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NATIONAL REVIEW



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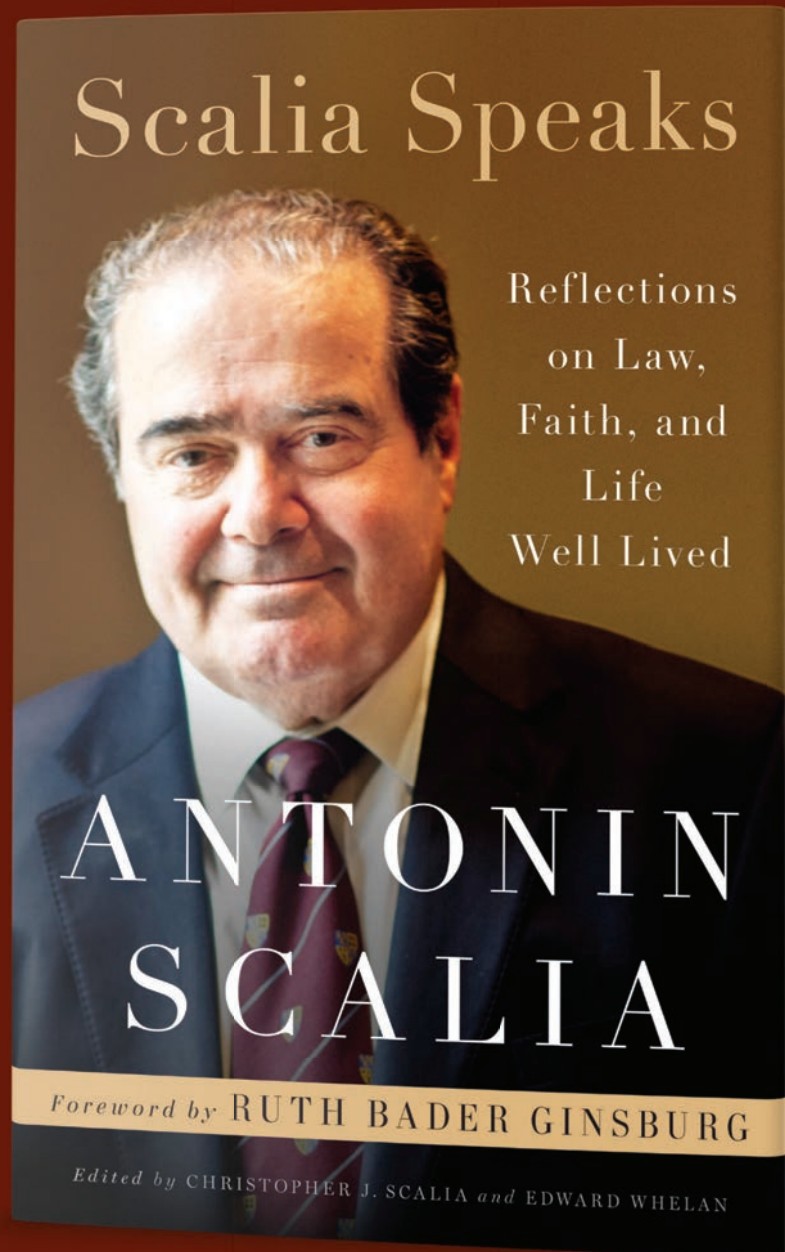
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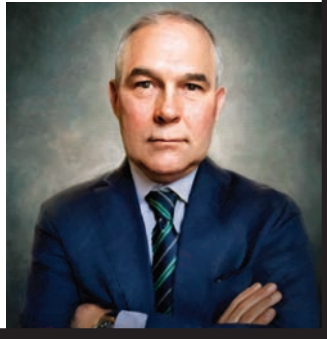
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ON THE COVER Page 25

Scott Pruitt's Reformation

Pruitt is, he says, doing the same thing as EPA administrator that he was doing in litigation against the EPA as attorney general in Oklahoma: trying to get it to do its job, to stay within its legal authority, and to abide by the rule of law. *Kevin D. Williamson*



COVER: THOMAS REIS



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City of Light, City of Magic

Cleveland has suffered dismal, frustrating, or tragic sports franchises, without exception, since the Eisenhower administration (“The Week,” November 13)? Come west of the Hudson sometime and stop relying on “fake news.” See for yourself.

Since the Eisenhower administration, the Cleveland Cavs have made the NBA playoffs in 2010, 2015, 2016, and 2017, winning the basketball championship in 2016! The Cleveland Indians made World Series appearances in 1995, 1997, and 2016, and had 102 wins in 2017, second only to the Dodgers’ 104. How about those Lake Erie Monsters winning the 2017 ice-hockey championship in their division! For the record, the beleaguered Browns *have* won a football championship since the Eisenhower administration, albeit in 1964! And, yes, another bright spot for the Browns has been Joe Thomas. He personifies perseverance, consistency, excellence, and character. Thank you for acknowledging a class act.

Before casting further aspersions on a city moving forward, come take a look and discover in Cleveland a world-renowned orchestra, a first-rate hospital that is arguably among the world’s best, a thriving Playhouse Square theater district, the “Emerald Necklace” park system, and outstanding museums, including: the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Cleveland Botanical Gardens, the Crawford Auto and Aviation Museum, the Great Lakes Science Center, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Visit delightful ethnic neighborhoods including Asiatown, Slovak Village, Little Italy, and the whole shebang at West Side Market. Even the Republicans were amazed during the convention, including those who still like Ike.

David Spencer
Kent, Ohio

THE EDITORS RESPOND: “*Almost* without exception,” we wrote. The Cavaliers broke the rule when they won the NBA Finals in 2016, but that’s okay. The city’s tradition didn’t die. It only nodded: Months later, the world watched in wonder as the Indians, true to the Cleveland genius for the tragic, roared back to lose Game 7 of the World Series in extra innings—again. Everyone says it was the best baseball game ever. And this year! What about those 102 wins? That late-season 22-game winning streak? We noted it in *The Week* (October 2). The best team in baseball, hands down, the Indians were, according to the sabermetricians. Congratulations, 2017 world champion Houston Astros.

We know Cleveland well and agree that it’s misunderstood. The institutions of University Circle do belong in any list of its attractions, but the Cleveland Orchestra deserves special mention. The downtown museums—the science center, the rock-and-roll museum—are slick and still too new to have absorbed and radiate the city’s character. Get back to us about them in a hundred years. The people of Asiatown are “delightful,” but let’s not sugarcoat the truth about the neighborhood. It’s dreary. Agreed, Cleveland has a fun Little Italy. Save us a spot at La Dolce Vita.

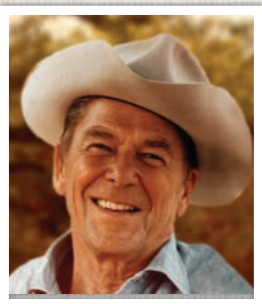
About 1 percent of Americans live in the Western Reserve, but from reading NATIONAL REVIEW, online as well as the magazine, you might think it was more. Cleveland enjoys, and suffers, a disproportionate amount of our attention. We have been a consistent and spirited defender of Chief Wahoo, for example. To know the city’s distinctive culture is to be charmed by it. We believe in Cleveland exceptionalism. With an eye on spring training, just around the corner, we shout out a hearty “Go Tribe! Wait until next year!”

Letters may be submitted by email to letters@nationalreview.com.



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The Week

■ All things considered, we'll take Roy Moore soliciting re-count donations over Roy Moore soliciting minors.

■ Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and our embassy should be in that city. In a well-crafted speech, President Trump announced that he would end the lamentable tradition of presidential waivers' deferring the implementation of the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act. The move both corrects an error of American policy and signifies our respect for Israeli sovereignty. Tensions between Israel and the Palestinian territories have been inflamed by Trump's decision, but breathless predictions of a new intifada have not come to pass. The charge that this move will derail the peace process is similarly unfounded: Any conceivable peace agreement between Israel and Palestine would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state. Move the embassy to Jerusalem with alacrity, and move the peace process toward reality.

■ The Federal Bureau of Investigation is in need of a hard look. It has recently emerged that Peter Strzok, an FBI agent assigned to the Clinton investigation, texted his mistress, FBI lawyer Lisa Page, in August 2016 (a month after the Clinton investigation was dropped) to the effect that the FBI could not afford to take the "risk" of a Trump presidency and needed to employ an "insurance policy" against the possibility. Meanwhile, the FBI was receiving the so-called Steele dossier, which James Comey has described as "salacious and unverified." The dossier, paid for at least in part by the Clinton campaign and the DNC, was compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele, working for the research firm Fusion GPS. Fusion's Russia expert on the project was Nellie Ohr—the wife of Bruce Ohr, a top deputy to then-acting attorney general Sally Yates (who was fired by President Trump). After getting the Steele dossier, the Obama Justice Department convinced the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to issue a warrant targeting a Trump associate, Carter Page, as an agent of Russia. We thus have the possibility that Clinton's opposition research helped to generate governmental surveillance of the Trump campaign. By contrast, Justice took a see-no-evil approach to the Clinton investigation, failing to use the grand jury to obtain key evidence, placing significant restrictions on FBI interviews and evidence collection, granting immunity to suspects who should have been pressured to plead guilty and cooperate against higher-ranking players, and declining to prosecute investigative subjects who made false statements in FBI interviews. Russia's interference in the election is surely worth investigating, but it is high time the Justice Department appointed a solid United States attorney from outside the Washington area to scrutinize the conduct of the FBI and the Justice Department during the 2016 election.

ROMAN GENN



See page 12.

■ Michael Flynn, the retired general and top Trump campaign aide who fleetingly served as the president's national-security adviser, pled guilty in the Mueller investigation to lying to the FBI. Flynn appears to have committed no crime in his contacts with Russians during the transition. His offense was to mislead interviewing agents about them. The conversations with the Russians concerned American sanctions on Russia, which Flynn would not commit to lifting, and a U.N. resolution against Israel, which the Russians would not commit to opposing: some collusion. The terms of the deal also suggest that Mueller has no case about Trump-campaign "collusion" with Russia. If Flynn's contacts had been part of a conspiracy, the normal prosecutorial practice would have been for Mueller to pressure Flynn to plead guilty to that scheme. A prosecutor does not usually build a larger case by establishing that his cooperating witnesses are convicted liars.

■ ABC had a bombshell: Trump ordered Flynn to contact the Russians during his campaign. Eight hours later, ABC issued what it called a "clarification": Trump gave the order as president-elect. Reporter Brian Ross had discovered part of the routine of a presidential transition, not a collusion plot. The network, to its credit, suspended Ross. A few days later, CBS, MSNBC, and CNN reported that Donald Trump Jr., among others in the campaign, had been emailed advance news of the WikiLeaks trove of Democratic emails. They had the date wrong: The emails to the campaign came after WikiLeaks had released the information to the public. Sarah Huckabee Sanders,

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OUR NEW HOME! A NEW CHAPTER

National Review Institute and *National Review* magazine have taken the next step in our strategic plan by moving to a new and improved office space at 19 West 44th Street. With a modern conference room, a flexible event space, a professional podcast studio, and a central location in Midtown Manhattan, the new office truly befits our modern publication and 21st-century journalistic think tank.

As an homage to our esteemed founder, we will install eight custom-built display cases in the reception area and conference room to highlight William F. Buckley Jr.'s legacy as the founder of *National Review* and his consequential impact on American conservatism. The space provides a contemporary, professional working environment for writers and editors, publishing and advertising sales teams, and NRI program and development teams, while showcasing cherished memorabilia from *National Review's* influential 60-year history.

This is an historic and exciting moment for our institution, and we hope you will consider supporting us as we raise funds for our new home.

We welcome our closest friends and most loyal supporters to be a part of this historic move. To learn more about special gifts and naming opportunities, please contact **Meredith Bogacz** at meredith@nrinstitute.org or 212-849-2838.

Bill Buckley always had a keen ability to bring people together, and in that spirit, we hope that our friends will grace our new office with a visit, to see all the vital work we are doing and the new space that makes that work possible.

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the White House press secretary, used these fiascos to claim, falsely, that reporters “regularly” and “purposely” spread false information. The truth is bad enough: Reporters are coming at these stories with a predisposition to believe Trump guilty of conspiracy, and not doing due diligence when they think they have evidence to prove it.

■ On a weekday rush-hour morning, Akayed Ullah, a Bangladeshi immigrant, detonated a pipe bomb strapped to his waist in a pedestrian tunnel leading to the Port Authority Bus Terminal, one of New York City’s busiest transit hubs. Thanks to Ullah’s incompetence, only he was seriously injured; four others sustained light injuries. But if his homemade device had worked as planned, the nails with which it was packed would have claimed many lives. Ullah claims to have acted alone, as a self-taught acolyte of ISIS. He was not entirely discreet, however; Bangladeshi authorities say he

been deported five times before shooting Steinle, and San Francisco had a sanctuary-city policy in place that protects illegal immigrants, including those convicted of violent crimes, from federal law enforcement. Supporters of sanctuary-city laws bitterly protest that most illegal immigrants are not violent criminals, and they are correct about that. But it is also true that their policy protects those illegal immigrants who are.

■ The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was designed by liberals to be “above politics”—i.e., to remain eternally liberal. So when the term of Richard Cordray, Obama’s appointee as CFPB head, was about to expire, Cordray hatched a scheme to give his side a few more months in power before politics—specifically, the results of the last election—could intrude. Cordray appointed Leandra English, a veteran bureaucrat, as his deputy and then resigned.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was designed by liberals to be ‘above politics’—i.e., to remain eternally liberal.

tried to radicalize his wife, who lives back home in Dhaka. Who else knew his plans remains to be seen. Evil losers of the Third World lash out at New Yorkers, natives and newcomers, trying to make it here: a characteristic tale of the new millennium.

■ Enough women came forward to accuse Al Franken of groping them that his Democratic colleagues began to call for his resignation from the Senate. They wanted to establish the principle that multiple accusations of sexual misconduct should force out officeholders, and then apply it to Trump and Roy Moore. Franken announced that he would resign at some unspecified date. Then Moore lost his race, and Democrats began to voice second thoughts. Senator Pat Leahy of Vermont has said he regrets calling for Franken’s resignation, asserting the Minnesotan deserves due process. Franken may yet make good on his pledge, if only to avoid exactly that.

■ President Trump retweeted the anti-Muslim blasts of Britain First, a far-right group. The British prime minister, Theresa May, let it be known that this was not a group to promote. Trump fired off a tweet to May, rebuking her rebuke. But he addressed the tweet to the wrong Theresa May, another British woman, as it happened. This “wrong” Theresa May got off a nice line—to the effect that you don’t want a U.S. president to push the wrong button.

■ A jury has found an illegal immigrant not guilty in the fatal shooting of Kate Steinle in July 2015 in San Francisco. Jose Ines Garcia Zarate was acquitted of murder and involuntary-manslaughter charges after a contentious trial, in which the defense claimed the shooting had been accidental. Over the last two years, this case became a focal point for the national immigration debate, as Garcia Zarate had

English and Cordray claimed that English was henceforth in charge of the bureau, because the law establishing the CFPB said that the deputy director shall “serve as acting Director in the absence or unavailability of the Director.” The fact that the Director was neither absent nor unavailable but in fact nonexistent did not seem to concern them. President Trump then appointed a legitimate acting director, English sued to “retain” the position, and Democrats spent a few days high-fiving each other before a court ruled in favor of Trump and the English language.

■ Jimmy Kimmel, the late-night host, has become a frequent liberal scold, delivering monologues supporting gun control and Obamacare. Most recently he used his infant son as a prop while excoriating Republicans for passing a tax cut for the rich while neglecting to renew funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Some reporters amplified Kimmel’s claims, with Marlow Stern of the *Daily Beast* saying that Republicans “are threatening to eliminate” the program. House Republicans had in





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actuality passed a bill funding CHIP weeks before Kimmel spoke, as had the Senate Finance Committee. Nobody has treated the program as a “bargaining chip” for the tax bill, as Kimmel claimed. Glenn Kessler, the *Washington Post*’s fact checker, to his credit cried foul on Kimmel. Stern’s false report is still up, and Kimmel has made the transition from comic with a political edge to political hack in record time.

■ The Department of Justice may be preparing to launch an investigation into Planned Parenthood. It has asked the Senate Judiciary Committee for documents from its 2016 investigation into allegations that the abortion provider profited from the illegal sale of fetal tissue. The previous year, the Center for Medical Progress had released video of Planned Parenthood executives negotiating prices and describing in gruesome detail procedures for extracting various fetal body parts intact. Planned Parenthood objects that the videos were “heavily edited.” In reporting on the controversy, media routinely repeat that characterization, but CMP from the beginning has made the full undercover footage available online. Reporters are free to compare it with the shortened versions and explain what about them they think is misleading.

■ James O’Keefe has always been a hit-and-miss proposition, and he’s been taking more bad swings of late, especially in his attempt to embarrass the *Washington Post* by feeding it a salacious and phony story about the Alabama Senate race. O’Keefe had an accomplice approach the *Post* with a story about having been molested and impregnated by Roy Moore when she was 15 years old. The young lady apparently had been hunting around for work in right-wing activism, and it did not take the *Post* very long to figure out what she was up to. So the *Post* turned the tables, videotaping her during their

wrong to acquit the officer who killed Shaver, though it is worth noting that police officers are trained to respond immediately when a suspect reaches toward his waist, as it doesn’t take much time to produce a weapon and pull the trigger. May Shaver, a father of two, rest in peace, and may his family’s lawsuits against the city of Mesa, Ariz., succeed.

■ Remember the Wisconsin “John Doe” investigations—the political inquisitions of Wisconsin conservatives that featured pre-dawn raids of conservative activists’ homes? Remember how they used criminal statutes as a pretext for investigating constitutionally protected speech and expression? Well, it turns out that the investigations were worse and more abusive than we knew. The Wisconsin Department of Justice released a comprehensive report that detailed, among other things, how partisan investigators scooped up the private correspondence of Wisconsin conservative activists and their families—often without their knowledge—and kept vast amounts of personal information in files marked “opposition research.” It discovered that partisan investigators tried to launch a new investigation even after courts had ordered earlier investigations stopped. Progressive-activist investigators were a law unto themselves, doing their best to criminalize political disagreement. The scandal isn’t just that they tried, it’s that they came so close to succeeding—with virtually the entire Wisconsin progressive establishment cheering them on.

■ Despite very similar environments, California and Mexico are experiencing two very different wildfire seasons: While fires tear through Southern California, Mexico is left relatively unscarred. Experts contend that the difference is thanks to California’s sloppy policy of fire suppression, the practice of eliminating all fires when they start. In

The world is awake to the tragedy in Venezuela. Or is it more a **crime** than a tragedy?

interview and making her squirm as they dissected her slander. O’Keefe et al. have fallen victim to a fairly common misconception: The mainstream media, including the *Post*, do in fact suffer from a problem of left-leaning bias, but that is not the same as simply making stuff up and printing it or publishing obviously sketchy accounts without doing any reporting. That kind of malfeasance is rare and is a separate question from the more familiar problem of ordinary bias. Advice to O’Keefe from friends: Do better.

■ Daniel Shaver’s killing by police is incredibly disturbing. Responding to a complaint about a man waving a rifle out of a hotel window, a group of officers arrived at the scene and ordered him and a companion out of the room. An officer then issued a series of confusing instructions that included crawling; drunk, crying, unarmed, and begging not to be killed, Shaver did his best to comply—but eventually reached behind his back, presumably to pull up his pants, and another officer shot him. (It turned out the rifle had been a pellet gun he was showing off to some guests in the room.) Given the totality of the circumstances, the jury was

Mexico, firefighters allow the fires to burn within a natural cycle of homeostasis: Brush builds up, a fire burns the brush away, the fire dies out. Wildfires are scarcer in regions that preserve the natural cycle than in California’s artificial cycle, because the fuel that enables wildfires to grow out of control is absent. What will it take to change the policy? State leaders will have to convince Californians that small fires year-round are better than the perennial threat of a season of huge fires.

■ The world is awake to the tragedy in Venezuela. Or is it more a crime than a tragedy? The European Parliament gave its Sakharov Prize to Venezuela’s political prisoners and democratic opposition, collectively. The *New York Times* had a moving, almost unbearable, report on the death of Venezuelan children by starvation. The toppling of that regime in Caracas ought to be a high international priority.

■ Ireland forbids abortion in the eighth amendment to its constitution. Pro-choice activists in Ireland point out that, despite

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the law, thousands of Irish women seek abortions in Britain each year. Their campaign to repeal the eighth may lead to reversal of traffic and make Ireland a destination for Europeans seeking later-term abortions that would never be allowed in Germany or France. A referendum on repeal will be held in May or June, and the parliament is recommending that a post-repeal Ireland make abortion legal for any reason up to the twelfth week of pregnancy and for “health” reasons thereafter. The proposal makes no distinction between physical and mental health. Americans know this as the “Doe exception,” which effectively allows abortion on demand so long as the person seeking it testifies that continuing the pregnancy involves mental distress of any kind. There is a gap between the political class and the public. Just one example: Even though the party leadership mostly supports repealing the eighth, Fianna Fáil’s party conference saw delegates rejecting calls to alter or repeal it. Pro-lifers have to hope that the political class is overreaching.



Emperor Akihito

■ Only one head of state is an emperor, and that is Akihito, the 125th emperor of Japan, according to an order of succession so ancient that no other country can begin to match it. His father, Emperor Hirohito, never quite shook off the stigma of Japan’s militarism in the 20th century. The post-war constitution had transformed the emperor into a constitutional ruler. Succeeding his father to the throne in 1989, Akihito gave a flawless performance of the ceremonial role that this involved, with never a word out of place. He might appear dignified in a morning coat and top hat at official duties or informal in white shorts on the tennis court. He has published research papers on marine

biology. Twice in his reign he addressed his people on television, the second time just now, to announce that, considering he is 85, he will be abdicating in the coming year. His son Naruhito, 57, is to be the 126th emperor.

■ During the Cold War and now after it, Russia has been eager to claim superiority by having its athletes win gold medals in all sports, taking, for the purpose, forbidden performance-enhancing drugs. Obtaining firsthand evidence of this from Russian whistleblowers, the International Olympic Committee speaks of “unprecedented systematic manipulation.” That involved breaking into laboratories and substituting clean samples of blood or urine for contaminated ones—in plain language, stealing and lying. Evidently shocked and angry to have been fooled, the IOC has banned Russia from the 2018 Winter Games to be held in Pyeongchang in South Korea. The sports minister responsible for the programming of forbidden drugs, Vitaly Mutko, is one among other government officials prohibited from attending Olympic Games

anywhere and everywhere. Alexander Zhukov, president of the Russian Olympic Committee, has apologized, and that really is unprecedented.



Harry

■ Prince Harry of Wales, fifth in line for the British throne, is to marry Meghan Markle on May 19. Harry has been much in the headlines, whether flying a helicopter in Afghanistan or at parties either taking his clothes off or putting on a Nazi uniform. Meghan is American, an actress, and a divorcee. Harry’s great-great uncle David, otherwise King Edward VIII, wished to marry Wallis Simpson, also an American who had previously been married. The British establishment from the prime minister downward thought that the public wouldn’t stand for it, and the king was obliged to abdicate. Today’s establishment speaks of joy, and the crowd cheered Meghan at her first public engagements.

■ “Lead us not into temptation,” the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, has long baffled many Christians. Why even assume that God would lead us astray? In an effort to correct the misunderstanding, the French Catholic bishops recently introduced a new translation, “Let us not enter into temptation” (*Ne nous laisse pas entrer en tentation*). On Italian television, Pope Francis criticized traditional translations, following the usual lines of the debate. He praised the French revision, although it strays from the original Greek, in which we ask God unambiguously not to lead (or bring) us into *peirasmon*: a peril, or trial, such as martyrs face under the sword. Jesus prayed “Let this cup pass from me” and taught his disciples to pray the equivalent. The word “temptation” (together with its cognates in modern languages) is no longer recognized as a derivation of the Latin word for “trial.” So substitute “trial” for “temptation.” Problem solved. The verb is fine. Stop fiddling with it.

■ In 8 A.D., the emperor Augustus exiled Publius Ovidius Naso, better known to us as Ovid, to the frontier of barbarism, the Black Sea. With Putin in Ukraine, barbarism is back. But Ovid can come back too, now that the City of Rome has revoked Augustus’s banishment. A masterly versifier, Ovid was best known for his cold-hearted NSFW love poetry and for the *Metamorphoses*, retellings of the myths of Greece and Rome. Clunky Hesiod first recorded them; the tragedians mined them for pity and terror. In Ovid’s hands they became style, spectacle, and human interest. He was the Hollywood of his day, George Lucas plus Marvel and DC, only a hundred times more talented. Welcome home; you are suited to our moment.

■ An eleven-year-old boy from Tennessee—we purposefully withhold his name—became famous when his mother posted a video of him complaining about bullying at school. It went viral, and celebrities offered their moral support. A third party set up a GoFundMe account (why? how does money stop bullying?). Then the world noticed that his mother had posted a family picture on Facebook that included a Confederate flag (plus Old Glory). The victim was a racist! A false report claimed that he had been bullied because he called schoolmates “n****rs.” Then it emerged that his estranged father is an actual white supremacist. Stop stop stop stop stop. In the age of devices, the rascally journalists of *Scoop* and *Miss Lonelyhearts* are, potentially, everyone. But your life is in your hands, not in your handheld. Live it, don’t broadcast it. And don’t feed on the lives of others.

■ “Cat Person,” a *New Yorker* short story by Kristen Roupenian, caused a minor firestorm. It describes the hookup of Margot, a college kid working at a movie-house concession stand, and Robert, a thirtysomething patron. They meet cute, as Hollywood says, flirt by text, then have an awkward date capped by bad sex. When Margot leaves Robert alone, he sends her a string of texts, desperate then angry, ending with “Whore.” It says something about the way we live now that so many young women identify with the heroine. Margot is narcissistic and rather foolish (she drinks too many beers for a first date, especially a first date with an almost-total stran-

ger). The author has her own blind spots: Robert’s parting shot, which Roupenian says she planned from the first, seems tacked on, the formula ending of a modern melodrama. The moral seems to be: Men are lousy, so we throw ourselves into bed with them. Ladies, ladies: You wanted third-wave—or are we on fourth-?—feminism; you’ll have to do better than this.

■ Rufus Wainwright was a guest artist of the Minnesota Orchestra. During the concert, he made some political remarks, bemoaning the Republicans’ recently passed tax bill. The principal trumpet, Manny Laureano, made an exasperated gesture and walked off the stage. Under contract to an orchestra, you’re not supposed to do this. But Laureano had had enough, and so have we, of the intrusion of partisan politics into such events as orchestra concerts. Bravo, Mr. Laureano.

■ The College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota has some advice at holiday time: If you’re going to throw a party, bill it as a “winter celebration.” And avoid “specific religious iconography,” such as Santa Clauses, “wrapped gifts,” and menorahs. Furthermore, avoid red and green, and blue and white or silver, as those combinations can denote Christmas and Hanukkah. Since the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences is so generous with advice, we have some advice for it: Get a life.

Free Speech is Under Assault on College Campuses

Take a Stand for Campus Free Speech

College campuses should be places where freedom to think and learn is unassailable. But this past year, concerned citizens have watched as colleges have become places where free speech is under daily attack by censors who are ready to silence anything that challenges their ideology.

A new set of campus rules has emerged that has little to do with educating young minds and much more to do with enforcing political correctness. At **Yale**, students waged furious protests after a professor criticized attempts to regulate Halloween costumes. At **Middlebury**, students disrupted the invited remarks of social scientist Charles Murray—and assaulted their own political science professor for

attempting to host a dialogue with him. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, George Will, and Ben Shapiro were “disinvited” from **Brandeis**, **Scripps**, and **DePaul**, respectively. The list goes on and on.

On too many college campuses, students, faculty, and administrators expect freedom from speech, not freedom of speech. **This is no way to prepare students for adulthood.**

The good news is that the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) works with alumni, parents, and donors to stand up against these practices that betray America’s long tradition of free expression and liberty.

ACTA is an independent higher education policy organization



Join the fight for free speech. Pre-order ACTA’s **Campus Free Speech** information packet with exclusive resources for concerned citizens and alumni.

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that promotes academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at American colleges and universities.

We aren’t afraid to fight the tough battles. Will you join us?



ACTA
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■ A college-football coach, such as Alabama's Nick Saban, has plenty of responsibilities, from game plans to press conferences to recruiting (and many more). Now a New York sports-writer wants to add another job to the list: political commentary. Before the Alabama senatorial election, in a column titled "Nick Saban is a clueless, gutless, selfish coward for his silence on Roy Moore," Chuck Modiano of the *Daily News* reviewed the case against Moore (with which we broadly agree) and then suggested that being paid a large salary by Alabama taxpayers imposes on Saban a duty to tell them how to vote. One might more logically argue the opposite.



■ John B. Anderson, son of a Swedish immigrant, was first elected to Congress from Illinois in 1960. Early in his career he offered a constitutional amendment acknowledging "the law and authority of Jesus Christ." The amendment went nowhere, and Anderson went slowly to the left. In the 1980 cycle he sought the Republican presidential nomination—a vanity campaign that caught the media's attention and did surprisingly well in early New England primaries. After Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush won and placed, Anderson ran on as an independent, winning not quite 7 percent of the vote (mainly from liberals who could not stomach Jimmy Carter). Anderson was the harbinger of the do-it-yourself presidential campaign, and thus the forerunner, however remote, of Donald Trump. Dead at 95. R.I.P.

■ Christine Keeler was at the center of a great British scandal in the early 1960s. A good-time girl, she was picked up by Stephen Ward, a social climber who took her to grand houses, one of them Cliveden, belonging to Lord Astor. There she began an affair with Jack Profumo, secretary of state for war in the cabinet of Harold Macmillan. It came out that she was also having an affair with Evgeny Ivanov, an attaché at the Soviet embassy. Military secrets, the media rumored, were coming out of Profumo's mouth and passing via Keeler to Ivanov's ear. Profumo foolishly lied to Parliament that there was no "impropriety" (his word) between him and Keeler. Unwittingly, she helped bring about the collapse of the Conservative government. At the age of 75, she died. R.I.P.

■ Tracy Stallard was a baseball workhorse who made the most of a series of negative achievements. Most famously, as a Red Sox rookie in 1961, he gave up Roger Maris's 61st home run on the last day of the season (a record that endured until the steroid era). Stallard, who had been told he was starting just 45 minutes before the game, always said the pitch Maris hit was a good one, "a knee-high fastball on the outside corner," but Maris knocked it out for the game's only run. In 1964, with the Mets, Stallard led the National League in losses (one of which came in Jim Bunning's perfect game), going 10–20 on the season—which still left him second on his team in wins; that's how

things were on the early Mets. That same year, he also lost the longest game in major-league history up to that time. He finished his career with the 1966 Cardinals—just missing the 1967 club, where he would have been Maris's teammate and won a World Series. In later years, Stallard was philosophical about the fame he won by serving up Maris's record shot, pointing out, "I played in a lot of golf tournaments because of it"—including, in 1990, the Roger Maris memorial charity tournament . . . which Stallard won. Dead at 80. R.I.P.

PUBLIC POLICY

A Tax-Cut Triumph

As we hoped, the Republican tax legislation improved as it moved through Congress. Harmful ideas such as eliminating the adoption tax credit were abandoned. Some tax relief for the working poor was added. The final bill should increase investment, reduce the distortionary effect of tax breaks, and lighten the especially excessive burden that the federal government puts on parents. While the bill is nobody's idea of perfection, it is nonetheless a solid accomplishment and we are glad that Congress has moved quickly to pass it.

Our 35 percent corporate-tax rate has stayed in place for decades as our major trading partners have cut their rates. The new tax rate of 21 percent should help us compete better for capital. Allowing businesses to write off the cost of investments more rapidly is another pro-growth win in the bill.

The legislation rightly pares back two major deductions: the ones for mortgage interest, which will be capped at mortgages of \$750,000 rather than the current \$1 million, and for state and local taxes, which will be capped at \$10,000 rather than being unlimited. In both cases we would have preferred more aggressive action, but the course chosen has the virtue of reducing the number of people who will face tax increases thanks to the bill. If some high-income households react to this change by leaving high-tax states, perhaps those states will in turn be moved to rethink their policies.

The bill's major contribution to tax simplification is the expansion of the standard deduction. That expansion will make tax deductions less important: Only a small percentage of taxpayers will find it worthwhile to itemize. The bill also reduces the number of people who will have to calculate their taxes twice, by limiting the reach of the alternative minimum tax.

Thanks largely to the interventions of Senators Marco Rubio and Mike Lee, the legislation expands the child tax credit. We have long favored a large tax credit for children as the most practical way to remedy a disparity in our old-age entitlements: They overtax parents, who pay the same tax rates and get the same benefits as childless adults no matter how much they have contributed to those programs by raising children.

The House bill eliminated the dependent exemption and expanded the child credit by roughly enough to make up for it. Very roughly: A lot of families would have paid higher taxes. The Senate bill included a real expansion, worth about \$400 per child for families in the middle of the middle class. Senators Lee and Rubio argued that the credit should apply against payroll taxes as well as income taxes. Most Republicans in Congress, unfortunately, remain wedded to the peculiar belief that relief from income taxes is wonderful but relief from payroll taxes is welfare. Senator Rubio had to threaten to vote against the bill to

secure a little payroll-tax relief for families with earnings too low to pay much income tax.

Republicans added a repeal of the individual mandate—the fines Obamacare puts on people who refuse to buy health insurance that complies with its regulations. That step will be a boon for people who have been priced out of the market by regulations and then fined on top of it. Ending the mandate is unlikely to lead to as many people going uninsured as the Congressional Budget Office says. By the same token, it won't save the federal government nearly as much money in insurance subsidies.

Which brings us to the main drawback to the bill: its likely tendency to raise the national debt. Most Republicans say that the tax cut will generate so much extra growth that it will increase revenues. No economic model of the tax cut, not even any of the models produced by conservative economists, backs this claim. It is convenient, though, in letting Republicans offer tax cuts to various constituencies without having to impose any restraint on spending.

Better legislation would have held off on some tax cuts pending that restraint. The corporate-tax cut could have been smaller while still marking a vast improvement. Pass-through businesses got, in general, a sweetheart deal in the legislation. The bill cuts tax rates on households making more than \$500,000. Not even the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, who crusaded for these tax-rate reductions, pretend that they will do anything significant to promote economic growth; and these households will benefit from many of the bill's other provisions. (If they own stock, for example, they benefit from the corporate-tax cut.) Without these excesses, the legislation could have promoted growth while providing more tax relief to parents and doing less to raise the deficit.

But while the tax cut is likely to increase the national debt over the next ten years, it is nearly a rounding error in comparison with the growth of entitlements. A tax code that places less of a burden on investment, by businesses and by parents, could be had without any increase in the debt; but it is worth having even in return for a modest increase.

Republicans are therefore justified in voting for this legislation and celebrating their victory. But only briefly. Many of the tax cuts in the bill are temporary, and Republicans will have to find the votes for future legislation to extend them or make them permanent. And their victory will not hold if they do not reform the entitlements. Perhaps someone could mention that fact to President Trump at the signing ceremony.

POLITICS

The Moore Fiasco

DEMOCRAT Doug Jones beat Republican Roy Moore in a special election to fill the Senate seat vacated by Jeff Sessions. Jones is the first Democrat to win an Alabama senatorial election in 25 years. The margin was 20,700 votes.

How lousy a candidate and a man was Moore? Let us count the ways. He was bounced out of the state judicial offices he held, not once, but twice, for failure to understand the supremacy clause of the Constitution. He ran a charity that paid him a cushy salary. He was credibly charged with pursuing teenage girls—allegedly assaulting one and molesting another when she was underage. His loss should be the end of him, but he is asking for donations to contest the result: one more way, if past is prologue, to squeeze out a Roy Moore payday.



Doug Jones during his Election Night party

There were 22,800 write-in votes—more than Jones's margin of victory—most of them evidently Republicans disgusted with their standard bearer, so some honor clings to the Alabama GOP. Only some: Moore had won the nomination in a fair fight.

Steve Bannon, Trump's soi-disant Svengali, campaigned hard for Moore as part of his plan to trash the current Republican political establishment. Moore's loss sets him back, but there is no guarantee that Bannon will always find cat's-paws of such low quality.

President Trump showed himself to be vacillating and dishonorable. He campaigned for the incumbent, Luther Strange, who had been appointed to fill the seat until the special election was held; then switched to Moore; then announced, in a post-election tweet, that he had been right to back Strange all along, since the deck was stacked against Moore. The only Trumpist the president will stand by is Trump.

Other Republican officeholders did no better than the president. After a show of displeasure, they resigned themselves to Moore's eventual victory. One of the few exceptions, Senator Jeff Flake, went too far in the other direction, making a contribution to Jones (who is among other things a pro-abortion zealot). Senator Richard Shelby steered the right course, writing in someone else and making it public.

Republicans should not write off the debacle as an anomaly. Black turnout was strong, and strongly Democratic, which will not matter in deep-red constituencies with normal candidates, but which will matter a great deal in competitive races next fall.



Robert Mueller's Missing Case

So far, the special counsel has found nothing to incriminate the president

BY ANDREW C. MCCARTHY

DOES Robert Mueller have a case against President Donald Trump? The answer increasingly appears to be no.

It has been seven months since Mueller's appointment as special counsel, and well over a year since the FBI began investigating possible Trump "collusion" in Russia's 2016 campaign interference. A few important things have become clear. The most apparent is that Mueller has no prosecutable collusion case.

This is clear from the three sets of charges Mueller has filed so far. Notwithstanding the frisson for Never Trumpers who've morphed into Impeach Trumpers, more-objective observers deduced from the charges that Mueller is probably about where James Comey was a year ago. Between Trump's November 2016 election and his firing of the former FBI director in May (the explosive event that triggered Mueller's appointment), Comey repeatedly assured the new president that he was not a criminal suspect.

This was not for lack of trying to make him one. In his March 2017 congressional

testimony, Comey announced that the FBI was investigating Russia's meddling in the election. This was a striking departure from Justice Department protocols against publicly acknowledging investigations. Yet it merely confirmed what was obvious from the U.S. intelligence agencies' January report on Russia's "cyberespionage" operation during the campaign. Comey's purpose in making this extraordinary disclosure was not to finger Russia but to rattle the Trump camp, as he did in his next breath: the explosive disclosure that the FBI's Russia probe included scrutiny of any contacts between Trump associates and the Kremlin, as well as any possible "coordination" between the Trump campaign and Russia's election interference.

It was an astonishing revelation that Comey had to know would signal to the media, and thus to the public, that the nation's premier law-enforcement agency regarded the sitting president as a suspect. Yet, in private meetings, Comey was telling both congressional leadership and Trump himself that the presi-

dent was *not* a suspect. I believe it was this Janus-like performance that ultimately led an irate Trump to dismiss the director. In retrospect, though, it's clear that Comey was ratcheting up pressure on Trump subordinates, reasoning that there must have been fire under all the Russia smoke the bureau was seeing.

Comey knew that, around the time the Kremlin appeared to have been hacking email systems of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Clinton-campaign chairman John Podesta, there were contacts between intriguing Russians and such Trump-campaign hands as Paul Manafort (the campaign chairman for a time), Michael Flynn (a top campaign aide and later, fleetingly, Trump's national-security adviser), Carter Page (a tangential campaign adviser), and George Papadopoulos (a young campaign adviser of even less stature than Page). Still, American intelligence agencies had found no evidence that these contacts had anything to do with Kremlin espionage. Indeed, their January report noted en passant that Russia had sought to compromise both Democratic *and* Republican communications—they'd just struck paydirt with the former.

In speaking with Trump, Comey explained his reluctance to say publicly what he was saying privately—viz., that Trump was not a suspect—by claiming that it would be worse for Trump if the FBI cleared the president only to have new troubling information arise later. That, according to Comey, would call for a damaging public announcement that the case was being reopened. This, of course, is what happened in the Hillary Clinton—emails investigation: The director's initial exoneration press conference in July 2016 was followed by the uncovering of new emails, leading to Comey's public reopening (and re-closing) of the case on the eve of the election.

It was a specious rationalization. Comey's problem in both the Clinton and the Trump situations was of his own making: Had he not made inappropriate public statements—outlining damning evidence against Clinton when he was not going to charge her, raising public suspicions about Trump when he did not regard Trump as a suspect—no later clarifications would or could have been necessary. For present purposes, however, the point is that, no matter what

assurances he had given Trump, Comey plainly believed a case connecting the president to Russia's perfidy remained well within the realm of possibility. It wasn't there yet, but it might emerge if investigators kept digging, if the bureau kept the heat on the likely accomplices.

Well, seven months after Comey's departure, they're still digging, still keeping the heat on. And Donald Trump is still not a suspect. In fact, a "collusion" case seems farther away than ever. Not just against Trump; against anyone.

As far as we can tell, Mueller's probe has two fundamental flaws, a theory problem and a proof problem, and both are fatal.

First, "collusion," which is just concerted activity of some kind, is not a crime. Prosecutors have to prove that contacts rose to the level of *conspiracy*—an agreement among two or more people to violate some federal criminal law. Whatever the various contacts between Trump associates and Russians may have amounted to, investigators have not come close to showing that they implicate the Trump campaign in the only crime we know of—Russian espionage, the hacking of the email system of the DNC.

Consider the three sets of charges Mueller has filed. The indictment against Manafort and his partner Richard Gates has nothing to do with the 2016 campaign and only indirectly involves Russia. (Manafort worked for many years as a consultant for a Kremlin-connected political party in Ukraine and is alleged to have failed to register as a foreign agent and to have laundered millions of dollars in fees.) Mueller is patently squeezing Manafort for cooperation, hoping to uncover any evidence that the Trump campaign had either foreknowledge of Kremlin efforts to undermine the Clinton campaign or some other corrupt arrangement with Putin's regime—such as a quid pro quo deal involving some form of Russian campaign assistance in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against Russia if Trump were elected. (The United States and other nations imposed sanctions against Russia over Putin's annexation of Crimea and other anti-Ukraine aggression.)

Yet Mueller's other two prosecutions, guilty pleas from Papadopoulos and Flynn, underscore the emptiness of

the collusion narrative. Both men are cooperating with Mueller, who filed detailed factual statements in connection with each plea. Both, moreover, colluded with Russia: Papadopoulos in sundry meetings with allegedly Kremlin-connected contacts in an unconsummated effort to bring Trump and Putin together, or at least to arrange meetings between their respective subordinates; Flynn in discussions with Sergey Kislyak, Russia's ambassador to the U.S., about a United Nations resolution condemning Israeli settlement-building and about sanctions President Obama ordered in response to Russia's election-meddling.

Nevertheless, the pleas Mueller took were not to offenses somehow related to collusion with Russia; each man pled guilty to the process crime of making false statements in FBI interviews. If the cooperators had given Mueller testimony about an espionage conspiracy, he'd have had them plead guilty to that—a prosecutor does not build a major case by establishing merely that his witnesses are liars. Plus, Papadopoulos's fact statement claimed that he was told, implausibly, that Putin's regime had thousands of Clinton's own emails, which it was considering providing to the Trump campaign. Put aside that Papadopoulos never saw any such emails and there is no known evidence that Russia had them (the hacked emails were from the DNC and Podesta, not Clinton herself). If Russia had to tell a Trump-campaign adviser it had obtained such emails, that means the Trump campaign had no involvement in Russia's acquisition of them.

Even more fundamental than this lack of a coherent legal theory that could inculpate Trump in Russia's espionage is Mueller's proof problem regarding the espionage itself. The intelligence community's finding that Russia interfered in the election, primarily by hacking, is merely a probability assessment, not courtroom proof. As the intelligence agencies' own report concedes, the announcement of a finding does not mean the agencies are in a position to establish the finding as a matter of fact. The agencies say they cannot make their evidence public for fear of compromising their methods and sources of intelligence.

Mueller's problem does not end with the inaccessibility of key witnesses. The Obama Justice Department indefensibly failed to force the DNC to surrender its server system for FBI forensic examination. Astonishingly, the government's conclusion that Russia is the culprit—the finding that has roiled the nation for a year—hinges on an examination by CrowdStrike, a private contractor of the DNC. That would be the same DNC that refused FBI requests to surrender its server and has a powerful motive to portray Russia, rather than Clinton's inept campaign, as the reason Clinton lost.

CrowdStrike is a reputable firm, so it is perhaps understandable that the intelligence agencies would trust its work in their probability analysis. They are not burdened, as Mueller is, by the obligation to prove essential facts beyond a reasonable doubt. If Mueller cannot prove Russia's espionage in court, it is inconceivable that he could prove that the Trump campaign conspired in Russia's espionage.

When it comes to Trump personally, then, Mueller seems reduced to establishing that he obstructed an FBI investigation. But that, too, is a dead end. To begin with, Trump has always had the power, as president, to shut down the Russia investigation, but he has never done so—and he even told Comey it would be helpful to know if any of his "satellites" had done something wrong. While it was unsavory of Trump to lean on Comey to drop the Flynn investigation, Trump has the constitutional authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion, and he did not actually order Comey to stop the probe—which continued and led, eventually, to Flynn's guilty plea. And Trump had undeniable authority to fire Comey; as president, he did not need a reason to terminate a subordinate serving at his pleasure, and, again, the investigation has continued despite Comey's dismissal.

To be sure, if Democrats flip the House in 2018, articles of impeachment could be filed against Trump regardless of what Mueller does. Impeachment is a political remedy, not a legal one, and Democrats could be rabid enough to act on sheer political will. For now, though, it appears that Mueller has no prospect of proving crimes, let alone high crimes and misdemeanors.

NR

A Strong Start

Trump's first-year report card

BY RAMESH PONNURU

GORSUCH confirmed, ISIS defeated, taxes cut: The Trump administration has compiled a solid record of accomplishment in its first year, one that compares well with the records of many of its predecessors.

Two of the biggest accomplishments came late in the year. The prime minister of Iraq declared victory over ISIS on December 9. Republicans reached a deal that seemed to secure passage of a tax bill on December 15. Until then, it appeared possible that 2017 would end without an all-Republican government enacting any major legislation.

Now the Republicans' policy record looks better, at least from a conservative perspective. The tax bill advances several longstanding conservative objectives. It cuts tax rates for most Americans, slashes the corporate-tax rate for the first time in decades, expands the tax credit for children, limits the reach of the estate tax and the alternative minimum tax, and scales back the tax break for expensive homes. By scaling back the deduction for state and local taxes, it may encourage a more conservative fiscal politics in the states. And it allows drilling to proceed in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The tax bill also partly makes up for the failure of Republican efforts earlier in 2017 to repeal Obamacare. The health-care law imposes fines on people who go without insurance. The tax bill sets the fines at zero. The least popular feature of Obamacare is thus effectively nullified.

Some conservatives would have considered voting for Trump in November 2016 worth it just for Justice Neil Gorsuch. His appointment to the Supreme Court means that Justice Scalia's seat will remain filled by an originalist for the next few decades. If one of the Democratic appointees or Justice Anthony Kennedy leaves the Court, Trump will have the opportunity to create the first conservative majority in modern constitutional history. Trump has also nominated many well-qualified conservative jurists to the appeals courts. (The quality of his

district-court nominees appears to be significantly lower.)

The administration has begun to rein in regulation. It has withdrawn and modified several of the Obama administration's regulations, often in concert with Congress. It has stopped or slowed the progress of many others that were barreling down the tracks. The Environmental Protection Agency, now run by Trump appointee Scott Pruitt, has also taken steps to end the practice of "sue and settle," in which activist groups get the agency to adopt new policies through lawsuits.

Trump killed President Obama's Clean Power Plan, which would have imposed significant economic costs while doing little to reduce the risks of global warming. He has effectively ended the Obama administration's mandate that employers provide contraceptive coverage: Employers who object to providing that coverage, or providing forms of that coverage they consider to cause abortions, are to be exempt. If the new policy stands, the Little Sisters of the Poor will

On policy matters, conservatives are getting what they want from Trump.

be spending less time in court. Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, has withdrawn Obama-era regulations that led colleges to lower the burden of proof for sexual-misconduct allegations and to monitor professors' speech.

Most conservatives cheered two symbolic actions by the administration: announcing that our embassy in Israel will move to the country's capital city of Jerusalem and that the United States will withdraw from the Paris climate accord. (I count that planned withdrawal as symbolic because the accord did not bind us to any policy commitments.)

Conservatives of various types have thus seen progress on their agenda in 2017. Economic conservatives got tax cuts and some deregulation. Legal conservatives got judicial appointments and an executive branch more mindful of the limits of its policymaking authority. Social conservatives also benefited from the judicial appointments and welcomed Trump's policy of blocking international family-planning funding from going to organizations that promote or perform abortions.

Many Republicans credit Trump for presiding over a strong economy, too. It's a point that requires some context. Job growth has not been quite as fast as it was in Obama's last year, but you'd expect it to slow after an expansion this long. Republican economic policies may have played a role in keeping the expansion going. Certainly the predictions of economic doom made right after the election by some Trump opponents—chiefly Paul Krugman—have not come to pass.

It's not the only bad outcome that has been avoided. Trump has started no trade war and has not blown up the World Trade Organization. He has merely engaged in the low-grade protectionism that is routine for presidents of both parties and withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership—which may not have been able to win congressional approval even if Trump had stayed in. NATO is still standing, too, and Trump's complaints about allies' burden-sharing may be arresting Western Europe's slide into functional pacifism.

How much Trump contributed to what has gone right in 2017 is debatable. He had less influence over the shape of the tax bill than most presidents exert over major laws. His unpopularity has probably dragged down the bill's poll numbers. He has reportedly complained that he wants to go further in imposing tariffs but his advisers keep thwarting him.

People who voted for Trump in November 2016 on the theory that he would deliver policies radically different from what other Republicans would do should be disappointed. Those who voted for him because he would usually line up with conservatives and sign Republican bills, on the other hand, have reason to be pleased.

They may not like everything about this presidency, the effects of which will not be limited to changes in public policy. Many of Trump's conservative supporters wish the president had spoken more firmly and consistently to denounce the white supremacists in Charlottesville, or had kept his distance from Roy Moore, or had contained himself on Twitter. On policy matters, though, they are getting what they wanted from him. **NR**

The City of The Temple

Recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital is right and good

BY DAVID PRYCE-JONES

ON the face of it, President Trump's announcement that the United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is no big deal, or as he puts it, "This is nothing more or less than a recognition of reality." He was careful to say nothing about the general understanding that Jerusalem would also serve as the capital of a future Palestinian state. Yet for all its apparent simplicity, this statement has profound implications. To accept that Jews have rights in the issue of Jerusalem destroys the illusion Arabs entertain about Jews.

The Arab and Muslim world believes as an article of faith that Israelis are settlers, colonists, imperialists who are in the land not out of conviction but only because some wicked and powerful persons

have put them up to it. Imams in the mosque and supposedly learned men on television unceasingly drum such stuff into the heads of people who have no means of finding out anything other. In reality, Zionism is a typical 19th-century movement of national liberation, one among many that brought all sorts of different peoples into the modern era. In the 20th century, Arabs themselves had successful national-liberation movements with means and ends similar to those of Zionism. In spite of experience, the Arab misrepresentation of Jews as either incapable of founding a state or undeserving of it seems to go too deep into their history and culture ever to be corrected.

A wise course for the Palestinian leadership would have been to put President Trump on the spot by insisting that he clarify what he has in mind for the capital of a Palestinian state. They chose otherwise. Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank, declared that the United States is "biased" and can no longer be considered an honest broker in negotiations with Israel. Hamas spokesmen in Gaza called for another intifada and promised for the umpteenth time "to open the gates of hell." This assumes that, once daily

life becomes really unpleasant, the settlers will prefer to leave for some other, quieter place.

Every time the Arabs have resorted to opening the gates of hell they have ended in a worse position than before, with less territory and more refugees. To adapt the much-quoted witticism incorrectly attributed to Einstein, Arab leadership has kept doing the same violence to Israel over and over again, invariably losing but always expecting a different result. Between 1937 and 1947, the Arabs could have taken possession of the major part of Palestine; but now, after the sequence of riots and intifadas and wars, only shards of it are left for them. The Israelis are not settlers: They are citizens willing and able to defend their national identity. For reasons that must go deep into the history and culture of the West, Israel is never allowed the benefits of victory, and the Arabs are never obliged to shoulder the costs of opening the gates of hell. Conferences and road maps and peace processes, arranged by parties with interests of their own, maintain a condition of perpetual crisis by obscuring the distinction between reward and punishment. Failure to impose costs for going to war is a standing inducement to have another



Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock

round of fighting. Hamas proves the point, pretty well daily.

Thanks to President Trump's decision, for the first time in this dispute the Arabs are having to pay for their misperceptions and policies. From their point of view, there is no knowing how bad the next step might be. Trump's statement about Jerusalem had another sentence not as simple as it looks: "We cannot solve our problems by making the same failed assumptions." The European Union has long since stuck to the same assumption that all costs should fall on Israel. Intellectually, morally, and politically incoherent, Federica Mogherini, the Italian official in charge of EU foreign policy, holds that the decision on Jerusalem "speaks of our darkest hours" and has a "very worrying potential impact." The latest accounts show that the EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority. Substantial amounts are siphoned off into terrorism and the construction of palatial villas in Ramallah. At the same moment, Mogherini wishes

to be an educated man. His family originally were from a Bedouin tribe in Saudi Arabia, yet he asserts his Canaanite descent, dating it to 1500 B.C.E.—when there were Jews but no Arabs or Islam.

United Nations Resolution 2334 could not make it plainer that Israel does not have, and never did have, legal or historical rights anywhere in Jerusalem, and President Obama refused to veto this considered opinion. U.N. agencies—including UNESCO and the Human Rights Committee—openly manipulate history, wiping the Jewish presence out of it. Never mind the Wailing Wall, the Bible, and the testimony of visitors down the centuries. It so happens that Benjamin Mazar, a professor of Biblical history and an archaeologist originally from Germany, once took me round his excavation of the Jewish foundations under Herod's Temple. King Hezekiah's seal dating from the eighth century B.C.E. has recently been found there. The U.N. has given the Temple Mount the name "Al-Buraq Plaza" in honor of the horse

With a little bit of luck, Trump will have saved some Palestinians from being marched pointlessly towards gunfire.

transactions were "more transparent, more accountable, and more democratic." President Emmanuel Macron of France is rumored to be considering recognizing Palestine as part of the EU. The ambassadors to the United Nations of Britain, Sweden, France, Germany, and Italy signed a joint statement that Trump's decision was not in line with Security Council resolutions and was "unhelpful." Inexplicably, the EU finds the nation-state retrograde for its members but progressive for the Palestinians.

The Palestinian leadership, the imams, and the supposedly learned men on television maintain that Jews cannot have a claim to Jerusalem because there were none there until Zionists were herded in. The indigenous inhabitants were allegedly Canaanites, dating from around 5500 B.C.E., and today's Palestinians are to be classified as their descendants. Mahmoud Abbas himself said so, the moment he heard the news about Jerusalem. Saeb Erekat has led negotiations with Israel; I have met him several times and know him

that, according to tradition, the Prophet Mohammed mounted there and so ascended to heaven. Rachel's Tomb, a Jewish monument outside Hebron on the West Bank, has similarly been Islamized as "Bilal bin Rabah." CNN has put the Dome of the Rock, an architectural gem under Israeli protection, at the top of its list of the most endangered structures in the world; the mosque's entrance still has the bullet marks left when Palestinian gunmen shot and killed King Abdullah of Jordan. Palmyra, Hatra, and the al-Nuri mosque in Mosul are among historic sites blown up in inter-Arab fighting.

American presidents have frequently intervened in the Middle East. This is different. This president has given an unprecedented lesson in "reality enforcement," a phrase coined, I believe, by Saul Bellow trying to make sense of what he could see and hear. By and large, Israelis know how to look after themselves, but with a little bit of luck, Trump will have saved some Palestinians from being marched pointlessly towards gunfire. **NR**

Reform the Antiquities Act

Trump's reduction of national monuments is a stopgap, not a solution

BY SHAWN REGAN

'T HE President Stole Your Land," the outdoor retailer Patagonia proclaimed in a widely circulated advertisement earlier this month. The company was reacting to what it called "an illegal move" by President Donald Trump to reduce the size of two national monuments in Utah. Patagonia's founder, Yvon Chouinard, didn't hold back his contempt, deriding the Trump administration and "the wacko politicians out of Utah and places" for scaling back the land protections. "I mean, it's evil," he told CNN.

Utah's crime? Its elected officials had the audacity to oppose executive actions, made by prior administrations, that imposed unwanted restrictions on large amounts of federal public land in the state. The two monuments, Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, which together comprise more than 3 million acres, were unilaterally created by presidential proclamation in the face of opposition from Utah's congressional representatives. On a visit to Utah on December 4, Trump partially reversed those decisions with an executive action of his own, cutting the Bears Ears monument by nearly 85 percent and Grand Staircase by half.

The fight centers on the Antiquities Act of 1906, a vaguely worded law that grants presidents broad authority to designate federal lands that are of historical, cultural, or scientific significance as national monuments and to restrict livestock grazing, timber harvesting, energy development, and other land uses. The act states that such designations should be limited to "the smallest

Mr. Regan is a research fellow at the Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Mont.



Ancestral Puebloan ruins at Monarch Cave, Comb Ridge, Utah, part of the newly created Shash Jaa National Monument

area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected,” originally meant to include archaeological sites, historical structures, and “other objects of historic or scientific interest.” But presidents have often used the law to place large areas off limits to many traditional uses—without congressional approval, public input, or local support.

The Antiquities Act has, in effect, become a tool for the executive branch to impose wide-ranging conservation protections by presidential fiat. Since 1996, more than 11 million acres of land have been designated as national monuments, primarily in rural western areas, and about 760 million acres of ocean as marine monuments. Past presidents have used the act to justify setting aside geological formations and natural landscapes and even to protect biodiversity, as in the case of Oregon’s Cascade-Siskiyou monument, created by President Bill Clinton in 2000. President Barack Obama was especially fond of the act, using it to create more monuments than any other president.

While such designations are controversial elsewhere, they are especially so in Utah, where two-thirds of the land is owned and managed by the federal government. The state has long sought to

gain more control of the lands within its borders, even calling for some federal lands to be transferred to state ownership in recent years. Those efforts have been fought tooth and nail by environmental groups, which seek to restrict livestock grazing, motorized-vehicle operation, energy development, and other public-land uses—often at the expense of many of the state’s rural communities. For environmental groups, the Antiquities Act is an effective tool to do just that.

Last December, after months of speculation, Obama created the 1.35 million-acre Bears Ears monument in southeastern Utah during the final weeks of his presidency, despite opposition from Utah’s governor, its state legislature, and its entire congressional delegation. The region is home to numerous archaeological sites, but many Utahns objected to the size of the designation, which encompassed far more land than just the sites containing Native American antiquities. This wasn’t the first time such an outsized designation had been made in the region. In 1996, over similar local resistance, President Bill Clinton established the nearby 1.9 million-acre Grand Staircase–Escalante monument, which nixed a proposed coal mine that was predicted to provide hundreds of jobs for nearby communities.

Monument designations such as these run roughshod over the legislative process that is at the core of American governance. In the case of Bears Ears, Obama’s designation bypassed a multi-year legislative compromise, known as the Public Lands Initiative, that sought to reach a “grand bargain” across the region. That effort, led by Representative Rob Bishop (R., Utah) and former congressman Jason Chaffetz (R., Utah), would have protected wilderness areas while also opening other lands for resource development, but it was thwarted by Obama’s monument designation.

The law undermines the potential for such collaborative solutions to public-land-use conflicts. With the Antiquities Act at their disposal, environmental groups are less likely to come to the bargaining table in good faith to find common ground with competing groups. Indeed, in the case of Bears Ears, environmentalists were able to stymie legislative efforts to establish a grand bargain in eastern Utah by simply holding out for a lame-duck monument designation from Obama. And why not? After all, there’s no reason to bother with the pesky details of conventional lawmaking, with its incessant demands for compromise and local buy-in, when

a president can simply declare a national monument from afar. And since the designations can be made in the waning days of an administration, as many of them are, others are left to deal with the consequences.

Utah's political leaders, however, were determined to fight back. In February, the governor, Gary Herbert, signed a resolution, approved by the state's legislature, calling on President Trump to rescind the Bears Ears designation. In April, at the request of Utah's congressional delegation, Trump ordered his interior secretary, Ryan Zinke, to review large monuments designated since 1996, when Grand Staircase-Escalante was established. Trump said the review was intended "to end another egregious abuse of federal power." Zinke's final report, released this month, calls for reductions to the two Utah sites and several other large monuments elsewhere, as well as for easing land-use restrictions on some monuments.

The fight will now turn to the courtroom. Several groups, including Patagonia, have filed suit to challenge Trump's reductions of the Utah monuments. While the Antiquities Act gives presidents seemingly limitless power to create monuments, it is unclear whether it also provides them with the authority to abolish or shrink monuments, as Trump has done. (Several presidents—including Woodrow Wilson, who nearly halved the size of Mount Olympus National Monument—have in fact shrunk national monuments, but none of those reductions were challenged in court.) The ensuing court battle could take several years.

But regardless of how the legal action shakes out, one thing should be noted: The lands in question are still federally owned. Despite Patagonia's claim that Trump "stole your land," the lands remain public. Monument or not, they are still subject to strict laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. And, like all public lands, they remain protected through other, yet-broader federal laws such as the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, created in 1979 to protect ancient artifacts on public land from looting or desecration, and the National Historic Preservation Act, established in 1966 to protect historic structures on federal property.

In light of past monument abuses, Trump's efforts to downsize monuments and loosen land-use restrictions may indeed be righting the wrongs of prior administrations. But what's really needed is an overhaul of the Antiquities Act, and that may be on its way. This fall the House Natural Resources Committee approved a bill, introduced by Bishop, that would limit the size of monuments that can be designated by unilateral executive authority. Monuments of more than 640 acres would require public input, and large monuments, up to a maximum of 85,000 acres, would need approval from local and state lawmakers.

The proposed legislation would also clarify the scope of the Antiquities Act by limiting the types of resources that it can be used to protect. Bishop's bill would define "objects of antiquity" as "relics," "artifacts," "skeletal remains," "fossils," and "certain buildings" already constructed. The bill would also codify the president's power to reduce the size of monuments designated by predecessors.

Regardless of the bill's outcome, the Antiquities Act should be recognized as an ineffective and inappropriate law that is incompatible with our American system of government, which typically rejects such wide-ranging executive authority. If nothing else, this much should be clear: If monument designations were good public policy, they wouldn't require presidential proclamations. The same, of course, could be said of Trump's unilateral monument reductions, should they withstand legal challenges. As long as such decisions are made by presidential decree, any particular outcome will be hopelessly uncertain and may last only as long as a president's tenure in the White House—and that's hardly an effective conservation strategy.

The only real solution is to get rid of the antiquated law that got us in this position in the first place. Congress should make the Antiquities Act a thing of the past and require that national monuments be established through individual legislative action, as is the case with national parks and federal wilderness areas. After all, if government is simply the word for the things we do together, as progressives like to tell us, then let's actually govern together—even when it comes to our land-conservation policies. NR

Good King Michael

Steering between Nazis and Communists, the Romanian monarch did 'his bravest best'

BY JAY NORDLINGER

I HAVE met a few kings, thanks to my practice of journalism. One was Leka of Albania—a pretender to the throne, but countable nonetheless.

He was born to King Zog and Queen Geraldine on April 5, 1939. Two days later, Italy invaded—and the royal family fled.

It was 2005 when I met Leka. He was in Albania, and very ill. Behind him was an Albanian flag. Leka projected great sadness and great dignity. He was the nominal head of a political party, and that very day was election day. "Did you vote?" I asked. He answered, "I don't vote. I am above all political parties, even my own."

This is the most kingly thing I have ever heard said. Leka may have been a faintly ridiculous or pathetic figure, but he was clearly a patriot, and he had not exactly chosen his path in life. He was following what he considered his duty. He died in 2011.

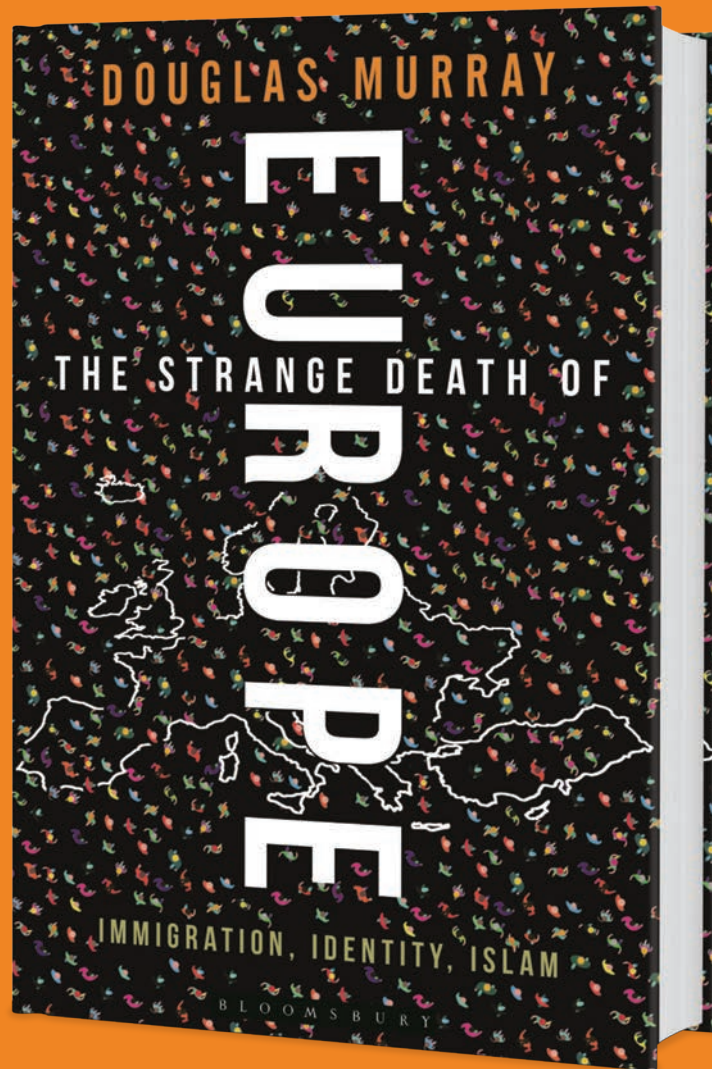
Michael of Romania died a few weeks ago. He was roughly a generation older than Leka, born in 1921. Like Romania itself, he was caught between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. In his life was reflected some of the turbulence of the 20th century.

When Michael was born, his grandfather, Ferdinand, was on the throne. His father was Carol, the crown prince, and his mother was Helen, a princess of Greece and Denmark, and a wonderful woman. His father was not wonderful: He was a Class A ass. A rake, he took up with a woman named Magda, who was not a suitable mistress from Romanian society's point of view. She was redheaded, Jewish, Catholic, divorced . . . The crown prince was given a choice: your future throne or Magda. He chose the latter, running off with her to Paris.

In 1927, King Ferdinand died. His grandson Michael, age five, was proclaimed king. "Really?" the boy said,

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Standpoint

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when he got the news. Then he asked for a piece of chocolate cake. He knew his royal prerogative.

A regency governed the country, of course. But forces hostile to this regency staged a coup d'état in 1930, bringing back the king's father, who became Carol II. Michael, now eight, was demoted to crown prince. Carol proved a nasty king, creating a personal dictatorship. This was brought down in 1940, in yet another coup (by equally nasty people).

Michael, 18, was on the throne again. He may well be the only man ever to precede and succeed his father as king. Yet the real power in Romania lay with the prime minister, Ion Antonescu, who was, essentially, a local Hitler. Indeed, Michael would refer to him as "the führer." Incidentally, Michael had lunch with the real führer, twice.

Antonescu "treated me like a child," Michael would recall. But Antonescu had respect for the queen mother, Helen, listening to her even when he didn't like what she was saying. Helen intervened to save thousands of Jews (a fact that infuriated Adolf Eichmann). In 1993, she was recognized by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, as a "righteous among the nations."

In the summer of 1944, Michael was 22 and coming into his own. The war was going badly for the Axis, which included Romania. Opponents of the Antonescu regime within Romania treated the king as a focal point. He led a daunting coup against Antonescu, toppling him, and swinging Romania to the side of the Allies. This shortened the war by some weeks or months, sparing both combatants and civilians many more casualties.

After the war, Michael received an award from Stalin and an award from Truman. The first was the Order of Victory. (Eisenhower received it too.) The second was the Legion of Merit. Truman's citation read, "By his superior judgment, his boldness of action and the high character of his personal leadership," Michael "has made an outstanding contribution to the cause of freedom and democracy."

Needless to say, freedom and democracy was not to be the lot of Romania, for many years. The country would be under Communist dictatorship, with its own Stalins.

In November 1947, King Michael traveled to London for a wedding: that of his



The late King Michael of Romania

cousins Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. He knew that he faced danger back home. He could have taken asylum then and there, but refused. A month later, in Bucharest, the Communists gave him a choice: He could abdicate the throne and leave the country; or they would execute a thousand students—supporters of his whom they had rounded up. Talking about this later, he asked, "What are you supposed to do in a situation like that?" He abdicated and left.

During this terrible period, there was something pleasant: Michael met a girl. He met her in London, when his cousins were getting married. She was Anne, daughter of Prince René of Bourbon-Parma and Princess Margaret of Denmark. She had grown up in France, and had spent some of the war in the United States—in New York, specifically. She attended the Parsons School of Design and worked as a salesgirl at Macy's. Then, for the French army, she drove ambulances. She would receive the *Croix de guerre*.

Michael and Anne had a religious problem to overcome—he was Orthodox, she Catholic—but they finessed it, and were married at the royal palace in Athens in June 1948. They bounced around several countries, as royal exiles do, and eventu-

ally settled in Switzerland (as royal exiles do). Michael worked as a farmer, a pilot, a stockbroker, etc. Money was often a concern, but the family had supporters.

The family consisted of mother, father, and five daughters. No sons is often a problem for a king (and a queen). Michael tinkered with the rules of succession—not that they matter too much for mere pretenders—declaring his eldest, Margareta, his heir, or heiress.

Michael looked the part—the part of king. He certainly looked like an aristocrat: tall, thin, erect, handsome, beautifully dressed. He had beautiful manners. He was not a fortunate speaker—he either mumbled or had a speech impediment (it was hard to tell)—but this did not impair his manners. "He was very, very shy," says Jessica Douglas-Home, a writer with long experience of Romania. And "he had an aura of goodness and duty."

Ion Mihai Pacepa knew him too. He had been a general in the Securitate, i.e., the secret police of Communist Romania. He had also been a top adviser to the dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. In 1978, he made a spectacular defection to the United States. He says that the Securitate had copious files on Michael—including "hundreds of false testimonies 'documenting' that he was an American, British, French, and German spy." He also says that, in his judgment, Michael lived "a heroic life."

In 1989—on Christmas Day—the Communist regime at last fell. It was replaced by a government not entirely un-Communist. Michael tried to return to Romania at Easter 1990, but they blocked him. He managed to reach Romanian soil that Christmas, but they expelled him after twelve hours. "He came like a thief," said a government spokesman, "lying and physically forcing his way into the country." Princess Margareta said, "It's obvious that the powers-that-be in Romania are terrified of him."

Yes, they were.

They let him come at Easter 1992 and were further spooked. This quiet king attracted huge, teeming crowds. Forbidden to give a formal address, he gave an informal one from a hotel balcony. You never heard or saw a less charismatic speaker. (There are films of the event.) But at least he wasn't a demagogue. He exhibited an integrity and a decency that apparently captivated the crowd.

In 1996, a government of the center Right was elected, led by Emil Constantinescu, a bulwark of Romanian democracy. Unafraid of Michael, they restored his citizenship, handing him his new passport right on the tarmac at the airport. Later, Michael became an unofficial diplomat-at-large for Romania, arguing for its admission to NATO and the EU.

He was shaken by the material deprivation of Romania—its poverty. But he was even more shaken by the lack of a “moral sense,” as he called it. No one was instilling this sense in young people. “This is not to say that we should all be priests or monks,” he explained, but “the rules of God” should be taught.

You know an old expression: “It is good to be king.” It can be, sure—but it can also be something else. There was far more drama, far more turbulence, in King Michael’s life than I have sketched here. “I had four years with the Nazis and three years with the Soviets,” he once said, referring to his second reign (after the childhood one). That is not necessarily what a king bargains for. But it’s what this one signed up for—or was born for.

A few days after Michael died, Rahul Gandhi was elected president of the Indian National Congress—like his great-grandfather, grandmother, father, and mother before him. (Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv, and Sonia.) A person might resent him, as a privileged dynast. Or envy him. Or pity him? Bear in mind, two of those predecessors were assassinated. You and I might not sign up for Rahul’s job.

We would also balk at “Your Majesty,” being good republicans, or red-blooded Americans. But Michael was a model of humility, particularly as contrasted with Ceausescu, say, who styled himself the “Genius of the Carpathians.” Leka of Albania may have had a pretension or two, but he would never have called himself what the Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha, did: “Sole Force.” Kings can be as tyrannical as the next leader, but they can also exemplify patriotism, national identity, and salutary tradition.

Michael once said, in his fumbling, mumbling way, “It’s queer how history does things,” and he is so right. My colleague David Pryce-Jones did not know Michael, but he knew his mother, Helen, and he has just the right words for the late king: “He did his bravest best.” **NR**

Before You Say No . . .

A correspondence, nonfictional, between a young boy, a housewife, a headmaster, and the young boy’s brother

ALOÏSE BUCKLEY HEATH

March 7

Dear Mrs. Heath:

I wish to ask you a great favor. My brother David goes to Cranwell and he says they go easier on brothers, so I might have a chance to get in even though my grades aren’t so terribly good. But I need three letters of recommendation and I have one from a priest and one from a nun and my father says he thinks the third one better be from someone who is not a priest or a nun. You are not a priest or a nun but yet you know me intimately from me having delivered your paper even that bad day right after Christmas when their was no school and the *Times* boy didn’t deliver his customers, and from those Catholic Christmas cards you always buy, and from the jack lantern pumpkins I helped you carve three years in a row, and the Easter Eggs, and a lot of other things. (Like the time I picked up John when he broke his arm and taught Priscilla how to ride a two-wheeler.)

Before you say no, I did break the trampoline but I didn’t honestly know how heavy I was, because I grew very suddenly and the only reason I was always on the roof was because of my gliders which you said I could get if they were on the roof, and the time you wouldn’t let me come in your backyard for three weeks that time, Catholic Word of Honor, John started it and it was not my fault because Scout’s Honor, I only gave John the most com-



A Christmas story by the late Aloïse Buckley Heath is a NATIONAL REVIEW tradition.

pletely gentle kind of tap so he would go home so Georgie Cunningham wouldn’t beat him up, because you know how Georgie is when he gets mad. Because John threw a mud ball at him on his bicycle. Not that you were wrong, but that I’m explaining now, because you were so mad then you wouldn’t give me a chance to explain, because John got their first and he fed you a lot of garbage. But I still like John, he is a fine young boy, he has been well brought up by his Mother.

But even if sometimes you don’t get along with me too well, I always think of you as my “Oldest Friend” so I hope you will do me this great favor of writing me a letter of recommendation.

Thanking you for your trouble,

Respectfully yours,
PETER BAILEY-GATES

P.S.: Thank you for the pennies of which I already had the 1926 San Francisco mint but I did not have the 1921 Denver. Do you have a 1905 Indian Head, I will pay one nickel, clear profit of four (4)¢?

Respectfully yours,
PETER BAILEY-GATES

March 7

Dear Peter:

I would be glad to write you a letter of recommendation to Cranwell, and I am very flattered that you asked me. Of course, I will have to tell the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth,

so I hope nobody will be careless enough to allow my letter to fall into the hands of the police. I can’t tell you how much I would miss you if you had to spend the next ten years in a reformatory.

Respectably yours,
MRS. H.

P.S.: No, I haven’t got a 1905 Indian Head, which saddens me very much, but what saddens me more is the fact that even after three years’ acquaintanceship you don’t know me well enough to realize that I also know that this particular penny is worth \$6! You and your 4¢ profit—hah! I’ve told you and *told* you about my high IQ. Don’t you believe me? However, just to show you I bear no

grudge, I will give you my duplicate of the 1911 no mint mark—for free yet!

Respectably yours,
MRS. H.

P.P.S.: Don't worry about my letter. I will bet you one dollar (from me) to one doughnut (from you) that you will get into Cranwell—not because you're such a hot-shot, you understand, but because if I'm crazy enough to like you, your priest and your nun are probably suffering from the same form of insanity. On the other hand, they may know you even better than I do, God help them!

Respectably yours,
MRS. H.

March 9

To Whom It May Concern:

Peter Bailey-Gates has been in and out of my house almost daily for the past three years—by “almost” I mean those short sentences of exile which I have been unkind enough to impose upon Peter—and in that time I have come to know him very well indeed: as friend, paper boy, fellow penny-collector, and combined decorator, waiter, and entertainer at my younger children's birthday parties.

I have found Peter to be unfailingly good-humored, well-mannered, and considerate—all of which qualities stand him in good stead in his relations with the public, which are many and varied. I am sure that no boy in New England, much less in West Hartford, has been engaged in so many intricate business enterprises as Peter Bailey-Gates. I have bought, hired, subscribed to, invested in, paid and been paid interest on fully a dozen of his ventures in the last three years—not even counting his snow-shoveling, leaf-raking, apple-picking, and garbage-can-toting, for which my own young sons are recruited. Peter's financial sense is, however, no deterrent to his feeling for what is fitting and proper: When he washed the car of the 70-year-old spinster who lives nearby, for instance, he was careful to explain (lest I should find out, I suppose!) that he had refused payment only because she had “no man to make money for her”; again, when he asked me to take an ad in his projected *Colony Road News* and I was so irreverent as to reserve two

inches of space for the slogan “HOORAY FOR MRS. HEATH,” Peter offered to refund my dollar because he had caused my ad to appear as “COMPLIMENTS OF A FRIEND.” I must, however, state categorically that Peter has faithfully and conscientiously fulfilled his share of every and any contract between us, whatever it may have been. (And the fact that one or two of these contracts have been rather clearer to Peter than to me has been indignantly attributed by my own children to my habit of doing jigsaw puzzles, reading, watching television programs, and saying “Uh-hunh” simultaneously, when I should have been *listening*. My husband affirms this judgment.)

Lest my young friend sound barely lower than the angels, I must add that his fertile imagination combined with his 13-year-old's sense of humor has led, on occasion, to my addressing him with words harsh and unkind (“You know perfectly well that when I told you last Tuesday you could climb up on the roof to get your glider, I didn't mean you could buy ten *more* gliders and *aim* them at the—and by the way, I hope you didn't buy them with the lottery money for the bicycle horn—when are you going to *have* that lottery, anyway? I bought those tickets six weeks ago!” And much more). These irrational, if predictable, crises of the adult world leave Peter possibly repentant, probably remorseful, but certainly unruffled. He is more sophisticated today than three years ago, when, at the age of ten, he frequently urged me not to get my liver in a quiver. Today, when Peter and I have what he refers to as “a difference of opinion,” he retires with complete equanimity to his own backyard until such time as my ill-humor subsides. My change of mood is apparently picked up by Peter's extrasensory perception within the hour, for whenever I decide that the time has come for forgiving and forgetting, he appears at my front door within 15 minutes, to assure me *he* has forgiven and forgotten. By way of proof (or penance?) he then resumes without rancor his status as our daily visitor.

Needless to say, our friendship is steadfast.

ALOÏSE BUCKLEY HEATH
(Mrs. Benjamin Wild Heath)

March 15

CRANWELL PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Office of the Principal
Mrs. Benjamin Wild Heath
29 Colony Road
West Hartford, Connecticut

Dear Mrs. Heath:

I am very grateful to you for your detailed and colorful description of Peter Bailey-Gates.

Many of Peter's accomplishments can be put to good use at school. Leaf-raking and snow-shoveling are part of the punitive curriculum. Endowed with all the energy which you describe, I am sure that Peter will be an early candidate for demerits.

We will try to keep pace with Peter. What substitute we will have when the occasion arises for Peter to “retire to his own backyard” we will try to figure out during the year.

Sincerely yours,
CHARLES E. BURKE, SJ
(Rev.) Charles E. Burke, SJ
Principal

March 15

Dear Mimi and Dad:

Please excuse the paper, for I'm in study hall, and since something happened tonight, which made me feel pretty proud of my little (little? Ha Ha) brother Peter, I thought I'd tell you about it, unless you already know. This has also changed practically my entire attitude toward Father Burke who has practically never been known to crack a smile in the memory of the oldest graduate.

Not more than five minutes ago, during the break between study-hall hours, Father Burke called me and showed me a letter which Mrs. Heath had written to him about Peter. It described Peter to a tee. All of the letter was praiseworthy about him, and had been written just about Peter and nothing else. Father Burke was astonished and asked me if it was all true, and I told him it was, and he said in that case PETER GETS IN!! . . .

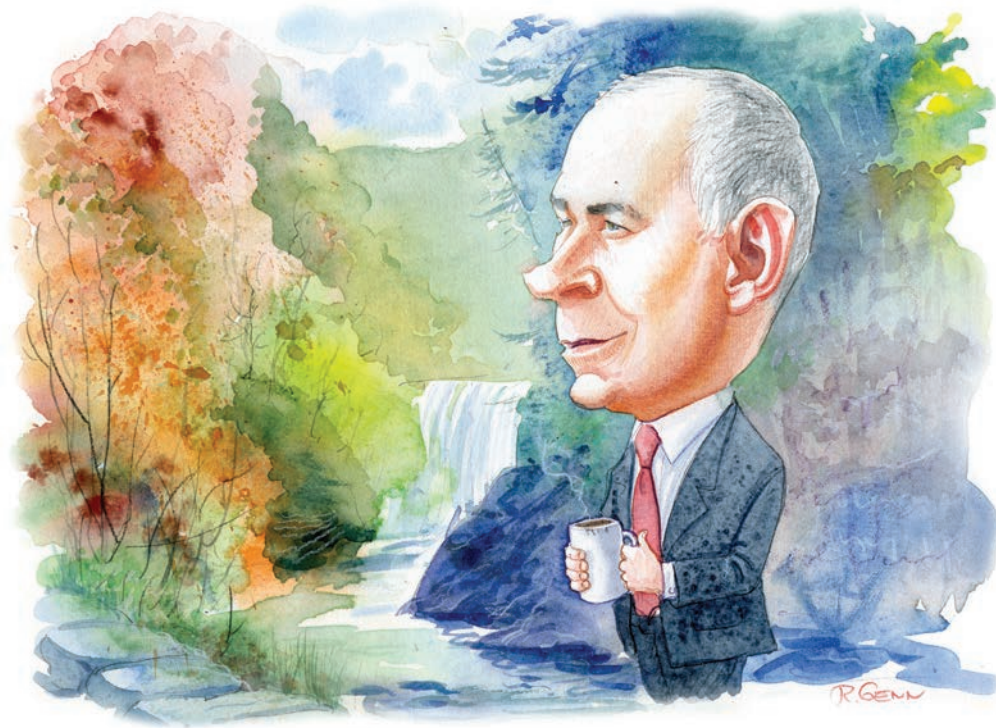
Say hello to the little kids for me please, and tell them “Big Dave” will be home soon.

Love and prayers,
YOUR SON DAVID

March 15

Dear Pete—Boy, does Mrs. Heath sure have your number. Father Burke said he can hardly wait to get you up here to knock it out of you. Love and Kisses.

DAVE NR



Scott Pruitt's Reformation

The challenge at the EPA is deeper than policy

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

Des Moines

SCOTT PRUITT likes coffee. *Seriously* likes it. He's all riled up and hopped up and caffeinated and talking 100 mph in front of a group of rural electrical co-op officers in Iowa and if we're all telling the truth here seeming just a little bit *overstimulated* this midmorning in Des Moines when he stops to intone the praises of the glorious steaming cup of coffee he's holding in his hand, obtained from a Scenic Route Bakery down the road. "The problem is that I keep talking, so I don't get to drink it, and I have to keep heating it up." And talk and talk he does, letting his coffee go tepid again, intoning his speech with a lawyer's emphasis on certain words that crop up repeatedly in his description of his mission as the Trump administration's EPA boss: *ephemeral* and *intermittent*, for all those drainage ditches and pasture puddles the Obama administration insisted were Waters of the United States—"WOTUS" for short; *fanciful*, for this and other interpretations of federal statute; and two words that he will repeatedly arrange in opposition to describe what he's up to and the fundamental conflict of visions that is the reason he is (perhaps second after Betsy DeVos) the member of the Trump team who gets most irritatingly up Democrats' noses: *stewardship* and *prohibition*.

Stewardship, Pruitt says, is making responsible use of our national blessings, including our natural resources: "Feed the world and fuel the world," he says, over and over. But the Left—

and the EPA, which has long been dominated by it—is not interested in stewardship. It's interested in *prohibition*, in a lot of THOU SHALT and a whole heck of a lot more THOU SHALT NOT. "You have two different approaches, two different worldviews, two very different sets of assumptions," Pruitt says.

"One side says we exist to serve creation," he explains. "The other side says creation is there for us to use and manage to the benefit of mankind. Those are competing ideologies, and they drive decision-making. They drive *regulation*. If you are of the side that says we exist to serve creation, then you have no trouble putting up a fence and saying DO NOT USE. Even though people may starve, may freeze, though developing countries may never develop their economies. That's something they're comfortable doing, and I think that's wrongheaded."

He shies away from characterizing this as a *religious* point of view but will allow that it has a deep ethical component. And he doesn't always shy away from the religious overtones, either: He says he is "prayerful" that a reasonable bipartisan consensus on the environment might emerge, and he jokes with a friend later in the day that the difficulties of his job put him in mind of the Book of Joshua: "Choose this day whom you will serve."

Seen from that point of view, what Pruitt is up to at the EPA isn't just reform—it's a Reformation. And he'll preach that gospel up and down I-35 at a number of Iowa events on a bright

2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise

Join Rich Lowry, Jonah Goldberg, Kevin D. Williamson, Andrew McCarthy, James Lileks, Scott Rasmussen, Kyle Smith, John O'Sullivan, Kathryn Lopez, Lee Edwards, Charles Cooke, Cal Thomas, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Jim Geraghty, Katherine Timpf, John J. Miller, Alexandra DeSanctis, David French, John Hillen, Reihan Salam, Rob Long, George Nash, Nick Adams, Daniel Mahoney—and more to come—as we sail the sunny Caribbean and visit the delightful ports of Ft. Lauderdale, Half Moon Cay, Amber Cove, Grand Turk, & Key West

It's time for you to sign up for the *National Review* 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise, certain to be the conservative event of the year. Featuring an all-star cast of your favorite *National Review* writers, this affordable trip—prices start at \$1,999 a person, with a \$100 per-person discount for anyone who signs up by February 28th—will take place December 1–8, 2018, aboard Holland America Line's beautiful MS *Oosterdam*. Throughout the year, we'll mark the 10th Anniversary of our founder's death by looking at Bill Buckley's profound legacy, and what it means for the future (and for the present!) of conservatism. On the voyage, we'll also discuss the legacy of other important figures—late 2018 will also mark the centennaries of Russell Kirk and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn—plus the Congressional elections, the status of the Trump Presidency, domestic policy and the economy, national security and foreign affairs, et al.

That's precisely what our conservative experts will do on the *Oosterdam*, your luxury getaway for fascinating discussion of major events, trends, WFB, and the 2018 elections. We're beginning to assemble a wonderful group of speakers hand to make sense of affairs cultural, worldly,

and national affairs. Confirmed speakers include *NR* editor-in-chief Rich Lowry, *NRO* editor Charles C.W. Cooke, *NR* senior editors Jonah Goldberg, Jay Nordlinger, and Ramesh Ponnuru, *NR* essayists John O'Sullivan, Andrew C. McCarthy, David French, Kevin Williamson, Kyle Smith, and Reihan Salam, *NR* columnists Rob Long and James Lileks, ace political writers Jim Geraghty, John J. Miller, and ace reporters on the cultural scene Kathryn Jean Lopez, Kat Timpf, and Alexandra DeSanctis, plus syndicated columnist Cal Thomas, pollster Scott Rasmussen, conservative historians George Nash and Lee Edwards, scholar Daniel J. Mahoney, FLAG USA founder Nick Adams, and military expert John Hillen.

And we have many invitations—to other leading conservatives—outstanding. We expect 400 people to attend *NR's* 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise. We are confident they—you!—will enjoy our exclusive event program, which will include eight scintillating seminars featuring *NR's* editors and guest speakers; two fun-filled “Night Owl” sessions; three revelrous pool-side cocktail receptions; late-night “smoker” featuring superior H. Upmann cigars (and complimentary cognac); and intimate dining on at least two evenings with a guest speaker or editor.

In addition, *NR* Institute will once again sponsor the special three-part “Burke to Buckley” program (a fundamental of conservatism refresher) that has proven quite popular on recent voyages.

Surely, the best reason to come on the *National Review* 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise is the luminary line-up. But there

JOIN US FOR SEVEN BALMY DAYS AND COOL CONSERVATIVE NIGHTS

DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
SAT/Dec. 1	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
SUN/Dec. 2	Key West, FL	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar “Night Owl” session
MON/Dec. 3	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
TUE/Dec. 4	Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
WED/Dec. 5	Amber Cove, DR	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night Smoker
THU/Dec. 6	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars “Night Owl” session
FRI/Dec. 7	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
SAT/Dec. 8	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		Debarck

SPECIAL EARLY-BIRD OFFER: SIGN UP BY FEB. 28TH FOR \$100 P/P DISCOUNT!

will also be a spectacular week of world-class cruising on the beautiful and luxurious *Oosterdam*, as it sails an Eastern Caribbean itinerary that will include Ft. Lauderdale, Key West (its tanned, rested, and ready!) Grand Turk, Amber Cove (a beautiful first-time destination in the Dominican Republic), and Half Moon Cay, Holland America's private island (home to a most pristine blue lagoon, and tons of fun).

And for those times when we're "at sea," or if you simply feel like staying on board rather than descending the gangway, the *Oosterdam* (it offers well-appointed, spacious staterooms and countless amenities, and hosts a stellar staff that provides unsurpassed service and sumptuous cuisine) has a terrific spa, a must-attend Culinary Arts Center, pools, luxury boutiques, plenty of nooks and crannies to hide in with a good book, and, oh yeah, a casino!

NR's 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise will be remarkable, and affordable. Prices start as low as \$1,999 a person, with "Single" cabins starting at only \$2,699. In many cases, our rates are even lower than we charged in 2012. And taking them even lower: Sign up by February 28th and receive a \$100 per-person discount (limited to 2 per cabin). And: Get a friend or family member to sign up (a single or a couple who have never been on an NR cruise, and who will stay in a separate cabin) and you'll receive an additional \$100 discount (and so will they!)

Have you always wanted to go on an NR cruise but never could . . . pull the trigger? Well, do it! Take the trip of a lifetime with America's leading conservatives: the *National Review* 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise. Signing up is a cinch: Reserve your cabin online at www.nrcruise.com. Have questions? Call the good and helpful folks at The Cruise and Vacation Authority (M-F, 9AM to 5PM EST) at 888-283-8965. Or fill out and mail/fax the application form on the following page.

We'll see you on the *Oosterdam* next December!

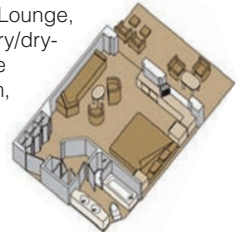
For more information or to apply online go to www.nrcruise.com or call The Cruise Authority at 1-888-283-8965

RATES START AT JUST \$1,999 P/P!

Superior service, gourmet cuisine, elegant accommodations, and great entertainment await you on the *Oosterdam*. Prices are per-person, based on double occupancy, and include port fees, taxes, gratuities, all meals, entertainment, and admittance to and participation in all *National Review* functions. Per-person rates for third/fourth person in cabin (by age and category):

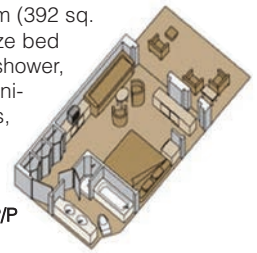
Categories C to J	17-younger: \$ 1,000	18-up: \$ 1,100
Category V	17-younger: \$ 1,050	18-up: \$ 1,150
Categories SS & SA	17-younger: \$ 1,100	18-up: \$ 1,200

NEPTUNE SUITE Magnificent quarters (from 506 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge, personal concierge, complimentary laundry/dry-cleaning, large private verandah, king-size bed, whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, flat-panel TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, safe, much more.



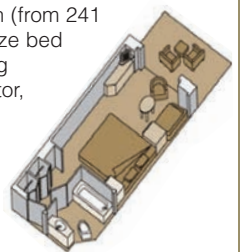
Category SA	
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 4,899 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 7,599

SIGNATURE SUITE Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, flat-panel TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe, and much more.



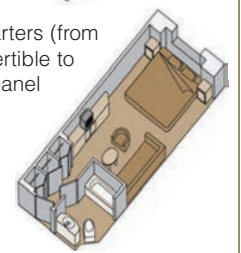
Category SS	
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 3,799 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 5,999

DELUXE OCEAN VIEW Spacious cabin (from 241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bath/shower, sitting area, mini-bar, flat-panel TV/DVD, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe.



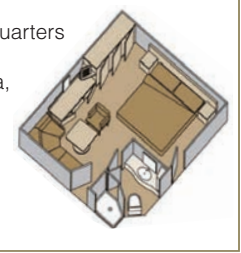
Category V	
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 2,899 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 4,299

LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (from 190 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bathtub/shower, sitting area, flat-panel TV/DVD, large ocean-view windows.



Category C	
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 2,399 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 3,299

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (from 152 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), shower, sitting area, flat-panel TV/DVD, safe.



Category J	
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 1,999 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	\$ 2,699



The National Review 2018 Buckley Legacy Conservative Cruise

Mail to: National Review Cruise, The Cruise & Vacation Authority, 1760 Powers Ferry Rd., Marietta, GA 30067 or Fax to 770-953-1228

Please fill out application completely and mail with deposit check or fax with credit-card information. One application per cabin. If you want more than one cabin, copy this application. For questions please call The Cruise & Vacation Authority at 888-283-8965.

Personal

GUEST #1: Name as listed on Passport (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)		Date of Birth
Passport Number	Expiration Date	Citizenship
Are you a past Holland America cruiser? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

GUEST #2: Name as listed on Passport (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)		Date of Birth
Passport Number	Expiration Date	Citizenship
Are you a past Holland America cruiser? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

PASSPORT INFORMATION This cruise requires a valid passport. Passports should expire after 6/9/19. Failure to provide this form of documentation will result in denied boarding of the Oosterdam. For more information visit www.travel.state.gov.

Cabins, Air Travel, & Other Information

All rates are per person, double occupancy, and include all port charges and taxes, all gratuities, meals, entertainment, and National Review activities. Failure to appear for embarkation for any reason constitutes a cancellation subject to full penalties. Personal items not included. **PLEASE CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES!**

I. CABIN CATEGORY (see list and prices on previous page)

First cabin category choice: _____ Second cabin category choice: _____
Bedding: Beds made up as 2 Twin beds 1 Queen bed
BOOKING SINGLE? Please try to match me with a roommate. (My age: _____)

II. DINING w/ FRIENDS/FAMILY: I wish to dine with _____
 Every Night 3-4 times 2 times Once

III. PRE- AND POST-CRUISE TOUR PACKAGES

Send me information on pre-/post-cruise packages (for 1 or 2 nights) at the Hilton Marina Ft. Lauderdale Hotel (or similar).

Payment, Cancellation, & Insurance

Deposit of \$600 per person is due with this application. If paid by credit card, the balance will be charged to the same card on 8/24/18 unless otherwise directed. If application is received after 8/24/18, the full amount of the cruise will be charged.

My deposit of \$600 per person is included. (Make checks to "National Review Cruise")

Charge my deposit to: AmEx Visa MasterCard Discover

Expiration Date	Month	Year	Security Code
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Amex 4 digits on front, others 3 digits on back

Authorized Signature of Cardholder

Name of Cardholder (please print)

Important: Your Responsibility

& Vacation Authority (TCAVA) and National Review magazine (NR). You understand and agree that if you elect to use TCVA to serve as your agent in connection with the provision of any Services, you will look solely to HAL or the applicable service provider in the event of any loss to person or property, and you expressly release TCVA from any liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity to you or your property that may result from any act or omission by any company, contractor or employee thereof providing services in connection with the Cruise (including any shore excursions), including but not limited to transportation, lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, sightseeing, luggage handling and tour guiding. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term "Services" shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (i) the issuance of tickets, vouchers and coupons, (ii) arrangements for transportation to and from the point of embarkation, and (iii) hotel accommodations prior to embarkation. Furthermore, TCVA shall not be responsible for any of the following: (i) delays or costs incurred resulting from weather, road connections, breakdowns, acts of war (declared or undeclared), acts of terrorism, strikes, riots, acts of God, authority of law or other circumstances beyond its control, (ii) cancellation of the Cruise or postponement of the departure time, (iii) price increases or surcharges imposed by HAL and/or service providers, (iv) breach of contract or any intentional or careless actions or omissions on the part of HAL and/or service providers, (v) social or labor unrest, (vi) mechanical or construction difficulties, (vii) diseases, (viii) local laws, (ix) climate conditions, (x) abnormal conditions or developments or any other actions, omissions or conditions outside of TCVA's control (xi) the accessibility, appearance, actions or decisions of those individuals promoted as Speakers for the Cruise. Should a Speaker promoted for the Cruise be unable to attend, every effort will be made to secure a speaker of similar stature and standing. TCVA does not guarantee suppliers rates, booking or reservations. In the event you become entitled to a refund of monies paid, TCVA will not be liable in excess of amounts actually paid. TCA reserves the right to prohibit any person from booking the Cruise for any reason whatsoever. HAL reserves the right to impose a fuel supplement of up to \$10 USD per guest, per day if the price of West Texas Intermediate crude oil exceeds \$65 USD per barrel. On behalf of those guests listed in this application, I authorize TCA to use image(s) (video or photo) for purposes of promoting future NR cruise events. You acknowledge that by embarking upon the Cruise, you have voluntarily assumed all risks, and you have been advised to obtain appropriate insurance coverage against them. Retention of tickets, reservations, or package after issuance shall constitute a consent to the above and an agreement on the part of each individual in whose name a reservation has been made for the Cruise, or a ticket issued with respect to the Cruise. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Georgia, excluding its conflicts of laws principles. Each party hereto agrees that all claims relating to this Agreement will be heard exclusively by a state or federal court in Cobb County, Georgia. Accordingly, each party hereby consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of any state or federal court located in Cobb County, Georgia over any proceeding related to this Agreement, irrevocably waives any objection to the venue of any such court, and irrevocably waives any claim that any such proceeding in such a court has been brought in an inconvenient forum. No provisions of this Agreement will be interpreted in favor of, or against, any of the parties hereto by reason of the extent to which any such party or its counsel participated in the drafting thereof or by reason of the extent to which any such provision is inconsistent with any prior draft hereof or thereof. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I understand and accept the terms and conditions of booking this cruise package and acknowledge responsibility for myself and those sharing my accommodations (signed)**

MAILING AND CONTACT INFORMATION (FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY)

Mailing address	
City / State / Zip	
Email Address	
Daytime Phone	Cell phone

CREDENTIALS

Your legal first and last name are required for travel documentation. If you have an informal name you would like reflected on your name badge, please indicate it here:

Guest #1 _____ Guest #2 _____

IV. AIR / TRANSFER PACKAGES

We will provide our own roundtrip air and transfers to and from Ft. Lauderdale (arriving there on 12/1/18 by 11:00AM and departing after 11:00AM on 12/8/18).

We would like The Cruise Authority to customize roundtrip air (fees apply) from _____ Coach First Class Air

Arrival date: _____
Departure date: _____
Preferred carrier: _____

V. MEDICAL / DIETARY / SPECIAL REQUESTS

Please enter in the box below any medical, dietary, or special needs or requests we should know about any of the members of your party:

--

The card's billing address is indicated above. The card's billing address is:

ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CANCELLATION PENALTY SCHEDULE: Cancellations must be received in writing by date indicated. Fax / email is sufficient notification. Guests must confirm receipt by The Cruise Authority. PRIOR to June 22, 2018 cancellation penalty is \$100 per person; June 22 to Aug. 24, 2018, penalty is \$600 per person, AFTER Aug. 24, 2018, penalty is 100% of cruise/package.

CANCELLATION / MEDICAL INSURANCE is available and highly recommended for this cruise (and package), see attached brochure or web site for pricing. The exact amount will appear on your cruise statement. Purchase will be immediate upon your acceptance and is non-refundable.

YES I/we wish to purchase the Trip Cancellation & Medical Insurance coverage. Additions to the cruise package will increase my insurance premium.

NO I/we are declining to purchase the Trip Cancellation & Medical Insurance coverage and understand that I/we will be subject to applicable cancellation penalties.

PLEASE READ: The Holland America Line (HAL) cruise advertised herein (the "Cruise"), which features guest speakers promoted for the National Review Cruise (the "Speakers"), is being promoted by H2O Ltd. d/b/a The Cruise Authority. PRIOR to June 22, 2018 cancellation penalty is \$100 per person; June 22 to Aug. 24, 2018, penalty is \$600 per person, AFTER Aug. 24, 2018, penalty is 100% of cruise/package. Cancellations must be received in writing by date indicated. Fax / email is sufficient notification. Guests must confirm receipt by The Cruise Authority. On behalf of those guests listed in this application, I authorize TCA to use image(s) (video or photo) for purposes of promoting future NR cruise events. You acknowledge that by embarking upon the Cruise, you have voluntarily assumed all risks, and you have been advised to obtain appropriate insurance coverage against them. Retention of tickets, reservations, or package after issuance shall constitute a consent to the above and an agreement on the part of each individual in whose name a reservation has been made for the Cruise, or a ticket issued with respect to the Cruise. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Georgia, excluding its conflicts of laws principles. Each party hereto agrees that all claims relating to this Agreement will be heard exclusively by a state or federal court in Cobb County, Georgia. Accordingly, each party hereby consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of any state or federal court located in Cobb County, Georgia over any proceeding related to this Agreement, irrevocably waives any objection to the venue of any such court, and irrevocably waives any claim that any such proceeding in such a court has been brought in an inconvenient forum. No provisions of this Agreement will be interpreted in favor of, or against, any of the parties hereto by reason of the extent to which any such party or its counsel participated in the drafting thereof or by reason of the extent to which any such provision is inconsistent with any prior draft hereof or thereof. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I understand and accept the terms and conditions of booking this cruise package and acknowledge responsibility for myself and those sharing my accommodations (signed)**

SIGNATURE OF GUEST #1

DATE

December day, from the electrical co-op convention to a smaller event at a nearby cattle ranch to a public appearance with Kim Reynolds, the charismatic new governor of Iowa, a Republican and the first woman to hold the job.

But you're probably wondering what the head of the EPA is doing on a tour of Iowa, which is one of those places you usually hit when you're running for president, and nobody seriously thinks Scott Pruitt is running for president.

They think he's running for governor of Oklahoma.

SINCE his swearing-in last February, Pruitt has made a pretty good tour of the country, touching down in more than 30 states and meeting with people he describes in the invariably saccharine language of modern politics as "stakeholders," which is to say, the people most directly affected by what it is the EPA does all day, about which there has been some dispute—a fair amount of it initiated by Scott Pruitt when he was the attorney general of Oklahoma, in which position he sued the agency on many occasions. There are a few federal agencies—EPA, Education, and Labor prominent among them—toward which the Left takes a proprietary interest, and from the time of Pruitt's nomination his critics insisted that the fact that he had so often sued the agency in an attempt to rein in its regulatory ambitions was in and of itself disqualifying. The unspoken argument there (usually unspoken—not always) is that anybody who is anything other than a progressive crusader cannot legitimately serve as the administrator of the EPA, because the EPA exists to undertake progressive crusades. The same argument is leveled at DeVos, a frequent critic of federal education policy and of the underperforming unionized monopolies that have made the Cleveland public schools what they are.

Pruitt takes a different view. He is, he says, doing the same thing as EPA administrator that he was doing in litigation against the EPA as attorney general in Oklahoma: trying to get it to do its job, to stay within its legal authority, and to abide by the rule of law. Contrary to the cartoon version of him generally offered up in the press, Pruitt in many ways desires to lead the EPA to take stronger positions on some environmental problems, especially air quality. "We still have a lot of work to do on clean air," he says. "The problem is that for the past decade we've been so focused on CO₂ that we've let a lot of other things slide." Regulating the greenhouse gas as "air pollution" was a cherished and ultimately failed priority for the Obama administration, and, in Pruitt's view, this took attention away from more ordinary concerns, such as industrial emissions and smog. "People come to me and say, 'Why don't you do this?' or 'Why don't you do that?'" And some of those I would. But Congress hasn't given us statutory authority. If you want to change the policy, you have to change the law."

For example, Pruitt's buddies in Iowa—he seems to know everybody by name and to have had long relationships with many of the people he's meeting—would love to see some changes in the ethanol rules, because the corn-fed economy of Iowa is mad for moonshine. The ethanol industry is characterized by an insane mix of subsidies, mandates, and regulations. Most American gasoline contains 10 percent ethanol, but some of it is 15 percent, which retailers can sell most of the year—but not in the summer. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, along with three corn-state colleagues, has been holding hostage an unrelated energy measure (relaxing Obama-era methane-emission restrictions on drillers)

until he gets his way on ethanol. Pruitt is positioned to cut that Gordian knot by simply issuing a year-round waiver on 15E, as the 15 percent-ethanol-blend gasoline is known. That would make his farm-state friends very happy, and it would also be a potential boon to his oil-and-gas allies back home in Oklahoma.

But he isn't sure he can do it. The administrator of the EPA is himself an endangered species: a Washingtonian who cares whether he actually technically has the power to do what he wants to do.

"I very much hope we can get there, but it's a matter of whether the statute permits it or not," he told a farm-lobby group earlier this year. The issue is still under consideration. And there's a lot more on the Trump administration's agenda that's of keen interest to Iowa ethanol producers. Right at the very moment the Trump administration is threatening to undo NAFTA, the government of Enrique Peña Nieto has moved to allow the sale of 10E gasoline in Mexico, where ethanol had been capped at 5.8 percent of gasoline blends. Mexico's state-run oil company produces a little bit of ethanol as the result of other petroleum-related activity, but Mexico—which already is the top foreign consumer of U.S. corn—imports much of its ethanol. Guess from where?

It may very well be that Pruitt giveth but Wilbur Ross taketh away.

PRUITT'S in an awkward position as I stalk him around Iowa. He gets a lot of bad press, and even if he laughs it off—"It's only the *New York Times*," he says with a smirk when asked about former New Jersey Republican governor Tom Kean's column calling for his dismissal—he's obviously mindful of the damage the media can do. At the same time, his boss is famously jealous of the spotlight, and good press can be a problem for a member of Donald Trump's administration—especially good press from NATIONAL REVIEW, a magazine that dedicated a special issue to arguing that Trump is unfit for the office he currently holds. Pruitt, a deeply intelligent man and a natural politician, surely must be mindful of this. But nobody thinks that serving as chief of the EPA is going to be the end of his career in public life—or that he wants it to be. And he does seem to enjoy the heck out of politicking, the glad-handing and the interviews and the standing ovations (of which there are more than one on this particular day in Iowa) and the posing for pictures: "I've always been short of stature," he says while lining up for press shots with a group of local worthies. "But that's helpful for a politician—I'm always in the front of the picture."

Pruitt, who is not yet 50 years old, has been a politician for a long time, having served in the Oklahoma state senate before being elected attorney general. Oklahoma has a part-time legislature, which left him a fair amount of time for his law practice and his great passion outside of politics: baseball. He owned Oklahoma City's Triple-A affiliate, which was part of the Texas Rangers organization, and he says it was an attractive business: The major-league affiliate picks up most of the payroll, the players and manager, but the local owner gets the sponsorship money and the concessions. When he's asked by a friendly interlocutor what he wishes the reliably critical news media would report about him, he answers: "That I batted .300 for Kentucky." I ask for a fact check on that. "I did a little better, sometimes." A natural politician with roots in the energy business who owned a baseball team? He shrugs off comparisons with George W. Bush. "Other than that . . ."

He didn't summer in Kennebunkport. He came up hard in Kentucky, with teenage parents and tight finances, and he spent a great deal of time with his grandfather, a Teamster. He played baseball at Kentucky on a scholarship, but that ran out after his sophomore year, at which point he transferred to Georgetown—not the prestigious university in Washington, but a small Baptist liberal-arts college in Kentucky. Around that time, it started to sink in for him that baseball was not going to be his future, and he settled on the idea of law school but took two bachelor's degrees first. There was an opportunity at the University of Oklahoma law school, and he's been singing "Boomer Sooner" ever since.

Oklahoma was good to him, and instead of a politician's blue suit and solid tie he sports a rich guy's wardrobe—fine dark sports coat, expensive-looking tie, big watch—along with a rich guy's confidence. But he remembers a very different milieu back in Kentucky, and he seems genuinely ticked when he talks about progressive do-gooders who never think about what their policies would do to the grocery and electric bills of people struggling to keep it together financially.

"The mindset is very arrogant and very elitist," he says. "And who benefits? The elite. The folks who can least afford those kinds of decisions pay the most. Go look at Ceausescu's Romania. They regulated the wattage of bulbs and told you when to turn out the lights. You know why? Because they wanted to reserve power for the elite."

Which is to say, he speaks fluent Trumpkin, and his allies in Iowa are, as is typical with populists, a mix of down-home and serious money. At a local farmhouse, he's served a very Iowa-looking lunch—meat and potatoes and gravy, rolls and butter, green beans, salad, shortbread, and some local Norwegian-American cream roll that everybody raves about, all of it presented by the blue-jacketed young ladies of the Future Farmers of America, overseen by a caterer wearing a jacket emblazoned with the eternal words of wisdom: MIND YOUR OWN BISCUITS AND LIFE WILL BE GRAVY. They say grace, and a Secret Service guy dressed down for the occasion (meaning brown shoes instead of black) hovers discreetly off stage right. There's more security at the door. A veteran of untold numbers of rubber-chicken political dinners, Pruitt puts his head down and eats like he means it when someone else takes the floor, but he more than holds up his side of the conversation. These people did not come for idle chitchat. His hosts and their guests are far from what people who don't know much about Iowa farmers would imagine Iowa farmers to be like: They are serious beef and commodity producers who are overseeing millions of dollars in capital and who have detailed questions and complex public-policy concerns. There is a positively Hayekian exchange about policy uncertainty regarding ethanol-volume obligations and interpretive conflicts between statutes and regulations. This is Pruitt's element, and he respects his hosts enough to forgo pretending that there are easy answers to their concerns or that they're going to get everything they want—even if he were personally inclined to give the Iowans their way on every jot and tittle, he's serious about hewing to a conservative interpretation of his legal power.

That's an ongoing concern. And for that reason, his regulatory-reform agenda is moving slowly. WOTUS and the Clean Power Plan are going to be reformed—there are executive orders to that end—but none of that has actually happened yet, as Pruitt's EPA slowly works through what its statutory authority is, what's con-

sistent with the law, and what's reasonable. As Pruitt points out, it isn't as though the plan is to replace the current interpretation of WOTUS with *nothing*. "We aren't deregulating," he says. "We're regulating in accordance with the law." The United States is out of the Paris agreement, thanks in no small part to Pruitt's countervailing influence on the president, who nearly was convinced by his daughter and son-in-law to break his campaign promise to quit the global-warming accord. Pruitt has ended the "sue and settle" process under which the EPA effectively outsourced regulation to activist groups and paid them for the courtesy, and he has barred, as an obvious conflict of interest, parties receiving EPA grants from serving on EPA advisory panels. He is rhetorically sharp, but his administration so far has been far from slash-and-burn.

And that's worth understanding about Scott Pruitt. His critics may dismiss him as a creature of oil and gas, as an ogre who is willing to see the water and air despoiled in the service of his corporate allies, but he is in fact a true believer. He's serious about this rule-of-law stuff. He's the last thing the Left expects to see in a Trump appointee: principled.

WHICH is not to say he isn't squirrely. He's plenty squirrely. After he's done with his public events, we meet for more of that coffee he was talking about: His tippie is called the "Honey Bee," and it's a concoction of espresso, honey, and cinnamon. "You're going to like this," he promises. He talks easily and with great command of the relevant policy details but is extraordinarily guarded about many things. Strangely, he refuses to answer the question when I ask him whether he actively sought his current job as administrator of the EPA or the Trump administration came to him. He doesn't seem like the sort of man who'd be ashamed of a little hustle, but the question momentarily interrupts his equanimity. "It . . . was . . . a conversation," he says. "A process."

Well, isn't everything? Presumably, Pruitt's taciturnity on the question is an artifact of his having been a Jeb guy rather than a Trump guy early on. But there's no question that Pruitt is fully on the Trump team now.

He is genuinely excited about the possibilities we have for improving the environment. He speaks at some length about Disney's arrangement with Harvest Power, an alternative-power company that takes the Magic Kingdom's food waste and uses it to generate electricity that it sells back to Disney. "What was even more impressive was to spend time with the Disney employees, because they understand that this is *purposeful*." That's another one of those words he keeps coming back to: *purposeful*. "A lot of times, we think of recycling as being *charitable* without realizing it can be *purposeful*, that it can truly contribute something. For example, over 20 percent of our landfills in this country are food waste. That's a lot. If we made progress with respect to how we deal with food waste in a more productive way, it would have a tremendous impact on the environment." He is unsparing in his assessment of the Obama administration, which he views as having been so strangled by its ideological commitments that it not only deformed the EPA but also failed to achieve any number of realistic, near-term environmental goals. He has been visiting Superfund sites and insisting that the involved parties come up with plans to get them "mediated," as they say, meaning cleaned up and detoxified enough that they're no longer on the long list of permanent federal environmental emergencies.

“If you look at the previous administration’s environmental record, I would be hard pressed to point to any successes. If their goal was to use their authority to pick winners and losers in the marketplace and shut down sectors of the economy, they were prevented ultimately”—by a lot of lawsuits filed by Scott Pruitt and others—“but they made progress toward that end. But you look at air-quality standards, water quality, land remediation, the Superfund sites, they did not achieve very much.” There is, he says, an opportunity for bipartisanship. “The criticism of Paris was as strong on the left as it was on the right. You’re going to allow China to skate until 2030? Allow India to skate until 2030? It was all a bumper sticker, and that’s *all* it was. The previous administration was all talk, very little action. We’re trying to focus on results. We’re going to get results on land remediation under Superfund. What’s so radical about that? We’re going to focus on air quality and measure that every single day. What’s so radical about that?” Though he doesn’t put it exactly this way, what Pruitt really objects to is repurposing environmental policy as industrial policy, as backdoor central planning. Alternative fuels and clean energy are all good and fine, but the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan wasn’t about that: It was about bankrupting the coal industry. “Generation-shifting is not at all consistent with the authority given to the agency,” Pruitt says.

And there is the question of what Robert Higgs calls “regime uncertainty.”

“We have private-property rights here,” Pruitt says, warming to his subject. “Those folks who have natural gas, coal, other resources—that’s *their* asset. *They* own the mineral rights. The United States government does not. Should we be able to use our authority to take that natural resource away? It’s not just a philosophical discussion. It’s also recognizing that private-property rights and the self-governing principles that we have lived under as a country are actually the greatest asset we have to improve environmental outcomes. You look at countries that are top-down, like China or former Communist countries: How do they do with the environment? Not very well.” But it’s a different world in the Asia of today. “India’s going to use its natural resources. China as well. Our goal should be to partner with them and export our technology and innovation to help them. We can also export hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling to help them understand how to get to those resources.” Exporting fracking: You can see why Al Gore is probably not going to send Scott Pruitt a big bouquet of flowers for Valentine’s Day.

Not that Pruitt is going to notice. He lives in a different and much more concrete world: so many acres of corn, so many tons of food waste, so many cubic feet of natural gas. He returns to stewardship-versus-prohibition.

“There are two tracks to the dialogue. One track is more granular in the sense that we talk about process, statutory authority, rule-making, those sorts of issues. There should be much more understanding, in my view, of how those things should work. We can’t just say, ‘Well, the Clean Air Act in Section 111 doesn’t give us the authority to do this, but we think it’s the right thing, and so we’re going to do it anyway.’ There ought not to be any departure on things as fundamental as the rule of law. But when you talk about the other issue”—the question of whether we were made for creation or creation was made for us—“we need to have that discussion. What do we as a culture, as a nation, believe about this? And that’s the question I’ve been asking everywhere I go.”

Where he’s going next is an interesting question, too.

NR

The Sexes After Weinstein

*Don’t encourage women to see
themselves as powerless*

BY HEATHER WILHELM

THINK back: Do you remember your first boy–girl party? “Perhaps we all have the same memory,” *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen wrote in 1988. “The boys stood on one side of the room and the girls on the other. . . . None of us would consciously know it then, but what we were seeing, that great empty space in the center of the floor as fearful as a trapdoor, was the great division between the sexes.”

If you grew up the way I did, deep in middle America, it takes just a moment to bring it all back: the drafty gym or basement, the fidgeting feet, the weapons-grade awkwardness clouding the air like Aqua Net. It would take a few brave souls to cut the tension, cross the floor, choose a partner, and edge out to the dance floor. (The “dancing,” at least at my early boy–girl events, usually involved extending two arms in a ramrod-straight line, placing them upon the shoulders of your dance partner, fixing your gaze into middle distance, and swaying like a slightly terrified robot Frankenstein until “The Lady in Red” wound to a close.)

“It was wonderful to think of the time when it would no longer be there,” Quindlen continued, referring to the giant invisible chasm between the boys and the girls, “when the school gym would be a great meeting ground in which we would mingle freely, girl and boy, boy and girl, person to person, all alike.” Then comes the kicker: “And maybe that’s going to happen sometime in my lifetime, but I can’t say I know when.”

HERE we are, almost 30 years later, and it sure hasn’t happened yet. When it comes to the tangled mess that is 2017, Quindlen’s symbolic dance-floor chasm seems to have morphed into a minefield—or, perhaps more accurately, a churning, stormy medieval sea vaguely labeled HERE BE VARIOUS MONSTERS.

Imagine a run-down haunted house. Next, imagine its rickety doors suddenly blown open, revealing a pack of groping, grinning, Stephen King–style clowns spilling down the steps. The clowns, while terrifying and larger than life, are almost comically socially inept, haphazardly lunging at women here and there, as if they were born in a barn full of savages (or, for that matter, in a rickety haunted house). Here’s the real mind blower of the whole spectacle: Many of these lurching clowns somehow also manage to earn millions of dollars making widely acclaimed

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movies, opening fancy restaurants, and gracing the screens of respectable nationally televised talk shows.

For media-consuming Americans, this is the sordid story dominating the daily news. Allegations of sexual misconduct against prominent men spool out, sad and predictable, seemingly every day. They are so frequent, in fact, that it is difficult to keep track. The stories are beginning to blur.

We could go back into the painful details, but hundreds of articles, essays, and think pieces have done just that. The alleged serial sex abuser and high-profile producer Harvey Weinstein is largely credited as the tipping point of 2017's sexual-assault "reckoning," as some like to call it. Since then, men ranging from Charlie Rose to Matt Lauer to Mario Batali have toppled like dominoes, with sometimes jaw-dropping accounts of sexual misconduct trailing them out the door.

Even now, the post-Weinstein cascade continues. On social media, the "Me Too" movement has celebrated women for publicly airing their experiences with everything from catcalls to rape. Over private email, a group of female journalists swapped an Excel database detailing anonymous accusations against supposedly sexually shady—they used a different word from "shady," but it's not fit for print—"media men."

ARE we indeed witnessing a massive reckoning when it comes to sexual harassment and assault, bound to change life—and certain unspoken social mores—forever? Has the tail end of 2017 brought about, as Anita Hill declared in a recent *New York Times Magazine* roundtable discussion, "a great consciousness-raising moment"? That, I would argue, is still up for debate, but we're certainly in the midst of a very weird time to be alive.

It's a time that's been labeled "The Perv Apocalypse," "The Perv-a-thon," and "The Pervalanche." It's a time when big-name television anchors can reportedly terrorize staffers with secret under-the-desk "lock the door" buttons in their cushy suites at NBC. It's a time when, at least according to the latest YouGov polls, close to a third of Americans aged 18–30 think compliments on personal appearance equal sexual harassment. Most bizarrely, it's a time when the Police Service of Northern Ireland found it a good idea to earnestly tweet—then delete!—the following holiday message: "If you bump into that special someone under the mistletoe tonight, remember that without consent it is rape. #SeasonsGreetings."

Ho ho ho! Heaven help us all! The "reckoning," if it is one, is laced with significant confusion.

By now, social-media users have mastered a bleak ritual when it comes to reckoning-related firings. First comes the lightning-quick breaking of the news, followed by occasionally grisly details. Next comes a short burst of barely concealed chortling, schadenfreude, and glee. Occasionally, there's the blasé brush-off: "Everybody knew." Finally, inevitably, comes the jaded question: "Who's next?"

The recent firing of *The New Yorker's* Ryan Lizza, however, took a different twist. Unlike the cringeworthy reports surrounding Harvey Weinstein, Matt Lauer, Charlie Rose, and Mario Batali, Lizza's axing announcement was strangely vague. "*The New Yorker* recently learned that Ryan Lizza engaged in what we believe was improper sexual conduct," a magazine spokesperson said. "We have reviewed the matter and, as a result, have

severed ties with Lizza. Due to a request for privacy, we are not commenting further."

Lizza, for his part, fired back: "I am dismayed that *The New Yorker* has decided to characterize a respectful relationship with a woman I dated as somehow inappropriate. *The New Yorker* was unable to cite a company policy that was violated. . . . This decision, which was made hastily and without a full investigation of the relevant facts, was a terrible mistake."

Perhaps it was; perhaps it wasn't. Perhaps, in the coming days, the door to the proverbial haunted house will fly open, exposing Lizza-related allegations that would make Charlie Rose, he of open-robe fame, blush. Perhaps it won't. Either way, it won't matter, at least not when it comes to the most worrisome part of the story: When the news of the firing broke, few seemed to care about actual details. *There goes another one! Who's next?*

Similar vagueness soaks the now-infamous "'Shady' Media Men" list, exposed on the Internet in the late months of 2017. Edited anonymously, the list accuses various men in the publishing, journalism, and television worlds of serious sexual crimes such as rape. But it also includes accusations of "inappropriate communication," "those weird lunch 'dates' that aren't about work," and "flirting." Lunch dates? Flirting? It's akin to the problems that haunt the hashtag "#MeToo," which sweeps between heinous crimes and socially awkward comments. It appears we've got some rough sledding ahead.

The "reckoning" may be strong, and it may be fierce, and it may be just beginning, but it is anything but clear-cut. It is not simply the horrors of the likes of Harvey Weinstein, who may end up facing criminal charges for his alleged sexual assaults. In certain corners, it seems to sprout from a genuine bafflement as to how the sexes can work together as functional adults in the real world.

WHEN a young person reaches maturity, he or she often stumbles upon a startling realization: In this wild, wild world, there is no proverbial man behind the curtain. Adults, once seemingly confident, omnipotent, and in charge—at least in the eyes of a child—are revealed to be as clueless and confused as anyone else. Strangely, however, many reckoning-related discussions seem to yearn for that invisible score-settling adult in the room.

In the *New York Times Magazine* roundtable, television veteran Soledad O'Brien related a story from early in her career—"I was probably 28"—when a "very famous anchorperson" gave her an unwanted shoulder massage at an awards dinner. If she had said something, she argued, it could have hurt her career. "The answer is change the culture," she said. "Imagine if . . . two men at the table who were equal hierarchically said right then and there: 'Hey, hey, you can't do that. Do not touch the young women without their permission.'"

Perhaps it's just me, but this approach does not seem aligned with feminist empowerment or the concept of female agency. Certainly, good men should call out inappropriate behavior where they see it. But waiting for a man to save you—a man who is likely self-interested in his career, with little to no interest in calling out a powerful news anchor, either—seems a bit patriarchal, no? How about encouraging young women to speak up or otherwise directly and effectively deal with weird or inappropriate behavior? With all eyes on sexual assault, now is certainly the time. In the end, what is the point of "the

reckoning”—a time in which we are finally hearing women, or at least so we are told—if it doesn’t eventually evolve into hearing women in real time?

In a distressing number of the stories surrounding the “Me Too” movement, speaking up doesn’t factor into the equation. Sometimes, as in the Weinstein case, the silence stems from threats, or fear, or intimidation. But other times, it’s a distressing refrain: “I froze.” “I didn’t move his hand.” “I pretended it wasn’t happening.” Sometimes, the silence stems from what one writer described in the *New York Times*: “I was so surprised and naïve, I guess, that I didn’t say anything.”

These are all natural responses to shocking behavior. But they also might help explain just how we got to the point where anonymous women complain about “flirting” on an online database ostensibly dedicated to harassment and assault. They also might help explain the sad and bizarre post-Weinstein catchphrase of our times: “Everyone knew.”

“I know from talking to my female students that they’re often at a loss about how to deal with the binds they find themselves in, especially in the context of hookup culture,” Northwestern professor Laura Kipnis told the roundtable. “What surprises me is that they often feel unable to say no to guys and just sort of yield instead, even when they don’t really want to. Somehow all the messages about assertiveness from the last few generations have gotten dissipated, and we’re back to Square 1.”

In early December, *Saturday Night Live* debuted “Welcome to Hell,” a bubblegum-toned satirical music video exploring the post-Weinstein landscape. For women, the song notes, 2017’s wave of sexual harassment is nothing new—this

mess has been rolling since the beginning of time. “Hell,” in short, is part and parcel of being a woman. Here are some sample lyrics, riffing off the firing of disgraced *House of Cards* star Kevin Spacey:

Now *House of Cards* is ruined,
And that really sucks.
Well, here’s a list of stuff that’s ruined for us:
Parking
And walking
And Uber
And ponytails,
Bathrobes
And nighttime
And drinking
And hotels
And vans
(Nothing good happens in a van).
Welcome to hell.
This isn’t news.
Our situation’s been a nuisance since we got boobs.

Let’s admit it: Any woman can relate. On average, we’re smaller and weaker than men, and we sometimes have a tougher row to hoe in this world. About this, there’s not a whole lot we can do, aside from practicing basic safety measures, adopting situational awareness, and learning to use a gun. I’m a runner; so is my husband. He breezily jogs down woody trails I would never run on alone. That’s life in this imperfect world.

But is it “hell”? If you read enough about the “Me Too” movement, you can be forgiven for envisioning modern American life as a Hobbesian war of all against all. “Like



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most American women, I've learned—oftentimes through experience—that I am not safe,” Jessica Valenti wrote in the *Guardian* on December 12. “Women know that they’re at risk whether in the streets, at work, or at home.” Really? We do? Everywhere, all the time?

Meanwhile, according to Sally Kohn in the *Washington Post*, “most men hate women” whether we “realize it or not.” Sheesh. Thanks a lot, Harvey.

Certain feminists go further: Because life is a living hell for women, it's only fair to make it a living hell for men. “Men are scared right now, which is good,” writer Amanda Hess said in the *New York Times Magazine* roundtable. “We spend our whole lives afraid,” wrote Valenti in the *Guardian*, “but a few months into men not being able to act with sexist impunity and it's a ‘witch hunt.’” Speaking of witch hunts, according to *Teen Vogue*'s Emily Lindin, they're not all that bad: “If some innocent men's reputations have to take a hit in the process of undoing the patriarchy, that is a price I am absolutely willing to pay.”

As you might have surmised, we're back to the “weird time to be alive” portion of the show. Who wants to live with that level of hostility towards 50 percent of the human race? Have we really moved that far beyond a basic shared humanity and common sense?

Perhaps, in certain circles, we have. The panic is palpable, with offices ditching alcohol at Christmas parties and managers worrying about the propriety of inter-sex friendly hugs. Hackneyed “harassment trainings”—many that resemble “an episode of *The Office*,” as the acting chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission noted to *Time* magazine—will undoubtedly mushroom. For a sex-obsessed society, we sure seem to need a lot of very unsexy details spelled out. Perhaps we do need that adult in the room, but in our anything-goes culture, we're not likely to get one soon.

Twenty seventeen has exposed many monsters, and that is a positive thing. Breathless reports of a looming monster epidemic, however, seem greatly exaggerated. In a recent op-ed in the *New York Daily News*, Christina Hoff Sommers pointed out some seemingly incongruous data from the General Social Survey: In 2014, 3.6 percent of women reported being sexually harassed at work in the previous twelve months. That's not fantastic, but it's certainly not “burn it all down” bad, either.

Supposedly, we're all in this together—or, at least, we should be. Perhaps a step towards sanity would involve some introspection on all fronts. Not all women are fragile, hapless victims. Not all men are predators or predators-in-waiting. Both men and women can contribute to a healthier sexual ethic. We can expect more from both.

Or not. “There are three ways you could approach the problem of sexual harassment,” Anita Hill told *The New York Times Magazine*. “You can fix the women. You can fix the guys. Or you can change the culture. And I think that really, at this point, what we should be talking about is fixing the guys and fixing the culture.”

“Do we have to choose?” asked Laura Kipnis. “Can't it be all three?”

“Well,” Hill replied, “I think if we fix the guys and change the culture, we don't need to fix women.”

“Good luck,” Kipnis replied. Good luck indeed.

NR

Basquiat's Tragedy

How the world of Warhol failed an artist in making him

BY DOUGLAS MURRAY

IN 1986, just two years before his death, Jean-Michel Basquiat sat down for a long interview with his friend Tamra Davis. The footage shows the then-25-year-old artist in his best light, as his friends and admirers knew him. The sturdy wall that Basquiat kept up in other interviews—erected apparently through a mixture of shyness and resentment—is absent here. Instead the young artist is relaxed, knowing, attractive, and open: in a word, charming. It is a reminder of what was there before the art-industrial complex, sudden fortune, and drugs wasted him.

A portion of that video appears in *Basquiat: Boom for Real*, an exhibition that will be at the Barbican Centre in London until the end of January. One of the most comprehensive retrospectives of the artist's work ever staged, it is also timely. In May of this year, at Sotheby's in New York, a 1982 work by the artist—the son of a Puerto Rican mother and a Haitian father—sold for \$110.5 million. That sale made Basquiat not only one of the two or three best-selling American artists of all time, but one of the highest-valued artists in history. An overheated Sotheby's representative claimed after the sale of *Untitled* (1982) that Basquiat had “joined the pantheon of great, great artists.”

Dealers and auction-house salesmen around the world have made similar claims for years. They began during his lifetime and only accelerated after his overdose, with the prices rising accordingly. As with his friend Andy Warhol, and more recent artists such as Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons, his work has become prized by—among others—people who do not prize art. Hedge funds seek out his work to hang in their offices. To have a Basquiat on the wall denotes something: mainly, the presence of cash.

It was not obvious that Basquiat would end up the producer of such trophies. Born in Brooklyn in 1960, he left school at 17 and first gained attention through his co-invention, with a friend, of a character called “SAMO.” Graffiti signed with this name cropped up in SoHo and on the Lower East Side in 1978. These cryptic semi-philosophical musings in spray paint caught the attention of some local media and soon the identity of the people behind SAMO got out, at which point—having done the job of bringing attention to the creators—SAMO was killed off.

Friends recall that Basquiat “always wanted to be famous,” and his other early assault on the public's attention came after suggesting to a friend at a party that they should form a band. Basquiat couldn't play the clarinet and the friend couldn't play the drums. Nevertheless they played clarinet and drums

Mr. Murray is the author, most recently, of The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam.

respectively in a group called “Gray.” And here an oddity of the arts in the 20th century created an opening for someone able to seize opportunities where he saw them. By the late 20th century, perhaps the only art that still required years of dedication, practice, and training was music. Somebody who had not studied the clarinet could not just pick the instrument up and play it by instinct. Even if the person managed somewhat, it was not just unlikely but impossible that he could then be acclaimed as one of the great clarinetists or musicians of all time. Yet—and you may lay the blame at the feet of Duchamp or one of a number of other culprits—at some point in the last century, ability, skill, and practice were no longer required fitness tests for launching a career in the visual arts.

To his credit, Basquiat—who never had any formal training and who (as footage of him working, as well as the work, shows) could not hold a brush properly—saw this gigantic opening and ran for it. He had also learned from the New York nightclub scene, and the mix of people he watched there, that fame had become the gift from which all other gifts might flow.

When he decorated some postcards, he made sure to thrust himself in front of Andy Warhol at a restaurant and persuade the older artist to buy one. Being noticed was something that both men were good at and recognized in each other. Basquiat’s work soon moved on from graffiti on scrap metal and rudely doodled postcards. Diego Cortez, an early supporter, offered to sell the results if Basquiat bought some paints and painted some things. Cortez subsequently curated the 1981 *New York/New Wave* show that launched Basquiat. Much of the work from around this time is in the Barbican retrospective.

To see some of it, even on the walls of a gallery as urban, gritty, and indeed bleak as London’s Barbican Centre, is to feel an unmistakable stab of pity. Even the simplest frames around works such as *Airplanes* (1980) seem obscene, as—even more so—do the curatorial descriptions: *Airplanes* (1980) is characterized as “Oil stick on paper. Guarded by Bischofberger, Männedorf-Zurich, Switzerland.” All this to describe a large sheet of paper with seven airplanes poorly placed and poorly scrawled on it. The only thing missing is a signature in a corner saying “Age 5.”

Excuses must be made for such work. At the Barbican, I overheard two young women separately whisper to friends in awed tones as they surveyed this work, “Apparently he suffered from really bad depression.” Other reasons are more commonly given, and can be easily refuted. Although his origins were not privileged, Basquiat did not come from the poorest part of society. (His father was a middle-class accountant, a “blazer-type-



Jean-Michel Basquiat

wearing person,” according to a friend.) Yet he hit a moment of the sort that Cortez once summed up in an interview: “I was just tired of seeing white walls, with white people with white wine.” Others clearly felt the same. “Getting people in the art world to pay attention to his work wasn’t that hard, I’ll tell you,” says Cortez. Dealer Annina Nosei picked him up, and at the show of his work that she organized, everything sold out in one night.

Yet even at that early stage, it was clear that the work was about something other than art. One of the highlights of the show is *Dos Cabezas* (1982; “acrylic and oil stick on canvas with wooden supports”). In October 1982, the art dealer Bruno Bischofberger took Basquiat to Warhol’s Factory for the first time. After some Polaroid snapping, the younger artist dashed back to his studio and painted this cartoonish work (“a really great masterpiece,” according to Bischofberger) and had it delivered to Warhol a couple of hours later, the paint still wet. Given his prodigious output, and the amount of time he spent socializing, some people claim to wonder when Basquiat did all his painting. The simple answer, as Warhol learned, is that none of it took much time. On this occasion, receiving this new work, Warhol apparently complained, “Oh I’m so jealous. He’s faster than me.”

There were other things Warhol was clearly jealous of, too. Footage from his 1983–84 series *Andy Warhol’s TV* shows the elder artist with his arm possessively, uncomfortably draped around Basquiat while Warhol simpers through a conversation. Warhol might have struggled in the age of Weinstein. Yet the titanic cynicism of Warhol was not precisely mirrored in his young friend. Basquiat was clearly an earnest and thoughtful young man who attempted to engage with ideas. Only his

inability to draw or paint presented a problem, though ever fewer collectors or curators were willing to identify this as any type of impediment. He did what he could with what he had. But it is the reaction of the world, and the art world in particular, that is the most fascinating element in his career.

HERE the most elementary problems are passed over as though unimportant. For instance, again and again the sheer disposability and impermanence of these works makes itself felt. Throughout a retrospective as lovingly curated as this one, the viewer wonders whether Basquiat had anything like a similar regard for the work. Frames are tied together poorly and canvases loosely attached. Drips of something (coffee or paint?) splatter works that their subsequent holders have preserved and here presented as great. The feeling dawns that these works are not art but relics, and their frames—and the galleries they hang in—modern reliquaries.

Very occasionally there is a striking image. *Self-portrait* (1983) is one of the few such, the artist's face all black with white, demonic eyes. It is one of the works that point to a still-subterranean fact about his career: Some early reception of Basquiat may have betrayed a certain racism, though not in the form of harsh criticism. Rather it came from people commenting on, for instance, the "primitivism" of his art. We know that this stung him, and he appeared to imagine that a white artist would not have had such attitudes attributed to him. He may have been right, or he may have been wrong, but basic, if not primitive, is what nearly all of his art remains. And the truth is that rather than an impediment, his skin color was the hugest possible boon to his career. A society in search of social harmony, examples, and role models, added to an art market aware of its elitist reputation in an anti-elitist age, had need of Basquiat or Basquiat-like figures.

Perhaps the over-egging of his place in art history comes from an effort to cover over this unpalatable truth. As with most overcompensation, it is an error. There is a whole section at the Barbican dedicated to "art history" and Basquiat's claimed relationship with, and alleged place in, that cosmos. Amid stiff competition, stretching across two floors and 14 large rooms, it is the most desultory section of the whole show. The nadir is a work called "Untitled (Duchamp, Pollock, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein)," from 1986–87, which consists of four pieces of brown paper, each framed, and each dedicated to one of these forebears. All consist only of a few words followed by Basquiat's signature. The one honoring Duchamp reads (in its entirety), "Duchamp's main contribution was the ready-made Fountain (1917). Jean-Michel Basquiat." The one for Lichtenstein records that "Lichtenstein did comic strip images."

Like *Untitled (Titian)* (1982), *Leonardo da Vinci's Greatest Hits* (1982), and a smattering of books on art history that Basquiat owned, these are exhibited as evidence of the place Basquiat should be recognized as holding in the history of art, and the accompanying notes and catalogues make this argument explicitly. The company does not show Basquiat in a favorable light. One of the regular refrains of his admirers is that he never copied the work of other artists, but rather did a total revision of any work he referred to. Nothing could be more provably wrong. Basquiat could not have copied Leonardo even if he had wanted to. He could not even reflect

the work of such greats: All he could do was refer to it. It takes a considerable amount of investment, and many of the biggest claims about Basquiat have always been made by people with a very serious investment, to see these works in any other way. Like the vast, pretentiously imagined triptychs that (along with framed pages from his notebooks) end the show, they reveal a person pitifully straining to achieve something with next to no technical ability.

Still, his admirers put him among the greatest artists. The art dealer Tony Shafrazi said in a recent film, "I put him in the highest place, like van Gogh, like Picasso." Another work in the Barbican show is *Untitled (Pablo Picasso)* (1984). It consists of a sloppily attempted cartoon of a young Picasso with a number of red stripes beneath the face that vaguely suggest a Breton jumper. According to the exhibition notes, "By conflating these two parts of Picasso's life Basquiat contemplates the entirety of the artist's career." Contemplates, possibly. But it is contemplation to no effect.

The truth is that there is more creativity in what dealers and critics say about Basquiat than there is in the work itself. It is they who have done the real work. The absurd claims and talking-up occurred while he was alive, famously catapulting him in a couple of years from poverty to exceptional riches. Perhaps it was inevitable that he should have tried to escape the situation that he and his wildest promoters had got him into. He tried first by escaping to California and then by escaping into heroin.

Friends claimed that Basquiat was famously independent of mind and that nobody could tell him what to do. They should at least have tried. If they had said at the outset that, instead of dealing his work, they would help him learn the skills needed to pursue it, then he might not have banged his head so visibly and continuously against his own limitations throughout his short career. Perhaps he understood that he was only getting away with something and worried when it might end. Far greater artists than he have had similar fears and been brought down by them.

Aided by his early death, the Basquiat industry has not seriously faltered yet. Indeed, owing to the price inflation of his works, today those who turned down his early work have had to deliver groveling mea culpas for missing the point. The chief curator of New York's Museum of Modern Art said, in a recent documentary interview, "When you first see brand-new work, chances are if it's really significant it will be uncomfortable to somebody like myself, because I am so immersed in what painting up until now looked like. And with Basquiat, many art professionals had skepticism about what he was doing because the paintings didn't necessarily fit their idea about museum painting. And yet of course that's exactly what's necessary in order to create the art of the future."

But this is not so. What is necessary to create the art of the future is the same thing that was needed to create the art of the past: tremendous vision melded with exceptional ability. Watching the crowds of inner-city children pouring into the Barbican in the middle of the day on their school trips, I found it impossible to avoid the thought that the problem Basquiat suffered from was being posthumously exacerbated by his fawning curators. Here was an artist being shown to these children as gritty, real, rich, and vindicated—and who would therefore merely perpetuate the problem he could not escape: the fact that ambition without discipline is uncapturable and blows away like dreams. NR

Regulation Nation

REGULATIONS empower the government to demand cessation of a million small violations buried deep in the compacted sediment of federal law. They are a fearsome tool for imposing the will of the state. Trump wants to cut them. What a Hitler, eh?

For reluctant Trump defenders, the drive to reduce regulations is the “But Gorsuch!” of the administration’s second act. For conservatives disinclined to say that anything good can come out of the Trump term, which they regard as a daily hair-ball soaked with Diet Coke coughed up on the national rug, the braking of the regulatory express is waved away: Any conservative president would have done the same.

Yeeeeeaaah, well, maybe. Perhaps a President Cruz or President Fiorina would have grabbed a shovel and headed into the Augean Stables of the *Federal Register*, but we’re used to a GOP president’s announcing a blue-ribbon panel to study the issue while the organs of the administrative state pump out more regs like a queen ant producing larvae for the colony.

Trump tweeted this out the other day:

“In 1960, there were approximately 20,000 pages in the Code of Federal Regulations. Today there are over 185,000 pages, as seen in the Roosevelt Room.”

That didn’t sound entirely authentic. The sentiment, yes, but the tone lacked his usual zesty style. If Trump was watching while an aide typed the tweet, you can note the exact moment when he leaned over and pressed CAPS LOCK on the keyboard:

“Today, we CUT THE RED TAPE! It is time to SET FREE OUR DREAMS and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!”

The response was what you’d expect: Millions will die, of course. The Obamacare mandate is dropped? Death stalks the land. The tax bill passes? The Reaper’s scythe drips red with its grisly harvest. An embassy is moved? Peaceful, pious family men instantly move to Sweden and throw gas bombs at Jews.

Here’s a typical response from Joy Reid, who is on TV somewhere for some reason. Tweeteth the sage:

“Every one of those pages protects your food from being filed with rat droppings, spoiled meat out of your deli, lead out of your paint, your child’s medicine from being defective & corporations from polluting the air you breathe or dumping medical waste in the water you wade in.”

What some liberals think a regulation says:

1. LEAD. There shall be no lead in anything children may touch or ingest. The end.

What the regulation actually says:

1. (d)(92) LEAD. Pursuant to the Lead Exposure Act of 1977 (modified under section 2, subsection C, of the Bacon-Lehtis Omnibus Chemical Control Act of 1982), all commercial products containing LEAD (hereafter defined as an unreactive post-transition metal, unless otherwise noted)

shall be, but not necessarily be, unless there is occasion invoked by the Drinkable Paint Act of 1984, subject to certification by the Lead Certification Bureau. Or not.

Any item proved to contain lead, or suspected of containing lead, or rumored to contain lead, or whose name can be acrostically rearranged to contain the word “lead,” or transported in a vehicle or bag that passed through a state in which lead is mined, or a state in which lead mining occurred prior to 1962 (SEE ALSO, Lead Mining Waiver List under section 43,237 of the Omnibus Obfuscation Act of 1988), shall, if so deemed, be subject to the Interstate Substance Transport Act of 1937, under which all samples must be put into a paper bag and handed off to the lab for testing by a bucket brigade of 400 unionized workers.

No part of this regulation shall be construed, or understood, or looked at askance, with the intention of regulating the pay, or employment status, of the workers who transport the samples, as they are covered under the Maik-Werk Act of 1933, and shall be employed until the point of death, after which they, or their descendants, shall receive half pay in perpetuity.

REVISED, 2013: The term “lead” shall include, but not be limited to, “lead-like products,” defined as anything that contains an element on the periodic table. Penalties for non-compliance with the requirements about the reporting of the specifics of the environmental impacts shall be trebled in the event of. Additional penalties will be brillig if an investigation demonstrates the intentional gimbling of toves, slithy or slightly slithy.

That’s one page. Multiply by eleventy billion, covering everything. At least it solves the lead problem! But it creates a climate of uncertainty. Imagine this conversation:

TOY MANUFACTURER TO LAWYER: What the hell does this regulation mean?

LAWYER: No lead, basically.

TOY MANUFACTURER: I sell a paste you smear on ceramic sheep and it turns into green moss that looks like hair.

LAWYER: No lead in the sheep?

TOY GUY: No. I mean, I don’t know, it’s clay. What kid breaks a clay sheep and starts eating the shards?

LAWYER (googling): You’re based in Iowa, right? I’m seeing a paint factory in Manitoba, operating from 1910 to 1914. If your sheep were made in a state that bordered a state that bordered another country, we have to do discovery on their lead-abatement process.

TOY GUY: Oh, no. Why?

LAWYER: The wind could have deposited lead from Canada in Iowa.

TOY GUY: Okay, well, if we have to—oh, geez, there’s a hair in my sandwich.

LAWYER: That’s impossible. I can’t tell you how many regulations forbid that.

NARRATOR’S VOICE: *When sent to a lab, the hair tested positive for lead. New regulations have since been proposed.* **NR**



The Long View BY ROB LONG

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: *Special Trump Edition*

STAVE FIVE

Trump awoke with a start.

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. The golden draperies glistened in the Palm Beach sunlight. The gold-rimmed water glass was still there beside his bed, still filled with Diet Coke. And miracle of miracles! It was still fizzy! The spirits had managed that!

The Twizzlers and Starbursts remained in their jar, ready for his morning snack. It was all as it had been the night before, when he had climbed into his bed and pulled the bed curtains shut and plugged in his phone for its nightly charge, slipped on his CPAP unit, and fallen asleep midway through his silent daily tally of the people he intended to get back at.

It was all as it had been. Despite the visitations of the three ghosts, Trump had lived through the night.

Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future,” Trump repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. “The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. O, Steve Bannon. Heaven and the Christmastime be praised for this. I say it on my knees, old Steve, on my knees.”

“I don’t know what to do,” cried Trump, laughing and crying in the same breath; “I am as light as a feather, though I honestly do not have a weight problem as regards to

my eating; I am as happy as an angel, mostly because I am very successful; and I am as merry as a schoolboy, but not in a gay way.”

Running to the French doors that opened onto the small patio overlooking the fairway, within sight of the eleventh green, he opened them and put out his head. Sunny, Florida sunshine!

“What’s to-day?” cried Trump, calling out to a perspiring groundskeeper of indeterminate documentation.

“¿Qué?” returned the man, with all his might of wonder.

“What’s to-day, my fine fellow?” said Trump.

“To-day,” replied the man, “is Navidad, señor.”

“It’s Christmas Day,” said Trump to himself. “I haven’t missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can.”

“Do you need something, Señor Trump? You no look well.”

Trump chuckled. He would not, he said to himself, have this man fired. He would, instead, simply have him moved to catering or somewhere else, where he would not have to look at him. Yes, he thought to himself, here’s a one who shan’t be deported! And as Old Trump sprayed his fingers with hair-spray and ran the sticky fingers through his own locks—where was the valet? where the Secret Service?—and as he plastered down the stray hairs and formed the rest into his trademark wedge, he thought to himself, Yes, I will do it. I will stop tweeting, will stop engaging in low behavior, will start anew and begin the last chapter of my life in kindness and . . .

Someone was calling his name—“Sir? Sir? SIR?” It was faint, but he could hear it. He looked around and saw that he was, somehow, on his phone.

“Sir?” It was the voice of Kellyanne! Charming, lovely Kellyanne!

“Why, bless my soul,” cried Kellyanne, “is that POTUS?”

“It’s I. Trump. A merry Christmas, Kellyanne,” said Trump, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken. “I have had such a night! And I have endeavored to change my ways, my good Kellyanne! No more will I tweet or insult or tell delusional tall tales! No more will I—”

“Sir?”

“—create needless turbulence and ill will! The ghosts have shown me a better path, Kellyanne! And the first thing we need to do is take this mobile phone and smash it to—”

“Sir? Sir? Are you okay?”

“—oh, but I am splendid! Tip-top! But I am utterly changed! And I will need your help and counsel, good Kellyanne, to undo some of the wrongs I have done and make such a name for myself that the word ‘Trump’ will forever mean humility and effectiveness, trustworthiness and wisdom!”

“Sir? Can you hear us? Can you hear us?”

Why on earth can’t they understand me? thought Trump. *Why, I’m speaking as clearly as I can!*

Suddenly, Trump’s entire body shook. The bed shook and the bed curtains shook and his jowls and belly shook and he suddenly sat upright.

Trump had been asleep. It was all a very odd dream. Two Secret Service agents stood on either side of him, each holding one of his arms. It was they who had been shaking him awake.

“Sir, are you okay? You were having a very bad dream.”

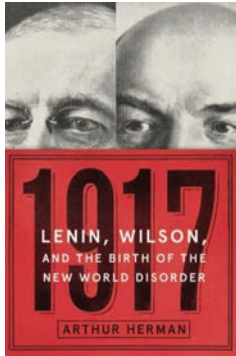
Trump looked at the agents, at the bedclothes and Twizzlers, at the Diet Coke—flat, of course, in its gold-rimmed glass. He waved the agents away. *What a stupid dream*, he said to himself. *Really stupid. Dreams are overrated.*

And with that he grabbed his phone from the charging cradle and tapped out a Christmas tweet: “God bless us, everyone, even the haters and the losers.”

Books, Arts & Manners

A Turn to Darkness

JAY WINIK



1917: *Lenin, Wilson, and the Birth of the New World Disorder*, by Arthur Herman (Harper, 496 pp., \$29.99)

ARTHUR HERMAN, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, likes quirky. He has written inventively about how the Scots invented the modern world (a bold and catchy thesis); Gandhi versus Churchill; Plato versus Aristotle; and declinist thought in Western civilization. Now, in his latest work, he focuses on the seemingly improbable duo of Vladimir Lenin and Woodrow Wilson, who gave birth in 1917 to what Herman calls “the New World Disorder.”

The book—part narrative, part biography, and part argument—is the story of 1917, which saw the emergence of the United States as a great power and the rise of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Taken together, these two profound events rocked the international order. But none of this was expected just three years earlier, as the great powers of Europe lumbered almost inexplicably into war.

At World War I’s outset, Woodrow Wilson wrote that “the world itself seems gone mad.” Never were truer

Mr. Winik is the historian-in-residence at the Council on Foreign Relations. He is the author of 1944, The Great Upheaval, and April 1865.

words spoken. Curiously, the great powers all counted on a short conflict; it was not to be. After two and a half years, little had been achieved except for incalculable bloodshed along trenches where gains were measured not in miles, but in yards. The Kaiser’s hope of a quick victory turned out to be a mirage. “The Germans,” Herman writes, “had staved off defeat, just barely.” And notwithstanding Germany’s unrestricted use of submarines to sink enemy shipping without warning, Germany’s options for winning the war were, by 1916, fading quickly.

For Russia, the colossus of Europe, it was a similar story. Despite its being an empire stretching over three continents, its picture became as bleak as Germany’s: The nation was hopelessly strained and demoralized by the burdens of conflict, and it was bordering on anarchy at home and collapse in the war. For Vladimir Lenin, singleminded, impecunious, and exiled in his sparse apartment in Zurich, this was an opportunity to trigger a “mass revolt” (in Herman’s phrase) that would change Russia and humanity forever. In the process, he believed, capitalism would be replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Meanwhile, in the United States, President Woodrow Wilson was eyeing his own opportunities. Taking a statesmanlike tone, he had sought to keep America out of the war and called for a “peace without victory” that he was prepared to help mediate. Yet by April 2, 1917, he was singing a different tune. The Zimmermann Telegram had already revealed Germany’s secret perfidy toward the United States, arousing the ire of the American people. By now, America’s march into the war was virtually unstoppable. Wilson poured some 1 million men into Europe, and ratified the United States as the dominant power on the world stage.

Herman doesn’t really like or admire Lenin and Wilson, but he has chosen them as his protagonists because they were the pivotal arbiters of what would emerge out of the rubble of war, and theirs is a fascinating story. Herman

makes it clear that even as they were different, they were also very much alike. Both men were less politicians or statesmen (one can quibble with this) than “dreamers, intellectuals” seeking to shape humanity’s true destiny. Both, writes Herman, had sweeping, revolutionary visions of “a massive upheaval” on the world stage, and each saw himself at the center of it. They wanted to create a “paradise on earth”—in Lenin’s case, a Communist one; and in Wilson’s, a liberal democracy based on humanity’s universal desire for freedom.

There are absorbing moments in the book. We see Lenin kicking around in London, Paris, and Geneva. We see him surrounded by his cohorts, including Leon Trotsky and the Georgian dropout from theological seminary known by the revolutionary pseudonym of “Joseph Stalin.” We see Lenin as head of a ruthless band of revolutionaries, leading the Bolshevik uprising in November 1917, which destroyed the nascent Russian democratic experiment. The result: the world’s first one-party-state dictatorship.

And we see the bitter fights over the post-war peace. An angry and petulant Woodrow Wilson was at the Paris Peace Conference, where he likely had a stroke (his first of three) and where he uncharacteristically imposed a hard peace on an embittered Germany, which would lay the foundations for Adolf Hitler’s rise to power. With his proposed League of Nations, Wilson was willing for the United States to relinquish “some sovereignty” for the “good of the world”; arrayed against him were forces led by the tireless Senate majority leader, Henry Cabot Lodge (R., Mass.), who invoked George Washington’s warning about entangling alliances.

Wilson was committed to the League Covenant’s Article X, which stipulated that if any member of the League was attacked, every member of the League was in effect threatened as well—just as with NATO today, but on a much broader scale. To critics, including Lodge, this meant that the U.S. would be subordinating its national interests

to an institution representing the global community, not the U.S. exclusively—a concern that resonates in 2017.

A third stroke left Wilson paralyzed on his left side and unable to function as president for more than a year, even as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee tacked one reservation after another onto the League of Nations treaty. Wilson, unwilling to compromise with his critics, doomed the treaty to be, in Lodge's words, "as dead as Marley's ghost"—a result that Herman applauds.

The book is filled with what-ifs about the war. What if Wilson had taken the advice of Lodge, to enter the war earlier in the first place, and to accept the League of Nations but with reservations? Herman contends that there would have been no Mussolini, no Hitler, no Second World War, no Bolshevik Revolution, and perhaps even not a Great Depression. What if Germany had accepted the offer to halt hostilities, opting for the status quo? Germany's evisceration might have been avoided. Or what if President Woodrow Wilson had accepted Lenin's

Nigel de Grey, an Admiralty House codebreaker, was a "small, narrow-faced man."

Herman raises some provocative questions. He speaks with a skeptical tone about the idea of self-determination of nations, which was invoked by the Western powers less for altruistic reasons than for "selfish, even cynical" ones. In the planting of the self-determination "flag," Herman says, the groundwork was laid for the transformation of a world war into a revolution that would spark global chaos and a Communist system that would enslave millions for almost half a century. But there is an alternative view: If the American experience is about one thing, isn't it about self-determination? When the Founders broke off from England, isn't that exactly what they were about?

Herman is suspicious of crusading idealism and fond of realpolitik; he approvingly quotes A. J. P. Taylor's judgment that "Bismarck fought 'necessary' wars and killed thousands, the idealists of the 20th century fight 'just'

There is little doubt that 1917 overturned the traditional global order.

audacious proposal to become Russia's principal manufacturing ally? America might have received a surfeit of fur and oil in return for helping Russia become updated.

If Lenin and Wilson are the anti-heroes of this book, there are two heroes: Lodge and Russia's Alexander Kerensky, who were moderate and realistic. Kerensky was the man who might have saved Russia from political extremism. He was a member of the Duma (Russia's first legislative body), later Russia's minister of justice and war, and then its prime minister. But he tragically turned a blind eye to the threat posed by Lenin, and eventually was overthrown by the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution.

Herman is partial to vivid descriptions. Thus, German quartermaster general Erich Ludendorff was "bull-necked" and had a "cold, arrogant stare"; British prime minister David Lloyd George had a "florid face"; and

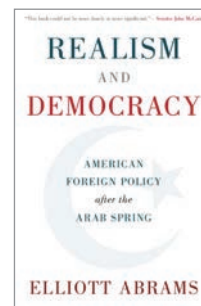
wars and kill millions." He says that Wilson's utopian dream was "impractical and ignorant."

Herman asserts that, before 1917, countries went to war to protect national interests, not ideas. This assertion does not fully hold up to scrutiny: It ignores the cataclysmic French Revolution, which, in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity, mobilized whole peoples for war and swept across the European continent. It was, in effect, the first world war.

Yet there is little doubt that 1917 overturned the traditional global order. In this illuminating, important new work, Herman goes to great pains to link the chaos of 1917 with the chaos of today's world, a world marked by al-Qaeda and ISIS (which he calls "Lenin's heirs"), assassinations, hostage taking, car bombs, and suicide vests. Such is the inexorable rhythm of history: One problem is solved and another crops up. **NR**

Quest for Arab Democracy

DAVID PRYCE-JONES



Realism and Democracy: American Foreign Policy after the Arab Spring, by Elliott Abrams
(Cambridge, 307 pp., \$20)

ONE day in December 2010, a policewoman in a small and rather humdrum town in Tunisia slapped the face of Mohamed Bouazizi. The dispute was over his permit to be selling fruit and vegetables off a barrow. The injustice that he encountered, and the humiliation, drove the poor man to take his life. Just as a butterfly fluttering its wings is supposed to cause a cascade of faraway atmospheric effects, this suicide set off a movement of protest and solidarity in one Arab country after another. The monarchies and republics in which Arabs live are, in reality, dictatorships, and the time had apparently arrived for them to reform and take their place in what was supposed to be an emerging worldwide democratic order.

What became known as the Arab Spring did not live up to these expectations; far from it. Since 2010, Arab countries have suffered civil war, coups, terrorism, invasion by foreign powers, genocide, the sale of women in slave markets, the ruin of historic cities and monuments, the death of civilians by the hundreds of thousands, and the flight of refugees in their millions. The rise of the Islamic State, self-described as a caliphate, redesigned the boundaries of Syria and Iraq, countries that may not be reconstituted for a very long time, if ever. Islamist volunteers in this misappropriated territory murdered, beheaded, crucified, or tortured to death,

often in public, whomever they pleased. Libya, Yemen, and Lebanon are also states in varying stages of collapse. A whole civilization seems to be coming apart.

The proper human response to such calamity is that something ought to be done about it. Elliott Abrams takes it for granted in *Realism and Democracy* that the United States can and should come to the rescue. His career has given him authority to comment on matters of power politics. In the Reagan administration, he was assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs (1981–85) and assistant secretary for inter-American affairs (1985–89); he later served as President George W. Bush’s adviser for global democracy strategy (2005–09). His sympathies are very wide, his quotations from the academic literature are numerous and apt, and his prose is almost miraculously jargon-free.

His introductory chapter, almost a hundred pages long, is a kind of handbook to the mindsets of American policymakers concerning the Middle East in recent decades. The U.S. approach during the Cold War was perhaps an unfair great-power exercise but at least it kept the peace after its fashion. The most frequent cause of a clash during that era was some independent but rash manipulation on the part of one of the superpowers’ clients. The superpowers’ balancing of *laissez-faire* and a tight fist was usually enough to keep major clients such as Turkey and Iran, and even Arab-nationalist dictators, on the straight and narrow path of cooperation with them. Those times are over. In the absence of the external pressures of the Cold War, former clients are now in a position to pursue their own ambitions, forming alliances and enmities without regard for Western interests. Military intervention in Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere so far has only sustained or increased the level of instability. The sole alternative is to make a moralizing speech, but if the decision not to intervene militarily has already been taken, this is pointlessly sanctimonious.

Put simply, what *Realism and Democracy* is asking is whether the United States should deal with the present free-for-all in the role of policeman or of paramedic. Abrams takes his lead from President Reagan, once his boss, who was convinced that whatever Arabs might do or say, basically they want the same freedom as Americans, and they are able to

acquire it, too. In this view, freedom is the function of democracy, and democracy in turn is the function of human rights. In the course of his career, Abrams also met and admired the like-minded senators Scoop Jackson and Daniel Moynihan and, last but not least, George W. Bush, the president who did his best to give freedom to Iraqis. Proud to be an unreconstructed Reaganite, Abrams further awards himself the title of neo-con.

In contrast, he has not much good to say of President Nixon or his secretary of state Henry Kissinger, the leading proponents of the different doctrine that goes by the name of “realism.” If they judged military intervention to be in the national interest, they ordered it, but the main geostrategic goal of their day was *détente* with the Soviet Union. The pursuit of democracy and human rights was bound to be understood in Moscow as anti-Communist incitement, in particular encouraging dissidents who then were likely to be deported to the Gulag.

The scandal of Soviet totalitarian practices had the unintentional short-term effect of postponing and even invalidating *détente*, leaving Communism to do its worst. In the Middle East, the policy of realism rebounds in just the same way. In a classic example of the inbuilt incongruity, President George H. W. Bush mounted the campaign to expel Saddam Hussein’s invading forces from Kuwait, rectifying a crime at the level of nations. When Iraqi Shiites and Kurds then rose in rebellion, President Bush did not come to their rescue on the grounds of human rights at the level of the individual. His indifference, if that is what it was, allowed

Saddam to hang and gas his own subjects, crimes that could have been prevented by the American military. The equally indecisive Obama administration, notes Abrams, “revealed its skepticism of democracy promotion from the very beginning.” When Obama did no more than pontificate in the media about what was happening in Syria, he too was in effect condoning crime.

“Is Islam compatible with democracy?” is the motion now being debated in public and private assemblies everywhere. Abrams gives a resounding Yes, on the basis of what happened earlier this decade in Tunisia. Rached Ghannouchi and his party, *Ennahda*, proposed to set up an Islamist constitution in that country to empower themselves, probably indefinitely. The opposition refused to participate in drafting such a constitution. “We could have continued without them,” Ghannouchi observed, but instead he and his party gave the first example of peaceful power-sharing anywhere in the Arab world. “Democracy can be implanted in the Arab world,” he asserted, adding a sentence that covers a lot of ground, “So we took a difficult path towards general consensus.”

Egypt, a far larger and more influential country than Tunisia, had the opposite outcome. Hosni Mubarak had been its long-standing president and, two weeks before he fell, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saw fit to report that “our assessment is that the Egyptian Government is stable.” (Bashar al-Assad had already launched civil war in Syria when she complimented him as a possible “reformer.”) The Muslim Brotherhood is a mass movement

SHOALS

The screeching oak planks and the sudden shock
announce the gale has pushed them too far east,
trapping the whaler on a hidden rock—
the broken molar of a howling beast.
She’s listing port. He knows what he should do:
furl sails and cut the masts before she tips,
supply and board the boats. Then what? The crew
awaits the first command from his pursed lips.
At best they’ll reach Tahiti. Odds are narrow
they’ll find it, though. He braces for the worst:
short straws, scraped femurs cracked to suck the marrow,
exposure, madness, all-consuming thirst,
until their blood congeals and sets them free.
He grasps the rail and stares into the sea.

—STEPHEN SCAER

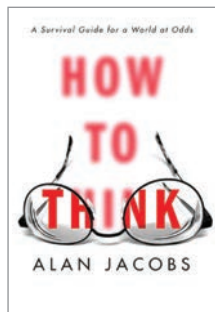
of extremists, but its leader, Mohamed Morsi, gave the assurance in a television interview that he was not seeking power. A few months later, he won a more or less fair general election. As soon as he was in office as president, he began to purge the secular opposition, feeble as it was. This exclusive political Islamism prompted Field Marshal Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to stage a classic military coup, become dictator, and purge Morsi and the Muslim Brothers, sentencing many of them to death. Business as usual, then.

In the past, I would have agreed unhesitatingly with Abrams that democracy is the best, indeed the only, hope for reconciling the conflicting interests of the Arab world. The end of the Cold War offered an opportunity to undertake the obligatory reforms, and perhaps that was the direction the Arab Spring initially was taking. As things turned out, though, Muslim identity overwhelms politics and governance. In Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, seemingly a world-historical figure on a par with Lenin, had put in place an Islamist order fundamentally hostile to democratization. Representing the Shiiteminority branch of Islam, he and then his successors did much to activate al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brothers, and the Taliban—all counterparts from the Sunni-majority branch of Islam. As Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran now face off for an all-out confessional war between them, the Arab Spring is well and truly over.

Abrams has coined the cautionary phrase “A human-rights policy means trouble.” If I understand it properly, he is accepting the Reaganite assumption that everybody recognizes and wants freedom, but also the fact that if we who are already free insist on others’ having the exact same rights, we will postpone and maybe invalidate any real progress toward freedom: Democratization is misrepresented in Islamic countries as a shameful surrender to the West. Abrams’s prescription for the future is that we go on doing what we have been doing up to now, with and for Arabs, only doing it bigger and better: more-generous aid (especially from private foundations), encouragement of political parties, genuinely competitive elections, no truck with dictators, inclusion of Islamists in the political process as much as possible, civil society, recognition that Arab democracy is linked to American leadership. That’s all very nice, but Abrams is placing a very large bet on hope. **NR**

Habits of Mind

KELLY JANE TORRANCE



How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds, by Alan Jacobs
(Currency, 160 pp., \$23)

I MADE it only to the third item on Alan Jacobs’s “Thinking Person’s Checklist” before throwing up my hands in defeat. That rule reads, in its entirety, “As best you can, online and off, avoid the people who fan flames.” I’m an editor at a Washington, D.C., political magazine, and I make regular appearances on cable

ous books as *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* and *The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography*, offers the checklist at the end of his latest volume. As he wrote recently on his blog, “the chief impetus of this book was the ever-increasing hostility and (often malicious) misunderstanding of one another that became one of the chief themes of the 2016 presidential election here in the U.S. and of the debate over the Brexit referendum in the U.K.” Who, in such a time, would profit more from a book called “How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds”—or at least from a discussion with someone who’s read it—than “the people who fan flames”?

Alas, books about deliberating better are usually ignored by the people who need them most: those who don’t deliberate much at all. But there seems to be a fine line between Jacobs’s target audience and the people he advises that audience to avoid. Never mind Twitter trolls. Think of your untactful uncle whose political pronouncements make Thanksgiving dinner uncomfortable for most of the table; an impassioned pundit trying to turn a complicated argument into a point-scoring soundbite; the piqued politician remaking policy in response to needling slights.

Books about **deliberating better** are usually ignored by the people who need them most.

news discussing the hottest-button issues of the moment—I wouldn’t be able to leave my apartment, let alone pursue my career, if I took that advice. I’d already paused at the first of his dozen rules, also troublesome for those in my profession: “When faced with provocation to respond to what someone has said, give it five minutes. Take a walk, or weed the garden, or chop some vegetables.”

I’m being playful, of course, but not facetious. These points go to the very heart of Jacobs’s project. Jacobs, a professor in the honors program at Baylor University and the author of such previ-

No matter his target, Alan Jacobs is nothing if not ambitious. *How to Think* is just 160 pages long, and its author doesn’t take his task lightly. He runs down the myriad steps one goes through, for instance, when thinking about purchasing a vehicle—and notes that such a decision is much less painful to make than those involving political and social questions. “If everything we have to think about were as easy as buying a car, then I’d need only to write a blog post or a few tweets to set us all on the right path. Instead, I’ve had to write this book,” he says. Why him? “I believe, thanks in part to my years of negotiating mutually hostile communities, I can help.” He’s an academic and a Christian, a member of

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two groups that regularly clash in the culture wars, and therefore more aware than most people are of the false assumptions and lazy thinking that too often characterize how we come to view our opponents.

Jacobs doesn't argue, however, that we must detach ourselves from our associations to think and think well. His central contention is that it's actually as members of groups, primarily, that human beings engage in the process of thinking. "Think for yourself" might be the mantra of the sage, but Jacobs proclaims it both foolish and futile. "To think independently of other human beings is impossible, and if it were possible it would be undesirable. Thinking is necessarily, thoroughly, and wonderfully social," he writes. He even goes so far as to say that "whatever we think we know, whether we're right or wrong, arises from our interactions with other human beings." Descartes, for one, would disagree: If a man thinks in a forest and no one is around to communicate with him, he still knows that he exists. But Jacobs is certainly correct to declare that discussion and debate are invaluable to reasoning and the search for knowledge. It's surprising that with so many references to thinkers past and present, he mentions Karl Popper only briefly in a footnote; that philosopher demonstrated this insight better than anyone, and used it to build powerful approaches to science and politics.

Man is a social animal, and the exchange of ideas within society can lead to better ideas. But it's a stretch to go from this to declaring, as Jacobs does, that "for people of all ages, some form of genuine membership is absolutely necessary for thinking." He seems to think that membership in a "good" group is the only insurance policy against falling into the clutches of a "bad" group.

Thinking is an art, not a science, Jacobs insists, but "science is our friend." He summarizes some of the conclusions of two of the best-known psychologists of thinking, Daniel Kahneman (author of *Thinking, Fast and Slow*) and Jonathan Haidt (author of *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*), with an aim of developing a practical art out of their

analytical findings. The bottom line: Thinking is a lot of work, and so in most instances we don't do it: "The cognitive demands of having to assess every single situation would be so great as to paralyze us." We tend to believe that if we want to think better, we should shed our prejudices and try to be more "rational," but Jacobs says the science doesn't support this: "We need the biases, the emotional predispositions, to relieve that cognitive load. We just want them to be the right ones. As a wise man once said, one of the key tasks of critical reflection is to distinguish the true prejudices by which we understand from the false ones by which we misunderstand."

On this "key task," though, Jacobs gives us little guidance. He recommends becoming "the kind of person who, at least some of the time, cares more about *working toward the truth* than about one's current social position." The worst groups encourage, explicitly or not, their members to value the latter over the former. One can best become the right kind of person, Jacobs says, by surrounding oneself with the right kind of people. "These best people will provide for you models of how to treat those who disagree with them," he writes; they'll be "temperamentally disposed to openness and have habits of listening."

That might be good advice. But of what we hear from "people of goodwill," how do we decide what to accept (at least provisionally, as we remain "disposed to openness")? This is the crux of the problem of how to think, and Jacobs doesn't offer any serious suggestions toward solving it. "We shouldn't expect moral heroism of ourselves," he says finally. "But we can expect to cultivate a more general disposition of skepticism about our own motives and generosity toward the motives of others." Take the ninth item on his "checklist": "Sometimes the 'ick factor' is telling; sometimes it's a distraction from what matters." But how can we tell when our "repulsions," as Jacobs calls them, are helpful and when they are harmful? Skepticism is only a first step in the search for truth. About the next steps, Jacobs is silent.

It turns out that *How to Think* might better be called "How Not to Think." Worse, it might even be called "How to



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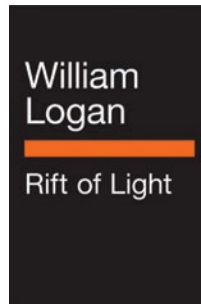
Not Think.” Jacobs puts too much emphasis on the work involved in thinking and not enough on its rewards. Near the book’s end, he quotes extensively the late novelist and essayist David Foster Wallace. The passage is an inspiring discussion of “the Democratic Spirit” and offers a shining example of, as Jacobs’s chapter title puts it, “A Person, Thinking.” But Jacobs ultimately rejects what the reader thought he was celebrating: “Wallace was wrong to say that ‘you have to be willing to look honestly at yourself and at your motives for believing what you believe, and to do it more or less continually.’ You really can’t do that, which, I believe, he discovered: His ceaseless self-examination caused him ceaseless misery and contributed in a major way to his early death.” Wallace killed himself nine years ago, aged 46, after almost a lifetime of battling depression. No one, especially those who weren’t his intimates, can claim to know exactly why. And it’s hard to imagine that the man who declared that “fiction’s about what it is to be a human being” would have been content with a life less examined.

We shouldn’t necessarily settle for one either. Jacobs doesn’t, in the end, tell us “how to think.” But he does astutely identify some of the roadblocks to doing so. “The person who wants to think will have to practice patience and master fear,” he maintains, and he’s right. We believe that our age is a particularly difficult one in which to think—recall that recent events spurred Jacobs to write this book—but we’ve always stumbled on our search for truth, especially when we’ve been unsure even how to go about finding it.

Jacobs quotes T. S. Eliot encapsulating the legacy of the 19th century: “When there is so much to be known, when there are so many fields of knowledge in which the same words are used with different meanings, when everyone knows a little about a great many things, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to know whether he knows what he is talking about or not.” That’s as good a summary of our own time as it is of Eliot’s, as Jacobs points out. Every politician and pundit would agree with the poet, if ever they all sat down and really thought about it. **NR**

The Great Conversation

NICK RIPATRAZONE



Rift of Light, by William Logan
(Penguin, 112 pp., \$18)

FOR years, to be a poet meant to be a critic—more precisely, a “poet-critic.” When T. S. Eliot was not writing “Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood / Teach us to care and not to care,” he was writing of tradition and individual talent, and of the emotional distinctions between Shakespeare and Dante. Matthew Arnold, Ezra Pound, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Adrienne Rich, and Randall Jarrell also practiced this art.

Why did it matter? To be an effective critic meant to read widely—of the past and the present—and with certain discernment. A breadth of reading offered a

The poet-critic knows that the ancient art of poetry is a conversation with tradition, with mysteries handed down from the past.

foundation, an architecture, to the poet’s own work. This is not to say that personal or confessional work is inherently bad, but see what Anne Sexton did in her appropriately titled *Transformations*: “I knew that the voice / of the spirits had been let in— / as intense as an epileptic aura— / and that no longer would I sing / alone.”

The poet-critic knows that this ancient art of poetry is a conversation with tradi-

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tion, with mysteries handed down from the past. We seem to have fewer poet-critics now; among them are Dana Gioia, Michael Robbins, Joan Houlihan, Stephen Burt, and William Logan.

Logan’s erudition has become his literary calling card. *Rift of Light*, his new book of poems, is an intellectual experience. This is a smart book, but the intelligence doesn’t neuter its emotions.

Logan pairs epigraphs that play on the book’s title phrase: George Gissing and William Inghram Russell see “rift of light” as portending both grace and doom. It’s an appropriate opening; Logan’s poems often turn on his ability to become magnificently dark, and yet appealing in his precision. From “Leaf Color”: “A steely torn silver, rusted along the edges; / the faint acidic yellow, like the backwash / of a polluted pond.” Another leaf is natural crimson, like the “false // bonhomie of the maraschino cherry.” He ends with a question: “Was it only the spilled-over, abandoned life / and, from the wastage, the broken buds?”

Logan lingers, watching the world and projecting it back to us, new. On clouds: “That morning, they resembled nothing, // no Rorschach in the sky kept un-empty / for the theologies of vacancy.” On a crow: “With cocked head, / it raked the ground / under one anthracite eye, // a shadow in shadow.” On suffering: “The day a steam bath, all life mildewed in incident.”

What do you get from writing criticism about poetry? You don’t get encyclopedic allusions and forced epigraphs;

you get patience. Reading poems teaches you to slow down in your own poems. Slow means methodical, measured, and focused. Slow doesn’t mean moribund; slow poetry contains the possibility for surprise.

Logan’s pleasures hinge on that capacity to lift an eye, cause a smirk. His poem about Cranach’s Luther portrait contains the lines “The boy monk’s inkblot cloak / swallows him like a python taking a goat.” There’s a poetic education to be had in the density, the mouthful of those

lines. They drag the tongue to the roof of the mouth. They bubble up, send you back to the painting, and make you look harder. Good poets make us see better. I returned to that art and saw through Logan's eyes: "the dull face slope-jawed, bangs unbarbered, long / longing for the tincture of the cell."

Elsewhere, Logan is surprisingly graceful and quiet, as in "The Field," where we follow the narrator past "flowers oily in their despairing freshness" and past the "thumbed portion of stream." We're suspended during some afternoon, "gathering in that field, arguing with that sky, / as if there were nothing to be done." Logan's short poems have the feeling of being shaved down to their best portions; the best ones remain in narrative (there are a few brief poems that feel like the poet joking around; the punchlines don't always land well).

At his best, Logan makes the reader work, but not because of obfuscation. He mixes the lyric with the conversational. I don't mean to draw a line from Eliot to Logan, but "The Waste Land" and "Ash Wednesday" succeed for many reasons, not the least of which is Eliot's ability to shift register and reference. Logan's right there with him, as in the deceptively direct poem "The Mail." The young narrator watches his family's rooster-shaped mailbox, tail "cocked-up, enameled." "Neighbors kept hens; we waited for bills." The narrator's father was a "gentleman / farmer," who mowed a "vacant field" once a year on Labor Day. A veteran, he was looking to live in the country, content to wait out the years, while his anxious son waits for the mailman to arrive. Connecting this with other poems, including "My Father in the Shadows," where "bills layered his desk / like drafts of snow," we get a sense of anxiety, perhaps even darkness. That poem ends with a photo, propped on a desk, of "my mother, feathered hat askew, / grinning like a demon / with a bald baby in her arms." Good collections bounce us back and forth between recurrent themes and images. Logan would give that a nod as a critic as well.

Rift of Light is moving, and moored in tradition—an appropriate work by one of our finest poet-critics, who traces the outlines of our mundane world while "in the air grew / the feathery sound of wings, / like an Annunciation, / among other things." **NR**

Bonnie and Clyde at 50

PETER TONGUETTE

THERE are many ways to make a gangster movie. Francis Ford Coppola puffed up the genre to operatic proportions in *The Godfather* (1972) and its 1974 sequel, an approach subsequently adopted by Brian De Palma in *Scarface* (1983) and Sergio Leone in *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984). Earlier directors—such as Raoul Walsh in *White Heat* (1949) or Joseph H. Lewis in *Gun Crazy* (1950)—instead saw stories of lawlessness primarily as opportunities to present action on screen: Having a couple make a quick exit from a hold-up the way John Dall and Peggy Cummins do in Lewis's masterly *Gun Crazy* is considerably more rousing than having them quarrel during dinner.

The sweep favored by Coppola and the other makers of gangster epics risks glamorizing miscreants.

The least likely approach, however, might be that of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), which relates the misdeeds of 1930s-era bank robber Clyde Barrow (Warren Beatty, doubling as producer) and his main squeeze and associate, Bonnie Parker (Faye Dunaway), with both burlesque and sentiment. In real life, the couple committed murder in addition to robbery before being felled by law enforcement in 1934.

Yes, the sweep favored by Coppola and the other makers of gangster epics risks glamorizing miscreants, and the all-action ethos of Walsh and Lewis could be confused with nihilism. Even so, none of these other films is as deferential to amoral antiheroes as *Bonnie and Clyde*, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. We may be in

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sympathy with Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*, or get a kick out of Cody Jarrett in *White Heat*, but they are hardly presented as saints in wolf's clothing.

By contrast, *Bonnie and Clyde* skirts around the horror wrought by the couple while simultaneously presenting them as objects of pity. Penn achieves this by alternating laughter-inducing scenes—such as the prolonged screaming of Estelle Parsons and a rather brilliant comic vignette featuring Gene Wilder—with oh-so-sincere intimate moments, including the golden-hued encounter between Bonnie and her dear mother.

This combination led to one of the most notorious negative reviews ever penned. *New York Times* film critic Bosley Crowther berated the film for cloaking Parker and Barrow's crimes with light entertainment. Not realizing that he was thrashing a film soon to be christened a classic, Crowther was unsparing. "It is a cheap piece of bald-faced slapstick comedy that treats the hideous depredations of that sleazy, moronic pair as though they were as full

of fun and frolic as the jazz-age cutups in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*," he wrote, adding, "This blending of farce with brutal killings is as pointless as it is lacking in taste."

Alas, Crowther's notice inspired commentary from the likes of Roger Ebert and Pauline Kael. "How do you make a good movie in this country without being jumped on?" Kael asked in *The New Yorker*. "Too many people—including some movie reviewers—want the law to take over the job of movie criticism; perhaps what they really want is for their own criticisms to have the force of law. Such people see *Bonnie and Clyde* as a danger to public morality; they think an audience goes to a play or a movie and takes the actions in it as examples for imitation."

In the short term, Kael's position prevailed: *Bonnie and Clyde* was honored with two Oscar wins out of ten nominations, while Crowther's tenure at the *Old Gray Lady* was finished by year's end. But *Bonnie and Clyde* actually



Gene Hackman, Warren Beatty, and Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)

startles with its acceptance of gangsterism. The film's opening title card about Bonnie establishes its tongue-in-cheek tone: "In 1931 she worked in a café before beginning her career in crime." The dry wording flattens distinctions between civil and criminal society, suggesting that the transition from waiting tables to holding up banks is altogether unremarkable.

Even before we see evidence of Bonnie and Clyde's murderousness, the pair's indifference to property is hard to take. In the scene of their introduction, Bonnie drifts to the window of her room to observe Clyde poking his head in and around her mother's car. As she instantly intuits, he intends to make off with it. "Hey, boy! Whatchyou doing with my mama's car?" Clyde insists he was "thinking about buying me one," but Bonnie knows better: "Bull! You ain't got money for dinner, let alone buy no car," she says, but her manner suggests she is more intrigued than outraged.

The duo's thievery begins in earnest minutes later, when Bonnie eggs on Clyde to demonstrate his criminal bona fides. An easily wounded stripling, Clyde nonetheless marches into a grocery store and departs with a fistful of greenbacks; a warning shot is fired at the proprietor, whose life, at least, is spared. But what about that cash? Will it not be missed?

In a manner that looks ahead to Beatty's far better *Reds* (1981), about American Communist journalist John Reed, Bonnie and Clyde take what they find. ("Hey, that ain't ours!" Bonnie says when Clyde takes off with a car that isn't his, but she soon stops objecting.) One memorable scene occurs after a foreclosed-upon homeowner stumbles on the pair squatting in his old residence. Clyde goes wild, blasting bullets into the sign affixed to the porch ("Property of Midlothian Citizens Bank") and encouraging the kicked-out homeowner to do the same. But is private property less private when belonging to a bank?

In fact, when speaking his immortal line "We rob banks," Beatty subtly, almost devilishly, emphasizes the word "banks," as though the morality of the crime depended on what—or who—is being plundered. During one robbery, Clyde asks an overalls-wearing customer whether a stack of cash is his or the bank's, and upon learning it's the former, the robber goes into Robin Hood mode: "All right, you keep it then." The film asks us to share a felon's indignation.

Penn, who maintained a careful, decidedly un-rowdy tone in his excellent films *The Miracle Worker* (1962) and *Night Moves* (1975), here lacks the requisite directorial distance. When Clyde shoots and then harasses a Texas Ranger—handcuffing him, turning him around by his badge, and lecturing him using the film's increasingly obvious New Deal politics ("You ought to be home protecting the rights of poor folk, not out chasing after us")—Penn does little to communicate the man's terror. Bonnie decides to force the ranger to sit for photos with the gang, proving that the female of the species can be equally malicious, but Penn saves his outrage for the finale: Prior to being punctured with bullets, Bonnie and Clyde make eye contact in a series of knowing looks, as though their ardor justifies their anarchy. As Peter Bogdanovich once aptly observed, "The brutal slow-motion massacre of Bonnie and Clyde was the ultimate (and much-imitated) anti-authoritarian deification."

The film's drowsy sentiment does not extend to the law officers who are killed. Penn is more comfortable with the horde of *Grapes of Wrath* types who attend to a wounded Bonnie and Clyde late in the picture—a helpless collective.

Ironically, Beatty found his greatest artistic success in Robert Altman's knock-about paean to capitalism, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971), which featured the unforgettable sight of the actor listening to Julie Christie outline a brothel's business plan while she puts away a plate of eggs. Later, Beatty embraced law and order, in cartoon form, in *Dick Tracy* (1990). Imagine a version of that strikingly bold, bright film in which "Big Boy" Caprice or Mumbles were the heroes, while Dick Tracy was an anonymous cop! Such is the world *Bonnie and Clyde* asks us to inhabit, leaving us to wonder: Was Bosley Crowther so wrong? **NR**

Film

Lost in Space

ROSS DOUTHAT

HERE is the tragedy of the ever-expanding Star Wars saga, first hinted at by J. J. Abrams's third-trilogy-opening *Force Awakens* two years ago and now clarified definitively by Rian Johnson's follow-up, *The Last Jedi*. In these new movies, Abrams and Lucasfilm and Disney have found exactly what the terrible, dreadful, I-still-can't-believe-how-bad-they-were George Lucas prequels lacked above all: a compelling human portrait of a young Jedi slowly being claimed by the Dark Side, and a compelling, sexually charged relationship with a young woman who tries to draw him back to the light.

But instead of that human drama being embedded in the sweeping story of a civilizational calamity, the fall of an old and corrupted republic, it is embedded in a political-military narrative that at best is derivative and disappointing, and at worst is just infuriating garbage.

This means I don't know exactly how to review *The Last Jedi*, because the contrast between its various elements is so extreme. Unlike *Awakens*, the new movie is not a pure homage or beat-for-beat re-creation; it aspires to be more of a remix than a remake of its original-trilogy counterpart, the dark and glorious *Empire Strikes Back*, and sometimes the remixing process produces interesting set pieces, calls up strong performances, and yields moments of genuine science-fiction beauty. But the rest of the time, basically all the time when the central young characters and a certain famous older one are not on screen, the movie goes in circles, insults our intelligence, copies the worst instincts of the prequels, and makes a mockery of the stakes and triumphs of the original movies.

The character who shows us what Hayden Christensen's awful, whiny Anakin could have been is Kylo Ren (Adam Driver), born Ben Solo, son of Han, and now the pupil of Supreme Leader Snoke (the inevitable Andy Serkis in motion-capture), the deformed

Dark Side-wielding leader of the First Order, which is like the Empire but with . . . okay, fine, it's just the Empire. The character who shows what Natalie Portman's Padme could have been to Anakin, with a rewrite and some Jedi abilities of her own, is Daisy Ridley's Rey, an up-from-nowhere Force prodigy who is searching for her parents; she bonded strangely with Kylo in the last movie and this time finds herself engaged in a Force-enabled long-distance dialogue-cum-courtship, in which she tries to pull him Lightward while feeling pulled to him in other ways.

She's dancing with Ren while being trained, sort of, by Mark Hamill's Luke Skywalker, who lives on a Skellig-like outcropping (complete with fish-faced monks who tend its Jedi temple) on an ocean planet to which he retreated after botching Kylo's training and enabling Snoke's rise. Luke was the most earnest character in the original story, and Hamill the weakest actor of the bunch, so asking him to reinvent the character as a man transformed by age and pessimism seems like a gamble. But it actually pays off; the relational triangle formed by his interactions with Rey and Kylo are as strong as anything yet depicted in the galaxy long ago and far away.

But everything outside the triangle . . . oh, man. The B-plot features Snoke's First Order fleet in pursuit of Leia (Carrie Fisher, R.I.P.), the hotshot pilot Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac), and the ships of the Resistance, which is like the Rebellion except . . . okay, fine, it's just the Rebellion. The C-plot sends Finn (John Boyega), the first movie's ex-stormtrooper turned Resistance hero, and a plucky mechanic named Rose (Kelly Marie Tran) on a mission to a casino planet to find some sort of locksmith (it ends up being Benicio Del Toro) who can release the tracking device the First Order has placed on the Resistance ships.

Their mission is entirely pointless, it resembles the worst CGI-addled sequences in the prequels (culminating in a stampede by a herd of racing animals that are supposed to be gorgeous but look, well, not), and it advances Finn's character development not at all, which is particularly unfortunate because he's set up as Kylo Ren's rival for Rey's affections, and let's just say the chemistry between Finn and Rey would have a tough time lighting a twig on fire on a dry day in the Black Hills.



Daisy Ridley in *Star Wars: Episode VIII—The Last Jedi*

Also, Del Toro is egregiously bad—though he does get off one good line, speaking dismissively of the Resistance–First Order battles: “They blow you up, you blow them up.” Which, on the evidence of the B-plot, seems exactly right: Without explaining why or how, the new movies have basically wiped away all the military victories of the original trilogy and returned us to exactly the same balance of power that existed when we first met Luke and Han and Leia.

The idea is to raise the stakes—*can the Resistance survive?*—but in truth it lowers them; if nothing that happens militarily in these movies matters from one to the next (including the destruction of a huge First Order Death Star . . . er, sorry, Starkiller at the end of *The Force Awakens*, which seems to have barely set back what was supposed to be an Imperial start-up, not a full-fledged empire), why should we care a whit about the latest imitation of the Battles of Hoth or Yavin or Endor that the Disney nostalgia factory conjures up?

The answer is that we shouldn't. As Driver and Ridley prove, with their charisma and their spark, there is still interesting drama to be mined from the story of Force-wielders and their various temptations. But when it comes to the political story that's supposed to explain why the psychodrama of Skywalkers and Solos matters to the whole galaxy, not just to their kith and kin, the new trilogy has completely lost the plot. **NR**

What's In a Name?

MY children attend a typical suburban public high school featuring an atypically beautiful, talented, funny, diverse, and precocious group of kids. With the swirling madness that's permeated American life, these kids actually imbue me with hope for the future.

There's just one tiny problem. I can't remember any of their names. It is, in fact, impossible for me to distinguish one of these young people from another using the labels that have been assigned them by their creative parents. Aaliyah? Adalyn? Allegro? Who knows? (The names, incidentally, have been altered to protect the innocent—primarily myself.) So I am forced to concoct monikers for my children's many associates, such as “the one with the extraordinarily whiny voice,” or “the one who is always reading those weird Japanese comics,” or “the tall one,” and so on.

The failing is mine and mine alone, of course, but I do come with a generational excuse. As was the case with many of you, when I went to high school, American kids were permitted to have one of perhaps six first names—and two of those names were the alternative spellings “Michelle” and “Michele.” As far as I knew, the Baby Boomers tasked with christening Gen Xers might have been the laziest name-givers in history. Because of them, I have met around 2,000 people named John in my life but not a single one named Caspian or Magnus.

My name, David, for instance, was traditionally bestowed to firstborn males in Jewish families in honor of the king of Israel. The results were less than regal, given where I grew up, as I was not merely one of five Davids in my small class but one of three David H's. No Jebadahs. No Harpers. No Augustuses. Lots of Davids. In the decade of the 1970s, nearly 450,000 babies would be named David in the United States. Heck, I've corresponded with two people who share both my first name and my surname. Most kids today will never know such indignity.

But it turns out I can't blame our parents alone, as naming habits have been increasingly individualized and varied over the past 100 years. From the 1880s to the 1950s, the names John, William, James, George, Charles, Robert, and Joseph (and, at the tail end, Michael) dominated the top ten for boys' names. There was rarely any genuine variation to the list other than the names' occasionally switching spots in the rankings.

Nowadays, according to Nameberry, a site that concerns itself with this vital topic, some of the most popular names for boys last year were Atticus, Asher, Milo, and Silas. Three of the top ten names of 2017 had changed from the year before. Some of the biggest movers were Kai, Liam, Cassius, Finn, and Ryker.

Mr. Harsanyi is a senior editor of the Federalist.

While in the 1950s around 25 of the most popular baby-girl names were used by roughly half the population, these days you'd have to include over 100 names to cover 25 percent of American baby girls, and those names are constantly fluctuating.

There are a number of reasons for this trend. Obviously, some names enjoy cyclical popularity. I've begun to notice kids' sporting names that had been, in my lifetime at least, reserved for octogenarians. My instinct is to put “Aunt” in front of names like Olivia (the most popular baby name for girls in 2017), Agnes, or Beatrice.

Another driver of variation is that fewer men are being named after their fathers. While there were once many juniors, III's, and IV's in areas of the United States that embraced “honor cultures,” today this naming convention is becoming rarer in all parts of the country.

The diversity in names can also be chalked up to an influx of immigrants who come here from areas outside of Europe. Anglicizing European names is unproblematic when compared with Anglicizing names imported from other areas of the world. Habits have changed, as well. While a generation of Jewish immigrants that came before me took on deliberately American-sounding names—Seymour, Morris, and such—today newcomers are more prone to keep their culture's conventional names. There's nothing inherently wrong with any of those tendencies.

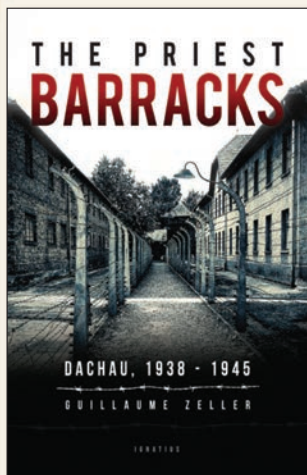
On the other hand, some sociologists argue that names transmit important social information to a wider world. So, for instance, while in the past we sought to associate our offspring with blessed saints, historic personalities, national leaders, and revered family members, today some of us name our kids Rumi because that's what Beyoncé and Jay-Z came up with for their daughter.

Striving for uniqueness—and I admit that I am somewhat guilty of this; who doesn't want his kids to be special?—rather than embracing tradition is a reflection of contemporary attitudes. It's difficult to avoid the fact that our progressively anarchistic naming conventions reflect a collective narcissism. In the past, parents were concerned about their children's fitting in or carrying on a legacy. Today, there is strong emphasis on standing out. A weird name is an easy, if often lazy, way to make that happen.

Don't get me wrong. In many ways the diversity is pleasing. If you feel compelled to name your child after a New York borough, or fauna, or something Gaelic, or maybe something that makes us think of a blacksmith in a New England town circa 1620, go for it. I mean, we should envy the Xaviers and Logans of this world. No decent scriptwriter would name a superhero Dave, after all. But sometimes, when I'm flailing to recollect one of my children's friends' names, I worry that maybe we're losing something important as well. **NR**

Striving for uniqueness rather than embracing tradition is a reflection of contemporary attitudes.

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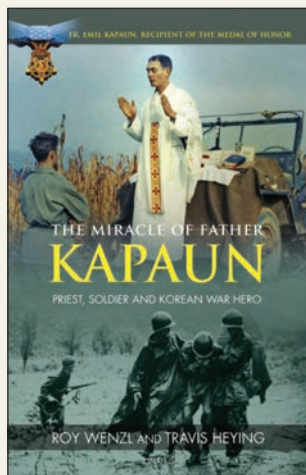
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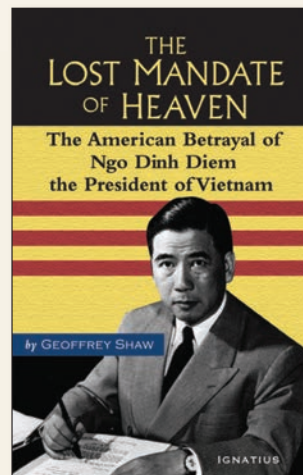


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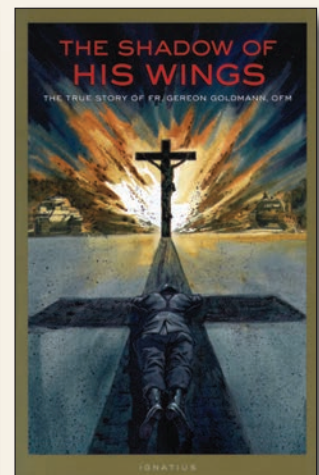


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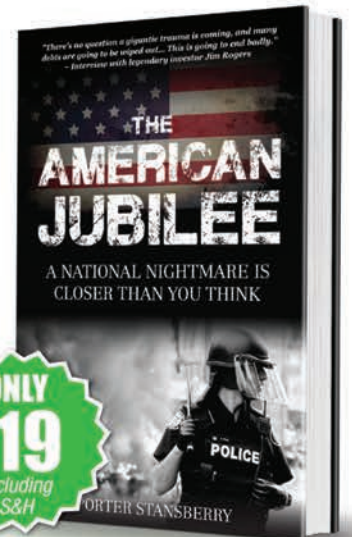
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