability of the Zapruder film.

5. David S. Lifton, *Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of President Kennedy* (Carroll and Graf, 1988), pp. 582–83 and passim.

6. Lifton, pp. 560, 655–664, and compare the "Autopsy Photo 4," following page 682, with the right-hand drawing on page 310.

7. Lifton, pp. 555n–57n.

8. Lifton, p. 559.

9. Robert J. Groden and Harrison Edward Livingstone, *High Treason*, pp. 39–41.

10. Groden and Livingstone, p. 83.

11. Examples of the arguments I have in mind are David Mantik's use of optical densitometry to analyze the autopsy x-rays, in James H. Fetzer, ed., *Assassination Science: Experts Speak Out on the Death of JFK* (Catfeet Press, 1998), pp. 121–139, and John P. Costella's discussion of the anomalies in the Zapruder film (Fetzer, *Great Zapruder Film Hoax*, pp. 164–221). I don't know enough about medical x-rays or film editing to answer these arguments, but for the reasons given in the text, I do not have to do this in order to decide that the Lone Nut theory is rationally preferable to the Conspiracy theory.

12. The single exception is the theory of Howard Donahue as presented by Bonar Menninger. In his well-argued book, *Mortal Error: The Shot that Killed JFK* (St. Martins, 1992), Menninger contends that Oswald was the only one who intended to kill Kennedy, and that an accidental discharge of a Secret Service agent's gun also hit Kennedy. The only Conspiracy, then, was to cover up this embarrassing accident. Menninger's book contains a knowledgeable and lucid discussion of the firearms aspect of the assassination. (I believe the totality of the evidence now excludes the Donahue-Menninger theory.)

13. Stewart Galanor, *Cover-Up* (Kestrel, 1998), p. 91. Galanor says that Brennan "was unable" to identify Oswald, which is misleading.

14. Howard L. Brennan and J. Edward Cherryholmes, *Eyewitness to History: The Kennedy Assassination As Seen by Howard Brennan* (Texian Press, 1969), p. 22.

15. Dale K. Myers, *With Malice: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Murder of Officer J.D. Tippit* (Oak Cliff Press, 1998), pp. 63–65, doubts that the description was what made Tippit approach Oswald. Twyman, *Bloody Treason*, p. 19, says "No one knows how the description was obtained," an untruth.

16. On Tippit's murder, see Myers, *With Malice*. Highly selective accounts of Tippit's killing by Conspiracy theorists such as Twyman should be compared with Myers's detailed and sober study.

17. Norman Mailer, *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery* (Random House, 1995).

18. For a fresh look at this often-told story, see Thomas Mallon, *Mrs. Paine's Garage and the Murder of John F. Kennedy* (Pantheon, 2002).

19. Fetzer, *Great Zapruder Film Hoax*, pp. 223–234.

20. Among many works promoting this theory, see G. Robert Blakey and Richard Billings, *The Plot to Kill the President* (Times Books, 1981); John H. Davis, *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (McGraw-Hill, 1988); Seth Kantor, *Who Was Jack Ruby?* (Everest House, 1978); David Scheim, *Contract on America: The Mafia Murders of John and Robert Kennedy* (Shapolsky, 1988).

21. The closest approach to such an attempt is Twyman, *Bloody Treason* (currently the most impressive statement of the Conspiracy theory), pp. 25–64.

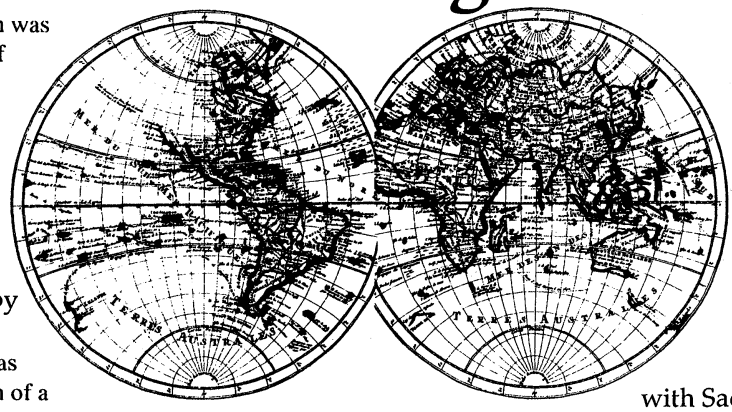
22. Lane, *Plausible Denial: Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), especially pp. 91–114.

23. For an excellent refutation of Kennedy as a Vietnam dove, Kennedy as anti-CIA, and similar legends, see Noam Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot: JFK, the Vietnam War, and U.S. Political Culture* (South End Press, 1993). Chomsky points out, pp. 144–45, that Johnson was more down on the CIA than Kennedy, and Nixon more so than Johnson. Note, however, that the argument from motive does not have to show what Kennedy would have done, but something much weaker: that the Conspirators *could not have been confident in advance* that Kennedy would concede defeat in Vietnam while Johnson would not, that Kennedy would abolish the CIA while Johnson would not, and so forth.

24. Conspiracy theorists claim that shooters can be discerned in photographs of the foliage at the top of the Knoll. See for instance the photographs in Fetzer, *Great Zapruder Film Hoax*, pp. 50–53.

25. *Bloody Treason*, pp. 57, 832.

Terra Incognita



Canada

Advance in jurisprudence from America's progressive northern neighbor, from the *Seattle Times*:

> A taxi driver was awarded damages after being fired with a pink slip that contained a "cold and perfunctory" tone.

Virginia

The *Associated Press* reports on a curious new currency:

> A grocery store clerk accepted a $200 bill which was decorated with a picture of President Bush and bore the slogans "We like broccoli" and "USA deserves a tax cut."

Asia Minor

Curious dispatch from Turkey, published by *Agence France-Presse:*

> A 4.4 pound hairball was removed from the stomach of a 17-year-old girl in eastern Turkey. The hairball is believed to be the product of hair eaten in the girl's childhood.

U.S.A.

Note on American journalism, from *U.S. Weekly*:

> Beyoncé Knowles, solo artist and leader of multi-million record-selling trio Destiny's Child, has been quoted as saying, "If I had a dollar for every time [someone] says, 'You'll only get the cover if you take off your pants,' I'd be rich."

Washington, D.C.

Progress in the right to veterinarian-patient confidentiality, even as the right of human-physician confidentiality is undermined by the PATRIOT Act, from a dispatch in the *Washington Post*:

> The National Zoo has refused to give a *Washington Post* reporter a dead giraffe's autopsy report because it would "violate the dead animal's right to privacy."

U.S.A.

Dramatic way to "show your support for America's military heroes," from an advertisement in *Parade Magazine*, offering a ceramic Teddy Bear outfitted in a camouflage uniform and helmet, clutching a machine gun:

> To honor the brave dedication of the U.S. Armed Forces, The Hamilton Collection proudly presents "Front Line of Freedom," a tribute to all those who serve our nation. Filled with authentic details, this handcrafted figurine represents our fearless troops who have vowed to defend the United States, no matter where their mission takes them. Just one look at this bear's boundless courage and fierce commitment to his country, and your heart will fill with pride.
>
> Show your support for America's military heroes. Reply today.

U.S.A.

Socio-political suggestion from pop idol Britney Spears, from an interview with Tucker Carlson of CNN:

> "Honestly I think we should just trust our president in every decision he makes and should just support that, you know, and be faithful in what happens."

Germany

Fahrvergnügen in the land of Bach, from a dispatch by *Reuters*:

> A motorist has been arrested for playing the flute while driving 80 mph down a busy highway.

Amman, Jordan

Curious report of interview with Saddam Hussein's daughters, upon their being granted asylum in Jordan, from a report by Ray Suarez of the Public Broadcasting System:

> "The two daughters said that their father was loving and very tender, but they would not discuss his decisions to execute their husbands in 1996."

Florida

Dramatic educational reform in the sunny South, from a report in the *Kansas City Star*:

> Politicians in the Sunshine State are considering allowing high school students to opt out of their senior year — and still graduate — in an attempt to remedy increasingly crowded classrooms.

Walnut Creek, Calif.

Ambitious attempt to establish a "nut-free zone" in this community, from the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

> Valle Verde Elementary School in Walnut Creek has banned "peanut butter sandwiches and other nut products." School officials search lunchboxes and backpacks for such contraband and supervise their kindergarten students' washing their hands with soap and water.

New Jersey

Advance in Higher Education at Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, reported by the *Trentonian*:

> Responding to student complaints that looking for parking in the crowded lots causes classroom tardiness, Rutgers will offer valet parking services to students at its Newark campus.

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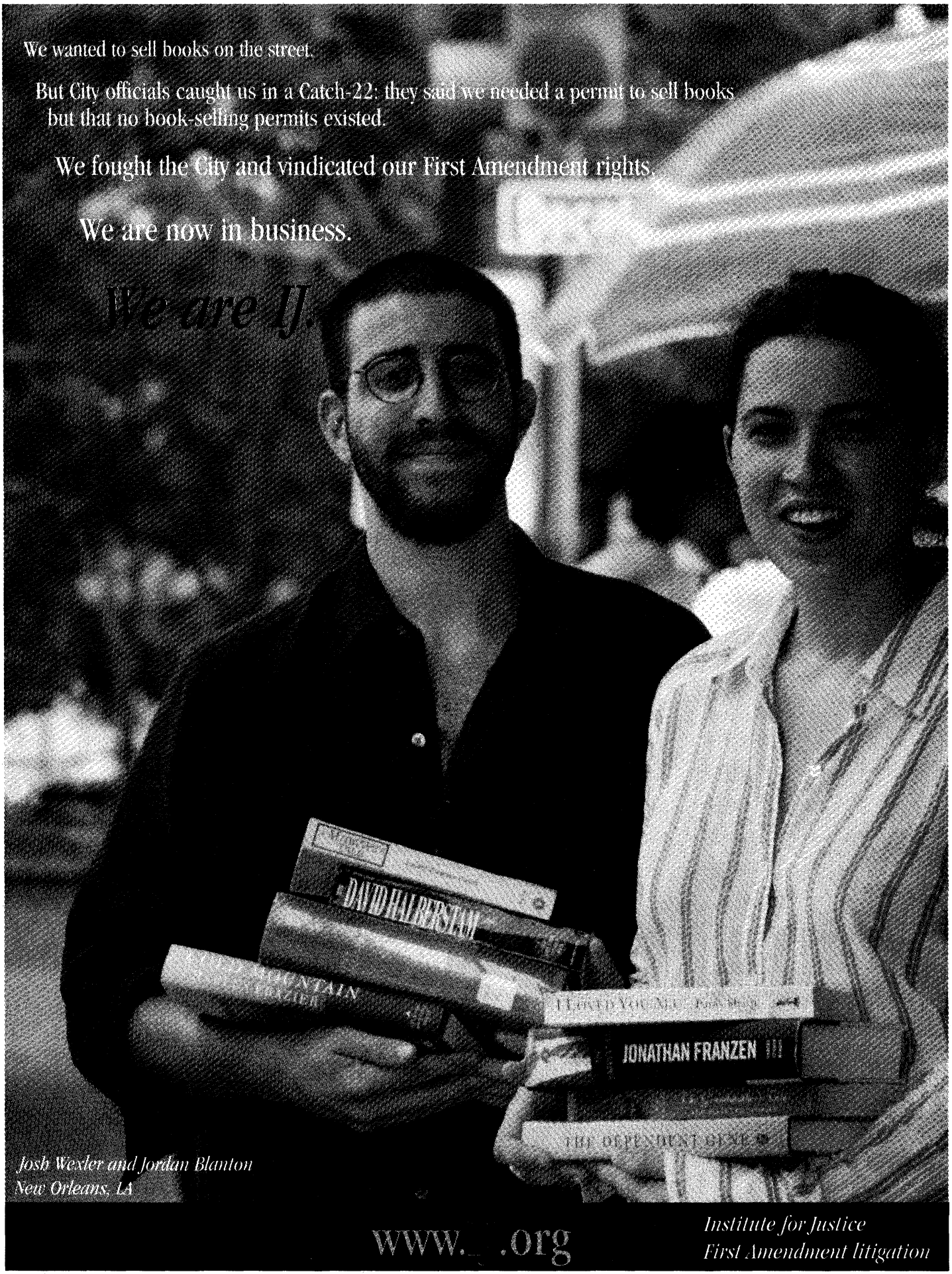
(Readers are invited to forward news clippings or other items for publication in Terra Incognita, or email to terraincognita@libertysoft.com.)


We wanted to sell books on the street.
But City officials caught us in a Catch-22: they said we needed a permit to sell books but that no book-selling permits existed.
We fought the City and vindicated our First Amendment rights.
We are now in business.
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