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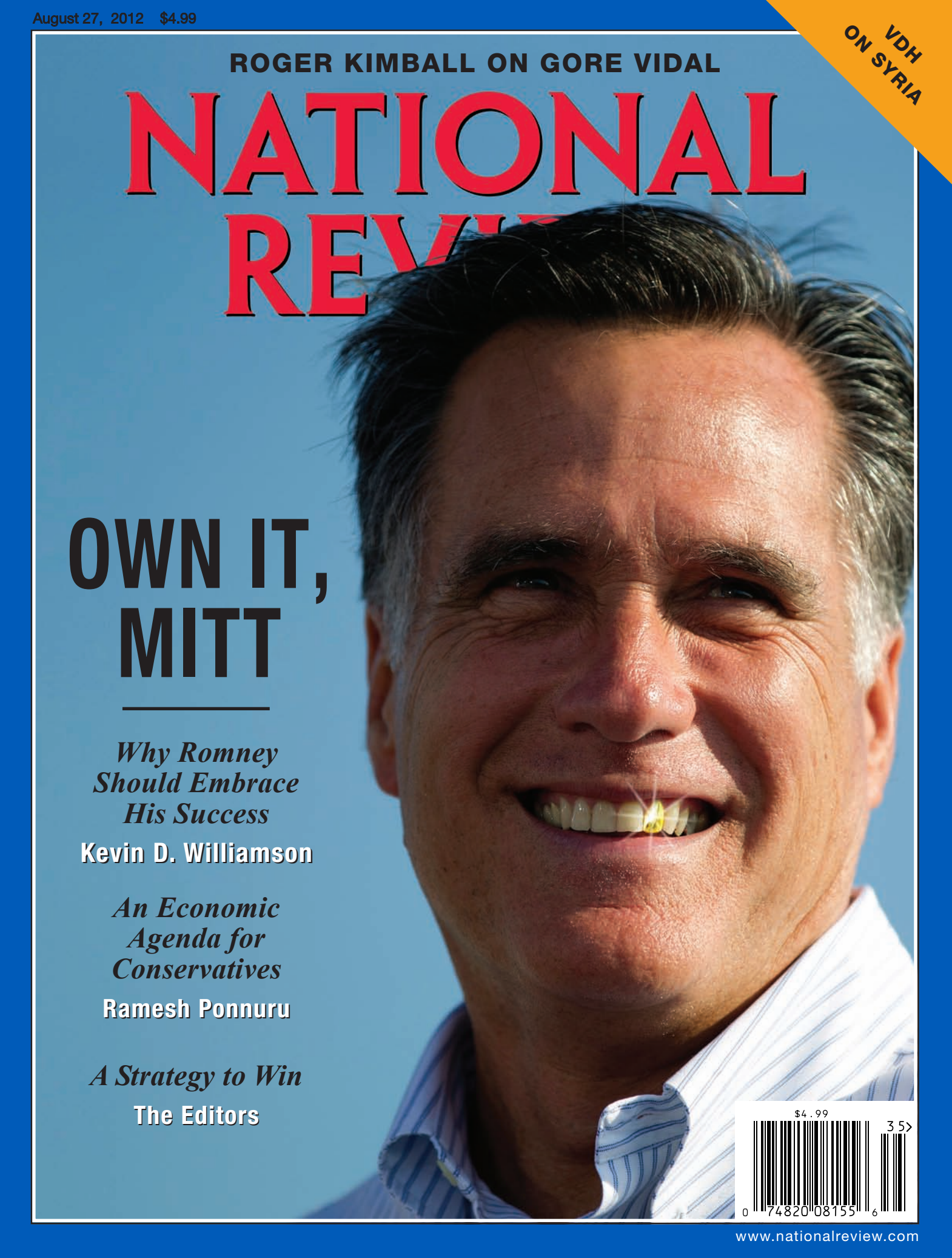

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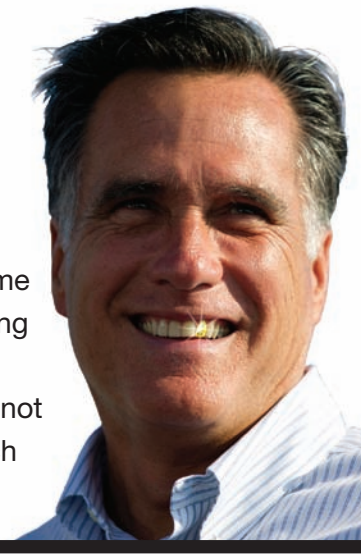
Like a Boss

It is time for Mitt Romney to get in touch with his inner rich guy. He should not be ashamed of being loaded; instead, he should have some fun with it. He will discover something that the Obama campaign has not quite figured out yet: Americans do not hate rich people. Americans love rich people. *Kevin D. Williamson*



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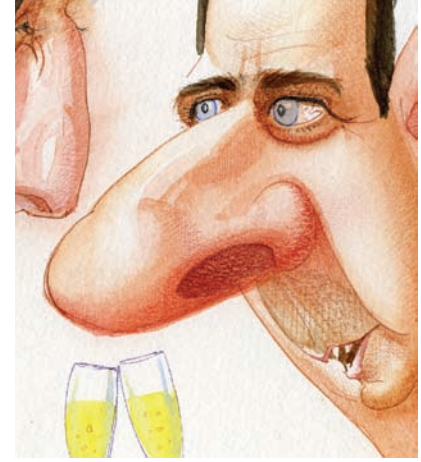

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NATIONAL REVIEW

AUGUST 27 ISSUE; PRINTED AUGUST 9

Letters

Deep Hunger

In "Quidditch, It's Not" (July 30), Andrew Stuttaford has some positive things to say about the Hunger Games trilogy, but in the end he dismisses the series as basically (shudder) "young adult" material: "The trilogy's numerous adult devotees need to move on to more challenging fare."

I must disagree. The initial book in the series, and the movie based on it, do tend to give that impression. However, as the story progresses through the next two volumes, it becomes a strangely and deeply moving (at least for this reader, who typically avoids fiction) study of the nature and means of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, and of the inevitable—and messy—fires of revolution that are kindled by these evils. The depiction of civil war in *Mockingjay* has a creepy similarity to the dispatches of new horrors coming out of Syria.

The determined and resilient (and also flawed) character of Katniss is cut from the same broad cloth as Patrick Henry and the American Revolution, the writings of Thoreau and Ed Abbey, and the Beethoven of the Third, Fifth, and Seventh Symphonies, the "Appassionata" sonata, and the "Egmont" overture. With her deprived upbringing, Katniss probably wouldn't know "Egmont" from egg salad, but it could be her anthem.

Robert C. Michael
Fort Collins, Colo.

ANDREW STUTTAFORD REPLIES: It's always good to hear that someone has really enjoyed a book, and the Hunger Games trilogy clearly did that for you. Beethoven and Patrick Henry: Any book that delivers those two to you has clearly done the trick. That said, while with a few reservations I thought that the trilogy worked well (contrary to you, I thought that its first leg—and the imaginative universe it created—was the best), I thought it worked well *for its target audience*. I struggle to see it as delivering much for adult readers. Yes, I'd agree that the depiction of the "messiness" of revolution had its moments, but I'd hope that should not be news to the older generation. Overall, I thought the author's attempts to tackle some quite big issues eventually degenerated into banal and mildly irritating sermonizing. And if I want that, I'll go to the *New York Times*. That said, I was also puzzled by the crossover success of the Harry Potter series, even more so, in fact, as that was aimed at an even younger set. Then again, I'm a *Doctor Who* fan. Who am I to judge?

Unsung Heroes

Thank you, Heather Mac Donald, for critiquing the media's coverage of the NYPD ("The Crime Reporting You Never Read," July 30). Seldom do we see someone defending the police so capably. I do not work in New York, but police officers everywhere are grateful.

As a police officer I have worked in the ghetto, and I have worked in one of the wealthiest areas of my state. Unfortunately my sense is that everyone hates the police until he needs them—and then still finds a way to hate them.

David Heater
Harbor Springs, Mich.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.

Government Melts Over 270 Million Silver Dollars

But collectors get an unexpected second chance

It's a ***crime.***

Most Americans living today have never held a hefty, gleaming U.S. silver dollar in their hands.

Where did they go? Well, in 1918, to provide aid to the British during WWI, the U.S. government melted down nearly half of the entire mintage–over 270 million silver dollars. If all those missing silver dollars could be stacked, they would tower over 400 miles into the sky! If laid in a chain, they would span 6,400-miles–enough to stretch from New York to LA more than two and a half times!

These vanished coins were not just any silver dollar–they were America's largest circulated coin, the beloved Morgan Silver Dollar. Each Morgan Dollar is struck from nearly an ounce of 90% fine silver and measures a massive 38.1mm in diameter. Morgan Silver Dollars were the engine of the American dream for decades. Created by famed American coin designer, George T. Morgan, they feature Lady Liberty's radiant profile and a majestic eagle, symbols of American strength and prosperity. Since their inception in 1878, they jingled in the pockets of famous and infamous Americans like John D. Rockefeller and Teddy Roosevelt, and desperados Jesse James and Al Capone. Today, Morgan Silver Dollars are the most collected coin in America.

Actual size is 38.1 mm

Lady Liberty takes a Final Bow
Just three years after the massive melt-down, the government gave the Morgan Silver Dollar a final chance to shine. In 1921, facing a serious shortage, the mint struck Morgan Silver Dollars for one more brief, historic year. Today, the last-ever 1921 Morgan Silver Dollar belongs in the hands of collectors, history buffs, or anyone who values the artistry and legacy of this American classic.

A Private Vault Gives Up its Secrets
Millions *more* silver dollars were melted over the past ninety years and today, private hoards account for virtually all the surviving Morgan Silver Dollars. We should know–we hunt for them every week. In fact, on one buying trip into America's heartland, as we were guided into a wealthy owner's massive private vault, we were thrilled to discover a hoard of nearly two thousand 1921 Morgan Silver Dollars, all in lustrous near uncirculated condition. We wasted no time in securing the entire treasure trove of silver dollars into our own vault.

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It's been estimated that less than 15% of all the Morgan Dollars ever minted have survived to the present day. And the number grows smaller with each passing year. The 1921 Morgan Silver Dollar is the last of its kind. But you can get one now before they're only a memory. Your chance to own this legend won't last long, so get yours today - and at a fantastic value!

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The Week

■ The Democrats are ramping up the invective. In just the first week of August, they called Romney a tax cheat, a murderer, and George W. Bush.

■ In a victory for principled conservatism, upstart Ted Cruz won the Texas Republican primary to fill the Senate seat being vacated by Kay Bailey Hutchison. Cruz defeated Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, a longtime Republican time-server anointed by Governor Rick Perry. Dewhurst's familiar name, party backing, and personal fortune had caused many to dismiss Cruz's campaign as a vanity project. Cruz (knock wood) is almost certainly headed to the Senate: His Democratic opponent is an obscure ex-legislator who has already been informally written off by the national party. Cruz was carried to victory in part by rowdy tea-party energy, in part by support from national conservative groups, including the Club for Growth, and in no small part by his obvious merits. Sarah Palin endorsed him, and NATIONAL REVIEW endorsed him (twice, in fact). He is a full-spectrum, ideas-oriented conservative with a compelling biography and a great deal of political talent. Texas is not Maine: It can sustain a conservative in the Senate, and now it will have one. The one niggling question about the race: With Sarah Palin, Rick Santorum, Ron Paul, the Club for Growth, James Dobson, Eagle Forum, FreedomWorks, Fred Smith of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Robert P. George, and the Tea Party Express all lined up on one side, why was the Republican party on the other?

■ One day, archeologists studying the ruins of our civilization will no doubt ponder the connection between homosexuality and chicken sandwiches. Chick-fil-A, a popular fast-food restaurant known for the friendly disposition of its employees and for staying closed on Sundays in deference to the Christian principles of its owners, found itself the target of a boycott when its CEO affirmed his support for traditional marriage in an interview with a Christian newspaper. That there is a healthy dose of Christian piety running through the enterprise is not news, nor is the company's history of giving donations to marriage-supporting organizations through its charitable foundation. The executive never mentioned gay marriage—he seemed at least as concerned about commonplace divorce—but his remarks were taken nevertheless as a slight to the demands of gay-rights activists, and a boycott was pronounced. The mayors of Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco threatened to use governmental powers to punish the business. It backfired: Chick-fil-A stores across the country did record business as Americans of diverse political persuasions came to dine in protest of the bullying. There were lines out the doors and full parking lots. Even liberal comedian Jon Stewart chastised the mayors for abusing their authority. (Need we even mention that those mayors were all Democrats?) The happy outcome is that it has been made clear to a great many Americans just who the aggressors are in the culture wars.

ROMAN GENN

■ Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader, said that a Bain investor had told him that Mitt Romney had paid no taxes for ten years. That's why, he said, Romney has not acceded to Democratic demands to release more tax returns. Reid said it was up to Romney to prove him wrong by releasing those returns. Then he said that he had heard this story from "a number of people." It's an unbelievable accusation. It's wildly implausible that Romney would have had no tax liability for a decade; no investor would have any reason to know about it; the shifting sourcing is suspicious. With the exception of Nancy Pelosi and Reid's own aides, nobody appears to believe Reid—and even Pelosi will vouch only for Reid's having heard the story, not for its being true. Several liberal pundits expressed skepticism; Richard Cohen denounced him. Reince Priebus, the head of the RNC, called Reid a "dirty liar" on national television. Under ordinary circumstances, Priebus's remark would be way out of bounds, but Reid has justified it.

■ Mitt Romney went on a three-country foreign swing, to Britain, Poland, and Israel. His choice of destinations said it all: our main ally throughout the last century, a firm ally since the collapse of Communism, and the only democracy in the Middle East. All three countries have been dissed, in various ways, by the Obama administration, which prefers resets with hostile tyrants. So the press reported it as Gaffe-apalooza.

Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid
Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

"Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry" – Dr. Babu, M.D. Board Certified ENT Physician

Dr. Cherukuri knew that hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer's dementia. **He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between $2000-$6000 for a pair, many of the doctor's patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri's goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the **"one-size-fits-most" reading glasses** available at drug stores.

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration from a Surprising Source

The doctor's inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. **"I felt that if someone could devise an affordable device like an iPhone® for about $200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price."**

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The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under $200. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

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"I have a $2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MD HearingAid PRO. in the right ear. ***I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids."***
— Dr. May, ENT Physician

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In Israel, Romney said that "culture makes all the difference" between Israeli success and Palestinian backwardness. Palestinian spokesmen squawked, as if corruption and a terror fetish were good things. In Poland, Romney's press secretary told badgering reporters to "shove it"—not bad advice. In Britain, Romney did raise hackles with the political establishment when he sympathetically noted London's Olympic problems. But Londoners have noticed them too: Maybe Romney should run for mayor. The special relationship can take it.

■ Charles Krauthammer found himself in a fact fight with the White House when he mentioned the strange case of the Churchill bust, which had resided in the Oval Office during the Bush administration but which President Obama sent back to the Brits. The story had been told before and is held up as an example of the current administration's inattention to the special relationship, but this time around, an odd thing happened: The White House claimed the episode never happened. It produced photographic evidence, and more than one enraged Democrat subsequently denounced Mr. Krauthammer as a "liar." But the photographic evidence turned out to be a different depiction of Churchill, and the British embassy confirmed that the bust had in fact been returned, just as Mr. Krauthammer had said. The White House apologized for its error, although not for its diplomacy.

■ The unemployment rate continued to climb in July, reaching 8.3 percent, with economists at the Fed predicting it will move slightly higher by year's end. The U.S. unemployment rate today stands at more than a full point above Canada's and more than three times the Swiss rate. The unemployment rate for young people seeking work is 12.7 percent overall, 14 percent for young Hispanics, and 22.3 percent for African Americans. The president recently gave a speech in which he said of the economy: "We tried our plan, and it worked." Not for 22.3 percent of young blacks it didn't.

■ Asked how well Obama would do among Jewish voters, Nancy Pelosi said that Republicans were "using Israel" to get votes when "what they really want are tax cuts for the wealthy." Jews who support Republicans, she said, are "being exploited. And they're smart people." Smarter, or at least more sophisticated about politics, than the House Democratic leader.

■ A new book by *Politico* reporter Glenn Thrush says that President Obama "has quickly developed a genuine disdain" for Romney, and that "scorn stoked Obama's competitive fire, got his head in the game, which came as a relief to some Obama aides who had seen his interest flag when he didn't feel motivated to crush the opposition." Maybe so. Scorn and disdain for one's opponents can, however, also breed complacency, something Obama's campaign has often seemed to show. Obama has never had to compete for middle-of-the-road voters (the financial crisis pushed them into his camp in 2008). We suspect, and certainly hope, that he will find this experience rather less enjoyable than his aides are predicting.

■ When the Democratic party's full platform committee meets on August 10, it will acknowledge what everyone already knows to be true. The *Washington Blade* reported and Barney Frank confirmed that a 15-member drafting committee has unanimously voted to include support for gay marriage in the Democratic party's official platform. Democrats have been more open in their desire to change the definition of marriage after President Obama came out on the subject, even though nobody really thought that his previous opposition to gay marriage was sincere. In his 1996 campaign for state senate, he said, "I favor legalizing same-sex marriage," and as president, he instructed his Justice Department not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act in federal courts. Like the president, the Democratic party has officially "evolved" on the issue. How long before it begins officially denouncing everyone who has not?

■ August 1, 2012, was a dark day for religious freedom in the United States; the Obama administration's requirement that all insurance plans cover contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs—the HHS mandate—went into effect. Some businesses have already won injunctions against the mandate, but there are many employers with religious objections to the mandate who lack the means to pursue legal relief. The American tradition of religious liberty holds that, in the absence of compelling reasons and when compelling alternatives exist, the government should not force any person to act against his sincerely held religious beliefs. The HHS mandate casts this principle aside as an obstacle to the progressive agenda and the president's reelection. It deserves a firm electoral rebuke.

The president recently gave a speech in which he said of the economy: 'We tried our plan, and it worked.' Not for 22.3 percent of young blacks it didn't.

■ As of this writing, relatively little is known about Wade Michael Page, the man who killed six in a Sikh temple south of Milwaukee before exchanging fire with police and taking his own life. He was an Army veteran, he played in a white-supremacist punk band, there are signs he recently broke up with a girlfriend, and his weapon of choice was a 9mm pistol. Without more information, it's difficult to tell what public policies, if any, could have prevented his rampage: Did he show clear signs of mental illness that should have disqualified him from owning a gun? Did he have a criminal record? Nonetheless, if past is precedent, it's not hard to predict how the conversation will unfold from here: The media will try to pin his neo-Nazi associations on the Right, there will be calls for more gun control, and plenty of newspaper accounts will mention that Wisconsin recently passed a concealed-carry

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law (even though there's no sign that Page had a permit, and it's hard to imagine that a lack of one would have stopped him). There will be more useful media coverage as well, such as of Satwant Singh Kaleka, the president of the temple—who died heroically, trying to stop the attack with a butter knife. Our thoughts are with the victims of this senseless atrocity.

■ Admiral William McRaven is the commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command. He planned and directed the operation that led to Osama bin Laden's death. When he was a three-star admiral, he still went on night raids with his SEALs. Another special-operations commander said that McRaven "can drive a knife through your ribs in a nanosecond." In other words, he is a serious sort of fellow. Thus it was not surprising

Vidal the Conservative?

WHAT do you call a person who loathed—and was loathed by—William F. Buckley Jr.; who despised the Judeo-Christian tradition as well as monotheism; who believed 9/11 was a setup; who wrote regularly for—and was warmly received by—the *New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, and other left-wing flagship publications; who endorsed Dennis Kucinich for president; who ran for Congress from New York as a Democrat with the endorsement of Paul Newman and Eleanor Roosevelt and, later, ran for the Senate, also as a Democrat, from California; who criticized the Democratic party from the left throughout the Vietnam War and beyond; who described himself as an "anti-anti-Communist" at the height of the Cold War; and who, upon his death, was eulogized warmly by nearly the entire liberal and leftist establishments, here and abroad, as a national treasure?

SIPA VIA AP

Why, a conservative, of course.

So argues David Greenberg, the in-house historian at *Slate* magazine.

Greenberg's argument is a classic example of getting any number of trees right, but, after adding them all up, seeing—instead of a forest—some otherworldly landscape devoid of arboreal contours of any kind. His case comes in two parts. The first is that Vidal once said he considered himself a conservative. The second is that Vidal was an ass in the grand progressive tradition.

Greenberg—rightly—traces Vidal's intellectual roots back to a time when many progressives saw no difficulty in being elitists, racists, and opponents of mass society in every regard. Greenberg—again rightly—also notes that Vidal was a creature of great privilege, which helps explain Vidal's overweening sense of entitlement and resentment at a world that didn't defer to him as the hedonistic poet-prefect of ancient Rome he believed himself to be. "Vidal," writes Greenberg, "was a paradigmatic, almost stereotypical representative of the traditional American elite—WASP lineage, prep schools, money, connections. Fashioning himself a latter-day Henry Adams, a valiant upholder of a civilization under siege . . . "

One might quibble that the author of the first major American novel celebrating homosexuality, who believed that "the great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism," might not exactly deserve the label of paradigmatic, "almost stereotypical," representative of the traditional American WASP elite (that is one Herculean "almost"), or that a man who became known as the "sage of Ravello"—that's Ravello, Italy, not Ravello, Ind.—might not be overly inspired by American isolationism. But whatever, as the kids say.

Greenberg quotes the brilliant but problematic historian Richard Hofstadter, who wrote that the two branches of progressivism split in two. One branch, the good guys, went on to create New Deal liberalism. The other bloc went cranky and nativist. "Somewhere along the way a large part of the Populist-Progressive tradition has turned sour, become illiberal and ill-tempered," wrote Hofstadter. That, too, is true enough (or true enough for the space available here). But it's another thing altogether to say it became conservative. It became nationalistic, to be sure, but it also became radically leftist in almost every objective measure. Gerald Nye and Hiram Johnson (whom Greenberg names) didn't stop being progressives because of their isolationism or nativism, anymore than Father Coughlin stopped being a leftist after he broke with FDR.

What is fascinating—though not surprising—is that a liberal like Greenberg can see that Vidal was a crank and fraud in so many regards, but he's perfectly willing to take Vidal at his word when he called himself "conservative." Odder still is that, while Greenberg acknowledges that Vidal was a "bigot," crank, and fool for nearly his whole life, he seems utterly uncurious about the fact that the Left loved him as one of its own and the Right saw him for what he was.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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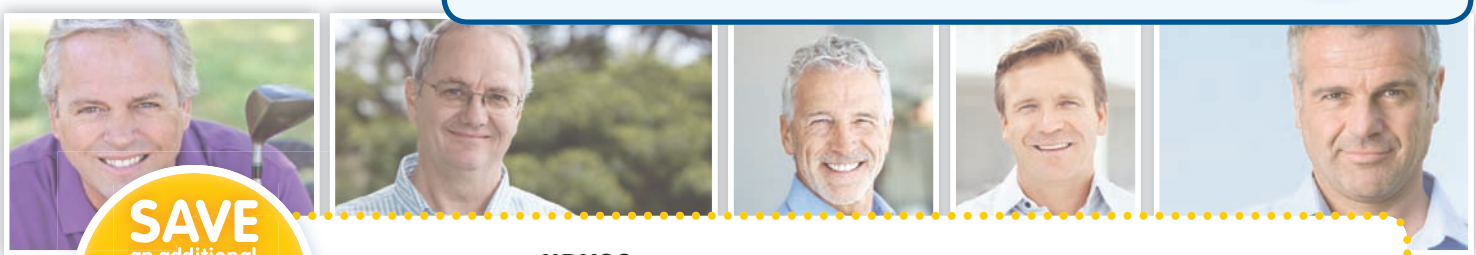

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when he candidly announced that the leaks regarding the bin Laden raid and other special operations had to stop, "because sooner or later it is going to cost people their lives or it's going to cost us our national security." He should be heeded.

■ According to the WARN Act, which was passed in 1988, most employers have to give 60 days of notice before mass layoffs. If Congress doesn't find a way to reduce the deficit soon, the "sequestration" process will force enormous defense cuts at the beginning of 2013—which raises the question of whether defense contractors should send layoff notices in November, right before the election. The Obama administration, rather unsurprisingly, determined that the WARN Act does not apply here because the cuts might not happen. In fact, it did more than that: The Department of Labor actually discouraged such notices, calling them "inappropriate" and claiming they "would be sudden and dramatic." Congressional Republicans tried to force the issue with legislation, but were blocked by the Democratic Senate. If the cuts indeed happen, contractors who follow the administration's advice could find themselves facing lawsuits or delaying needed layoffs; in many cases the law forbids layoffs that aren't preceded by the full warning period. But then again, the Obama administration has never had a problem rewriting laws by executive fiat, so we're sure they'll come up with something—if they're still around come January.

Charlie Summers

SUMMERS: RON EDMONDS/AP

■ Outgoing Republican senator Olympia Snowe has not exactly been known for her party loyalty while in office—and she's solidifying that reputation with her behavior in this fall's Maine Senate race to fill her seat. Republican secretary of state Charlie Summers will be facing independent former governor Angus King and a Democratic candidate, with King holding a commanding lead in the polls and fundraising. Snowe has announced that she will not be endorsing Summers or sharing her $2 million war chest. Summers did decline to support Snowe when she faced a possible tea-party challenge if she ran for reelection, so Snowe is understandably less than enamored of him. Nonetheless, Snowe is immensely popular and powerful in Maine, and if she had an ounce of party loyalty or conservative conviction, she would offer crucial support for Summers in his general-election fight to defeat King, who will almost surely caucus with the Democrats. Instead, she plans to donate her war chest to a "multi-candidate committee" that will aim to reduce partisanship and promote moderates in Congress. Angus King must be delighted.

■ Tennessee's Democratic Senate primary has been won by an inconvenient candidate, an unabashed social conservative. The party is right to be concerned that the nominee, Mark Clayton, does not hew to much of the party'Maine secretary of state Charlie Summerss platform. But they have singled out their nominee as a bigot for his opposition to gay marriage. The Democratic party might do well to recall that 73 percent of Rocky Top residents share this opposition.

■ In the Chick-fil-A flap, New York mayor Michael Bloomberg was one of the few liberal politicians to defend the First Amendment rights of the fast-food chain, but that doesn't mean he's done playing nanny to a population of 8 million New Yorkers. His "Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative," sponsored by the World Health Organization, will pressure women to breast-feed instead of giving their babies formula. At participating hospitals, mothers will have to request formula from nurses, who in turn will be required to give a stern lecture about the advantages of breast feeding, get the formula from a secured location, and keep records of the transaction. Bloomberg is correct that breast feeding is beneficial. He is wrong to force this view on new mothers.

■ Wall Street investment banks are demanding that their European partners restructure contracts to ensure that Greek and Spanish obligations will be repaid in euros in the event of a breakup of the euro zone. Nobody wants to be the first to find out what a new drachma is worth. Likewise, the banks are demanding collateral that cannot be converted into a new currency in the event of a Greek or Spanish exit, and contracts that specify that disputes will be handled under London or New York law. Given that Wall Street's reputation for risk mitigation has taken a beating in the past few years, this may or may not be a significant indicator, but then indicators of the euro zone's stresses are not rare. But Wall Street is buckling its seatbelt, and so should we all.

■ The defection of Syrian prime minister Riad Hijab is another twist in the country's conflict. The issue is no longer political, if ever it was, but sectarian. Bashar al-Assad and his regime are Alawites or heterodox Shiites, a small minority fighting to maintain their rule over the Sunni majority. A Sunni, Hijab had had previous spells as a junior minister and as governor of Latakia. Two short months ago, he was promoted to prime minister because Assad needed a Sunni to cover for Alawite supremacy and thought he had a loyalist. Hijab has proved an unwilling collaborator. Rebels smuggled him and his family out to Jordan, whereupon Hijab declared in the expected high style that he had "joined the ranks of the freedom and dignity revolution." Although Assad at once pretended that he had fired Hijab, he could not hide that he had received a resounding slap in the face and may now have a Sunni opponent with a plausible claim to replace him. Outrage follows outrage, as Assad tries to recover ground. Slowly the persistence of the rebels may change the balance of power in favor of the Sunnis, but Assad and the Alawites show themselves prepared to stop at nothing.

■ In February, three women belonging to the Russian punk band Pussy Riot tried to sing an anti-Putin song from the altar

of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Their intent was ostensibly religious—they called on the Virgin Mary to rebuke Putin—but their means outré: They wore neon masks and screamed. Disturbing the peace—a misdemeanor. But they were charged with "hooliganism," which could get them seven years. Western rockers, from Pete Townshend to Madonna, have spoken up for them, and Putin himself has suggested they should not be judged "harshly." The protesters had valid targets: Putin's late-phase authoritarian regime, and the Russian Orthodox church's collusion with it. In the midst of Pussy Riot's travails, Patriarch Kirill was spotted wearing a $30,000 gold Breguet watch in a photo on the church's website. That represents a lot of tithes—and a lot of rendering unto Caesar.

■ As it has been for more than 50 years, the news from Cuba is tragic and infuriating. On July 22, two Cuban dissidents, Oswaldo Payá and Harold Cepero, were killed in a car crash. From what can honestly be learned, they were rammed and driven off the road. Two weeks before, the same thing had happened to Payá. This dissident seemed to have awfully bad luck. On July 22, two democratic politicians from Europe were traveling with Payá and Cepero. They were Ángel Carromero of Spain and Aron Modig of Sweden. They had come to help Cuba's peaceful dissidents, struggling for freedom and democracy. Both survived the crash. They were then held incommunicado by state security for about a week. After this period, which must have been harrowing, they apologized to the Cuban state for their illegal activities; Carromero, for good measure, confessed to causing the accident himself. Modig was allowed to return to Sweden. Once there, he said he could not speak freely, for fear of harming Carromero—who is still being held in Cuba. They have charged him with vehicular manslaughter. He is now, in effect, a hostage, same as Alan Gross, the American aid worker who has been imprisoned since 2009. The message of the Cuban dictatorship is clear: No one had better lift a finger for the island's democracy movement. Since it took office, the Obama administration has claimed that its kinder, gentler approach to the dictatorship would yield results. One sees the results.

■ China has planted a military garrison on the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, about as far from Hainan province on China's southernmost tier as Barbados is from Miami. The archipelago is Taiwanese territory, at least according to Taipei. So the longstanding fear that the People's Liberation Army will one day storm Taiwan may be exaggerated: Beijing appears to have decided on an incremental approach. Other countries in the region—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines—dispute China's extravagant claims over most of the South China Sea, which has oil reserves. Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other U.S. allies in the Pacific welcome the Pentagon's decision to deploy most of the Navy's fleet to Asian waters by 2020. But what the Defense Department aims to accomplish through the pivot to Asia, the White House would undermine through cuts in defense spending: A double-minded administration is unstable in all its ways.

■ Some 700 million Indians were without electricity during a two-day blackout, and 300 million remained without power after New Delhi declared the crisis resolved. India's electrical grid is a gigantic tragedy of the commons: The system is politically owned and politically run, and consequently between one-third and one-half of all electricity generated in India is stolen. Massive investment is needed, but nobody wants to invest when half the juice is going to get hijacked. The solution to the original tragedy of the commons was property rights, and it still is.

■ For a reminder that nothing is impossible in politics, one needs to look no further than the improbable ascent of London mayor Boris Johnson. Currently presiding over the London Olympics, "Boris," as he is known to one and all, has elevated himself from figure of fun to serious political contender. Once a critic both of Islam, which he called "medieval" and "vicious," and of gay marriage, which he compared to polygamy, Johnson has reinvented himself as a moderate, appropriating the milquetoast political correctness of Tony Blair's "Cool Britannia." It is paying off: Johnson easily won a second mayoral term and appears to have his eye on the premiership. With this in mind, he is doing what he can to recruit Rupert Murdoch to the cause, openly hosting him as his special guest at the Olympics. And, in July, the *Telegraph* reported that he was approached by a group of disgruntled donors to the Conservative party. Johnson once famously said that he had "as much a chance of becoming prime minister as of being decapitated by a Frisbee." The British might well start looking out for frisbees.

DANIEL BEREHULAK/POOL/AP

■ The Olympic opening ceremony was an impressive production, but it contained its fair share of oddities. Many of them reflected the eccentric British sense of humor, but others were less salutary. Among this latter group was a curious tribute to socialized medicine, which was shoehorned into the show without context or excuse. The National Health Service is the closest thing that modern Britain has to a national religion, and the spectacle of hundreds of nurses running around making beds in front of a sick baby was little short of an offering to the Gods of the Department of Health. That government policy can transform the character of a people was never made more obvious than by the exhibition of tens of thousands of putatively free citizens rapturously applauding an inefficient bureaucracy. Americans might take heed: In 50 years, that could be you.

■ At the Stockholm Olympics 100 years ago, Jim Thorpe, All-American college football player, won gold medals in the pentathlon and decathlon. His record-setting decathlon was the first time he had ever competed in the event. Back home he went on to play professional football and baseball. The unresting engine of excellence paradoxically makes such all-around careers impossible. Athletes specialize early and train relentlessly. The unscrupulous seek advantage in drugs, sometimes at the command of totalitarian states. Ye Shiwen, the Chinese

swimming prodigy, insists she is dope-free, and indeed tests clean. She still comes out of a Communist athlete factory. Now Oscar Pistorius, the South African blade-runner, sprints on carbon-fiber prosthetics. We idealize what Housman called "the early-laurelled head," while trying to adjust our rules to new modes of competition, both fair and foul.

NASA/JPL-CALTECH

■ *Curiosity*, which weighs a ton, landed on its feet, gracefully, in Gale Crater on the surface of Mars earlier this month. Seven minutes later it transmitted a color photo of its surroundings on the surface of the Red Planet. "A miracle of engineering," a lead scientist on the NASA project called the performance of the Mars rover. Its job is to gather information about the planet's inorganic chemistry and about its organic chemistry, if it has one, which it might. Intelligent life, of course, is another matter. It's doubtful that *Curiosity* will find that on Mars. That there is plenty of it on Earth is what the mission has succeeded in showing us so far.

■ The scene could have come straight out of a movie: A dog, barking eagerly, runs up to its owner, who says, "What's that, Lassie? Two little girls lost? And . . . you want Taco Bell?" Fajitas all around were in order in an Atlanta suburb after two young girls got lost in the woods and a neighbor's chihuahua (named not Lassie but, inevitably, Bell), though barely able to see over a daffodil, tracked them down. The rescue was reminiscent of an incident in Los Angeles last year when a tobacco shop's chihuahua chased off two faint-hearted robbers. It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog.

■ Friends of freedom and partisans of clear thinking paused to celebrate the centenary of the late Milton Friedman, whose scholarship deeply influenced economics and whose popular *Free to Choose* series of television programs and books provided millions of people around the world with a crash course in liberty. He was a tutor to Ronald Reagan and an adviser to such other heads of state as had the wisdom to take his counsel. (Too few acted on it.) He was tireless in arguing that the chief virtue of the free market is that it is the only reliable method for alleviating the mass poverty that is the natural state of man. He conclusively disassembled the regnant myth of the Great Depression (that it was a failure of capitalism rather than a failure of government policy), revolutionized monetary economics, and invented important statistical techniques in his spare time. His key social insight—"Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself"—remains ferociously relevant, perhaps more so now than in his day. When Milton Friedman won the Nobel Prize in economics, it was the stature of the prize that was elevated, not his.

■ John Keegan was a British historian who made people think hard and long about war. In his view, human beings in all eras had fought to settle issues and always would. His books excelled in bringing to life not just the great commanders but the men in the line. He would have liked to have been a soldier himself but as a boy he had orthopedic tuberculosis and had to spend years in hospital. All his life he was in pain, supporting himself with an elegant cane and never complaining. After two decades teaching at Sandhurst, the British military academy, he became the military-affairs editor of the *Telegraph*. Out of principle he supported the war in Vietnam and the invasion of Iraq, and his opinion mattered because of the historical perspective that informed it. However just a war might be, though, he remained a humanist who deplored the brutality of battle. Aged 78, he died at his home in England. R.I.P.

■ Gore Vidal's status as a literary lion was an instance of grade inflation. He managed to persuade literary folk that he knew something about politics, and political folk that he knew something about literature. Yet each pretense was true only up to a certain low point. As a political commentator and historian, he wasted himself on conspiracy theories; his literary oeuvre comprised hackery in various genres—novels, detective stories, screenplays, memoir, essays—only a handful of essays rising to real excellence. He was a tub thumper for homosexuality who sneered at AIDS; a self-styled old republican who shrugged at totalitarians, from Nazis and Japanese to the Soviet Union; an aristocrat who pursued airtime with the zeal of the Kardashians; a wit whose only note was bitchiness; and a creator who created only one character, himself, and that an unpleasant one. Dead at 86. R.I.P.

POLITICS

Romney's Road Ahead

It is a season of second-guessing for the Romney campaign. He has been behind in the polls fairly consistently, both in the nation as a whole and in swing states. Journalists are emphasizing his gaffes and alleged gaffes. Conservatives want him to pick a running mate who will supply the charisma they do not find in him.

The candidate has made his mistakes, to be sure, but most of the commentary is scanting his strengths. The race remains tight, and Obama is below 50 percent both nationally and in the swing states. Romney is running a competent campaign that raises funds effectively, develops its messages and mostly stays on them, and can be trusted to execute its strategies well.

Conservatives are nervous, however, because it is not clear how Romney plans to close the gap in the polls. Undecided voters may break against an incumbent with a lackluster economic record, but hoping that they will do so is not a strategy. If Romney and his aides understand this point—and they might—they have not telegraphed it.

The campaign's message could be strengthened. Its principal argument is that the economy is weak, and therefore President Obama has failed. Blaming the weak economy on Obama has two political defects. First, it underestimates the public's willingness to cut him slack because he inherited an economic crisis. Second, implying that all would be well if

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"Nice watch," I said, pointing to his and holding up mine. He nodded like we belonged to the same club. We did, but he literally paid 100 times more for his membership. Bigshot bragged about his five-figure purchase, a luxury heavyweight from the titan of high-priced timepieces. I told him that mine was the ***Stauer Corso, a 27-jewel automatic classic now available for only $179.*** And just like that, the man was at a loss for words.

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Obama's policies were rolled back lends credence to the Obama campaign's relentless attack on Romney as the second coming of George W. Bush.

Better for Romney to acknowledge that we have had some long-building problems in addition to ones of more recent creation, and to pledge to fix them. Our dysfunctional health-care, tax, and immigration systems long predate Obama even if he has made them worse. All need conservative reforms to serve the country's interests. So do our entitlement programs. Romney need not (and should not) repudiate Bush. He needs instead to make a case that transcends the Obama-vs.-Bush debate that the president is obviously desperate to have.

Some Republican strategists say that for Romney to offer his own agenda would be to take attention away from where it should go: to Obama's record. That advice is more simplistic than shrewd. To hold out the possibility of constructive reforms of American life is to underscore Obama's failure.

This kind of campaign would be in keeping with Romney's career of successful turnarounds. And it's a campaign that could win.

NATIONAL REVIEW

Frances Bronson, R.I.P.

Frances Bronson, WFB Jr.'s secretary from 1968 until his death, passed away on August 1, after a long and tough battle with emphysema. She was 81 years old.

She was, in many ways, the perfect Girl Friday to the founder of National Review. Perhaps a better metaphor would be: the Mary Poppins of the modern conservative movement.

What a formidable portcullis at the castle drawbridge she was. Her pronunciation of "Mister *Buckley's* office" could instill trepidation in the stoutest heart, and was heard over the years by presidents, prime ministers, the great and good, and the not so great and good. But beneath the rime of frost on those vocal cords were great warmth, a merry soul, and a sharp, fun-loving wit. If you made Frances giggle, you felt that you'd passed some important existential test.

She came on board just as WFB's fame was cresting. *Firing Line* had launched in 1966; WFB had made the cover of *Time* in 1967; his famous exchange with Gore Vidal on television took place the year she arrived at NR.

Frances's plate—or, alas, ashtray—was never empty; her professional life consisted of dealing with a groaning smorgasbord of Buckley detail: NR; books (over 55); columns (nearly 6,000); *Firing Line* tapings (over 1,500); the fortnightly editorial dinners; the annual decampment to Switzerland; sailboats; family; godchildren; nieces and nephews (over 50); friends (countless); Cavalier King Charles spaniels. It was endless, but all was handled with cool and calm and British phlegm. Anyone capable of coping with the hyper-dervish world of WFB could probably have planned the Normandy invasion—in her spare time.

Frances was a splendid and caring friend, and devoted to her own large family. She never married but, being the second child in a family of eight, did not lack for siblings and nieces and nephews, upon whom she doted. At the end, her bedside was crowded with those whom she had loved, and who returned her love, with interest.

I visited with her the night before she died, and the next morning called to tell her, "You outlasted Gore Vidal!" Her nephew Howard reported that this made her laugh. I shall miss hearing my beloved "Aunty Frances" laugh. She was so very dear to me, as she was indeed to so many. Her passing brings almost to an end the old school of NR. R.I.P.

—CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

'He's driving me—" Dramatic pause. "*Insane.*" Or gaga. Or cuckoo. *He* was WFB, editor of this magazine, but also columnist, TV host, author, speaker, and (in his spare time) hard partier and sportsman. *Me* was Frances Bronson, WFB's right hand—"secretary" does not comprehend what it took to choreograph WFB's numerous activities—from 1968 until his death 40 years later.

She came up the hard way, born into a large and loving but indigent family of Jewish Cockneys. She auditioned for the D'Oyly Carte company and was asked to come back in a year, but the charms of big-city life and high-powered employment won out. She served, and tamed, a number of bosses in England, Canada, and America until Harry Elmlark, the agent for WFB's syndicated column, put the two of them together.

Her life history concealed an irony. In England, where everyone is born with a class Geiger counter, her origins would be spotted a mile away. But to Yanks, her accent suggested imperious Plantagenets. She used it to cut through tangles and deflate stuffed shirts.

She was thoughtful, attentive, and kind. Everyone who overlapped with her at NR has some story of her goodwill; same with her many siblings, nephews, and nieces. She loved music, dining, reading, and talking about all three. She was beautiful—a bright-eyed, whip-sharp girl; a sultry, lustrous woman; a lively old lady.

Dead at 81. R.I.P.

—RICHARD BROOKHISER

NATIONAL REVIEW ARCHIVES

WFB and Frances Bronson

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The Romney tribe

Like a Boss

When it comes to being a rich guy, Mitt Romney should own it

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

WHAT do women want? The conventional biological wisdom is that men select mates for fertility, while women select for status—thus the commonness of younger women's pairing with well-established older men but the rarity of the converse. The Demi Moore–Ashton Kutcher model is an exception—the only 40-year-old woman Jack Nicholson has ever seen naked is Kathy Bates in that horrific hot-tub scene. Age is cruel to women, and subordination is cruel to men. Ellen Kullman is a very pretty woman, but at 56 years of age she probably would not turn a lot of heads in a college bar, and the fact that she is the chairman and CEO of Dupont isn't going to change that.

It's a good thing Mitt Romney doesn't hang out in college bars.

You want off-the-charts status? Check out the curriculum vitae of one Willard M. Romney: $200 million in the bank (and a hell of a lot more if he didn't give so much away), apex alpha executive, CEO, chairman of the board, governor, bishop, boss of everything he's ever touched. Son of the same, father of more. It is a curious scientific fact (explained in evolutionary biology by the Trivers-Willard hypothesis—*Willard*, notice) that high-status animals tend to have more male offspring than female offspring, which holds true across many species, from red deer to mink to *Homo sap*. The offspring of rich families are statistically biased in favor of sons—the children of the general population are 51 percent male and 49 percent female, but the children of the *Forbes* billionaire list are 60 percent male. Have a gander at that Romney family picture: five sons, zero daughters. Romney has 18 grandchildren, and they exceed a 2:1 ratio of grandsons to granddaughters (13:5). When they go to church at their summer-vacation home, the Romney clan makes up a third of the congregation. He is basically a tribal chieftain.

Professor Obama? Two daughters. May as well give the guy a cardigan. And fallopian tubes.

From an evolutionary point of view, Mitt Romney should get 100 percent of the female vote. *All of it*. He should get Michelle Obama's vote. You can insert your own Mormon polygamy joke here, but the ladies do tend to flock to successful executives and entrepreneurs. Saleh al-Rajhi, billionaire banker, left behind 61 children when he cashed out last year. We don't do harems here, of course, but Romney is exactly the kind of guy who in another time and place would have the option of maintaining one. He's a boss. Given that we are no longer roaming the veldt for the most part, money is a reasonable stand-in for social status. Romney's net worth is more than that of the last eight U.S. presidents combined. He set up a trust for his grandkids and kicked in about seven times Barack Obama's net worth, which at $11.8 million is not inconsiderable but probably less than Romney's tax bill in a good year. If he hadn't given away so much money to his church, charities, and grandkids, Mitt Romney would have more money than Jay-Z.

It is time for Mitt Romney to get in touch with his inner rich guy.

Some Occupy Wall Street types, believing it to be the height of wit, have begun to spell Romney's name "Rmoney." But Romney can do better than that—put it in all caps: R-MONEY. Jay-Z can keep his puny little lowercase letters and the Maybach: R-MONEY doesn't own a flashy car with rims, R-MONEY does billion-dollar deals with Keystone Automotive and Delphi. You want to make it rain? R-MONEY is going to make it storm, like biblical. Rappers boast about their fat stacks: R-MONEY's fat stacks live in a beachfront house of their own in the Hamptons, and the bricks in that house are made from tightly bound hundred-dollar bills. You have a ton of money? R-MONEY has 200 metric tons of money if he decides to keep it in cash.

Romney is forever saying—and God bless him for this—that we shouldn't punish success, that we shouldn't discourage risk-taking and entrepreneurship, and that we shouldn't resent wealth. He celebrates the successful businessman and the free market that makes such success possible. And then he goes around acting like somebody who gives a fig about the price of a gallon of gas as anything other than a statistical abstraction on some spreadsheet somewhere or a political opportunity. This isn't just cheap campaign theater: In 2010, Romney and his wife were flying back from the Vancouver winter Olympics when a guy flipped out on the plane and took a swing at him. Romney

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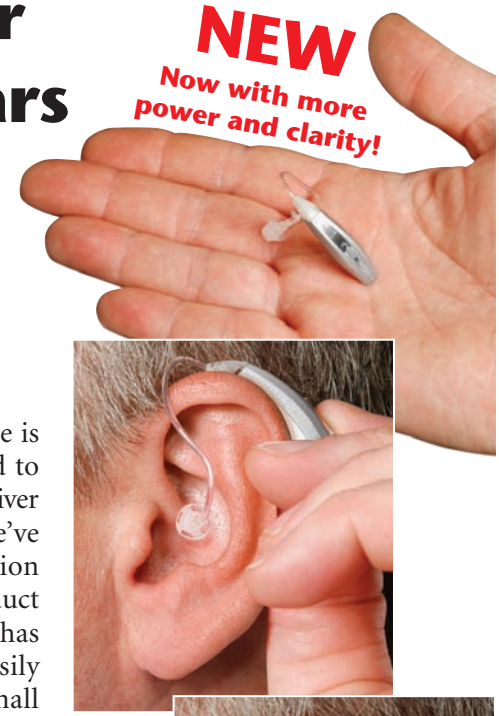

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had reminded the guy to return his seat to the full upright and locked position before take-off—that's our Mitt, no? Romney laughed the episode off and didn't press charges, but the real news is this: Romney was flying commercial. In fact, he was sitting in the 15th row of an Embraer ERJ-190, which on Canadian Air means he was flying coach. *Economy class!* No normal person flies economy class if he can afford not to—and Romney can afford his own airliner. Fly like a G6? Romney could buy his-and-hers Gulfstreams and still have more money left over than Gwyneth Paltrow and the McCains combined. And John McCain famously has more houses than he can count.

I suppose he's practicing bourgeois virtues and whatnot, and we conservatives probably should cheer that. Hurrah. Now Romney should quit pretending that he's an ordinary schmo with ordinary schmo problems and start living a little larger. He should not be ashamed of being loaded; instead, he should have some fun with it. He will discover something that the Obama campaign has not quite figured out yet: Americans do not hate rich people. Americans love rich people. Americans will sit on their couches and watch billionaire Donald Trump *fire people* on television—for fun. Nobody hates Jay Leno for owning seven Aston Martins and 17 Lamborghinis—people go to his garage's website (of course his garage has its own website) to ogle his cars and leave appreciative remarks. (Like President Obama, Leno's big on green cars: He's got 39 of them, which probably negates the environmental benefit of buying a green car, but whatever.) There are lots of children of rich and powerful men who do not turn out to be 0.01 percent as successful as Mitt Romney has. Meghan McCain's father is a rich guy and a failed presidential candidate, just like Mitt's. Anybody think Meghan McCain's life is going to turn out like Mitt Romney's?

Romney should try to find out whatever the hell happened to fellow gazillionaire William Weld, last seen nodding off in the lunchroom at McDermott Will & Emery, though by no means should he let it be known that he is seeking the advice of another moderate Republican ex-governor of Massachusetts. Weld has occasionally disastrous political judgment (he endorsed Romney in the 2008 primary but endorsed Barack Obama in the general) but he carried off the rich-guy thing with real panache. When it was suggested that his aristocratic background would prevent his understanding the problems of the common man, Weld retorted that his family "arrived in 1630 with only the shirts on their back . . . and 2,000 pounds of gold." Romney, the millionaire executive/governor/presidential-candidate son of a millionaire executive/governor/presidential candidate, would be blessed to be as comfortable in his own pampered skin as Weld was.

It isn't just that he has money—it's how he got the money. Sure, he grew up rich—Dad was the CEO of American Motors. (Hey, where was *their* bailout?) But Mitt didn't inherit his fortune: He gave away everything his father left him, establishing a school of public management in his father's memory. (Old-school patriarchs build monuments to their fathers.) Why would he do a thing like that? Because he didn't need the money: "I figured we had enough of our own," he explained. And then some. George Romney made his money by being a boss—a leader. Mitt Romney has been the same thing. When things went wrong, people put Romney in charge of them—at Bain, at the Olympics, at a hundred companies he helped turn around or restructure. Bain is a financial firm, but Romney wasn't some Wall Street bank-monkey with a pitch book. He was the guy who fired you. He was a boss, like his dad, and like his sons probably will be. Barack Obama was never in charge of anything of any significance until the delicate geniuses who make up the electorate of this fine republic handed him the keys to the Treasury and the nuclear football because we were tired of Frenchmen sneering at us when we went on vacation. Obama made his money in part through political connections—no, I *don't* think Michelle Obama was worth nearly 400 grand a year—and by authoring two celebrity memoirs, his sole innovation in life having been to write the memoir first and become a celebrity second. Can you imagine Barack Obama trying to pull off a hostile takeover without Rahm Emanuel holding his diapers up for him? Impossible.

Elections are not about public policy. They aren't even about the economy. Elections are tribal, and tribes are—Occupy types, cover your delicate ears—ruthlessly hierarchical. Somebody has to be the top dog. As much as we'd all like to forget Al Gore ever existed, it's worth keeping in mind that ridiculous episode in which Naomi Wolf tried to teach him to be more of an overdog. *Slate*, after poking fun at her advising him to wear more earth-toned suits, reported it thus:

> Wolf's non-sartorial advice to Gore—and to President Clinton before him, as an unpaid adviser—is even stranger. She coached each to emphasize his manly strengths, relying on hoary, tired gender stereotypes. She reportedly told Gore that he is the "beta male" who must fight Clinton's "alpha male" for dominance. And as an adviser to the Clinton White House, she informed the president that the nation was searching for a "good-father role model" to "build a house" for the country. "I will not let anyone or anything touch the bedrock," Wolf wrote in one memo for him. "I will DEFEND/PROTECT the foundation." This came only three years after the publication of her book *Fire with Fire*, in which she savaged Republican spin doctors for positioning George Bush as "the reassuring arch-patriarch."

Reassuring arch-patriarch—maybe one with enough sons and grandsons to form a pillaging band of marauders? Hillary Rodham Clinton told us that it takes a village, and Mitt Romney showed us how to populate a village with thriving offspring. *Newsweek*, which as of this writing is still in business, recently ran a cover photo of Romney with the headline: "The Wimp Factor: Is He Just Too Insecure to Be President?" Look at his fat stacks. Look at that mess of sons and grandchildren. Look at a picture of Ann Romney on her wedding day and that cocky smirk on his face. What exactly has Mitt Romney got to be insecure about? That he's not as prodigious a patriarch as Ramses II or as rich as Lakshmi Mittal? I bet he sleeps at night and never worries about that. He has done everything right in life, and he should own it. And by own it, I mean put it on the black card and stow it in the G6—or at least in first class, for Pete's sake. **NR**

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Four Challenges

The long and short of the economy

BY RAMESH PONNURU

Whoever wins the presidential election will have political responsibility for an economy beset by four distinct problems. At the moment neither party has a compelling answer to them.

The first challenge is, of course, the weakness of the recovery. Unemployment remains high. Worse, it has been high for a long time. The longer people are out of a job, the less productive they become—and the less likely to stay in the labor force at all. Long-term unemployment thus has even longer-term consequences.

Second, the federal government is running a very high deficit and the future looks bleak, largely because of the escalating costs of entitlement programs. Many state and local governments also have pension debts they have no money set aside to repay.

Third, take-home pay has been stagnant for most people even during years when the economy has expanded. This stagnation has reduced Americans' confidence in the country's future.

Fourth, it is possible that the long-term growth rate that the country is capable of reaching has declined. The jury is out on this question. The Great Depression saw similar views become conventional wisdom, only to be discredited in the high-growth postwar decades. It would be risky, though, for a leader to assume that trend growth will be as high in the future as it has been in the past.

Liberals have offered answers to these challenges. To kick-start the economy they would provide short-term fiscal stimulus and help underwater homeowners refinance their mortgages. To address the long-term deficit they would raise taxes and cut health-care spending. They would achieve the latter by, for example, having federal health-care programs stop paying for procedures that a board of experts considers wasteful. They expect these sorts of measures to drive down inflation in health-care markets generally, thus allowing firms to give workers raises instead of spending the money to pay for ever-more-expensive health-insurance policies. To improve the long-run growth rate they would, for example, spend money on improving the country's infrastructure and allow more legal immigration.

These policies seem either unlikely to achieve their objectives, likely to worsen other problems, or both. Will the federal government really spend extra infrastructure dollars efficiently, or will it throw money at high-speed-rail systems that population density renders unsustainable? The research on the economic effects of liberalized immigration yields murky results; there is at least a strong possibility that adding more low-skilled workers to the labor force will make life worse for people at its bottom end. The federal government has been trying to use its power as a large purchaser in the health-care market to drive costs down for decades, without notable success. Raising tax rates on capital and high incomes, as liberals prefer, is among the most economically damaging ways to raise revenue.

Fiscal stimulus seems exceedingly unlikely to work. It is true that some models predict that increased deficit spending will raise economic output in a depressed economy. These models do not, however, take account of how monetary policy interacts with fiscal policy. The flaw in the models can perhaps best be seen through the use of a stylized example. Assume that the Federal Reserve has a 2 percent inflation target and hits it perfectly: When inflation threatens to go to 1.8 percent it loosens money, and when inflation could hit 2.2 percent it tightens.

Under those circumstances any fiscal policy, even one that was more perfectly designed than any that Congress would ever pass, would be perfectly offset. If the government were to try to stimulate this hypothetical economy with a steady 2 percent inflation rate, the Fed would simply tighten money to keep inflation stable—and you'd be exactly where you were, but with more federal debt. In the real world, of course, the Fed does not shoot for a perfectly stable inflation rate and does not perfectly hit its target. It does, however, seem to want and be able to keep inflation expectations in a narrow band a bit below 2 percent. That doesn't leave a lot of room for fiscal stimulus to have an effect.

The point isn't that Ben Bernanke would deliberately set out to undermine a fiscal stimulus. He might well want Congress to enact one because it would make his own life easier: The more Congress stimulates the economy, the less he would need to engage in the types of monetary easing that have brought him so much criticism. So long as he maintains his inflation target, fiscal stimulus cannot do much to boost the economy. If the Fed adopted a nominal-income target instead, as some economists counsel, the fiscal-policy story would be the same: More fiscal stimulus would mean a tighter (or less loose) monetary policy, and the economy would end up in roughly the same place.

The dominance of monetary over fiscal policy is one reason conservatives are

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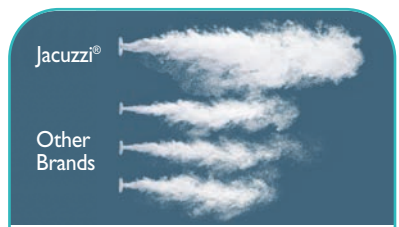

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right to insist that we can tackle the budget deficit now without weakening the economy. If Congress cut its deficit spending so much that inflation expectations dropped below what the Fed deemed acceptable, the Fed would respond by loosening money. To the extent the market expects this response, the Fed would not even have to take much action, since inflation expectations would have a floor under them. The net result should be the same amount of economic activity, but with more of it taking place in the private sector. Many conservatives believe there would even be more economic activity. On this argument reduced spending, now and in the future, will reduce future tax burdens and thereby improve present incentives to work, save, and invest.

The bulk of any reduction in federal spending should come in the form of future cuts to entitlement programs. The growth of Social Security benefits should be restrained. Benefits for tomorrow's high earners should be the same as benefits for today's high earners, plus an adjustment for inflation. Right now, they are scheduled to be much higher. That's unaffordable, and the alternative to reducing future benefit levels is perverse: to raise taxes on these people just to give them these higher benefits. Medicare is a bigger and longer-term challenge. The correct response to it is the one Representative Paul Ryan and Governor Romney have outlined: Have the federal government allot a certain amount of money to help senior citizens pay for the health insurance of their choice, with the amount depending on their age and risk factors. Let competition moderate the growth of costs.

Current and future spending cuts should provide long-term dividends, because the association between smaller government and increased economic growth appears to be strong. When it comes to spending, then, the appropriate policy is the same over both the short and the long run: cut it.

Conservatives take a similar approach to taxes and regulation, treating the appropriate policy response to our short-term and long-term challenges as identical. An economic slump is the best time, in this view, to deregulate and cut taxes, especially taxes on investment. Thus Governor Romney and congressional Republicans are offering no policies that are specifically directed at counteracting the business cycle. The strength of this frame of mind is that it directs the attention of a government often oriented to short-term thinking to long-term imperatives.

The drawback to this line of thinking is that it offers no plausible answers to a recession or slow recovery. It is one thing to say that cutting income-tax rates would improve the long-term health of the economy. Income-tax rates are, however, low in historical terms. The top rate is 35 percent: It has been lower than that for only five of the last 80 years. It is hard to believe that this tax rate has had much to do with our recent economic troubles. Dropping it to 28 percent, as Governor Romney proposes, would increase the after-tax return on a dollar earned by a modest 11 percent of taxpayers. Reagan's 1981 tax cut was six times more powerful because taxes were so high back then.

Tax cuts, spending cuts, deregulation, free trade, tort reform: The economic policies that conservatives usually tout can boost the trend growth rate but cannot do much when we are growing below trend. The situation is reversed with monetary policy. It can't improve the economy's long-term potential growth rate. Bad monetary policy can, however, cause growth to fall below (or rise temporarily above) that rate, and righting it can therefore have positive near-term effects.

During the Great Moderation that preceded the crash, American monetary policy was reasonably good, though not perfect, at holding the growth of nominal spending steady. It thus enabled debt contracts, most of which are written in nominal terms, to be made against a backdrop of stable expectations. In 2008 and 2009, however, nominal spending plummeted at the fastest rate since the Great Depression. Debts suddenly became harder to service than expected, and asset values premised on the maintenance of monetary stability tumbled.

The failure of the Federal Reserve to keep nominal spending stable played a larger role in the economic crash than even the housing bubble and bust. Residential-construction employment had been dropping for two years before the economic meltdown, and unemployment had risen only slightly. Tight money in mid-2008 made the housing bust, and everything else, much worse within months.

Monetary stability is a prerequisite for long-term growth. There are two ways to achieve it, however, and they have different short-term consequences. If the Fed made a credible commitment to bring nominal spending back toward its pre-crash trend line, we would expect a more robust recovery. Or the Fed could let market expectations adjust to a new post-crash trend line, which would be a more drawn-out and painful affair.

The Left and Right have been complicit in the Fed's defaulting to Option Two, with much of the Left arguing that the Fed cannot raise nominal spending and much of the Right insisting that it should not. Liberal skeptics are mistaken: There has never been a case of a central bank in a fiat-money system trying for monetary expansion and failing. The conservative skeptics are wrong, too, with respect to current monetary conditions. They fear a revival of inflation. On any reasonable measure, though, inflation and inflation expectations are well below the average rate of the last few decades. A credible nominal-spending rule would constrain future inflation, and by reducing the demand for money balances would also make it possible to shrink the monetary base. The crawling recovery the Fed is opting for, on the other hand, will mean the continuation of our abnormally enlarged base.

Monetary policy has been one of the Right's blind spots; wages another. The experience of the "Bush boom" suggests that even a robust economic recovery may not lift wages. During that period rising health-insurance premiums swallowed every increase in the cost of compensation. Conservatives sometimes respond to complaints about wage stagnation by

The economic policies that conservatives usually tout can boost the trend growth rate but cannot do much when we are growing below trend.

pointing to this increase in benefits as though it made things better. It is little comfort to most people to be told that their paychecks are flat but at least their health-care costs are up.

If people want to direct all of the added income from economic growth to health care, they should have that choice. But it is hard to believe most people would do that in a more transparent system: one, that is, that does not hide costs from those who ultimately pay them, as ours does. The stagnation of wages has probably also played a role in reducing Americans' willingness to support free-market reforms such as free trade. In the context of stagnation, foreign competition begins to look more and more like a threat.

Various conservatives have advanced policies that solve the wage-stagnation problem, even if they rarely talk about it in those terms. The key is to replace the current tax break for health insurance, which gets bigger the more expensive the policy is, with a tax credit that helps people buy insurance but does not reward them for picking the deluxe option. That credit, unlike the current tax break, should also be available to people who do not have access to coverage from their employers and therefore have to buy it themselves. It is a reform that Governor Romney should endorse.

So each of our sets of challenges should call forth distinct answers: We need stable money to get out of the slump, entitlement reform to bring federal debt to manageable levels, better health-insurance incentives to revive wage growth, and structural changes to increase long-term economic growth. These policies are mutually reinforcing. We are unlikely to get entitlement reform without first addressing our short-term economic weakness. People probably won't get behind structural changes to increase productivity unless they have a reasonable prospect of earning higher take-home pay for their trouble. If we do not meet our challenges with conservative ideas, we are likely to end up with liberal ones that are wrong—and expensive. **NR**

Say No to Medicaid Expansion

Governors should send this gift horse packing

BY JOHN HOOD

RICK PERRY of Texas, Scott Walker of Wisconsin, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, and many other governors and state legislators across the country are proving to be rather obstreperous. In the aftermath of the Supreme Court's controversial decision

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on Obamacare, they've looked past the convoluted ruling on the individual mandate and zeroed in on the clearer 7–2 decision that Washington may not compel the states to go along with the law's massive expansion of Medicaid. These Republican state officials have already decided not to comply with the Medicaid provisions; other state leaders, both Republicans and Democrats, are considering doing the same.

The Obama administration and its supporters on the left are apoplectic about this. They are demanding, loudly and furiously, that state officials not be so rude as to look the gift horse of Obamacare in the mouth. Why in the world, they ask, would governors and legislators pass up a deal to insure millions of Americans at little or no cost to state governments? Why aren't governors and legislators salivating at the prospect of drawing billions of federal tax dollars into their local economies through new Medicaid spending? "They would be committing fiscal malpractice if they left all this money on the table," Ron Pollack, head of the nonprofit group Families USA and an Obamacare supporter, told the *Washington Post* a few days after the Supreme Court decision.

But liberals such as Pollack know *exactly* why many fiscal conservatives in state capitals are seizing on the high court's ruling to forgo the Medicaid expansion. They also know that the future of Obamacare itself may be at stake. They just won't spell out why. So I will.

For all the focus on federal mandates, free riders, and insurance exchanges over the past two years, Obamacare was never primarily about expanding private health-care coverage to the uninsured. More important were the bill's provisions to expand Medicaid, the joint federal-state health-insurance program for low-income, elderly, and disabled Americans.

According to early projections, Obamacare would add 17 million people to the Medicaid rolls from 2014 to 2019, more than half of the 30 million uninsured Americans projected to gain coverage under the bill. That would be significant enough. But, intentionally or not, the proponents of Obamacare overestimated the private-insurance count and underestimated the Medicaid count. Their models did not account sufficiently for the number of non-poor uninsured who would rather pay the tax/fee associated with the individual mandate than buy private insurance, or for the number of businesses that would reorganize their benefits and work forces to escape the mandates that apply to them. Nor did the models account sufficiently for the number of Americans currently eligible for but not enrolled in Medicaid who would be swept into the program during the implementation of Obamacare. Crucially, this group of Medicaid recipients will not trigger the bill's generous federal matching payments. They'll cost state budgets plenty.

Medicare and Medicaid were created in the same 1965 legislation, and they both pose a serious threat to the nation's fiscal health, but they operate in very different ways. States have no role in financing, and almost no role in overseeing, the Medicare program. But with Medicaid, while the federal government pays part of the cost and sets overall parameters, the state governments pick up the rest of the tab and make key decisions about eligibility and benefits. The federal share of the Medicaid budget varies widely by state, from just over half in some to about three-quarters in others. On average, states are paying a bit over 40 percent of the tab right now. That creates a perverse incentive for governors and legislatures to increase enrollment or cover additional services, since they can claim political credit for all of the benefits while having to appropriate state funds for only some of the cost.

When you combine that perverse incentive with the broader problem of health-care inflation, you can see why Medicaid has been among the fastest-growing categories of state spending. In most states, lawmakers must balance their operating budgets with current revenues. So, faced with surging Medicaid projections, their only options have been to raise taxes, cut Medicaid, or lower the rate of spending growth for services that benefit a wider range of constituents, such as education. During tough budget years, you might think the path of least political resistance would be to cut Medicaid, but the argument that every state Medicaid dollar draws "free" federal money has proven persuasive to many state policymakers. Even more important, the passage of Obamacare made cutting Medicaid even less plausible by extending a maintenance-of-effort requirement originally imposed in the 2009 stimulus bill. This rule forbids states to make major changes in Medicaid eligibility. Therefore, Medicaid spending has continued to rise as lawmakers have chosen to cut other programs or raise taxes. According to a new report from the State Budget Crisis Task Force, which is co-chaired by former Fed chairman Paul Volcker, Medicaid is one of the chief causes of "persistent and growing structural deficits in many states which threaten their fiscal sustainability."

States with fiscally conservative governors and legislatures have tended not to maximize their participation in Medicaid, particularly when trying to cope with the demand from rapidly growing populations for public education and other popular services. In most northeastern and midwestern states, enrollment of children in Medicaid or the closely related Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) approaches or exceeds 90 percent of the level allowed by federal law, but in the South and West, the enrollment rate is often lower: in Texas and Florida, for example, just 77 percent of those who are eligible according to federal standards. The variation is even greater for adults: States such as Pennsylvania and Massachusetts enroll more than 80 percent of current eligibles, while Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, Oregon, Florida, and Nevada enroll less than 50 percent.

For the states that have relatively low Medicaid participation, Obamacare's expansion plan poses a major problem. The bill promises to pay all of the cost of enrolling those newly eligible for Medicaid from 2014 to 2016, but the federal-funding share will then decline to 90 percent by 2020. Even if that timetable sticks—and governors can't be sure Congress won't try to cut funding sooner, as President Obama actually proposed during deficit-reduction talks in 2011—states start to incur significant budget expenses for newly eligible enrollees in just a few years.

With Medicaid, while the federal government pays part of the cost, the state governments pick up the rest of the tab.

But the states have a bigger problem, stemming from the fact that Obamacare will increase Medicaid enrollment *regardless of current eligibility status*. The bill streamlines the enrollment process. "It won't be an in-person visit, it won't be a 'Bring six forms of ID,'" said University of Virginia health-care analyst Jeff Goldsmith on a recent National Public Radio program. "There will be an expedited—lubricated, if you will—process to get people onto the rolls, and I think that's the part that's giving state budget officers serious indigestion at this point." In addition to changes in the application process, the legislation calls for a major promotional effort to enroll the uninsured, an effort that will benefit from all the media attention surrounding the individual mandate. The states will have to cover these new enrollees' care, with the federal government paying only the pre-Obamacare level of, on average, about 60 percent of the cost.

This "woodwork effect" could quickly increase the direct costs to some states by hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars a year. And the adverse effects won't just be fiscal. In many states, hospitals and doctors simply aren't able to accept new Medicaid enrollees, who are uneconomical to take on as patients because Medicaid reimburses health-care providers at extremely low rates.

The new federal Medicaid money will thus end up costing the states a lot. And there's yet another wrinkle that could make saying no attractive even to states with more liberal Medicaid policies. Remember that maintenance-of-effort requirement that Obamacare imposed on state Medicaid programs right off the bat? For states that choose not to participate in the Medicaid expansion, the requirement will vanish in 2014. (Some states, in fact, argue that the recent Supreme Court decision has already voided the requirement as an unconstitutional coercion.) Once states regain the ability to adjust their eligibility rules, it might even make sense for previously generous states to make the rules more restrictive—by refusing anyone with an income higher than 100 percent of the poverty line ($23,050 for a family of four). This is because, under Obamacare, those with incomes between 100 percent and 400 percent of the poverty line will be eligible for federal subsidies to buy plans within the insurance exchanges. Cutting off Medicaid eligibility at the poverty line would get previous enrollees out of the program, and thus off the state's books permanently, without leaving those individuals uninsured. The federal government would pick up the full tab rather than just part of it.

If all this sounds like a fiscal and political fiasco for the Obama administration, then you're getting the picture. As state governments say no to Medicaid expansion, the result will be either a reduction in the benefits of Obamacare, an increase in its negative impact on the federal budget, or some of both. If just the few states that have already announced opposition to the expansion follow through on their plans, the number of uninsured Americans gaining coverage under Obamacare's Medicaid increases will shrink by millions. In fact, a Congressional Budget Office analysis published in July pegged the reduction in Medicaid growth at 6 million people—about half of whom would be eligible for federally subsidized private plans through the health-insurance exchanges. The CBO then estimated the federal fiscal impact of states' refusing Medicaid expansion as close to a wash, by assuming that the other 3 million would be left uninsured and thus unsubsidized by Washington.

Nevertheless, Obama-administration officials and liberal groups argue that Obamacare critics are giving states bad fiscal advice. They say that even after shouldering the cost of expanding Medicaid, states would come out ahead through savings in other programs that subsidize medical treatment for the uninsured. But Cato Institute analyst Jagadeesh Gokhale has checked the numbers carefully. "Even after taking into account potential savings from uncompensated care and the higher federal match rate for newly eligible Medicaid enrollees," Gokhale says, "the choice to expand Medicaid is likely to significantly boost state-general-fund spending on that program."

What's even more questionable than the liberals' math is their political judgment. State leaders won't be punished back home for eschewing a costly Medicaid expansion. What's more likely is that the resulting mess will lead even a reelected President Obama and a divided Congress to rewrite significant sections of the law. Under a President Romney and/or a Republican Senate, such a rewrite would likely become a repeal. **NR**

Olympian Self-Seriousness

There should be a gold medal for crying

BY KYLE SMITH

It's that orotund opening theme song that drags you into watching the Olympics, that inescapable Cecil B. DeMille bombast suggesting Vulcan beating a kettle drum. Bum-bum-ba-BUM-BUM-bum-bum-ba-BUM-BUM. Battle stations! Ramming speed! Associations rush to mind—the classical splendor, the brotherhood of Man, the apotheosis of the physique, the ennobling of the spirit.

And then we get on with the event: Badminton. Trampolining. Beach volleyball. Water polo. This isn't the body stretched to its limits—it's the world's largest gathering of every crank who took the croquet way too seriously at your last backyard barbecue. Would you invite back the man you found weeping in the shrubbery after he was undone at Jarts? Every four years such eccentrics are held up for our global adulation.

But that's the Olympics: a gruesome wedding of inordinate self-importance with crackpot micro-monomania. Today's games (not, please, Games) do not suggest the ancients and their simple olive wreaths. The combination of the pompous and prosaic calls to mind what the U.S. Postal Service would be like if it were run by the Hapsburg dynasty. The International Olympic Committee's archdukes and barons—and I remind you that IOC president Jacques Rogge is literally a count, having been ennobled by the King of Belgium—bedizen one another with shiny badges and ribbons, paying little heed to the athletes, the seething provincials whose labor is the regime's strength.

The Olympics committee is ham-fisted in sporting matters. But it excels at defending its fortress headquarters—the crown jewels, the palace vaults. When a writer for the London *Spectator* dubbed

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this summer's activities "the censorship Olympics," he took note of an alarming new British law that, in affording special trademark protection to Olympics sponsors only, ordered the courts to look warily on any usage by a business (or charity!) of a word or phrase from column A (such as "games" or "two thousand twelve") with one from column B (such as "London"). Police were empowered to "enter land or premises" and "remove, destroy, conceal or erase any infringing article." All previous speech-protection laws and policies were superseded for the temporary emergency.

So: A butcher in Weymouth, England, was forced to take down sausages arranged in rings. A village in Surrey was forbidden to hold an "Olympicnic" on its village green. Police ordered a newsdealer in East London to remove Union Jack bunting featuring the words "London 2012."

Out there on the sporting field, though, things were less efficient. There is a numbing surplus of similar events. Did we really need this many answers to the question about who might be the swiftest swimmer or runner? Is there a Pulitzer for best work of fiction in the 50-, 100-, 150-, 200-, and 300-page ranges? Is there an Oscar for best film submitted by a foursome of directors?

Given that the International Olympic Committee rakes in billions from the likes of NBC and the BBC, you'd think they could have afforded to have an expert thumb on the stopwatch during the semi-final of the women's fencing competition. Instead, Shin A-Lam of South Korea lost a chance at a gold medal in a match with Germany's Britta Heidemann when the countdown inexplicably froze at one second long enough for Heidemann to score a victorious touch. Ms. Shin sat dejected on the piste, but after an hour of discussion her appeal was rejected. That she was offered a hastily devised consolation prize of some sort (the coveted zinc?) was a seeming admission of error by the archdukes, who issued a vague denial of reports that a 15-year-old volunteer was the timekeeper at fault. Ms. Shin had the good sense to refuse the ersatz honor.

An Algerian who didn't want to run in the 800-meter race (he liked his chances in the 1500-meter instead, but his team forgot to enter withdrawal paperwork) gave a quarter-hearted effort, stopped running, and strolled off the track before the race was finished. The judges said he was disqualified from the entire Olympics for lack of competitive vim, then, after an outcry, hinted that he might be reinstated if he could produce a medical certificate attesting to his fitness, an issue previously not raised by anyone.

A Canadian horse was barred from the team jumping competition because an infrared gizmo had documented "hypersensitivity" in the animal's front left hoof. Team riders compared the alleged injury to having a cut on the finger and protested plausibly that they knew their animal better than the officials did. To no avail.

Despite all the flubs, the host nation has reacted with unwonted glee to the expensive gala, conferring (for instance) instant heroine status on its own Jessica Ennis for emerging the heptathlon victor after she proved the mistress of a farrago of obscure tasks few can list, much less pretend to be interested in. (Let's see, there's the jumping high, the putting of shot, the chucking of javelin, the . . . picking of banjo? fishing of bass?)

After the U.K.'s astounding Saturday, August 4, when it nabbed six golds, the Sunday *Times* was so excited that it chose the legend "Six of the Very Best" for its front-page headline, its editors apparently conflating resounding athletic victory with their own fondly remembered boarding-school beatings. Where are the dissenters who will note, for instance, the way each iteration of the Olympics seems more polluted with shoddy language, tinny commercialism, raw sentimentality?

It's a pool, not an "aquatics center."

Her Majesty is supposed to be the one person in the Western world who is not actually available to star in a little spoof of a James Bond film, but acknowledgment must be made that throughout Danny Boyle's bizarre opening ceremony the Queen maintained an appropriately regal look of frosty disdain, or possibly disbelief.

Teams of men engaged in athletic endeavor ought not to embrace one another except, as briefly and awkwardly as possible, after a championship victory, and should never shed tears owing to either victory or defeat, though patriotic emotion is acceptable. Instead the male volleyballers have a gang make-out session after each point. Even the swimmers have taken to hugging one another over their lane barriers. Everyone cries in contemplation of his or her own excellence. British gymnast Louis Smith cried after reaching the final round on the pommel horse. Giovanni Cernogoraz of Croatia cried just because he reached the final of trap shooting. If there's any "sport" that would seem a natural stranger to emotion, it's the discharging of firearms at clay pigeons.

The true Olympic spirit doesn't really go back to classical times. Its roots are in the romping Victorian combination of bluffness and good humor. The modern Olympics were inspired by events that began in the Shropshire town of Wenlock in 1850, where an annual festival of "Olympian Games" sometimes included,

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along with tests of strength and speed meant to build health and character, such contests as blind wheelbarrow racing and the Gimcrack Race, during which riders were obliged to stop at various points to put on boots, have a drink, and smoke a cigar. So British are the Olympics that even the length of the marathon has nothing to do with the Olympia in Greece. Before 1908, a marathon was simply a long foot race of no fixed distance. But 26 miles and 385 yards was the distance between the 1908 starting line beneath the window of the royal nursery at Windsor Palace and the finish line in front of the King's box at London's White City Stadium.

In other ways, though, the Olympics are getting farther away from their modern British roots. The summer games once meant merely larking about. But as today's Rogge's gallery of Continental aristo-buffoons pushes the games to become ever more slick but hollow, pretentious yet meretricious, the whimsical, sturdy British character of the gathering recedes. **NR**

A Vicious Narcissus

On the career of Gore Vidal

BY ROGER KIMBALL

THE novelist and fantasist Gore Vidal, who died last month at 86, must ever occupy a special place in the hearts of NATIONAL REVIEW's extended family. I hasten to add that by "special" I do not mean honored, cherished, or affectionate. On the contrary. The critical Vidal moment came in the summer of 1968. The place: Chicago. The festival: the Democratic National Convention. The weather: partly cloudy with a high chance of riots.

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If you are reading this, you probably know the story. WFB and Gore Vidal had both been asked by ABC, at that time an important television network, to comment on the proceedings. The chemistry between them was not pacific. The streets of Chicago were exploding with demonstrations "against the war"—against, as WFB observed, the orderliness that civilization requires. Vidal thrilled to the anarchistic spectacle of it all. "They were absolutely well behaved," quoth he. Reality check: They were attempting to raise the Vietcong flag in a public park, taunting the police, and chanting "F*** LBJ! F*** Mayor Daley!" WFB was not amused: "I'm for ostracizing people who egg on other people to shoot American marines and American soldiers."

That was too much for Gore Vidal. "As far as I am concerned, the only crypto Nazi I can think of is yourself," et cetera, to which WFB made his now-famous reply: "Now listen, you queer. Stop calling me a crypto Nazi or I'll sock you in your goddamn face and you'll stay plastered."

The man from ABC intervened with a

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," Gore Vidal beamed with pleasure at getting under WFB's skin, and the proceedings bumbled along with a few *tu quoque*s before the interviewer managed to shoo them both off the air ("I think we have run out of time . . .").

WFB provided a long recollection of the incident, "On Experiencing Gore Vidal," that first appeared in *Esquire* and was reprinted in his collection *The Governor Listeth* (1970). The piece has some tantalizing details. One is that he was suffering from a broken collarbone, an injury he sustained sailing the previous weekend. As WFB's son Christopher speculates in a masterly obit of GV in *The New Republic*, absent the fractured clavicle, history might have recorded a more kinetic reply from WFB to Vidal's accusation that he was a "crypto Nazi."

Another detail: The actor Paul Newman, a longtime friend of Vidal's, joined the Buckley party afterwards to express his displeasure. "Have you ever been called a Nazi?" asked WFB. "That was purely *political*," said the future purveyor of popcorn and lemonade. "What *you* called *him* was personal!"

A dissertation, or rather several, might be written to explicate that observation fully. You'd need a sociologist of Max Weber's stature to get to the bottom of the social assumptions behind Newman's use of "political" and "personal," and a philosopher of the astringency of A. J. Ayer to unpack the epistemology. For now, let's just ponder the worldview that regards the charge that someone is a Nazi, be it crypto or flagrantly patent, as something other, and decidedly less obnoxious, than *personal.*

One further semantic plug to chew on: Newman's objection seems to have centered not on WFB's threat of violence but on his use of "queer," a colloquial synonym for "homosexual." That is curious in about 18 different ways. Let's take an analogous case. If Lillian Hellman says "I'm a Communist," people like Gore Vidal and Paul Newman cheer. "Atta girl! Free speech, long live the Constitution that Communists like you are trying to destroy," etc. But if a conservative commentator like WFB says "Lillian Hellman is a Communist," folks like GV & PN find the highest horse in the neighborhood, climb aboard, and start denouncing him for "red-baiting."

Something similar, I think, was at work in Newman's snit over WFB's use of the word "queer." Not that WFB was proud of his outburst. I spoke to him about it a few times and it was clear that he deeply regretted it. He did *not*, by the way, regret the *substance* of his response. He always acknowledged that he regarded Gore Vidal as a repellent human being who eminently deserved being socked. But he regretted losing his temper. Anger, like other natural human emotions, has a rightful place in the economy of human life, but, as Aristotle pointed out, one should be angry at the proper things, in the proper degree, for the proper duration. A temper, that is to say, ought not to be lost but deployed. WFB, on that one occasion (it is the only one I know about), lost his, and he regretted it.

Well. This is a memorial notice about Gore Vidal and here I have said at least as much about WFB. That strikes me as about right. Gore Vidal was always a minor literary figure. As a figure in the annals of recent intellectual life, he does not register at all. He occupies a footnote in the library of pornography for period-piece S&M fantasies such as *Myra Breckinridge*. He wrote some good essays: on Montaigne, for example (I always found it curious that he admired Montaigne: a less Montaigne-like character than Gore Vidal is hard to imagine), and on the canny, if grim, 1950s novelist Dawn Powell. In the library of memorable catty lines, he also has a place. Among my favorites is his judgment that Leon Wieseltier, the longtime literary editor of *The New Republic*, is distinguished chiefly by having "important hair." (I also like his observation that the three most dispiriting words in the English language are "Joyce Carol Oates.")

AP

Gore Vidal in 1977

But even these barbs point to something unpleasant about Vidal. There was a barely concealed (or do I mean ostentatiously exhibited?) current of viciousness that characterized his spirit. Teddy Kennedy, he said, had "all the charm of three hundred pounds of condemned veal." Yikes. I laughed, but a bit uncomfortably. Shortly after WFB died, in February 2008, Vidal said in an interview for the *New York Times* that "hell is bound to be a livelier place, as he joins forever those whom he served in life, applauding their prejudices and fanning their hatred." Vidal cultivated his viciousness at the expense of the truth, at the expense of that sanity which a steady contact with reality confers. Bill Buckley was a "crypto Nazi." Pearl Harbor was provoked by FDR. World War II was orchestrated by U.S. arms manufacturers. Timothy McVeigh, the deranged man responsible for the Oklahoma City bombings, was "a noble boy," no more murderous than Generals Patton and Eisenhower. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were a plot by the U.S. government—or was it Mossad? The Patriot Act was "as despotic as anything Hitler came up with." And so on.

Thinking back over Vidal's long and garrulous career, I am left primarily with a feeling of sadness. Mark Steyn once described Vidal as "the Noel Coward of conspiracy theorists." That's funny, but it's not quite fair to Coward, whose lightness of touch and fundamental decency were qualities Vidal never approached. Writing about Vidal's 2006 memoir *Point to Point Navigation*, the journalist Joseph Rago made an observation that touches on the cold and melancholy core of Gore Vidal: "His self-love is well requited." That's it precisely. To understand Gore Vidal, his detached *noli me tangere* pan-sexuality, his bitchiness, his unending contempt for the habits and institutions of civilized life, one need only turn to those pages in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* devoted to the unhappy figure of Narcissus, the comely youth who was burdened with a "pride so cold that no youth, no maiden touched his heart." The world unfolded all around him, but Narcissus remained bent over the fatal pool, rapt: "He gazes in speechless wonder at himself." It gives me no pleasure to say that those words might serve as an appropriate epitaph for Gore Vidal. **NR**

The 'Reformer' Tyrant

Our Syria policy has been incoherent

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THE United States recently dropped its support for the "Annan plan"—due to the fact that there is no more Annan plan, special U.N. Syrian envoy Kofi Annan recently having resigned. As most understood the plan, the Obama administration was supposed to be pressing for international sanctions and organizing a common front against Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, as Annan forced Assad to negotiate away his power with various rebel groups.

Annan's Westernized Third World credentials also supposedly made him uniquely suited for soothing Russia and China's fears over the loss of their friend Assad. Annan's shuttling between the Syrian government and the rebels would usher in a peaceful transition to consensual government. Such a grand bargain would then be overseen by the United Nations and result in a pluralistic Syrian society, albeit with some sort of face-saving retirement for the deposed tyrant.

In other words, Annan's pipe dream was doomed from the start. The United States is now left with the task of asking Assad to step down while stealthily sending arms to the insurgents to ensure his compliance—hoping thereby to gain some influence when and if they take power. But Assad is in no mood to compromise, given the fate of other deposed authoritarians such as Moammar Qaddafi, Hosni Mubarak, and Saddam Hussein.

After more than a year of violence, Assad's regime wagers that the West in general is tired of the Middle East and will not interfere in Syria the way it intervened in Libya—and that Barack Obama in particular is more worried about the November elections than about the escalating violence. Further, the regime knows that China and Russia will not abstain from Security Council votes on Syria as they did from votes on Libya.

The rebels understandably want the usual American help—no-fly and safe zones, heavy armaments, money, and supplies—but they want it without any liberal strings attached. It is likely that the terrorists and Islamists among them believe they can, in time, do to their naïve, more moderate rival insurgents what they did to Assad. Summed up, the rebel front's implicit position is that Syria may or may not end up with the Muslim Brotherhood in power, but that is the insurgents' own business, and either way the new regime will be better for the West than Assad was.

It is true that few regimes have done more to harm U.S. interests or oppress their own people than has the Assad dynasty, which has ruled Syria since 1970. Bashar al-Assad, who assumed power on the death of his father Hafez in 2000, turned Syria into an unambiguous client of Iran, a sponsor of Hezbollah, and a supporter of terrorism. He also sought to destabi-

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lize Lebanon, destroy the American effort in Iraq, and encourage terrorists to strike Israel.

So the Syrian uprising, which began on March 15, 2011, in the wake of the Arab Spring that swept North Africa, should have been a godsend to the West and to the United States in particular. Unlike Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Assad has been a clear enemy of the United States. His fall would belie the common belief that only pro-American Arab dictators suffer popular uprisings. Even if we worry that the stability of pro-American authoritarians may deteriorate into chaos and anti-Western Islamic theocracy, how could anything be worse than Assad's Syria? Why, then, are we not actively and publicly working to topple the government in the manner we did with similarly odious authoritarians such as Hussein and Qaddafi?

Public opinion explains much of the reluctance. With over 80,000 Americans still in Afghanistan, with nearly 8,000 Americans having died in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with the country $9 trillion more in debt than when we took out Saddam Hussein, there is no support for sending ground troops into Syria—the only sure method of removing Assad and replacing him with a pro-Western, democratic government. In fact, the public has no more desire to intervene in the Middle East, whatever the strategy or rationale. One could argue that the removal and trial of Saddam Hussein, who was replaced by a constitutional government, was the catalyst for the Arab Spring. Yet few, especially in the Obama administration, seem eager to make that argument. One of the most bizarre aspects of the current administration's Middle East policy has been its eagerness to intervene in Libya and contemplate some sort of assistance to the anti-Assad forces in Syria, while ostracizing the Maliki government in Iraq and offering no support for the million-plus protesters who swarmed the streets of Iran in the spring of 2009.

The election-year American politics of Syrian intervention are certainly muddled. Many liberals are calling for overt help for the Syrian resistance, despite the general indifference they have shown Iranian protesters. Supporters of the Iraq War are baffled that the administration and its supporters, who demagogued everything from Iraq to Guantanamo, now ponder using preemptive force to remove a Middle East strongman. Bipartisan calls to do more in Syria evoke an eerie déjà vu of a similar consensus in October 2002, when both houses of Congress voted to authorize the use of force to remove the Hussein regime—a consensus that crumbled when casualties mounted in late 2003 and the 2004 presidential primaries heated up.

Arab politics concerning Syria are even more muddled. Oil-rich Sunni authoritarians from the Gulf are sending money and arms, hoping to topple an ally of Iran. Apparently they believe that outcome would be worth the risk of spreading the Arab Spring to Kuwait, Qatar, the smaller Gulf sheikhdoms, and Saudi Arabia itself. And if we think that the Lebanese—long the victims of Assad's terrorism—are uniformly rooting for the Syrian insurgents, we should think again. Many worry that the fall of the murderous Assad would end any shred of tolerance for Alawites, Christians, and Shiites, of which Lebanon has large populations. That is not an idle fear, given the Muslim Brotherhood's growing hostility toward the Coptic Christian minority in Egypt. Syria's Alawite minority, which dominates the Assad government and has largely been an oppressor of majorities, may soon find itself a persecuted minority—much the way that Germans in Eastern Europe in 1945 went from being protected pro-Nazi bullies to being a victimized minority as the Red Army swept in to settle scores in atrocious fashion. And looming over the violence in Syria is a soon-to-be-nuclear Iran, yet there remains some uncertainty as to whether the restless Arab Street fears Iran more than it enjoys the prospect of the irritation that an Iranian bomb would cause Europe, the United States, and Israel.

THE NATO removal of Moammar Qaddafi is sometimes cited as a model for deposing Assad. But Libya is sui generis and offers no blueprint for much of anything. In the lead-up to the intervention, authorization from Congress was bypassed in favor of U.N. approval for the first time since the Korean War. Yet Security Council resolutions called only for no-fly zones and humanitarian aid, not an around-the-clock NATO bombing campaign. In other words, Congress was ignored and the U.N. was snookered, and they are unlikely to approve a similar use of air power in Syria. And whereas Libya was less than an hour's flight from NATO bases in Sicily, Syria is far from Europe, in a more volatile region of the world, better armed, and over four times as populous.

Supporters of the Iraq War are baffled that the administration, which demagogued everything from Iraq to Guantanamo, now ponders using preemptive force to remove a Middle East strongman.

In some sense, Qaddafi was a monster in rehab. His offspring jet-setted to and from the West, buying respectability on the cheap among American and British academics and journalists (who nonetheless damned the regime when it became clear it was likely to end). It took the Arab Spring to ensure that British war cemeteries in Libya—sacrosanct since World War II—would be desecrated by Islamist gangs in the manner of Bamiyan and Timbuktu. Post-war Libya cannot be worse than the first 30 years of the Qaddafi regime—but it also might not be any better than the last four.

The West's hopes for the Arab Spring—that constitutional reformers would ensure human rights, free elections, and a transparent society—are for now suspended. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was met with chants of "Monica! Monica!" as she arrived in Egypt—a state that has received an aggregate of $65 billion in American aid since 1979. Newly elected Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood's Free-

dom and Justice party, may have two children who were born in California and are U.S. citizens, but he convinced few Westerners of his commitment to tolerance and moderation when, almost immediately after his election, he called for the U.S. to grant clemency to the "blind sheikh," Omar Abdel-Rahman, who is serving a life sentence in a North Carolina federal prison for his prominent role in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

What future will follow the removal of tyrants in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen is unknown even to the revolutionary players themselves. At worst, the secular dissidents will fade from post-revolutionary election cycles as hardcore Islamists are voted in and purge the opposition—"one man, one vote, one time." Islamists could then do to Egypt or Libya what the Khomeinists did to Iran, or what the Hamas theocrats have done to Gaza. At best, we might see something like Erdogan's Turkey, where a "moderate" Islamist purges opponents and jails critics while holding elections that are more or less open and transparent—and which he is unlikely ever to lose. Even if the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq are corrupt and probably only with difficulty will give up power, they nonetheless reflect the American effort to birth constitutional government—a stewardship impossible with the Arab Spring democracies. The presence of American troops, aid, and constant attention can result in a constitutional government that may serve as the model for others—but it comes at such a price, in American blood and treasure, serial violence, and knee-jerk opposition from the Middle East street, that it probably will not be repeated in the near future.

Israel seems ambivalent about the removal of its archenemy, the Assad regime. As an authoritarian, Hafez al-Assad could enforce the agreements he signed, and he did not succeed in any meaningful way in subverting the understood protocols that followed the 1973 Yom Kippur War. When he seemed to try—e.g., in the air war of 1982 and the attempt to build a nuclear facility—Israel easily swatted him down. A Syria governed in the fashion of Sudan or Somalia might be worse. Syria could well turn into a sort of *Star Wars* cantina for assorted international terrorists, its weak government denying any culpability as it sought immunity from Israeli retaliation against terrorists operating on its soil.

There are other contours in revolutionary Syria that should cause reflection. Like Qaddafi, Bashar al-Assad was long considered by many Westerners to be an authentic anti-imperialist who, if he did not have legitimate grievances against the United States, was at least unfairly demonized as a terrorist abettor by the Manichean George W. Bush. The Assads were the subject of a splashy *Vogue* profile—a 3,200-word valentine entitled "Rose in the Desert"—that portrayed the dictator's family as evolving Westernized liberals with exquisite taste. The author, Joan Juliet Buck, fawned over Bashar's wife, Asma: "glamorous, young, and very chic—the freshest and most magnetic of first ladies." Buck apparently had never heard of Hama, where in 1982 Bashar's father butchered up to 20,000 people. Her subsequent mea culpa ("Mrs. Assad Duped Me") seems predicated not on the fact that Assad is a monster, but on the probability that he is a loser going the uncool way of Hussein and Qaddafi.

Adjustments must be made as Assad transmogrifies from an understandable voice of Arab nationalism who fights neocon-

servative nation-building into a creepy international pariah. Barack Obama, remember, advocated the resumption of diplomatic relations with Syria—which had been ended by Bush in 2005 over Syria's overt efforts to promote terrorism—amid Democratic calls in 2008 to reopen direct relations with both Syria and Iran. For most of the last decade, Middle East dictators' anti-Americanism and opposition to the war in Iraq shielded them from liberal criticism.

We may forget that despite John Kerry's current calls one day for NATO bombing of Syrian military installations and the next for the establishment of a Western-enforced "safe zone" for Syrian insurgents, the senior senator from Massachusetts visited Syria frequently in the past few years. Indeed, he once voiced real confidence in the regime: "My judgment is that Syria will move. Syria will change as it embraces a legitimate relationship with the United States and the West and economic opportunity that comes with it and the participation that comes with it." But in fact, as in the case of the about-face concerning Qaddafi, most liberal calls for U.S.-backed efforts to remove Assad follow earlier assurances that he was worth courting in a way that the obstinate George W. Bush could not appreciate. Speaking about Bashar al-Assad in March 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared: "There's a different leader in Syria now. Many of the members of Congress of both parties who have gone to Syria in recent months have said they believe he's a reformer." Perhaps Hillary Clinton was referencing then–House speaker Nancy Pelosi, who in March 2007, at the height of Syria's efforts to send terrorists into Iraq to kill Americans, said of Assad, "We were very pleased with the assurances we received from the president that he was ready to resume the peace process. He's ready to engage in negotiations for peace with Israel." John McCain had it right when he concluded that the Clinton-Kerry-Pelosi assessment was "one of the great delusionary views in recent foreign-policy history."

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WHERE, then, does this incoherence leave us? Conservatives should not oppose U.S. efforts to topple Assad simply because of the abject hypocrisy of the liberals who found him worth reaching out to when Bush was president but wish for his downfall now. Their inconsistency does not change the fact that Assad's departure would be in America's interest.

But this fact raises two questions: At what cost, and what follows? Since ground and air power are largely ruled out, we are talking mostly about continuing or increasing covert military assistance to rebels. The theory, apparently, is that we could somehow selectively arm rebel factions in a way that avoids arming the many al-Qaedists and other Islamic terrorists who are involved with those factions. And if the United States failed to keep its arms out of terrorists' hands, then we might at least win some influence through our help. Yet our experience of supplying the Taliban and the Libyan rebels suggests that we would either have no leverage with Syrian Islamist dissidents or incur their hostility.

What is sorely lacking is a Middle East policy that deemphasizes particular countries and personalities and instead applies a consistent general standard. The criterion should be that the United States supports those who advocate constitutional democracy and opposes those who do not, and we should honestly accept that this standard sometimes has costly consequences. The Obama administration, in contrast, was silent when nearly a million Iranian reformers hit the streets in the spring of 2009. It belatedly treated Hosni Mubarak as the Carter administration had the Shah of Iran in 1979, and thereby suffered the same fate: that of alienating friends and looking weak to enemies and neutrals. In Libya, the administration's stated policy of "leading from behind" was a euphemism for coming late and opportunistically into the conflict and outsourcing the more publicized bombing to Britain and France. And in Syria, the administration is above all adaptable—after resetting with Syria, it now calls for Assad's removal to the degree the rebels seem to be winning in a given month, and it supports negotiations when the insurgency stalls.

Why the incoherence? Because the Obama administration cannot quite square the various circles of its own making. It refuses to open up oil-rich federal lands for petroleum and natural-gas exploration, but then wonders why corrupt and illiberal Gulf sheikhdoms possess the power to veto American foreign policy. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate champions human rights in the abstract, but does not acknowledge that such idealism usually hinges on American exceptionalism and a willingness to incur costs—lest he be tarred with the interventionist slur that not so long ago he readily leveled at others.

The administration—through hare-brained schemes such as attempting to try Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in a civilian court or euphemisms such as relegating Major Nidal Hasan's mass murder to the category of workplace violence—has assured us that Islamism is an invention of the paranoid right wing and that the Muslim Brotherhood is evolving into a secular political force. And yet, according to some reports, the administration privately remains worried that al-Qaedists and their ilk are infiltrating the very dissident groups of the Arab Spring that it hopes to help and influence.

Until the United States develops fully its own natural-gas and oil reserves, becomes honest about the dangers of radical Islam, and articulates an across-the-board policy that promotes constitutional government in place of authoritarianism, its policies regarding anti-authoritarian uprisings will seem not just opportunistic, but ineptly so. **NR**

Scholars with SPINE

Notes from the field of China studies

BY JAY NORDLINGER

Jerome A. Cohen may not be known to the public, but he is well known to Chinese democrats and their supporters. A law professor at New York University, and a veteran China scholar, he is the sponsor and, in a way, protector of Chen Guangcheng. Chen is the Chinese legal activist—"the blind peasant lawyer," as he has been called—who made a run for the U.S. embassy in Beijing earlier this year. This was after six years of imprisonment, house arrest, and physical assaults. Cohen played a key role in the negotiations that led to Chen's departure from the country. Chen is now at NYU, under Cohen's supervision. Not many are the China scholars in the West who are willing to stick their neck out for Chinese dissidents, democrats, and other "troublemakers."

Why is that? First, it is perfectly human, probably, to shrink from trouble. But we can be more specific in our reasons. Obviously, some number of scholars are simply sympathetic to the Chinese regime. But a greater number are wary of crossing that regime, because they need or wish to go to China, and must have visas. Also, there is a great deal of Chinese money in China studies—and biting the hand that feeds you is problematic. In sum, there are plenty of reasons to steer clear of controversy. Plenty of reasons to avoid Beijing's bad side, and blacklist.

There are similarities between China studies and Middle East studies. Bernard Lewis, the eminent Middle East historian, discussed them with me in an interview four years ago. First, there's the money: As Chinese money affects China studies, Middle Eastern money—particularly Gulf money—affects Middle East studies. "Vast sums of money are pouring in from Arab governments, Arab princes," said Lewis. Second, there's the curse of political correctness, or academic orthodoxy. "It is difficult to make a career unless you conform," Lewis said. Around the same time, I interviewed Richard Pipes, the eminent historian of Russia. There was never much money in Sovietology, he said. But there was certainly political correctness, plus a desire—a natural desire—to visit the Soviet Union. One day, Pipes testified in the Senate about an arms treaty. He took a hard, or realistic, line. A much softer line was taken by a fellow academic. As they were leaving the room, this second academic said to Pipes, "I really agree with you, but if I talked as you do, they wouldn't give me a visa."

The Chinese Communists are much more subtle about visas than were the Soviet Communists. The Soviets denied visas left and right, and they kicked foreigners out "by the shovelful," as Jonathan Mirsky says. Mirsky is a China scholar and journalist of long experience. The Chinese, on the other hand, ban relatively few—although they seem to be banning more and more, says Perry Link, another experienced China scholar. Also, they tend not to tell you why they're banning you. They'll say, "You know. You know the reason. You have chosen this outcome yourself." And when one scholar is banned, all the others wonder, "What did Smith do? How can I avoid the same fate?" Then they are all the more cautious. As Link says, the Chinese are much better at "psychological engineering" than the Soviets ever managed to be.

There are certain topics about which Beijing is especially sensitive. Sarah Cook, an East Asia specialist with Freedom House, mentions "the three 'T's": Tibet, Taiwan, and Tiananmen. This last, as you know, refers to Tiananmen Square, main site of the 1989 student protests, which ended in a massacre by the government. Cook also notes that Beijing is somewhat more relaxed about Taiwan than about the other two "T"s. Then there are the Uighurs and Falun Gong, she says. The Uighurs are a Muslim minority, much persecuted; Falun Gong is a spiritual movement, also much persecuted.

Link has been on the blacklist since the mid-1990s. And one of the annoying things about being on the list, he says, is that students and young professors regularly ask him, "What can I say or do? How can I be sure to stay off the list?" They might say, "Can I accept an internship at Human Rights Watch?" "Can I mention Tiananmen?" Even, "Can I say I know you?" Link can cite example after example of caution, or, to be more severe about it, cowardice. Some of his colleagues counseled a student not to write about Chinese democracy. He should pick another subject for his dissertation—democracy wasn't worth the trouble. Another colleague had useful things to say about Falun Gong—but refused to go on television to say them. Link and other bold scholars can understand the concerns of their younger colleagues, particularly. They do not necessarily condemn them: A ban by China can cripple a career.

Still, scholars can go further than they think. They can say and do more than they imagine. They censor themselves. "You become your own policeman," as Link says. Jianli Yang has observed this phenomenon for years. He is a Chinese democracy leader, a former political prisoner, and a scholar: the holder of two Ph.D.s from American universities, one in math from Berkeley, and the other in political economy from Harvard. People who are in perfectly secure situations, he says, behave as though they were in imminent danger. They can perform good—or simply tell the truth (which may amount to the same thing)—at virtually no risk. Yet they shrink from doing so. In 2007, Yang gave a speech at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government entitled "Overcome Fear."

After Tiananmen Square, says Yang, the Chinese government made the decision to co-opt intellectuals—intellectuals both at home and abroad. This is something the Soviets never really bothered to do. The Chinese provide money, programs, and perks, in exchange for . . . cooperation? Goodwill? Non-hostility? Western scholars who visit China are often treated like royalty, says Yang. At home, they are just another guy or gal in the grocery store. In China, they are wined and dined. Naturally, this is pleasant and seductive—not easy to give up. What's more, polite people don't offend their hosts, do they? Above all, there is the lure of access—access not just to archives, but to people. A professor can say, "Well, as it happens,

I was talking to someone close to Vice Chairman Liu, and he said . . .”

Arthur Waldron, a China scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, is very familiar with all this. “Once you have a project in China,” he says, “you become its hostage.” And “there’s tremendous pressure on China specialists to stay current”—to drop names and prove, or flaunt, insider knowledge. “If you’re like Perry Link and open to dissidents, people can say, ‘Well, Perry—great scholar and all, but he hasn’t been to China for more than a decade, and no matter how good he is, he’s bound to be out of touch. After all, China changes all the time.’” This has a sinister effect, says Waldron. There are many ways of “undermining” a person’s “academic authority.”

From my experience, Link is modest, but others are immodest in his behalf. A professor at the University of California, Riverside, and a professor emeritus at Princeton, he has stuck his neck out a long way. At the time of Tiananmen Square, he took Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Shuxian, to the U.S. embassy. Fang was a famed dissident scientist, and No. 1 on the regime’s Most Wanted

HENNY RAY ABRAMS/AP

Chen Guangcheng and Jerome A. Cohen, May 19, 2012

list. Years later, Link edited *The Tiananmen Papers*, a trove of (formerly) secret Chinese-government documents about the protests and massacre. His co-editor was Andrew Nathan, a scholar at Columbia—who is also on the blacklist. “Andy and I are sort of old standbys on the list,” says Link, “the ones held up as examples of going too far. We inadvertently have become tools of the regime: They use Andy and me to frighten the younger scholars.” Waldron tells me that Link used to head Princeton’s Chinese-language program in Beijing. When China banned Link, Princeton did what American universities characteristically do: nothing. But there was an alternative course, says Waldron. “They could have said, ‘Professor Link is our director, and will remain our director. If you don’t want him, fine. We’ll move the program to Taiwan. It’s up to you.’” But that is not the American way, where China is concerned. Waldron quotes the late James Lilley, an East Asia hand who ended his diplomatic career as U.S. ambassador to China: “You won’t get anything from them unless you squeeze them.” But Westerners—scholars, businessmen, government officials—are almost never willing to squeeze.

Waldron, too, has stuck his neck out—but has not been banned. The Chinese authorities have made things difficult for him, and are stingy with the number of days they allow him to be in the country. But he is not on the blacklist. As he explains, he is on a kind of “graylist” instead. Recently, NHK, the Japanese broadcasting corporation, asked him to speak on air about Confucius Institutes. These are language-and-culture centers set up by the Chinese government all over the world, including on American campuses. They are an expression of Beijing’s “soft power,” its attempt to spread its influence in benign, or benign-seeming, ways. In my view, these centers are a mixed blessing at best, corrupting and malign at worst. In any case, NHK was having trouble finding an American academic willing to speak on the subject, and Waldron agreed. By agreeing, he thought, he could be costing himself a visa. But “the way I look at it is this: If your university has gone to the trouble of building an endowment so that you don’t have to fight in the marketplace for a living, but are guaranteed rice for life in return for what you think, you should say what you think. That’s part of the deal.” Waldron says he could not have lived with himself if he had turned down NHK.

He has suffered various professional bumps and bruises for stating such things as, “North Korea started the Korean War”—a simple fact to you and me, maybe, but a primitive, embarrassing notion to many academics. “Like a car, you get banged up,” says Waldron. “But I’ve survived, I’m at a top university, and others are in prison or dead.” (Here, of course, he is speaking of Chinese dissidents.)

POSSIBLY the most maddening, and effective, aspect of China’s approach to visas is its randomness, or seeming randomness: You never know when the boom will be lowered—on whom and why. The Chinese will allow a foreign scholar to criticize as he pleases, and come and go as he pleases, and then, one day: boom. “You know the reason. We don’t have to tell you.” In 2002, Perry Link wrote a well-known essay called “The Anaconda in the Chandelier.” The Chinese state is not like a snarling tiger or fire-breathing dragon in your living room (although it certainly can be that, for Chen Guangcheng and other dissidents). It’s more like “a giant anaconda coiled in an overhead chandelier. Normally the great snake doesn’t move. It doesn’t have to. It feels no need to be clear about its prohibitions. Its constant silent message is ‘You yourself decide,’ after which, more often than not, everyone in its shadow makes his or her large and small adjustments—all quite ‘naturally.’”

Jonathan Mirsky worked in China, coming and going, for almost 20 years. He was one of the first Westerners in, in 1972. Because he wrote honestly, he figured he would be tossed out any day. But it took the Chinese until 1991 to do it. Why did they do it when they did it? Who knows? One fine day, Mirsky’s minder of many years said to him, “We would like you to leave our China the day after tomorrow.” Mirsky replied, “Really, Mr. Wang? You’re serious? Thank you so much. You’ve made me the happiest of men.” Wang was nonplussed. It was not the reaction he was used to. Mirsky explained, “You mean I’m not going to have to be in your mother-raping country anymore, and have my phone listened to, and be followed on the street, and be constantly warned to watch what I write? What a relief that will be!” There is a coda to this story. Some years later, Mirsky was

starting a stint at Harvard, and bumped into none other than his old minder. "Mr. Mirsky," said Wang, "this is like a dream!" "No, Mr. Wang, a nightmare." They never saw each other again.

Andrew Nathan, the Columbia scholar, has had the honor of being banned, or blocked, on three separate occasions. The latest followed his work on *The Tiananmen Papers*. Audacious, he is affiliated with various human-rights organizations: Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights in China, the National Endowment for Democracy. Virtually the whole array. Obviously, he regrets not being able to go to China, as any China scholar would. But he has not been all that harmed by his banning. First, he says, he has tenure. Second, his research does not depend on fieldwork in China. (One of his subjects is Chinese foreign policy, and that does not require your presence on Chinese soil. Anthropology, by contrast, does.) And third, "being banned is a kind of fieldwork of its own." You learn all sorts of interesting things from it: about how the Chinese government operates, about how your colleagues operate. The government doesn't necessarily send you a telegram saying, "Guess what? You're banned!" They may simply not respond, next time you request a visa. Or they may say, "It is not a convenient time." As for your colleagues, they may disinvite you from a conference here at home, because Chinese officials will be there, and you know how it is . . .

Western scholars who keep their head down, says Nathan, are not all "lily-livered liars and knaves." He suggests that there are three groups. There are scholars who hold "the perfectly respectable view" that the U.S.-China relationship is too important to be disturbed in any way. We must have a dialogue with the Chinese Communists, find out what makes them tick, and get along with them. Then there are young scholars who have careers to make and simply cannot do without access to China. And the third group? Well, "the lily-livered liars and knaves."

Perry Link, for his part, says he felt "liberated" after being banned. The anaconda had ruled, or affected, his behavior, in ways conscious and unconscious. "You avoid sensitive terms and sensitive topics. You try to be acceptable." The relief he felt after being banned was confirmation that the anaconda's sway was real. In his essay, he cites a Chinese proverb: "Dead pigs aren't afraid of hot water." Once he was "dead," i.e., banned, you could threaten him with boiling water, or pour it all over him, what did he care? Besides which, his main scholarly concern is literature, and he can do his work in beautiful California as well as he can anywhere else.

KNOWN to every China scholar, surely, is a book published in 2004. This is *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. (Xinjiang is the home of the Uighurs.) The book brings together contributions by 15 scholars, all of them Western, or in the West, apparently. Last year, Bloomberg News ran a fascinating article by Daniel Golden and Oliver Staley about the publication of the book and its aftermath. The book's editor, S. Frederick Starr—a well-known Sovietologist and Russianist, actually—chose not to include scholars of Chinese nationality: He did not want to get anyone in trouble with his government. Furthermore, he assured the Chinese embassy in Washington, before publishing the book, that the book would be scholarly and objective—nothing much to worry about. He took yet other steps to reassure the Chinese. You and I may wonder, "Why should a man in a free country bend over backward to soothe the sensibilities of a one-party dictatorship with a gulag?" But this behavior is perfectly normal and, to a degree, understandable.

Working with Starr to assemble the contributors was Justin Rudelson, a China scholar then at Dartmouth. The Bloomberg article quoted him as follows: "I remember people saying at the beginning, 'Do you think China will ban us?'" China did ban them—all 15. Said Rudelson, "I wound up doing the stupidest thing, bringing all of the experts in the field into one room and having the Chinese take us all out." According to Bloomberg, "Dartmouth almost fired Rudelson because he couldn't go to China." He now works elsewhere, evidently of his own accord. One of the 15 authors, Dru Gladney of Pomona College, said, "As a group, most of us have been very disappointed in the colleges' and universities' lack of sympathy and support." Institutions are "so eager to jump on the China bandwagon, they put financial interests ahead of academic freedom." Incidentally, I said that all 15 contributors were banned, but that's not true, or did not remain true for long: At least two of them wrote statements disavowing any support for Xinjiang's independence movement. That did the trick.

Jianli Yang says that he and other dissidents are not entirely comfortable at American universities. Link says that another prominent dissident recently told him the same thing. If you're a dissident, says Yang, people may regard you as radioactive, a bit untouchable—as though they might catch a disease from you. You are too "political." You could put a professor or a program or a university in an awkward spot. Dissidents sometimes hear, "Sorry, but this conference is for scholars, not dissidents." Yet, as Yang says, some of the dissidents are top-notch scholars. Fang Lizhi, the man Link took to the U.S. embassy, was a towering scientist, an astrophysicist. Yang himself knows a thing or two about math, political theory, economics, international relations, the Chinese penal system, poetry—lots of things.

I have a memory from the mid-1980s. Harvard invited Armando Valladares to give a talk. He had just emerged from 22 years in the Cuban gulag, and had written a memoir called *Against All Hope*. Some people called him "the Cuban Solzhenitsyn." The university would not let him speak on his own. They paired him with a professor, whose job was to give the pro-Castro point of view. Every other day of the year, of course, the professor had the students to himself. Valladares, who knew something, was not allowed to appear for an hour by himself.

It is not the job of a scholar to help a dissident, you could say (although we might hope the scholar is not hostile). Scholars are not human-rights activists or heroes. But they should probably tell the truth, and the full truth, to the extent they can ascertain it. And we are constantly told how important China is to the world, and that this importance will only grow in the future. Shouldn't we, the "world," have solid and complete information? Even, or especially, on the verboten subjects? Also, when a Jerry Cohen runs interference for a Chen Guangcheng—we can applaud. This may not be the job, strictly speaking, of a scholar, but we can applaud. We can applaud even when an Arthur Waldron is willing to say we ought to think twice about Confucius Institutes. Some contend that Chinese authorities themselves have respect—highest respect—for those foreign scholars who challenge them. Whom they might even find it convenient to ban. If so, that's one thing we can give them credit for. **NR**

Political Thriller

A look at the books and beliefs of Brad Thor

BY JOHN J. MILLER

A FEW pages into Brad Thor's new thriller, the hero, Scot Harvath, wipes out a squad of trained killers who come to murder him. "He was an apex predator—at the top of the food chain," writes Thor of his protagonist in *Black List*. "People didn't hunt him. He was the hunter, and he hunted *them*."

Book buyers continue to hunt down Thor and his tales of a counterterrorism operative who once served in Navy SEAL Team Six. *Black List*, released on July 24, is the twelfth title in Thor's oeuvre. And with at least 7 million books in print, Thor is one of the most successful thriller writers now at work.

He's also an unabashed conservative. There are other right-of-center bestselling novelists: Vince Flynn has lampooned liberal pieties in his Mitch Rapp series, and Stephen Hunter's latest novel, *Soft Target*, includes a send-up of President Obama. Yet perhaps no other bard of the potboiler is as forthright about politics as Thor, who not only inserts them into his books but also tweets his opinions to a wide following and even stumps for candidates. (Full disclosure: Thor provided a generous blurb for my novel, *The First Assassin*.)

The first question many people ask Thor regards his byline: Is he trying to channel the Nordic god of thunder through a nom de plume? "Thor really is my last name—it's Swedish," he says. "If I had picked a pen name, I would have started it with a 'C,' so my books would sit between 'Clancy' and 'Cussler.'" In the future, however, would-be Tom Clancys and Clive Cusslers may want to start their pen names with a "T," so they're stocked near "Thor."

Thor, now 42, grew up in Chicago and attended the Francis W. Parker School, an exclusive academy, where his classmates in the late 1980s included the actors Anne Heche and Billy Zane. Then he went off to the University of Southern California, where his father, a real-estate developer, expected him to study business. "I was in an economics class one day, and the professor was all jazzed about a project that would have us pretending to be the managers of flower stores," says Thor. "I closed my book and walked out. I'd rather take a bullet than be the manager of a flower shop."

He moped around for a couple of days, trying to decide what to do next. At a career-counseling office, Thor took the Strong-Campbell psychology test. "I scored off the charts for writing and publishing," he says. So he switched his major to creative writing, but didn't tell his dad. A few months later, Thor's father was looking over a report card and saw a bunch of writing classes. "He confronted me about it, and I told him it was the way into the television and film industry," says Thor. The explanation worked.

One of Thor's writing instructors at USC was T. C. Boyle, the renowned novelist. "He taught me to be fearless—to write for no one but yourself," says Thor. Boyle's prominent students have included Téa Obreht, who won last year's Orange Prize for Fiction, but Thor probably has enjoyed the most commercial success. "He was then a fine writer, but you never know which students will succeed in the field and which will not," says Boyle.

For Thor, success as a novelist didn't come immediately. He struggled with a first novel. "A couple of chapters into it, I thought writing was the most solitary profession in the world," he says. "But that's not true. Today, I'm on the phone and on e-mail every day, consulting with subject experts. Back then, I just didn't know." He traveled through Europe and came up with an idea for a television show on getting around with a backpack, rail pass, and shoestring budget. That turned into *Traveling Lite*, which appeared on public television for two seasons.

In 1998, Thor married his wife, a doctor. On their honeymoon, over dinner in Italy, he told her about his desire to write and publish a novel. She urged him to set aside a couple of hours each day. "I had told her my deepest, darkest secret," says Thor. "Now I had to write it. My man card was on the line."

Then came a stroke of luck. A few days later, on an evening train from Munich to Amsterdam, the Thors shared a compartment with a brother and sister from Atlanta. "We stayed up talking about our love of books," says Thor. "I even mentioned that I wanted to write one." When the train reached its destination, the woman informed Thor that she was a sales rep for Simon & Schuster. She told him to send her a manuscript when he was ready.

Back home, *Traveling Lite* went on hiatus, due to a dispute with a public television station. Meanwhile, Thor wrote *The Lions of Lucerne*, about a massacre of Secret Service agents and the kidnapping of a president. "People always say 'Write what you know,'" says Thor. "That's bad advice. You should write what you love to read. You have a Ph.D. in that genre."

Simon & Schuster offered a contract, and Thor prepared to become a professional author. Right before his book went to press, however, Osama bin Laden's terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Thor hustled to update his book, which came out a few months later. "To the best of my knowledge, I was the first thriller writer to mention 9/11 in print," he says. The disaster also galvanized him: "I wanted to pay more attention to our government. Why weren't the CIA and FBI talking to each other? How did 19 goat herders take down our great symbol of capitalism?"

The Lions of Lucerne didn't hit the bestseller lists, but it performed well enough for Thor to ink a three-book deal. He began to pump out novel after novel, at a clip of about one per year. Sales mounted steadily—and then in 2008, Thor hit No. 1 on the bestseller lists with *The Last Patriot*, which is a clever cross between an episode of *24*, the *National Treasure* films, and *The Da Vinci Code*, but with an emphasis on Islam rather than Catholicism. The story involves a lost revelation of Mohammed that undermines extreme Islam, a trail of clues planted by Thomas Jefferson, and a group of modern-day terror fighters who try to make sense of it all. The hero is once again Scot Harvath, whose unusual first name comes from Thor's brother. Their mother liked the name "Scott" but thought that "Scott Thor" had too many "T"s in a row.

As *The Last Patriot* came out, the death threats from Islamic

Brad Thor

radicals poured in—and Thor became the Salman Rushdie of thriller writers. "I had taken no steps to protect myself or my family," he says. Thor turned to friends in law enforcement for advice. He changed addresses, hired security, and varied his daily routine. Today, he writes in a Chicago high rise, with a view of Lake Michigan. He doesn't want anything more specific said in print, on account of the harassment he continues to face. In February, for instance, he posted a comment to Twitter: "The life of one U.S. soldier is worth more than all the Korans in Afghanistan." An hour later, Barei Danish, a Kabul-based blogger, issued a typo-ridden response: "One word of Koran is worth more than all property of US gov))shut up,u will die near future."

MANY of his readers might have guessed that Thor is a conservative. "I write about American exceptionalism and look at the United States as the greatest force for good in the world," says Thor. "Also, I don't think a lot of liberals are reading in my genre, on counterterrorism and national security." Yet it took the election of Barack Obama for Thor to decide that he would make his politics plain: "That's when I said 'I'm going to scream it from the mountaintops.'" He put his conservative views on Facebook and Twitter, made appearances on Glenn Beck's show, and contributed to Andrew Breitbart's websites. The decision influenced his novels as well. In *Full Black*, published in 2011, a sinister character resembles George Soros. "I've never said he's based on anybody," says Thor, trying to suppress a smirk.

A year ago, Thor endorsed Rick Santorum for president, back when most Republicans were ignoring the former senator from Pennsylvania. A mutual friend had introduced them. "Rick is fluent in conversation," says Thor. "I was impressed with what he had to say about everything from judges to the family to Iran." As the Iowa caucuses approached, Thor traveled with Santorum's campaign and introduced the candidate at several stops. With the GOP primaries over, he's backing Mitt Romney: "Obama must be defeated."

Despite Thor's involvement in presidential politics, his new book, *Black List*, doesn't have anything to do with the 2012 election. Instead, it's about the rise of the surveillance state: "Privacy had been obliterated," writes Thor in the book. He points to everything from warrantless wiretapping to Future Attribute Screening Technology, a Department of Homeland Security project that aims to predict criminal behavior. "I'm the most straight-and-narrow, law-and-order guy you'll ever meet," says Thor. "But now I'm starting to see that parts of the Patriot Act overreached."

Black List is fundamentally an adventure story, though Thor also seeks to plant a few ideas with his readers. About halfway through the book, Harvath delivers a short monologue that sounds like a libertarian call to arms: "Every e-mail, all our Internet activity, the entirety of every single phone conversation, every piece of GPS data, all your social media interactions, every credit card transaction, every single electronic detail about your life, like it or not, is being placed into a safety deposit box that you have no control over. The government can come in at any point, open that box, and conduct retroactive surveillance on you. They will be able to create a perfect profile of your behavior, and they'll be exceptionally well armed if they deem your behavior to be in opposition to the best interests of the state." (In the pre-publication galleys of *Black List*, Thor even capitalized the "S" in "state," deploying a conventional right-wing trope. A copy editor apparently didn't get it, and in the finished editions now on sale the word appears in lower case.)

Critics of Thor complain that his heroes are too good, his villains too evil, and his action sequences too extravagant. One bad guy in *Black List* doesn't merely exhibit the familiar human weakness of lust for power; his awfulness is so complete that he once wrote a comprehensive report on how the Nazis could have improved the efficiency of the Holocaust. Thor makes no apologies: "I'm an entertainer, first and foremost." He wants his readers to think, but first he wants them to have a good time.

Would he ever consider taking his career in a different direction—possibly by running for office? "I've shot my mouth off a lot," says Thor. He pauses and then adds: "Maybe in ten years, when I'm in my 50s." Vote for Thor: It would be a great bumper sticker, and an even better plot twist. **NR**

WWW.BRADTHOR.COM

The Long View

BY ROB LONG

TO: YUM! Brands

FROM: MarketGAY Public Relations

IN RE: How to maximize YUM!'s position in the marketplace

This is a short document to "set the table" for our deeper discussions in the following week. Everyone here at MarketGAY PR is thrilled to have the opportunity to discuss our vision for YUM! Brands Quick-Serve Restaurant brands, especially the flagship KFC, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell locations.

As you know, the current "crisis" in the QSR sector—Chick-fil-A's trouble with the same-sex-marriage movement—has created an opportunity for YUM! that it would be foolish to ignore. Everyone knows that the Chinese character for "crisis" is the same as the character for "opportunity," but did you also know that the Chinese logogram for "chicken sandwich" is very similar to the traditional Chinese logogram for "two men lying together within the Red Chamber"?

No one wants to see another American QSR suffer the way Chick-fil-A has. Although it may seem at first glance that Chick-fil-A's sales have actually increased during this crisis period, it is foolish to imagine that any American QSR location can exist for long without identifying itself as "extremely gay" to the marketplace. Consumers have many choices about where to spend their QSR dollar, and offering them a homosexual option for their chicken, pizza, or informal Mexican cravings is just good business!

We here at MarketGAY PR are here to help you seize that market!

To get the ball rolling, we thought we'd send along our top "brainstorm" ideas for turning Chick-fil-A's crisis into a YUM! Brands homopportunity™.

- **KFGlee!**

Using sophisticated social-media marketing—including sponsored tweets, Facebook fan pages, and live-blogging via Tumblr—and combining it all with a carefully orchestrated product-placement campaign, we would like to utilize the gay-positive vibe of TV's hit musical show *Glee* to rebrand KFC as a *very* gay place to eat. Ideally, the menu would need to become less carb-heavy, and the mashed-potato bowl would probably have to be retired completely, but that could be integrated within a *Glee* storyline, perhaps one in which all of the gay characters on the series—which is roughly all of them—decide to enjoy KFC's skinless and boneless options.

- **The Pizza Hut Men's Gymnastics Challenge**

Simply put, here's an opportunity to narrowcast to specifically gay audiences by sponsoring a men's gymnastics "Whirl Off." Live events can take place in the Pizza Hut parking lots, and, even better, the event need not be "gay specific." Let the phrase "Men's Gymnastics" do all the work carrying the brand. Could also craft a tie-in for more adult markets and late-night advertisements with the popular Pizza Hut Meat Lovers™ Pizza.

- **The Colonel Marries Long John Silver**

We recognize that LJS is no longer part of the YUM! Brands QSR portfolio, and yet we think that a cross-corporation market action here makes all kinds of sense and requires nothing in the way of brand-image rewriting, as both Long John Silver and Colonel Sanders are as yet unmarried and therefore seem "available." In addition, men of a certain age who remain unmarried are almost always assumed—correctly—to be homosexual, which makes the "shock" value of the announcement less "shock" and more "value." Could easily tie in an in-store "celebration" involving the popular "Party Bucket."

- **Ricky Martin Presents Taco Bell!**

Reaching out to the popular—and openly gay—Latin singer Ricky Martin seems like a perfect marriage of brand identification and gay pizzazz. Taco Bells are known for their late-night, post-club atmosphere—the menus are specifically designed to counter-balance a night spent dancing and drinking—and who better to bridge those two worlds than a certified pop star? All stores could be rebranded as Ricky Martin Presents Taco Bell™ in the current hip-hop style, reaching out to both a young generation of music fans and a core gay audience.

- **Pasta Bravo!**

Pasta Bravo needs no rebranding. It's gay enough.

- **The Chicken-on-Chicken Sandwich at KFC**

We suggest creating a new menu item, a chicken patty sandwich with an additional—and identical—chicken patty resting on top of the original chicken patty, to thematically suggest that at KFC, it's okay for two chickens to lie together.

This is just a snippet of what MarketGAY PR can do for YUM! Brands. The idea here is to knit the locations together via branding and trade dress—as you have already done with your combination KFC/Taco Bell stores—into a coherent and extremely gay brand identity.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts! And thanks again for allowing us to introduce you to the MarketGAY Team!

Athwart

BY JAMES LILEKS

Creation Unscience

PERHAPS you read my latest popular-science book, *Colons: How the New Science of Punctuation Is Changing Our Book Titles*. I intended it to change the conversation about how we have conversations. I showed how evolutionary fight-or-flight reactions—that ineffably mammalian moment of confusion and hesitation—led to the semicolon. It was well received, and once we had a blurb that compared it to Malcolm Gladwell, they printed another 100,000 copies. There was even talk of a movie, with Al Pacino playing the exclamation point, and Gérard Depardieu as the *accent grave*.

A few weeks ago I got a call from a journalist asking about some of the quotes. In the chapter "From Borges to Borge; or, What Does a Comma Sound Like in Spanish?" I'd profiled an Argentinian man who made a clicking sound every time he encountered a comma when reading out loud.

Jonah Lehrer

"A comma fills the empty space between things CLICK!" he said, "and it is in man's nature to abhor a vacuum CLICK! particularly if the wife is running it when you're trying to sleep."

The journalist pointed out that the line turned up in a 1974 *Mad* magazine article, and I felt a brief spasm of panic. I'd never been to Argentina. In fact I'd made up everything in the book. After the success of my first popular-science book, *Lassie Was a Geologist: Absurd Assertions and the New Science of Book Marketing*, I'd been under pressure to produce another book within two years; plagiarism and a haphazard parade of claptrap seemed my only option.

The more he pressed, the more I knew the jig was up, and I confessed. Everything I wrote was a lie. Except for that profile of Lillian Hellman.

Note: I made all that up. Don't you feel sorry for me? Don't you wonder where I went wrong?

After all, I'm just like Jonah Lehrer, disgraced *New Yorker* science scribe, except he actually did make things up, and I just made things up about making things up. Lehrer wrote a book called *Imagine*, a disquisition on the neurological origins of creativity. He made the mistake of inventing Bob Dylan quotes, and since there are people who have memorized every cryptic utterance from Dylan—which is a little like sculpting with oatmeal—Lehrer was found out. The hunt for fibs and plagiarism began. If you've ever seen a nature documentary where insects flense a dead beast down to white bone, you know what the Internet can do. Lehrer quit his *New Yorker* post, apologized, and went into the deep dark woods where the shades of Stephen Glass and Jayson Blair float in eternal disgrace.

People are sad. So much talent, so much promise! Also, he was one of the good guys: In 2008 Lehrer wrote about Mitt Romney's "cognitive dissonance" in a pop-psych blog post where he likened Mitt to an apocalyptic cult leader. If he hadn't fallen hard and fast, perhaps he would have proved that conservative brains operate from leftover Neanderthal DNA, and process gay marriage in terms of a rampaging woolly mammoth on fire, or resist change because buried evolutionary memories associate it with the pain they felt when their knuckles dragged the ground.

In other words, it's the trendy science that lofted him up, and hence his supporters' dismay: He was one of those clever writers who gather up all the Science Things and give us talking points for cocktail parties. No one personally believes he likes to play golf because the brain is pre-wired to enjoy swinging poles and lying, but hell, it probably explains the rise of golf *in general*. The new science says so, anyway.

There's nothing wrong with middlebrow science. People like to learn things. I enjoy reading about theoretical physics—or rather enjoy reading the first paragraph; after that, it's gibberish. "The quoson beams interact with weak-attractor fizbin particles along the visible puce spectrum, confirming theories that fubari waves diffuse the hork factor."

Okay, I guess. But a book that explains in layman's terms why dark matter, well, *matters*—that's not only good, but you get the quiet glow of realization that you're the sort of person who enjoys knowing about dark matter. It rarely comes up in conversation unless it's dinner with liberal relatives who go off on the make-up of Glenn Beck's brain, but there's that day when you're driving home, listening to NPR, and the subject arises. *Ah*, you think, settling comfortably into the La-Z-Boy of self-regard, *this is a matter with which I am somewhat familiar.*

Many new books, however, seem keen to explain away the spark that makes humans different, to reduce us to chemical factories. The boon of modern medicine means that remedies exist for people brought low by depression and other ailments, but dammit, sometimes you have weltschmerz for a reason. Sadness is not pathological; despair is a perfectly rational reaction, particularly after you see the fall line-up on the networks. We are more than gears and lubricants, and while it's interesting to read about the neurological origins of creativity, it's like studying whether Hitchcock rode to work in a Ford or a Chevy. What counts is *Vertigo*.

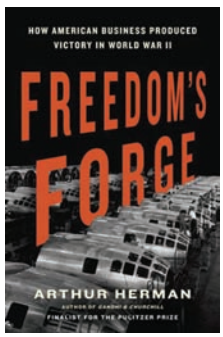
Scientists in previous eras wondered about the weight of a soul; now, you suspect, they're keen to find out *why* in Sagan's name we think we have one in the first place. If a brilliant young science writer wrote a book that proved we believe in God because of a lizard-brain holdover that processed thunder as speech, well, hosannahs all around. But Lehrer blasphemed the word of Dylan. Rock is God, and Dylan his only prophet. STONE HIM! **NR**

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.

NINA SUBIN

Making War

DANIEL FOSTER



Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II, by Arthur Herman (Random House, 346 pp., $28)

"THE size of the internal American market and its wealth of buying power and also raw materials . . . guarantee the American automobile industry internal sales figures that alone permit production methods that would simply be impossible in Europe. The result of that is the enormous export capacity of the American automobile industry."

So wrote a young Adolf Hitler in the unpublished "Second Book" of *Mein Kampf*. And he was right. Which raises the question of why he would declare war on such an awesomely productive power on December 8, 1941, when his alliance with imperial Japan (whose leaders hadn't even bothered to give the Führer advance notice of Pearl Harbor) required no such thing. For it was the greatest exports of the American automobile industry—the nearly 300,000 aircraft, 90,000 tanks, and 400 million tons of bombs it retooled itself to produce during the war—that would prove to be the doom of the Third Reich.

As Americans, we're likely to focus on American-led campaigns and battles—names such as Midway, Iwo Jima, Normandy, and Bastogne—and the brave men who fought and died in them. But the indelicate fact is that four of every five Germans who died in ground combat were killed by Russians, and that it was the Soviet Union under the bloody-minded Josef Stalin that provided the sheer mass of bodies required to stop Germany in its tracks. As British historian Andrew Roberts puts the matter in his brilliant recent book *The Storm of War*, America's most important contributions were made thousands of miles from the front lines. "Grossly to oversimplify the contributions made by the three leading members of the Grand Alliance in the Second World War," he writes, "if Britain had provided the time and Russia the blood necessary to defeat the Axis, it was America that produced the weapons."

Just how the United States managed this is Arthur Herman's subject in his engaging new book, *Freedom's Forge*. His narrative is impressive in both its breadth and its detail, and fills out the gauzy images of war bonds and Rosie the Riveter that constitute the casual American's understanding of the war economy. But though his scope is plenary, Herman wisely tells much of the story through two paradigmatic captains of industry: Bill Knudsen, who as one of Roosevelt's "dollar-a-year" men did as much as anyone to ensure that free enterprise survived and thrived on a war footing; and Henry Kaiser, an industrial dynamo who built just about everything short of fully formed infantrymen for the war effort.

Kaiser was of that truly American type whose business is business. He started out as an ambitious camera-shop owner and in the course of the first two decades of the 20th century became one of the most important road-graders and -pavers west of the Mississippi, connecting the burgeoning West Coast to the heart of America. He then turned his sights to dam building, and was instrumental in forming the conglomerate known as the Six Companies that put up the Hoover and Boulder Dams. By 1940, Kaiser and his company were building shipyards in Seattle, and the experience convinced him that—why not?—he could build merchant freighters for the desperate British, whose own fleet was being decimated by German U-boats. And so he did—747 of the famed Liberty ships for Britain, and later America, before the war was over.

He installed massive new yards in Richmond, Calif., and Portland, Ore., and from there turned shipbuilding, which had been an idiosyncratic, artisanal process, into just another example of assembly-line mass production. The first Liberty freighter out of the Richmond docks in May 1941 took 253 days to build and launch. When Admiral Howard Vickery of the Maritime Commission told him that that would need to come down to 105 days, Kaiser and his team gulped but signed on. A year and a half later, the Richmond yards assembled Hull No. 440, later christened the *Robert E. Peary*, in *four and a half days*.

Eventually Kaiser would turn to making the steel for the ships himself rather than having it brought in from the major foundries in the Midwest, building the first large-scale steel-production facility west of the Rockies in Fontana, Calif. His Six Companies would also help rebuild Pearl Harbor after the Japanese attack, and their engineers and workers would die alongside Marines in the heroic but ill-fated defense of Wake Island against the Japanese. By the end of the war, Kaiser was even building aircraft carriers, and had become a living legend.

On the surface, Kaiser looks like a character from an Ayn Rand novel, but Herman demonstrates that he was also a shrewd political operator with a team of slick lobbyists and an instrumental affection for the New Deal and its influence-peddling architects. He believed in and succeeded through the free-enterprise system, to be sure, but he was also well aware of the benefits of having friends in Washington.

William Knudsen, whom Herman affectionately refers to as "the Big Dane" throughout the book, was in many ways Kaiser's complement. An immigrant who earned a reputation as a bare-knuckle boxer in turn-of-the-century New York City, Knudsen was a maker of bicycles who caught the attention of Henry Ford. He worked for—and clashed with—Ford during the Model T era, inventing vast swaths of the science of industrial management in the process. In the 1920s, he left Ford for Chevrolet and engineered—both literally and figuratively—its dethroning of the Model T as the bestselling car in America. By 1940, when President

Roosevelt called Knudsen to Washington to lead the country into war production, Knudsen sat atop General Motors and the automotive world, his reputation second not even to that of Ford himself. But Knudsen nevertheless resigned his position unceremoniously (to the chagrin of his America First–supporting chairman at GM, Alfred P. Sloan) and left for Washington. America had been good to him, Knudsen reasoned, and he owed her.

While Kaiser's is an impressive story of American ambition, what Knudsen managed to accomplish in a number of largely thankless government roles—unpaid, unchartered, unloved, and with little more than the (fleeting) good wishes of the president of the United States—was nothing short of astonishing. Leveraging his personal stature and his relationships in Detroit and elsewhere, along with his innate production genius and intimate knowledge of America's manufacturing base, he personally distributed billions in government contracts to those companies best suited to deliver—even if it meant focusing on the large auto corporations (thus drawing ire from the likes of Senator Harry Truman) he well knew had the dedicated engineering staffs required to make massive plants turn on a dime for war production. Herman does the sums:

> In the end, American automakers would produce 50 percent of all aircraft engines, 35 percent of aircraft propellers, 47 percent of all machine guns, 87 percent of all aerial bombs, 80 percent of tanks and tank parts, one-half [of] the diesel engines for ships, submarines, and other naval craft; not to mention 100 percent of U.S. Army trucks, half-tracks, and other vehicles.

Knudsen was more than just a glorified appropriator. Herman details the myriad ways in which he helped improve everything from airplane-assembly orders to military-contracting procedures during a seemingly never-ending cross-country inspection tour of America's "arsenal of democracy" (a phrase Knudsen coined and FDR borrowed). A representative tidbit recounted by Herman is Knudsen's realization that the country's tax laws, which included a *15-year* amortization schedule for deducting physical capital as a business expense, would make the private-sector investment required for a speedy military buildup impossible. (Hitler's Germany had a seven-year schedule.) Knudsen finally prevailed upon Roosevelt to change the law—but first he had to get FDR's friend, glass tycoon John Biggers, to explain to the president and his cabinet what "amortization" meant.

Indeed, the proximate villains in Herman's story are not the Nazis or the Japanese, but the ideology and often, as above, the ignorance of the progressive New Dealers and labor unions. Union strikes, especially those spearheaded by the Communist-tainted CIO, stymied Knudsen's efforts and crippled production in the critical months before Pearl Harbor. Nor did the date of infamy change much: Workers at a Consolidated B-24 plant in San Diego struck a week *after* Pearl Harbor. In all, 1941 would have 3,500 strikes, costing 23 million man-days of labor. Roosevelt's refusal to check the unions meant the strike menace would persist through the war, although it would reach a turning point in 1943, when public outrage over a coal-miners' strike allowed Republicans in Congress to pass (over FDR's veto) the War Labor Disputes Act, which curtailed unions' ability to walk out.

Nor was it just Roosevelt's allies in Big Labor who worked to undermine Knudsen. Roosevelt's chief ideologue and fixer, Harold Ickes, mistrusted the Big Dane and thought of him as a creature of Big Business. Others in the administration—including the first lady—shared Ickes's opinion, and, owing to their whispers, so did a compliant press. And they'd eventually have his scalp. After Knudsen had overseen no less than the repurposing of the entire manufacturing capacity of a continent, Roosevelt unceremoniously cut him loose from his civilian position, bowing to pressure from the Left. Knudsen learned of his termination over ticker tape. He'd get a consolation prize, of sorts, in the form of a three-star commission in the U.S. Army (he was the only civilian ever to be made a lieutenant general), and go on as an indispensable troubleshooter for the War Department until 1945.

Besides Kaiser and Knudsen, there are hundreds of heroes in Herman's book: American businessmen of every make and model, from burly immigrants and bayou dropouts to teetotaling prep-school dandies and the scions of Gilded Age dynasties, alongside countless upstarts

who, with a few thousand dollars and a spare garage or tool shed, created new ways to weld studs onto naval vessels or mass-produce pre-fab huts for troops stationed in the Arctic. From the titans to the little-guy entrepreneurs who would form the 500,000 new businesses that emerged from the war, all of them were motivated to help America by helping themselves.

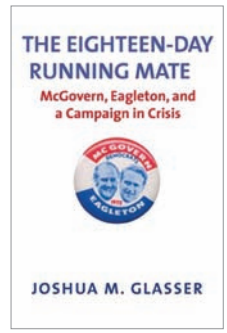
Their stories make Herman's narrative revisionist in an important respect: Most casual histories of American armament write as if the wartime economy were purely central-planned and state-driven. Herman shows that it was not, that individual businesses motivated by *both* patriotism and profit were the motor of the war effort.

To be sure, progressive ideologues saw the military buildup as the New Deal by other means: As one put it, it was "a version of the WPA that Republicans [would] have to support." But the parts of the war effort the government planned most heavily—production-priority charts, rations for raw materials, and the like—were messes. For instance, when one of FDR's alphabet-soup agencies unilaterally ordered a halt to new civilian-automobile manufacturing on January 15, 1942, so that Detroit could focus exclusively on armament, the administration faced a swift kick in the pants from the God of Unintended Consequences, as 400,000 autoworkers were laid off and car dealerships across the country shuttered. The result of centralized control was to slow, not hasten, wartime production.

This isn't to say that the American war economy was an ideal example of *laissez-faire*. Among other things, the effort involved massive, wholesale collusion of a type that would be illegal under even the most basic of antitrust laws. Nearly all of Detroit, for example, agreed in 1940 to stop making yearly model changes, to save retooling time and focus on the war production effort. And competitive bidding for war contracts was thrown out the window—there simply wasn't enough time to do things that way. But Herman's excellent book reminds us again and again that the most successful warmaking machine in history—by the middle of the war, the U.S. was out-producing all the other belligerents *combined*—was also the freest. We did not defeat Nazi syndicalism, or Soviet Communism for that matter, because we were lucky. We defeated them because we were right. **NR**

Veep Chaos

JOHN J. MILLER



The Eighteen-Day Running Mate: McGovern, Eagleton, and a Campaign in Crisis, by Joshua M. Glasser (Yale, 392 pp., $26)

THE day after Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern won the Massachusetts primary in 1972, reporter Robert D. Novak called around for comments. One of his sources, a liberal senator, provided a memorable quote: "The people don't know McGovern is for amnesty, abortion, and legalization of pot." When they find out, the senator continued, "he's dead."

Novak tucked the line into the fourth paragraph of the syndicated column he shared with Rowland Evans. McGovern, a left-wing senator from South Dakota, became the guy for "Amnesty, Abortion, and Acid," and this "triple-A" tag dogged him for months. The snappy label recalled "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," the alliterative putdown Republicans tried to use against Democrats in the 1884 presidential election.

The triple-A quote was controversial for its substance, because although McGovern supported an amnesty for draft dodgers and endorsed legal abortion, he did not in fact call for drug legalization. It was also controversial for its anonymity: Novak refused to name his source, who spoke on background (i.e., he allowed Novak to use his words but to identify him only as a "liberal senator"). Critics charged Evans and Novak with invention: "I guess sometimes they sort of soup things up to get a good story," said one of McGovern's staffers—an accusation that Timothy Crouse conveyed with approval in *The Boys on the Bus*, a popular account of the 1972 political press corps.

For 35 years, the origin of the triple-A quote remained a secret. Then, in 2007, Novak finally revealed it: Thomas Eagleton, the Missouri senator who had gone on to serve as McGovern's running mate for 18 tumultuous days before being booted from the ticket amid concerns about his mental health. For years, Novak, irritated by the claim of fabrication, had pleaded with Eagleton to go on the record. Eagleton always refused and Novak felt honor-bound—until Eagleton's death broke the seal of confidentially, and Novak at last gave up his source.

Joshua M. Glasser glides past this episode in *The Eighteen-Day Running Mate*, his otherwise thorough and engrossing account of the doomed McGovern-Eagleton partnership. Yet by dropping his readers into the middle of a campaign in crisis, he imparts lessons for both then and now: McGovern was ill suited for national leadership, and the vetting of vice-presidential candidates is a serious business.

Thomas Eagleton, age 42, was considered a safe pick. As a civil-rights liberal who opposed the Vietnam War, he satisfied the base of his party. As a Missouri senator with strong ties to labor, he was supposed to win over the working class in a swing state and beyond. And as a pro-life Catholic—back when it was possible for an elected Democrat to be such a thing—he was meant to appease socially conservative voters who frowned on McGovern and the New Left but had not yet abandoned the party of FDR.

In reality, Eagleton was a liability. Three times in the 1960s, he had checked into hospitals. Explanations varied from exhaustion to a stomach ailment. Yet the actual reason, kept hidden from the public, was depression. Treatment included electroconvulsive therapy, better known as shock therapy. Glasser's sober account of the procedure will cause many readers to wonder what the fuss was all about, but at the time the technique was poorly understood. A harsh depiction in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the novel by Ken Kesey, shaped negative perceptions. And, as the political adage says, when you're explaining, you're losing.

McGovern and his staff knew almost nothing about Eagleton's medical history—and Glasser's tick-tock chronicle of July 13, the day McGovern settled on Eagleton, is both a fascinating piece of political history and a devastating portrayal of executive irresolution. One of McGovern's problems was a delegate-counting flap that rendered his nomination uncertain until the Democratic convention in Miami Beach. Only after clinching the nomination just before midnight on July 12 could he announce a vice-presidential selection. Under party rules, he had until 4 o'clock the next afternoon to make a choice. If he missed this deadline, control of the nomination would shift to the delegates.

Before the convention, McGovern had wanted to run with Massachusetts senator Ted Kennedy, despite the fresh memory of Kennedy's craven performance at Chappaquiddick in 1969. Although Kennedy demurred, McGovern refused to quit his pursuit of JFK and RFK's kid brother. On July 13, McGovern wasted precious hours trying to persuade Kennedy to change his mind.

Kennedy held firm. He suggested Eagleton, who was on McGovern's list but not at the top—and would not have been on it at all if McGovern had known him as the author of the notorious triple-A quote. After Kennedy, McGovern reached out to Walter Mondale, the Minnesota senator who would run with Jimmy Carter in 1976. Mondale turned him down and recommended Eagleton too. Still uncertain, McGovern pitched the idea of Idaho senator Frank Church but backed off when his staff objected. At one point, Boston mayor Kevin White appeared likely to carry the day—a McGovern aide wrote White's name on official filing papers—but White fell from favor. Even CBS anchor Walter Cronkite was in the mix, though McGovern decided not to ask because he feared the embarrassment of a refusal. ("I'd have accepted in a minute," said Cronkite, many years later.)

At 3:05 P.M., as the deadline loomed, McGovern phoned Wisconsin senator Gaylord Nelson to offer the nomination. Nelson took half an hour to call back. He also declined, adding that he'd go with Eagleton. So at 3:45 P.M., McGovern made the call that people had been telling him to make all day. "I thought it over carefully," he said to Eagleton, in words that can be described most generously as a white lie. "I'd like you to accept the vice-presidential nomination." Eagleton jumped at the chance: "Why, ah, before you change your mind, I hastily accept."

Ideologues of both left and right often explain their defeats by citing tactical mistakes: It's not that voters rejected them or their ideas, but that the dunderheads in charge of advertising, debate preparation, or whatever messed up. Diehard McGovernites who succumb to this temptation point to this moment, when McGovern picked Eagleton without the benefit of a proper vetting, as the fatal error.

What the incident actually reveals—and Glasser tells it with admirable objectivity—is that McGovern was weak and waffling. It's a cliché to say that a presidential candidate's most important decision is a running mate, but there's an awful lot of truth to it. When the choice fell to McGovern, he fantasized about Kennedy, let his staff overrule him on Church, and just plain dithered. He didn't present the profile of a man equipped to answer the White House phone at 3 A.M., to use a theme one of his low-level volunteers, Hillary Rodham, would develop in the 2008 Democratic primaries.

In the days ahead, the problem grew worse. As reporters poked into Eagleton's background, they began to uncover the truth about his hospitalization. Questions about Eagleton's mental fitness and credibility flared into controversy. Would he crack under pressure? Had he tried to deceive his own constituents? Should he have warned McGovern about his vulnerability?

McGovern faced considerable pressure from Democrats to dump Eagleton. One of the small delights of reading Glasser's story is to witness the obnoxious behavior of Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the Democratic court historian. In a letter to McGovern, he blasted Eagleton's "betrayal of you and his party" and, in a cruel metaphor, urged "a surgical excision." Schlesinger, of course, had served in the Kennedy administration, enjoying a front-row seat to what may have been America's most medicated presidency. Perhaps he knew the dangers.

" . . . and then I forgot the stupid Swiss bank account number."

McGovern avoided a final decision for as long as possible, vacillating all the way. He announced that he was "1,000 percent" behind Eagleton. McGovern also tried the passive-aggressive ploy of planting a story with newspaper columnist Jack Germond that he wanted Eagleton to withdraw, in the hope that Eagleton would read it and decide to quit on his own. A last-minute interview with Eagleton's psychiatrists probably made the difference: They warned that Eagleton wasn't up to the demands of the presidency.

On July 31, McGovern ejected Eagleton. He eventually ran with Sargent Shriver, still striving for at least a bit of Kennedy mojo, as Shriver was married to a sister of Jack, Bobby, and Ted. The McGovern-Shriver ticket suffered one of the most lopsided defeats in history, losing every state except Massachusetts. Even Barry Goldwater had won more electoral votes in the blowout of 1964. It seems that in their hearts, Americans knew Eagleton was right: The candidate of amnesty, abortion, and acid was just too radical.

McGovern stayed in the Senate for eight more years, until he was swept away in the Reagan deluge of 1980. Eagleton outlasted him, evidently without any nervous breakdowns, and retiring on his own terms in 1986. In assessing McGovern's failure in 1972, Eagleton concluded that he was "one rock in that landslide."

Was McGovern wise to oust Eagleton? Glasser stays scrupulously neutral. McGovern, for his part, has expressed conflicting opinions. "If I had to do it over again, I'd have kept him," he said in 2006. In his 1977 memoir, however, he seemed eager to blame his rout on Eagleton, echoing the words of his 18-day running mate: "Landslides begin with a single rock."

It seems that the triple-A candidate hadn't considered the possibility that he was the first rock. **NR**

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WED/Nov. 14	Ocho Rios (Jamaica)	7:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 15	Grand Cayman	7:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night Smoker
FRI/Nov. 16	Roatan (Honduras)	9:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
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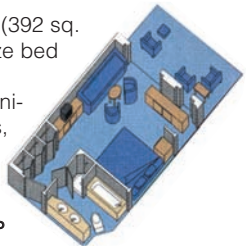

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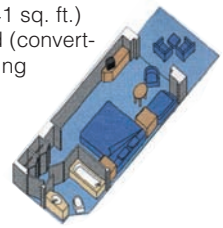

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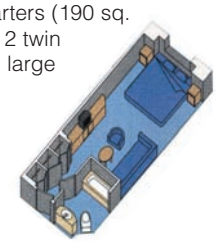

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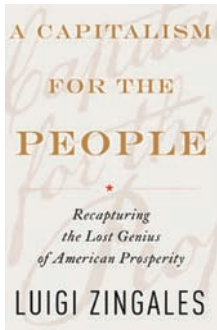
SIGNATURE OF GUEST #1 _____ DATE _____

The Italian's Job

NICK SCHULZ



A Capitalism for the People: Recapturing the Lost Genius of American Prosperity, by Luigi Zingales (Basic, 336 pp., $27.99)

'I BELIEVE in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." When President Obama spoke these words, on April 4, 2009, he waded into a long-raging debate on American exceptionalism. And he set off a torrent of speculation about whether he believed the United States, thanks to its history, institutions, and character, stood apart from (and above) other nations, or whether he was really saying that, since all nations are in some sense unique, no nation is truly unique, including America.

Luigi Zingales certainly thinks America is exceptional, or at least that it used to be; and in his new book, he argues that we must recapture some elements of what made America exceptional if we want the nation's future to be as prosperous as its past.

Zingales is an economist at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and writes frequently for popular business and political publications such as *City Journal*. In 2003, he co-authored (with Raghuram Rajan) an important, if underappreciated, book called *Saving Capitalism from the Capitalists*.

He immigrated to the United States from Italy, and this experience has shaped his views about capitalism profoundly, helping him appreciate the exceptional nature of his adopted country. "Capitalism in the United States is distinct from its counterparts in Europe and Asia," he writes, "for reasons that reach deep into history, geography, culture, and the institution of federalism."

He contends that this distinctive form of capitalism is an essential component of American exceptionalism. He notes, for example, that America's free-enterprise system developed when the federal government was relatively small. "At the beginning of the 20th century," he says, "when modern American capitalism was taking shape, U.S. government spending was only 3 percent of gross domestic product." When a similar system of market economics took hold in Western Europe after World War II, in contrast, government's share of the economy in those countries was over 30 percent.

Why does this matter? "When government is small and relatively weak," Zingales says, "the most effective way to make money is to start a successful private-sector business. But the larger the size and scope of government spending, the easier it is to make money by diverting public resources. . . . Thus in nations with large and powerful governments, the state usually finds itself at the heart of the economic system, even if the system is relatively capitalist."

While Zingales does not mention it, there is a large body of economic literature demonstrating that the size of the state at the time an economy modernizes is correlated with how well the economy performs. The fact that the U.S. government was so small when it began to modernize helps explain America's extraordinary economic performance and its dynamism.

Thanks to this auspicious beginning, the American economy was much more hospitable to entrepreneurship than other countries were. America's system of free enterprise was noteworthy for its relative lack of crony capitalism and rent seeking, and its embrace of vigorous market competition unencumbered by government interference.

Other factors have contributed to making America's economic system exceptional. It emerged without heavy influence from foreign powers or the direct and sustained influence of Marxism. The New World's colonial developments were dri-

Mr. Schulz is the DeWitt Wallace Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the editor of American.com.

ven not so much by the quest for gold as by the quest for freedom. The openness of America's frontier and its sparse population made mobility easy and undermined centralization of government power.

Zingales also stresses the populist roots of American culture and the federalist system enshrined in the Constitution. "For all of these reasons," he concludes, "the United States constructed a system of capitalism that comes closer than any other to embodying the free-market ideal of economic liberty and open competition."

That system has served the American people—and the millions of immigrants who have come to these shores—extraordinarily well. Not just because it helped make America the wealthiest large nation in history, but also because it was the fairest economic system ever contrived, especially when compared with Europe. Zingales writes:

> I came here in 1988 from Italy because I was trying to escape a system that was fundamentally unfair. Italy invented the term *nepotism* and perfected the concept of cronyism, and it still lives by both. You are promoted based on whom you know, not what you know. . . . I emigrated to the United States because I realized that it offered me an inestimably brighter future than my native country. And when I got to America in 1988, I wasn't disappointed. I experienced for the first time the inebriating feeling that any goal was within my reach. I had finally arrived in a country where the limits to my dreams were set only by my abilities, not by the people I knew.

Zingales arrived here at the end of the Reagan presidency, when American capitalism was reinvigorated after the malaise of the 1970s. So it's easy to see how he could be enamored of the country's economy. But his personal story didn't end there; if it had, this book would have been just another lovely account of an immigrant successfully seeking good fortune in the land of the free.

Instead, Zingales documents how the U.S. has changed since then, how much it has betrayed its exceptional character, and how much this matters for the future. "It wasn't long after arriving in the United States that I began to notice things that felt more like home," he says, "as if I were watching a movie I'd seen before." In this movie, the government intervenes to pick winners and losers in the economy; to blunt the necessarily rough edges of competition; to rescue failing but politically well-connected firms; to bail out the undeserving and reckless.

The first scene of this movie is the rescue of the hedge fund Long Term Capital Management in 1998. Warren Buffett offered to rescue the firm after it made a series of bad arbitrage wagers. Given the firm's weak financial position, Buffett's terms would understandably have been extremely costly to the original investors. But the Federal Reserve stepped in and "coordinated a rescue effort that proved more generous to LTCM's investors and managers—a group that happened to include David Mullins, former vice chairman of the Fed."

Another scene is the successful effort by Citigroup in the late 1990s to overhaul the Glass-Steagall Act:

> At that time, the head of the Treasury was Robert Rubin, who worked very hard to convince his fellow Democrats to change the law. Rubin left the Treasury in July 1999, the day after the House passed its version of the bill by a bipartisan vote of 343 to 86. Three months later, on October 18, 1999, Rubin was hired by Citigroup at a salary of $15 million a year, without any operating responsibility. It is hard not to see a connection between these two events.

It's not just Rubin's swift turn through Washington's revolving door that troubles Zingales: More important, he indicts Rubin for being, in his role as economic adviser to Bill Clinton and later Clinton's secretary of the Treasury, "the person who may have done the most to make bailouts the prevailing doctrine in the United States." In the mid- and late 1990s, a series of economic crises threatened developing countries in Latin America and Asia. Following the "Rubin doctrine," Mexico was bailed out in 1994. This was followed by South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia in 1997. Brazil received a bailout in 1998. These bailouts helped the receiving nations, of course, but helped the banks that lent money to them even more.

The examples Zingales cites of crony capitalism and bailouts in the 1990s were followed by still others in the next decade. These include the imposition of steel tariffs by President Bush in 2002 to protect sensitive constituencies, and the Bush administration's offer to corporations of "special rates to repatriate their profits." Zingales does not mention it, but he could

CHRISTENING

A melancholy soul is penning verses
downstairs, between two pillars and a post,
imposing limitations on himself
with rhyme and beat, for lack of confidence.

The box fan makes a loosely grumbling host.
Mahogany and brass support the shelf
beside him, where a singing child rehearses
building with letter blocks that make no sense.

He eyes his tiny diva with suspicion,
up close, as if beneath a microscope,
when all her structures falter from their forms,
intrude into each other's sides and fall.

She rocks back, grasps a plastic antelope.
Her aria is put on hold, as swarms
of crickets chirp a raspy composition
beyond the doors of the adjoining hall.

He knows she will rebuild the forms. She sees
Abandonment would only spell defeat.
And even now, the crickets have begun
To make their partial choruses complete.

—JENNIFER REESER

have included the unfunded prescription-drug mandate, a giveaway that was pushed by health-care interests.

It wasn't just Bush 43–era Republicans. "At the time," he notes, "Democrats were becoming cozier with big-business interests, launching 'public-private partnerships,' a way to suck money from the government while pretending to do good."

The most egregious examples of crony capitalism and bailouts occurred, of course, with the 2008 financial panic, the subsequent recession, and the federal government's ham-handed response: the interventions to address problems at Bear Stearns, AIG, General Motors, Chrysler, Rubin's Citigroup, and more.

Zingales is not ideologically opposed to government interventions to stem a panic. His critique is different, and it has two parts: First, he'd like to see greater recognition on the part of policymakers that it was earlier government meddling that paved the way for excessive risk-taking in the financial system. Second, he'd like to see recognition that there is a right way and a wrong way for governments to respond to panics.

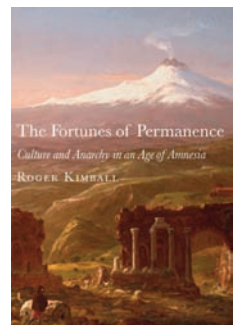
"I am not opposed to the idea of a government intervention in such extreme circumstances, but I do object to the way it was done," he writes. "When a drug addict is undergoing a withdrawal crisis, one certainly should not stand by and do nothing—but one also should not give the addict a full year's supply of drugs, which is roughly equivalent to what the U.S. government opted for with TARP. The program was a pillage of defenseless taxpayers that benefited powerful lobbies: not just the triumph of Wall Street over Main Street, but the triumph of K Street over the rest of America."

Zingales is rightly outraged by the behavior of his adopted country's political and financial elites over the last two decades. Their actions have eroded the exceptional character of the nation's free-enterprise system and put the nation on a path toward the crony capitalism and corruption he fled when he left Europe.

Fifty years ago, the great Italian liberal thinker Bruno Leoni remarked that "it seems to be the destiny of individual freedom at the present time to be defended mainly by economists." Half a century later, we are fortunate to have an Italian-born economist so powerfully and persuasively defending America's once exceptional free-enterprise system. **NR**

Shoring Up Fragments

ANDREW ROBERTS



The Fortunes of Permanence: Culture and Anarchy in an Age of Amnesia, by Roger Kimball (St. Augustine's Press, 360 pp., $35)

Conservatives have long understood the importance of fighting the cultural war against the Left simultaneously with the much more straightforward and easily delineated economic and political wars. In many ways, the cultural struggle is even more important than the others: Long after both Mitt Romney and Barack Obama have left the political scene, we will be living with buildings built either by classicists or by brutalists, listening to music composed either by tonalists or by atonalists, reading poetry that either scans and makes sense or doesn't, and watching movies that either attempt to entertain and provoke thought or instead to disgust and provoke self-hatred. The cultural war frames our very existence, therefore, and marks out the parameters for the lesser struggles over what King Lear dismissed as "who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out."

When the Purple Hearts and Congressional Medals of Honor come to be awarded for courage in the face of the enemy in the cultural war, no breast will be more highly decorated than that of Roger Kimball, editor and publisher of *The New Criterion* magazine and author of books such as *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*, *The Long March: How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s Changed America*, and *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art*. These books name names, and alongside this new one they make up an important body of work that now almost amounts to a new conservative political philosophy in itself. What Kimball is saying is not only right and important, but also can be used by conservatives as live ammunition in the frontline trenches of the culture war.

The Fortunes of Permanence seeks to achieve nothing less than the blending together of the thought of Edmund Burke and that of Alexis de Tocqueville, and to explain how their truths can be used to turn around the disasters that have beset Western culture in recent decades. Thus Burke's timeless messages about the importance of institutions, customs, and habits, and about the fragility of cultural excellence—so easy to lose, so incredibly hard to regain—are meshed by Kimball with Tocqueville's lessons about the central dialectic of democracy, the eternal seesaw between equality and liberty. Kimball is perfectly at home at what Lionel Trilling called "the bloody crossroads where literature and politics meet," and is convinced that the seesaw has tipped far too far in favor of equality over liberty, both in America and right across the West.

Essentially an exercise in cultural pathology, *The Fortunes of Permanence* identifies and trains a powerful light upon the enemies of excellence and truth. Relativism has mutated from a spore bacillus in French universities in the Fifties and Sixties to infect virtually the entire culture, even though intellectually we all of course know perfectly well that Mozart is qualitatively better than your two-year-old with a tambourine, that Rembrandt is better than Jasper Johns, and so on. "When Elton John is put on the same level as Bach," Kimball writes, "the effect is not cultural equality but cultural insurrection." By denying that there is any such thing as absolute value or truth, the relativists are effectively denying that there are any worthwhile values or truths per se. Yet, as Kimball shows, "relativism has assumed the role of cult religion in the West."

Mr. Roberts is the author most recently of The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War.

Kimball's pithy destruction of what Pope Benedict XVI has called "the dictatorship of relativism" ought to be engraved in letters three feet high on the portico of the Sorbonne. This book shows how it is not "ethnocentric" (i.e., racist), nor elitist nor intolerant nor narrow, to prefer the Western intellectual and cultural heritage to the others on offer, but rather that it is logical. He quotes the British philosopher Walter T. Stace's superb aphorism that "as a rule, only very learned and clever men deny what is obviously true; common men have less brains, but more sense." This book is an attack not merely on relativism, but also on the paralyzing cowardice that overcomes intelligent people when called upon to fight against it. "When people's ideas are challenged," Kimball rightly points out, "deference to the challenger rather than defense of the principles is the order of the day." A society that has abolished social deference toward one's betters and seniors nevertheless demands it toward anyone who trashes one's values and assumptions.

After the relativists came the PC-mongers of the 1980s and 1990s, with their war on language, custom, humor, and identity. The road to serfdom is paved with good intentions, and Kimball takes a well-aimed crack at do-gooders, in a brave chapter titled "What's Wrong with Benevolence," which seeks to establish that, all too often, philanthropy is "less a virtue than an emotion," and moreover one that can do incredible damage. He sees in much modern charity, especially when undertaken by governments and corporations at great distances rather than locally by directly concerned individuals, precisely that self-satisfied "telescopic philanthropy" denounced by Dickens in *Bleak House*, when Mrs. Jellyby practiced it on behalf of the people of Borrioboola-Gha on the banks of the Niger while her own feral children went around unfed and ill shod. Kimball sees in the general benevolence of Rousseau, Marx, and other citizens of the world a series of terrible dangers and provides with this book an important philosophical treatise against utopianism and social engineering.

The "Age of Amnesia" in the subtitle can hardly be denied. Although 90 percent of Ivy League freshmen know who Rosa Parks was, only 25 percent of them know who spoke of "government of the people, by the people, for the people." Some 40 percent of high-school seniors are unable to say within half a century when the American Civil War was fought. Small wonder, therefore, that the Left can so routinely bend the past to its own purposes, attempting to equate pride in American exceptionalism with racism and exploitation. Thus Cecilia O'Leary of American University identifies American patriotism as a right-wing, militaristic, male, white, Anglo, and repressive force, and Richard Sennett of New York University denounces "the evil of a shared national identity" and describes the erosion of national sovereignty as "basically a positive thing." Kimball denounces those who "look to the past only to corroborate their sense of superiority and self-satisfaction," and he tells us who these people are.

Yet the book is uplifting, too. There are plenty of heroes, apostles of freedom such as Friedrich von Hayek, James Burnham, Leszek Kolakowski, and the passengers of United Airlines Flight 93 who attacked the 9/11 hijackers on the way to Washington, D.C. "As a result" of the latter act of heroism, writes Kimball in a typically arresting phrase, "the plane crashed on a remote Pennsylvania farm instead of on Pennsylvania Avenue. Who knows how many lives their sacrifice saved?" Kimball emphasizes the importance of cultural confidence, such as that exhibited by writers such as John Buchan, G. K. Chesterton, and Rudyard Kipling, and he analyzes and criticizes the malevolent and seductive blandishments of statist "democratic despotism." He presents the Hayekian themes of limited government and individual liberty as an effective counter, and although President Obama himself is only glancingly referred to, the whole Obaman zeitgeist is firmly in Kimball's firing line.

Kimball also mounts an effective, unapologetic defense of the values of the English-speaking peoples, again citing the work of Burnham and Kolakowski, a defense of the pragmatic tradition that he is proud to describe as "the bourgeois virtues" of thrift, trustworthiness, sobriety, and hard work, which to his mind have provided the most nurturing home for high-level cultural achievement and the development of genuine individuality. The greatest threat to this derives from the dependency culture that the Left sedulously injects into the American body politic, with all the infantilizing effects of which Hayek warned in his 1944 clarion call, *The Road to Serfdom*. The more the government takes into its domain, the less power and influence the individual has over his own existence, and the less the individual will produce of value. Kimball shows how Hayek's thought makes as much sense in the cultural sphere as in the economic and political. With the coming presidential election fast shaping up to be the most unambiguous Hayekian-versus-Keynesian struggle for decades, with the Republicans just as consistently promoting Hayekian precepts for the economy as the Democrats are clinging onto Keynesian verities, Kimball's book has powerful overtones for the November race.

Kimball quotes the great British writer John Buchan, who wrote in his memoir, *Pilgrim's Way*: "The world must remain an oyster for youth to open. If not, youth will cease to be youth, and that will be the end of everything." I can think of no better present for a young person today than a copy of *The Fortunes of Permanence*; for anyone wanting to try to make sense of a world gone awry—and looking for arguments to help set it back on its axis—this is a fine oyster to open. **NR**

Kimball emphasizes the importance of cultural confidence, such as that exhibited by writers such as John Buchan, G. K. Chesterton, and Rudyard Kipling.

Film

Blistering B-Listers!

ROSS DOUTHAT

THERE are few Hollywood career transitions more fraught than the leap from "star in the making" to movie star outright. Consider Colin Farrell: The handsome, roguish Irishman worked his way up the movieland ladder in the early 2000s, and then found himself graced with a remarkable string of opportunities. Between 2004 and 2006, he was cast as Alexander the Great by Oliver Stone, as Crockett in Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*, and as John Smith in Terrence Malick's *The New World*—three chances of a lifetime in quick succession.

And none of them worked out. Stone's *Alexander* was a fiasco, with Farrell looking dazed and confused under a blonde dye-job; *Vice* was a disappointment (though an interesting one), with Farrell looking puffy in the role Don Johnson made famous; and *The New World* was a work of genius that the critics unfairly buried. Instead of becoming an A-lister, Farrell was suddenly just another overexposed wannabe, earning gossip-column inches instead of paydays.

Or consider Kate Beckinsale, like Farrell a British Isles import who rose through costume dramas and art-house flicks (her best role was as the mean girl in Whit Stillman's *The Last Days of Disco*) to what should have been her big moment: playing the nurse torn between two flyboys in Michael Bay's attempt to imitate James Cameron's *Titanic*, 2001's *Pearl Harbor*.

The movie was a hit, but unfortunately for Beckinsale it was also a joke. People went for the bombs and special effects, but they sniggered at the love triangle in a way they hadn't at the Kate Winslet–Leonardo DiCaprio pairing. Which meant that instead of being borne upward to true stardom, Beckinsale slipped downward into the B list, alternating between thankless "hot wife" parts and her recurring (and, one hopes, well-compensated) role as the leather-clad vampire Selene in the Underworld franchise.

The Hollywood gods sometimes offer second chances, though, and this month finds Farrell and Beckinsale jointly graced with their biggest chance in some time: They have the leading roles in *Total Recall*, the big-budget, don't-call-it-a-remake adaptation of the Philip K. Dick short story that Arnold Schwarzenegger and Paul Verhoeven made famous 20 years ago.

Farrell plays the hero, Quaid, a working stiff in a futuristic, chemical-warfare-ravaged world who opts to escape from the everyday with a trip to "Rekall," a boutique memory-implantation firm that promises to make whatever secret fantasy you've always nursed feel like it actually took place. Beckinsale plays his lovely wife—or rather, the woman who seems to be his wife, because just as he's about to begin the Rekall process a squad of soldiers bursts in to arrest him, and Quaid fights them off with skills he didn't know he had. They're the skills of the secret agent he used to be, it turns out, before his memory was wiped and replaced and Beckinsale's character, a fellow secret agent, was assigned to monitor him by posing as his spouse.

The Dickian hook here, of course, is the Rekall business, which leaves the audience—and Quaid himself, eventually—uncertain as to whether all of the secret-agent action is actually genuine, or is all just the fantasy he paid for playing itself out.

COLUMBIA PICTURES

Colin Farrell in Total Recall

If it's the latter, Quaid clearly gets his money's worth, since his post-Rekall adventures throw him right into the middle of a world-spanning struggle between the two surviving outposts of civilization: a wealthy London-based capital and a poorer, exploited, rebellious Australian colony, which are connected by a part-train, part-elevator conveyance called "The Fall" that travels (I kid you not) through the center of the earth.

The London government is embodied by Bryan Cranston, cashing in on his fame as the antihero on television's *Breaking Bad*, while the rebellion is represented by the gorgeous Jessica Biel, so you know which side to root for. The real action, though, pits Farrell against Beckinsale, because it turns out that hell hath no fury like a "wife" who's exposed as an impostor and then assigned to hunt you down.

If Quaid gets his money's worth, though, the audience does not. The Schwarzenegger *Recall* was campy and garish and fun; this version is self-serious and desperately dumb. The world-building is by turns ridiculous (again: *it travels through the center of the earth*) and entirely unoriginal (the film's rain-soaked colony is ripped off from *Blade Runner*, and its glittering capital from *The Fifth Element*). The plotting is dim-witted, the political gestures predictable, and the most interesting aspect of the story, the "is it real or isn't it" uncertainty, mainly feels like an excuse to justify lazy screenwriting. ("Since Quaid's adventures might not be real," you can imagine the filmmakers saying to themselves, "we don't have to worry about making any of them realistic.")

Amid all this awfulness, the two stars do their best. Beckinsale is hot and wicked and magnetic, and the slightly baffled look that Farrell wore as Alexander works much better with this character's confusions. Watching this movie so soon after watching Anne Hathaway and Christian Bale—two not-so-dissimilar actors who have broken through to a higher level of success—glide through the almost infinitely superior *The Dark Knight Rises*, the main thing I felt was sympathy for *Total Recall*'s leads: so close to true stardom, and yet still so far away. **NR**

Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

The Paramilitarized Bureaucracy

I FLEW in to Montreal from an overseas trip the other day and was met by a lady from my office, who had kindly agreed to drive me back home to New Hampshire. At the airport she seemed a little rattled, and it emerged that on her journey from the Granite State she had encountered a "security check" on the Vermont–Quebec border. U.S. officials had decided to impose temporary exit controls on I-91 and had backed up northbound traffic so that agents could ascertain from each driver whether he or she was carrying "monetary instruments" in excess of $10,000. My assistant was quizzed by an agent dressed in the full Robocop and carrying an automatic weapon, while another with a sniffer dog examined the vehicle. Which seems an unlikely method of finding travelers' checks for $12,000.

Being a legal immigrant, I am inured to the indignities imposed by the U.S. government. (You can't ask an illegal immigrant for ID, even at the voting booth or after commission of a crime, but a legal immigrant has to have his green card on him even when he's strolling in the woods behind his house.) And indeed, for anyone familiar with the curious priorities of officialdom, there is a certain logic in an agency that has failed to prevent millions of illegal aliens from entering the country evolving smoothly into an agency that obstructs law-abiding persons from exiting the country.

But my assistant felt differently. A couple of days later, I was zipping through a DVD of *The Great Escape*, trying to locate a moment from that terrific wartime caper that I wished to refer to in a movie essay. While zapping back and forth, I chanced on a scene after the eponymous escape in which Richard Attenborough and Gordon Jackson are trying to board a small-town bus while Gestapo agents demand "Your papers, *mein herr*." My assistant walked in in the middle, and we exchanged some mordant cracks about life under the Nazis. "It's almost as bad as driving from Lyndonville to Lac Brome for lunch." Etc. Her family have lived blameless and respectable lives in my North Country town for a quarter-millennium, and she didn't like the idea of having to clear an armed checkpoint on a U.S. highway in order to leave the country.

But, if you don't care for the Third Reich comparisons, consider more recent European ones: The capital flight from Greece, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere as the euro zone approaches breaking point. Greek bank deposits dropped 16 percent in the year to this April; according to a Credit Suisse analysis, capital outflows from Spain are currently running at about 50 percent of GDP. Most of these Mediterranean euros have found safe haven in German banks. You can do that on the Continent, not just because of the common currency but because of the free movement of people within the so-called Schengen area. That's to say, if a Greek figures that now's the time to load up the trunk with "monetary instruments" and drive them to a bank in Munich before the whole powder keg goes up, there's no gauntlet of machine guns and sniffer dogs to run. My friend's experience suggests that, come the collapse of the U.S. dollar, Washington is going to be far less sanguine about you tootling what's left of your 401(k) up to the Royal Bank of Canada.

In fact, it already is. On January 1, the FATCAT Act (technically, it's FATCA, but we all get the acronymic message) imposes a whole new bunch of burdensome regulations and punitive fines on Americans with non-U.S. bank accounts. Not just Mitt and his chums with the numbered accounts in Zurich, but ordinary Americans teaching abroad at, say, the International School in Accra, or doing regular business in Ireland, or with an old family hunting camp in Quebec for which they've always had a small checking account just to pay grocery and fuel bills when they're up there. Americans now enjoy less financial freedom than Canadians, Swedes, and Italians. When I mentioned this on NRO recently, I received a fair few e-mails from readers saying they have no plans to work abroad or buy a second home, so why should they care?

Here's why: Because Washington is telling you something important about how things are likely to go when things get even worse. Which is the way to bet. American government is not noted for its sense of proportion. This is a bureaucracy whose Fish and Wildlife agents fine an eleven-year-old Virginia schoolgirl $535 for the crime of rescuing a woodpecker from a cat and nursing him back to health; whose National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration agents threaten a marine biologist with 20 years in jail over whistling at a whale; whose Food and Drug Administration agents want a hundred grand in fines from some onanistic weirdo in Fremont who gives away his sperm to infertile couples. If you're wondering which of the Food and Drug Administration's twin responsibilities semen counts as, don't waste your time: Whether your deposit belongs at a Swiss bank or a sperm bank, it's all federally regulated.

By the way, I use the word "agents" rather than "officials" because, in the developed world, the paramilitarized bureaucracy is uniquely American. This is the only G7 government whose education minister has his own SWAT team—for policing student-loan compliance. The other day, the Gibson guitar company settled with the feds over an arcane infraction of a law on rare-wood importation—after their factories were twice raided by "agents" bearing automatic weapons. Like the man said, don't bring a knife to a guitar fight. Do musical-instrument manufacturers have a particular reputation for violence? Akin to that of female marine biologists and sixth-grade schoolgirls?

As American insolvency grows and the dollar dies and the real value of household wealth shrivels, is it likely that Washington will share Athens, Madrid, and Rome's insouciant attitude to capital mobility? Or will exit controls on I-91 become as familiar a sight as TSA patdowns? The United States has the most powerful government, with the longest reach, of any nation in history. It is also the Brokest Nation in History. Resolving that contradiction is unlikely to be pretty. NR

Mr. Steyn blogs at SteynOnline (www.steynonline.com).

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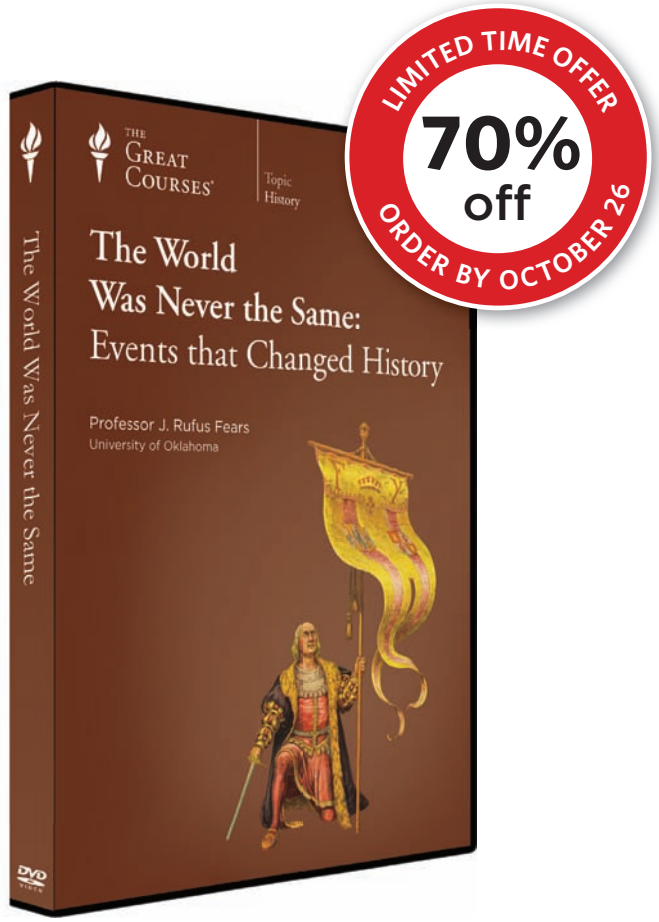

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28. One Night in Petrograd (1917)
29. The Day the Stock Market Crashed (1929)
30. Hitler Becomes Chancellor of Germany (1933)
31. Franklin Roosevelt Becomes President (1933)
32. The Atomic Bomb Is Dropped (1945)
33. Mao Zedong Begins His Long March (1934)
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