

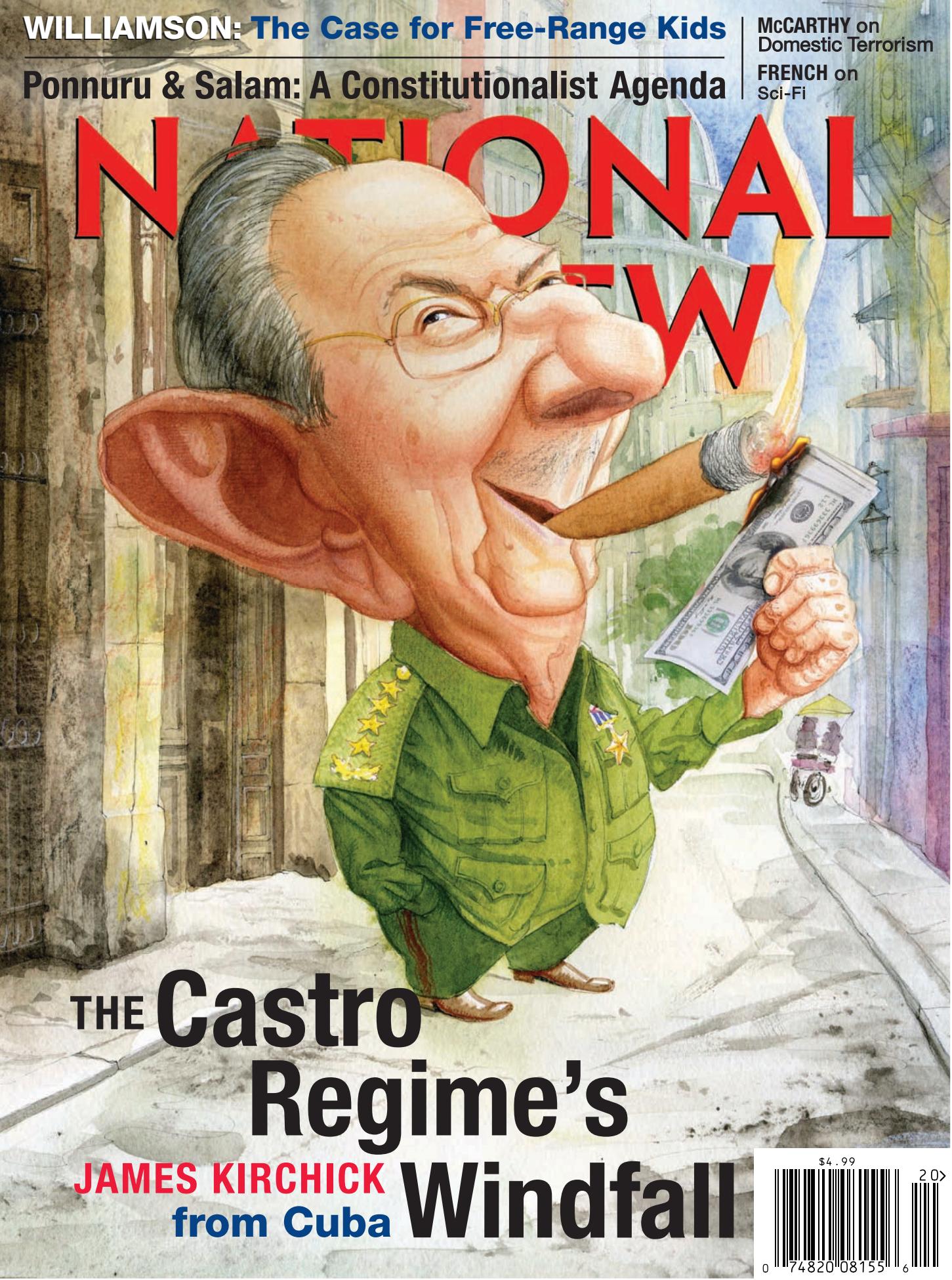
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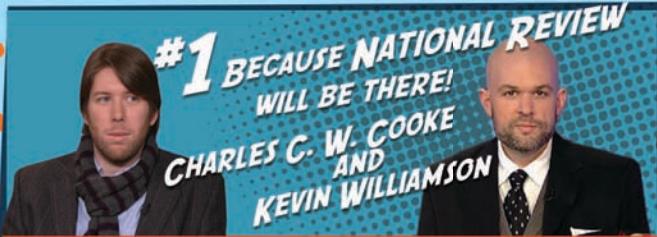
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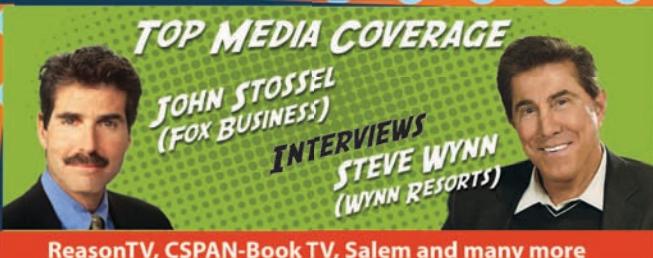
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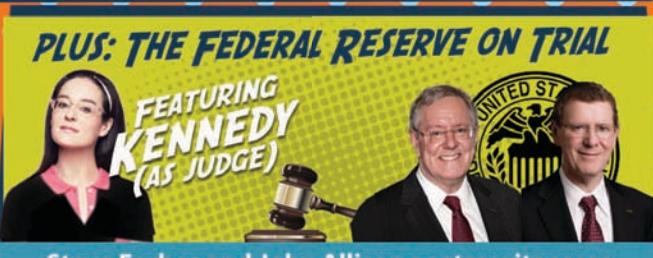
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The relaxed travel policies, the pending opening of embassies, the removal of Cuba from the State Department's list of terrorism sponsors, the restoration of limited economic activity—all longtime goals of the Cuban regime—were declared without any corresponding demands that Havana change its conduct. *James Kirchick*



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MAY 18 ISSUE; PRINTED APRIL 30

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MAIN NUMBER 212-679-7330

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES 386-246-0118
WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226
ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
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The Germ of Corruption

In his review of my book *A Republic No More: Big Government and the Rise of American Political Corruption* (April 20), Matthew Spalding states that I offer a “neo-anti-federalist account” of corruption, and that the Bank of the United States heralded an era of “living constitutionalism,” facilitating a “slippery slope” of “rampant corruption.” This inaccurate characterization elides key points of my theory and ignores most of my research.

The Anti-Federalists thought the new government was too powerful and removed from the people, whereas I am concerned with the process by which government authority increases. This self-consciously Madisonian approach is hardly the stuff of Brutus or Federal Farmer. At one point I even recommend Hamilton’s quasi-monarchical plan, given the powers the government eventually acquired.

Moreover, my treatment of the Bank explicitly avoids constitutional hermeneutics. My modest point is that because the Framers did not anticipate the Bank, they did not build institutions to ensure it would behave well. Even so, I aver that the Bank was hardly corrupt in the grand scheme, and I celebrate Hamilton’s “sound and sure management.” It is a relatively benign metaphor for my theory: an early indication of a process that would eventually cause problems.

Per Spalding, I see the Framers as the “fathers of big government.” I would never make such a claim. My analysis of the early Republic has less to do with the (small) size of government or the (modest) level of corruption; rather, it outlines the early development of a methodology that, “perfected” over time, would eventually yield corruption.

The early Republic takes up only about a tenth of my book, which focuses primarily on the progressive era and beyond. This is when government truly broke free of its restraints. Spalding glosses over the bulk of this research and misunderstands the role that the early Republic plays in my analysis.

Jay Cost

MATTHEW SPALDING RESPONDS: Jay Cost’s fine book is best when it describes the corruptions of the Gilded Age and the rise and proliferation of modern liberalism and interest-group politics. But a key question for both history and future policy is, How did we get here? Cost is right that the progressive movement was “a reimagining of American republicanism,” and what comes after the New Deal is “an inflection point” in the story. But throughout he presents Hamilton’s bank and its early embrace of expansive government as “a microcosm of the argument in this book,” which leaves the general narrative on a downward slope from the very beginning. This suggests that an extended but limited republic may not be possible after all, just as the Anti-Federalists predicted. The alternative is a fundamental break in thought and practice between the Founders’ constitutionalism and the progressive project. This analysis also helps us see the possibility of a Madisonian solution to our current dilemmas rather than accept an inherent corruption in republican government that is here to stay.

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



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The Week

■ When Clinton became secretary of state and said she would build stronger relations with foreign countries, she really meant it.

■ On the morning of April 12, Freddie Gray was arrested after fleeing from police near the Gilmor Homes housing project in Baltimore. He was hauled into a police van to be transported to the local police station. When he arrived, less than half an hour later, he required urgent medical treatment. He died at Baltimore's Shock Trauma Center one week later, his spine "80 percent severed" at the neck, according to his family's attorney. How that happened is the outstanding question that has much of Baltimore's black community outraged—and, indeed, it is difficult to envision a scenario in which the police were not, at best, grossly negligent. (Requests by Gray, during his arrest, for medical attention were ignored by the arresting officers.) As in Ferguson and Staten Island and elsewhere, however, the Black Lives Matter crowd had no interest in allowing the investigation to run its course, and, predictably, peaceful protests did not remain so. On Saturday, April 25, hundreds of protesters shattered storefronts, threw trash cans into police cruisers, and brawled in the streets, while a mob of "youths" assaulted a Russia Today camerawoman and robbed her of her handbag. Two days later, the city was engulfed in riots; stores were looted and burned, and the police force was beaten into retreat. Such violence has nothing to do with Freddie Gray, with "anger," or with "justice." It is "rioting mainly for fun and profit," in Edward Banfield's famous phrase. And it's no coincidence that it is happening in a city ruled for nearly half a century by Democrats. Look on your works, ye mighty, and despair.

■ President Obama responded to the rioting in Baltimore by condemning the rioters, calling for criminal-justice reform, lamenting such problems as fatherlessness, and then, in a long riff, urging Americans to do some "soul-searching." We know how to fix Baltimore and other troubled communities, he said, and would make the large investments necessary if we saw their children as ours. This is, of course, delusional. If Obama knows how to revivify marriage or compensate for its decline, he should share his insight. In reality, his confidence that he has the answers, and that the rest of us do too but are too callous to act on them, is a reminder that his worst personal failing is the same as his worst ideological one: vanity.

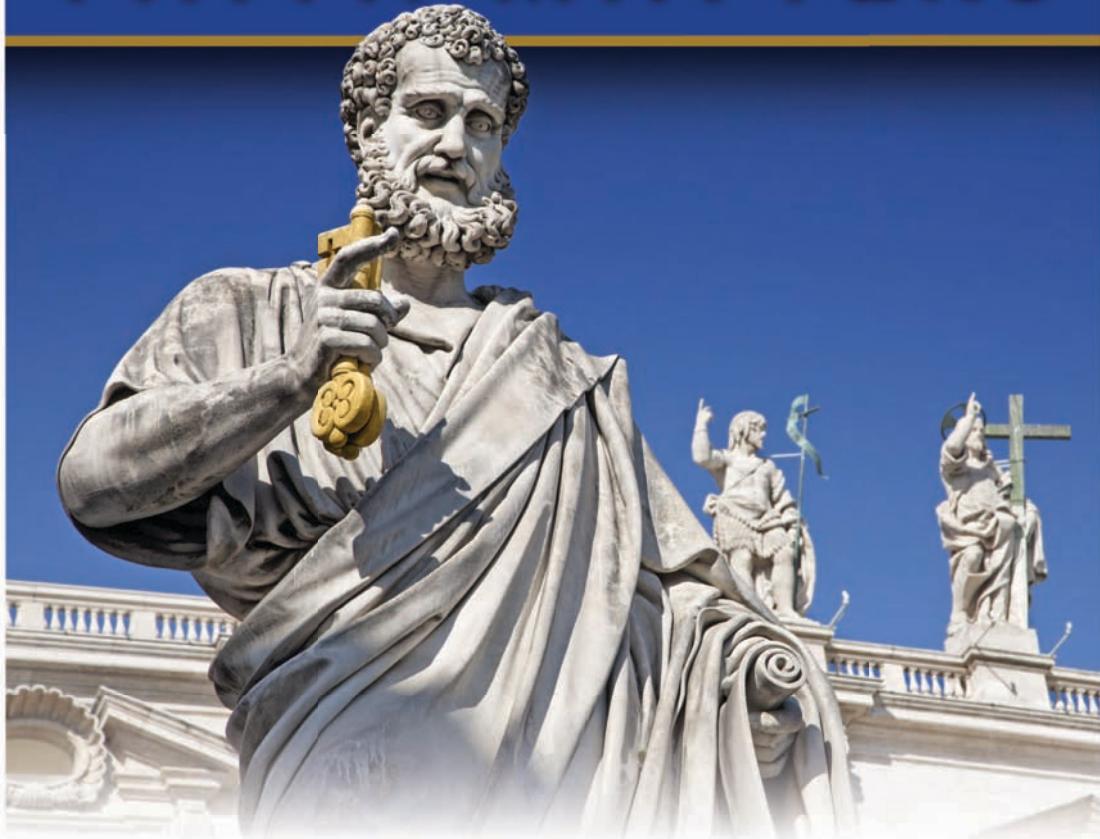
■ Everyone supports "marriage equality," including opponents of same-sex marriage. Americans gay and straight have all lived under exactly the same marriage rules since the founding of the Republic. When the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the same-sex-marriage cases, then, it wasn't considering "marriage equality" but rather "marriage redefinition." Observers nearly unanimously expect



the Court to rule that all states must recognize same-sex marriage. That expectation ought to offend Justice Kennedy, since it assumes that all his rhetoric about the dignity of states two years ago—when he voted to strike down the federal government's definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman for the purposes of federal programs—was for show.

■ The Democrats have been working overtime to gut the First Amendment. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the presumptive Democratic front-runner for the 2016 presidential nomination, has endorsed this effort. The Democrats have repeatedly attempted to use federal law to stifle the political speech of activist groups and independent parties, and the Supreme Court has repeatedly told them that they may not do this, most notably in the *Citizens United* case—a case that turned on the question whether people showing a film critical of Hillary Rodham Clinton should be prosecuted as criminals for doing so. The courts keep telling the Democrats that the First Amendment exists primarily to protect political speech, but the Democrats seem to think that it's about pornography, and keep trying to criminalize the act of criticizing politicians in unapproved-of ways. That culminated last year in Harry Reid's attempt to pass a constitutional amendment that would exempt political speech from First Amendment protections—which is to say, that would effectively repeal the First Amendment—an effort that received the support of

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every Democrat in the Senate. Mrs. Clinton makes it official: The Democrats are now an anti-First Amendment party.

■ Marco Rubio and Scott Walker traded shots, with Rubio saying that governors could not be prepared to handle foreign policy and Walker noting that this standard would have disqualified Ronald Reagan. It's not the first time Walker has cited Reagan in making the case for his foreign-policy credentials: He has also said that his battles with the unions proved his readiness just as Reagan's firing of the striking air-traffic controllers showed he was serious. Walker's response nicely shows that Rubio's claim is too categorical. But Reagan was more like Rubio than like Walker in one respect: He had spent years thinking and talking about foreign policy; the Soviets already knew what he thought before they were sure he would follow through. If Walker knows what he thinks about foreign policy, he should share it with the public—which would also give Rubio something better to talk about than the candidates' résumés.

■ Walker has not come out "against legal immigration," as some reports have put it. He has said that he thinks immigration policy should be set with an eye on its impact on wages, and should welcome more newcomers when labor markets are strong than when they are weak. He has said, as well, that he is listening to Senator Jeff Sessions (R., Ala.), the leading congressional advocate of lower legal-immigration levels. Walker is taking a lot of flak for these comments, some of it from Republicans. But his general statement is inarguable—what's the case for ignoring labor markets?—and the implied position is reasonable. Immigration increases national wealth, but most of that increase accrues, naturally, to the immigrants themselves. The average impact on people already here is negligible.



When more low-skilled immigrants come here, however, people in low-wage jobs—many of them immigrants themselves—come under more economic stress. In this way and others, high levels of immigration can retard assimilation. These points may explain why 39 percent of Americans in a recent Gallup poll favored reducing immigration. Only 7 percent wanted more. Yet the "comprehensive immigration reform" that all the great and good in Washington have been seeking for years includes much higher immigration levels. It is a mark of how out of touch American elites are that, in all those years, that feature of the plan has occasioned less debate than Walker's remarks have in a few weeks.

■ Ian Reisner, a strong supporter of Israel, held a "fireside chat" in his Manhattan duplex for presidential candidate Ted Cruz, another strong supporter of Israel. Politics as usual? No

WALKER: RICHARD ELLIS/CONTRIBUTOR; LYNCH: MARK WILSON/STAFF

way—because Reisner is gay, while Cruz wants the Supreme Court to let states decline to recognize gay marriage. The gay Left jumped on Reisner—a Facebook call to boycott his businesses (he is a hotelier) got 8,200 likes. Reisner promptly crumbled ("I am shaken to my bones. . . . I made a terrible mistake"). The new Stalinism politicizes the political, and is utterly unforgiving. All that is needed to complete the picture is a photo of the fireside chat, photoshopped to remove Cruz.

■ On April 27, Loretta Lynch was sworn in as the first female African-American attorney general in U.S. history—a triumphal moment for those who care passionately for such mile-



stones. Far more important was the swearing in of an attorney general who declared in hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee that she had no concerns about the constitutionality of, or the alarming precedent set by, President Obama's November executive amnesty, and that she would happily give her imprimatur as America's chief law-enforcement officer to its implementation. Ten Republican senators, including Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, voted to confirm Lynch. Even Republicans who voted against her made a point of saying that she was qualified for the job: a testament to their unclear thinking, since adherence to the Constitution is among the most important qualifications an attorney general can have.

■ Obamacare was carelessly designed and lawlessly implemented. A Supreme Court decision imposing legal limits on Obamacare this summer could lead to millions of people seeing their premiums rise or their coverage disappear. Senate Republicans do not believe that these people should pay the price for the administration's recklessness, so Senator Ron Johnson (R., Wis.) and 29 of his colleagues have introduced legislation to extend subsidies to the affected people until 2017, when a new president could revisit health-care policy. At the same time, the Republican bill would eliminate some of Obamacare's regulations. That's not a bad place to end up—but it might be a bad place to start. We think Republicans would be better off allowing states to opt out of Obamacare. Extend subsidies, yes, but let people use them outside of Obamacare's exchanges. And let these states convert most of their Medicaid funds into cash assistance for low-income people buying regular health insurance. Five years after Obama-

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care became law, Republicans have an opportunity to stand, at long last, for a model of health-care policy that puts markets and states, rather than the federal government, at the center of the action.

■ Democrats finally surrendered in a standoff over bipartisan legislation intended to toughen penalties against human trafficking. They had filibustered the bill because it included a provision that would prevent money from a victims'-compensation fund from going to abortion services; they contended that this was an expansion of Hyde-amendment precedent that generally bars funding for abortion. As a practical matter, it wasn't, but the abortion lobby, presumably, was worried about legislative penumbras. Both parties finally agreed to fund health services for victims from other, existing federal funding that is already subject to the Hyde Amendment, and to restrict the new victims' fund to non-health services. Thus, no (meaningless) expansion of Hyde precedent, and (meaningfully) no more money for abortion. It was a small victory for Republicans, and a reminder that picking their battles shrewdly on life issues can force Democrats to defend a decidedly unpopular position.

■ Standardized tests in the schools can serve useful roles, especially in letting parents, voters, and policymakers know how well schools are doing. But testing can be taken too far, as well, and many parents have come to believe that schools are making that error as part of their states' implementation of Common Core. Many parents are opting out of tests for their kids in New York and New Jersey. Much of the unhappiness appears to stem from a sense that the testing regime, like Common Core generally, was adopted without input from them. That sense is justified. Common Core resulted from an elite consensus, not a public debate, and solidified because the Obama administration made federal funding and regulatory waivers contingent on its adoption. Supporters of the tests are now lashing out at the opt-out parents, calling them irrational and enemies of civil rights (on the theory that it is harder to address failing schools without widespread testing). Tests show whether learning is taking place; Common Core's supporters are failing theirs.



JOHN W. ADAMSON/STRINGER

■ As an Army general, David Petraeus was a hero of the Iraq War. As CIA director, he had an affair with his biographer and gave her classified information. With FBI investigators and others, he was apparently untruthful. He has now gotten off with a slap on the wrist: two years' probation and a \$100,000 fine (which Petraeus, who has landed handsomely in the private sector, can easily afford). He said, "I now look forward to moving on with the next phase of my life and to continuing to serve our great

nation as a private citizen." We trust he will do this well. And who among us is unspotted? Also, his Army service was stellar, even invaluable. Still: The charge made by MoveOn.org, the left-wing organization, in 2007 has a creepy ring now. That charge was "General Betray Us."

■ In Washington, D.C., residents who wish to exercise their right to own a firearm are subjected to an absurdly draconian permitting process, and then to a set of harsh, often irrational, restrictions that govern which models they may own in their homes. These rules, however, do not apply to members of Congress, who may possess and transport whatever guns they please. When Representative Ken Buck (R., Colo.) was recently seen holding an AR-15 in his Capitol Hill office, onlookers reasonably wondered whether he had broken the law. But the Metropolitan police were swift to confirm that he had not, and to note that the rules don't apply to the lawmakers who wrote them. The District's gun laws are thus a double offense against republican government.

■ A deranged woman named Dynel Lane lured Michelle Wilkins to her home and cut her unborn child, Aurora, from her womb. Aurora died, but under Colorado law an assault that results in an unborn child's death does not count as a homicide. The Colorado legislature is aiming to change that and join the federal government and 37 other states in recognizing that unborn children can be victims of crime. The abortion lobby is resisting. In the *New York Times*, one opponent of the law opined that the "core harm" of crimes like Lane's is that "reproductive freedom is trampled." If Wilkins is like most victims of such crimes, she probably takes a clearer view of the crime against her and her daughter. So should the law.

■ In California, the health committee of the state assembly recently passed a bill that would require staff at crisis-pregnancy centers to tell clients how they can get state-funded abortions. Eighty witnesses testified against the proposed legislation. Federal courts have struck down similar laws in New York, Texas, and Maryland. Jor-El Godsey of Heartbeat International, a pro-life group, notes the lack of evidence that clients of pregnancy centers in California have been harmed. He suggests that one motive behind the bill is to make the centers spend time and money defending themselves in court. As usual, there seems to be only one choice that pro-choicers are pro.

■ As the American Civil Liberties Union is demonstrating anew. When some 60,000 unaccompanied minors poured across America's southern border last year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops took seriously Christ's call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and harbor the harborless, partnering with the federal government to tend to the least of these. But no good deed goes unpunished. In April, the ACLU filed suit, seeking to end the partnership because Catholic agencies do not offer contraception or abortions to unaccompanied minors in their care. This lawsuit is not unprecedented: In 2009, the ACLU sued the Department of Health and Human Services for contracting with the USCCB to provide help to victims of human trafficking. The ACLU opposed the bishops

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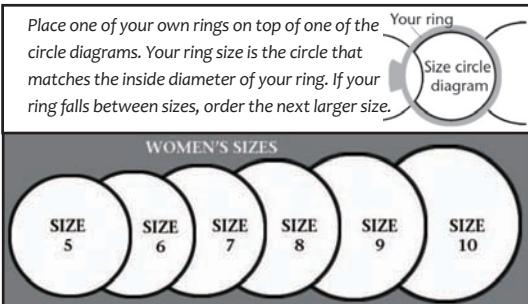
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on the same grounds. Its stand has nothing to do with liberty, and less with compassion.

■ The full Senate has taken up legislation, known as the Corker-Menendez bill, that would require President Obama to submit a nuclear deal with Iran to Congress. The problem, and the reason the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed it unanimously and President Obama promised he would sign it: The current bill would effectively require a two-thirds majority to reject a deal. That risks making a congressional failure to reach that high threshold look like a tacit endorsement of a deal. So what to do? The Senate should consider strengthening the bill by passing amendments that require any deal with Iran to include certain reasonable measures, such as unfettered inspections access and only phased relaxation of sanctions. Perhaps that will send a message to Iran that the West will not be as pliant as Obama would like it to be. The virtue of the Corker bill is that it would at least force President Obama to submit the text of a deal to Congress, which he had hoped to avoid. But Congress should insist on more: The Iranians shouldn't be the only ones to win concessions from Obama.



■ Over and over, President Obama has said that Ali Khamenei, the “supreme leader” of Iran, has issued a fatwa that prohibits Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. Trustworthy authorities say that there is no such fatwa. If there is no such fatwa, Obama should stop proclaiming the existence of one. If there is such a fatwa—what are we negotiating about? Is the Iranian government defying its supreme leader? Someone, preferably the U.S. president, should clear this up.

■ In the aftermath of a drone attack that inadvertently killed two hostages—an American and an Italian—commentators immediately decried American “failures” in the drone war, thus suggesting that anything but the most surgical strike is unacceptable. This is a dangerous notion, one that is incompatible with the laws of war. When terrorists hide among civilians and surround themselves with human shields, their actions make civilian deaths inevitable. To avoid those deaths at all costs would tie the hands of our men and women in uniform, empower terrorists, and cost American lives. Americans weep for the lost hostages and their families, but our mourning must turn not into self-doubt but into a renewed resolve to find and kill terrorists—no matter how, or behind whom, they hide.

■ The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a proposed trade pact, is being threatened by demands that measures intended to curb Chinese currency manipulation be inserted into the deal. This is curious for many reasons, not least of which is that China is not a party to the TPP, and that, of the pact’s potential sig-

natories—which include Canada, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand—the most significant currency manipulator is the United States, which through quantitative easing has exnihilated digital dollars equivalent almost to the GDP of Japan, another TPP party. One almost suspects—is it possible?—that Beijing’s monetary policy is not the real issue here. Experts disagree about the extent and significance of Chinese efforts to keep the renminbi cheap relative to the dollar, thereby boosting Chinese exports at the expense of Chinese consumers. But there is no disagreement about the fact that the left wing of the Democratic party hates trade pacts categorically on ideological grounds. Thus Senator Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) is on the warpath against TPP, while Hillary Rodham Clinton, hoping to split the difference between the anti-TPP Warren camp and the pro-TPP White House, is walking sideways away from a deal she strongly supported until the day before yesterday. The Democrats’ retreat into naked xenophobia has been something to behold, but playing the “Yellow Peril” card when China’s not even part of the deal? That’s new.

■ Stalin was wrong: The recent drowning of more than 900 migrants fleeing to Europe in a boat that capsized in the Mediterranean is more a tragedy than a statistic. Regrettably, statistics do, however, affect decisions that Europe and the West must make about mass illegal immigration. If the 900 were the forerunners of more hundreds or even thousands, Europe and the world could make reasonable provision for receiving them. It is because they may be the forerunners of millions that the West must resolve to prevent further influx. Relatively stable countries should agree on specific numbers of political refugees to whom they will grant asylum. Apart from that, they should make it unmistakably clear that no illegal immigrant will be admitted under any circumstances and that those who make it halfway will be returned to the countries from which they embarked. It sounds harsh, but anything short of that measure is incentive for desperately poor people to take the terrible risk of setting sail in unreliable craft.

■ The PEN American Center is giving its annual free-speech award to *Charlie Hebdo*, the French satirical newspaper whose staff was massacred by Islamists in Paris. This has, remarkably, led to protests, with six writers—Peter Carey, Michael Ondaatje, Francine Prose, Teju Cole, Rachel Kushner, and Taiye Selasi—withdrawing from the awards gala. Kushner, hilariously, cited the newspaper’s “intolerance” for her decision: *Charlie Hebdo*’s “intolerance” was expressed through cartoons of dubious taste, which were met with intolerance of a rather more robust sort. Meanwhile, the cartoonist Garry Trudeau dismissed *Charlie Hebdo* as an example of “hate speech,” declared that free speech is “its own kind of fanaticism,” and blamed the murdered for having “brought a world of pain to France.” PEN calls its prize the “Courage” award—better that these supine members of the literary establishment stay away. Far away.

■ Speaking of Rachel Kushner: We found uniquely nauseating Ms. Kushner’s valentine to Cuban dictator (ahem, “presi-

dent") Raúl Castro in *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People" issue. Kushner, whose qualification for estimating the Cuban leader is having written a reasonably successful novel about Cuba a few years ago, neglected to mention the dissidents daily tortured on the island, or the gulag archipelago where that torture occurs. But she did make sure to note Cuba's "main achievements, such as education and universal health care," the "insulting, cruel, and utterly failed 50-year U.S. embargo," and the prospect of "the destabilizing influx of foreign capital," now that the U.S. and Cuba have reached a "historic rapprochement." Only a true leftist could look on Cuba and declare the most urgent concern the possibility of gentrification.

■ President Obama is determined to normalize relations with the Castro dictatorship in Cuba. Naturally, the Castros have some conditions. One of those conditions is that Cuba be removed from the State Department's list of terror sponsors. Obama has obligingly moved to do this. Does Cuba deserve the removal? Have the Castros repented? They support the FARC in Colombia, ETA in Spain, paramilitaries in Venezuela, and other such actors. They harbor a man who plotted to kill Álvaro Uribe, the former president of Colombia. They were recently caught smuggling arms to North Korea. Even more recently, they were caught smuggling arms from China. They harbor some 70 American

fugitives, one of whom is among the FBI's ten most-wanted terrorists. We could go on. The point is, the Castros have not repented or reformed. Obama is simply determined to romance them.

■ The massacre of up to a million and a half Armenians 100 years ago was not the first ethnic cleansing of Christians in the Middle East, but it was the grossest in modern times; ISIS is doing its best to emulate it now. Armenians worldwide insist on calling it "genocide," as if this were a post-graduate degree in suffering. The Young Turks who tried to save the Ottoman Empire did not start out wishing to slaughter Armenians, but after rushing into World War I they willed that result, and many of the Armenians' neighbors threw themselves into the bloodletting. Ancient communities were wiped out; survivors had to change their names and their religion. One good consequence of Recep Erdogan's campaign to remake Turkey in his own image was his willingness to nod to Armenian suffering, though as the centennial approached he reverted to denial. Acknowledgment cannot bring back the dead, but modern Armenians deserve it and modern Turks would benefit from offering it.

■ "Do as I say, not as I do" has long been a progressive mantra, but rarely has the chasm between the Left's piety and the Left's behavior been as poignantly exposed as it was in April,

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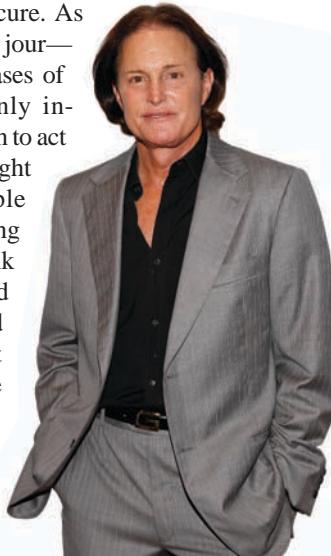
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in which month NATIONAL REVIEW discovered that more of MSNBC's rabble-rousing hosts are behind on their taxes, making four in total. According to the State of New York, liens have been leveled against Touré Neblett (\$59,000), Melissa Harris-Perry (\$70,000), and Joy Reid (\$5,000). Al Sharpton, meanwhile, owes almost \$4.5 million. When this crew says taxes are too low, perhaps they're generalizing from experience.

■ Bruce Jenner won the 1976 Olympic gold medal in the decathlon, and a place on the Wheaties box. More recently and dubiously, he married into the Kardashian clan. Now he has announced that he is a woman. He has had minor cosmetic surgery and expects to adopt new pronouns and a new name soon. There are people so cross-wired by nature that they feel they are in the wrong body; the desire to remake one's gender, however, is often a mask for extreme unhappiness or madness, which no change of wardrobe or genitals can cure. As trans becomes the flavor du jour—gay is so 20th-century—cases of gender confusion will only increase. Encouraging children to act on these impulses is the height of irresponsibility: People should not think of changing sexes before they can drink or drive. Adults will find doctors to supply every need and cater to every whim. But let them read Horace before they take their hormones: You may drive out Nature with a pitchfork, yet she still will hurry back.



■ NPR's Ira Glass recently declared Shakespeare to be "unrelatable." If he were in college today, he would likely be spared the bother of trying to relate. A survey of 52 top-rated American colleges and universities shows that only a widely assorted four—Wellesley, UCLA, the Naval Academy, and Harvard—require English majors to take a course in Shakespeare. To be sure, some colleges feel a Shakespeare requirement would be superfluous, like requiring poetry majors to smoke Gitanes; others include the Bard in required survey courses, or strongly recommend a Shakespeare course without making it mandatory. But too many English departments now have requirements like those of Northwestern, which make no mention of Shakespeare but include "one course in Transnationalism and Textual Circulation and one course in Identities, Communities, and Social Practice." In the bad old patriarchal days, English departments didn't care whether Shakespeare was relatable or not; you read it because it was the foundation for centuries of classic English literature. Nowadays, evidently, that's considered a bad thing.

■ Former Columbia student Paul Nungesser is suing the school, and good on him. Nungesser was accused of raping another student, and was exonerated, the accusation appearing

to be a fiction of a piece with the rape hoaxes seen of late at other campuses. His accuser, Emma Sulkowicz, embarked on a theatrical campaign to ruin Nungesser's life, and did so with the effective sponsorship of Columbia, which blessed her protest—carrying a mattress around on her back like Christ with His cross—as approved coursework, and which published material that depicted Nungesser as a rapist, though he was acquitted by a campus tribunal; Sulkowicz, perhaps conscious of the fact that lying in court is more consequential than lying on campus, declined to make a criminal complaint. Subsequently released e-mails and social-media messages—with at least one declaration of love from the purported victim to the man she says forcibly sodomized her, along with an invitation to "chill" and a great deal of small talk—show Nungesser and Sulkowicz maintaining a close, affectionate relationship after the alleged sexual assault. Nungesser is charging gender-based defamation and harassment, in an effort to make Columbia live up to its own pieties.

■ To peruse the prospectuses of America's many liberal-arts colleges is to be invited into a world of learning, of open-mindedness, and of rambunctious debate. The reality, alas, is a long way from the promise. In April the mere presence of a dissenting voice on campus was enough to send some students into paroxysms. At Oberlin and at Georgetown, the visit of the "factual feminist," Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute, prompted the creation of "safe spaces" into which those who disagreed fled. Outside the lecture hall, protesters called Sommers names and accused her of being an "apologist" for rapists; inside, they interrupted her, and some taped their mouths shut in dissent—a reflection of their conviction that, by speaking to a voluntary crowd, she had "silenced" them. And, of course, silencing people is the protesters' job.

■ In a show of exquisite sensitivity joined to galloping imagination, students at Stevenson College at the University of California, Irvine, reportedly protested that Mexican food was served at an "Intergalactic" campus party. "The program planners made a poor decision when choosing to serve a Mexican food buffet during a program that included spaceships and 'aliens,'" Carolyn Golz, a college administrator, explained in an apology e-mailed to students. Because "this incident caused harm within our community," she would "require cultural competence training for Programs staff." She was "working closely" with the coordinator for diversity and inclusion "to continue to increase the cultural intelligence (CQ) of our staff." Concerned students were directed to the office of counseling and psychological services as well as to a couple of offices whose names included the words "diversity," "inclusion," "bias," and "hate." No word yet on whether the college has plans for a human-rights conference where the food catered will be Chinese-Cuban.

■ Johns Hopkins University had no apparent plans to lease space in a mixed-use development, currently under construction, to a Chick-fil-A franchise, but that did not deter the student-government association from declaring against the possibility. In a resolution passed by a vote of 18–8, they noted that Dan Cathy, president and CEO of the fast-food chain, opposes same-sex marriage. Somewhere between the parts about "a

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safe, supportive environment" and being "subjected to micro-aggression," the resolution included the accusation that Cathy "has publicly stated divisive statements." The students thus prevented themselves from ever having to seek a "safe space" from politically incorrect chicken sandwiches and waffle fries.

■ A hundred years have passed since British and Allied troops landed at Gallipoli, a bleak shore on the Dardanelles. Turkey had made the fateful decision to side with Germany in World War II, and this campaign was intended to knock it out. The incompetence of the admirals and generals in command was matched by the bravery and endurance of the men. Led by German officers and Mustapha Kemal, the future president of his country, the Turks held their ground. Trench warfare and hand-to-hand fighting over a period of eight months left more than 34,000 British, and about 87,000 Turks, dead. In addition, almost 9,000 Australians and 3,000 New Zealanders were killed, so high a number that the British have been accused of callousness toward the Anzacs, as they then began to be known. Gallipoli has numerous gravestones and the Anzac Memorial. For this centenary, tens of thousands came to remember the fallen, and reports quote one of them expressing what has been something of a general view: "All those brave lads who sacrificed their lives at the behest of Britain." At one of the several church services held there, Tony Abbott, Australia's prime minister, spoke for many when he said that the "baptism of fire" had given the nation its identity. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was long held responsible for Gallipoli, which could have altered the course of history by putting an end to his career.

■ The sesquicentennial of the Civil War has ended. Previous commemorations brought presidents to Gettysburg, hoping no doubt to share Lincoln's luster: Woodrow Wilson spoke at the 50th anniversary, and FDR at the 75th; for the 100th, President Kennedy was in Europe, though he had toured the battlefield earlier that year. President Obama did not speak at the 150th anniversary of Gettysburg, though he did something equally meaningful, awarding a belated Medal of Honor to First Lieutenant Alonzo Cushing, killed on Cemetery Ridge while helping to repel Pickett's charge. In "Little Gidding," T. S. Eliot wrote of the English Civil War that "we cannot restore old policies." But this must not be true of a nation founded on principles, as the United States is. Many of our struggles, from daily politics to civil strife, have been over those principles and how they should guide us now. Alonzo Cushing and hundreds of thousands of other men gave their lives for them; keep them bright in the new millennium.

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PETER SCHWEIZER, author of the forthcoming book *Cinton Cash*, did the country a favor by delving seriously into the foreign money sloshing around the Clinton Foundation. Schweizer's story was picked up, pre-publication, by the *New York Times*, which delved into the matter as well, adding details of its own and giving the story the credibility it might have lacked with the rest of the media.



Peter Schweizer

During Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, the State Department okayed a deal whereby a Russian company acquired a majority interest in Uranium One, a Canadian firm that owned a string of uranium mines stretching from Wyoming to Kazakhstan (the American mines triggered U.S. oversight). Uranium One executives gave the Clinton Foundation millions over the years—not all of it disclosed by the foundation. While the deal was going forward, Bill Clinton was paid \$500,000 by a Kremlin-linked bank for giving a speech in Moscow. In sum: Hillary did her part to let Vladimir Putin scoop up uranium properties here and abroad; Putin gave her charitable donors and her husband a payday.

Once more, the Clinton songbook. These tireless strivers—"dead broke," Hillary claimed, when Bill left the White House—show that their appetite for acquisition is undiminished. Not that the money is all or even mainly for whoopee. The Clinton Foundation, besides its charitable work, is a parking lot for loyalists who can be moved to the next Clinton campaign. (Bill Allison, a senior fellow at the Sunlight Foundation, a watchdog for charities, called it "a slush fund for the Clintons.") Donations support politics, and serve as down payments for current and future access.

After sleaze comes demagogery. Mrs. Clinton is a Democrat, a member of a party that, since its inception, has demonized the rich, especially when they support other parties (James Madison called them "the opulent"). She cannot switch modes as smoothly as her husband, but even she can leave fundraising long enough to stop at a midwestern Chipotle to show solidarity with the middle class.

Her minions carry the refrain of parsing and partisanship. George Stephanopoulos, grilling Schweizer on ABC, insisted that he had found no "smoking gun." There's a ringing endorsement: The woman who would be president has not yet committed Richard Nixon's crimes. He went on to implicitly accuse Schweizer of bias, noting that he had written speeches for George W. Bush. This is rich, coming from a former flack for the Clinton White House.

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The Paranoid Style in American Parenting

In Maryland, Big Brother plays Big Mommy

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

It may not yet have congressional recognition, but May 9 is the red-letter day on the calendar for a growing national observance: “National Take Your Kids to the Park . . . and Leave Them There Day.” Owing to recent very stupid events in a tony Maryland community, this year the theme has been slightly revised: “National Take Your Kids to the Park . . . and Let Them Walk Home by Themselves Day.”

The Meitiv family resides in Silver Spring, Md., a comfortable suburb directly adjacent to the District of Columbia with a median family income pushing \$90,000 and a crime rate well under the national average. The Meitivs, Alexander and Danielle, had their children, Rafi and Dvora, taken into police custody and now find themselves on the wrong side of Child Protective Services as offenders—repeat offenders—whose crime is letting their children play in the park and walk home by themselves.

In December 2014, the Meitivs dropped their children off at a park less than a mile from their home; police picked up the children, ages ten and six, during their walk home. They delivered them to

their parents, who received a letter from Child Protective Services a few months later informing them that they were guilty of “unsubstantiated neglect,” the Orwellian term that the CPS bureaucracy uses when it wants to convict parents of an offense for which there is no real evidence. But the Meitivs were determined that their children would not be raised as prisoners, and, after a six-hour drive from upstate New York in April, they dropped them off at another park to give them a chance to play and unwind from the long ride. They were given instructions to be home at 6 P.M. By 6:30 P.M., the parents were quite worried. It was not until 8 P.M. that they received a call from CPS informing them that their children were in custody. They had once again been picked up by police, but this time delivered to CPS rather than to their parents.

Mindful of the paranoid style of American parenting, the Meitivs had instructed their children in how to deal with inquiring police or assorted do-gooders, to inform them that they are not lost, that they have permission to play on their own, that they know their

way home, etc. That availed the Meitivs nothing. They are, so far as the State of Maryland is concerned, neglecters of children.

“Children have the right to some unsupervised time, and parents have the right to give it to them without getting arrested.” So declares Lenore Skenazy, advocate for “free-range kids” and former host of *World’s Worst Mom* on Discovery Life. Danielle Meitiv had written to Skenazy some years ago with a parenting question, and the subsequent developments are an excellent illustration of Skenazy’s view: “This isn’t about parenting. If I knew anything about parenting, I could make my kids clean up their rooms or go to bed on time. This has nothing to do with parenting—this is about *fear*.” The United States and much of the developed world is in the grip of an irrational panic directed at our children. From paranoia over vaccinations to Whole Foods shoppers’ ruthlessly eliminating gluten from their toddlers’ diets to those who are scandalized by parents’ allowing their children to play in the park unsupervised, anno Domini 2015—arguably the safest time in human history to be a child in the English-speaking world—is an age of terror for parents.

And that terror has real-world consequences: “It’s fantasy as policy,” Skenazy says. The end product is what she refers to as “salvation by regulation,” with laws named for unfortunate children who are victims of vanishingly rare traumas. “If a child dies in a horrible way and it’s been on TV for more than two nights, then they’ll want a law named after that kid. It’s a way to make these events seem less terrible. It has to do with superstition—it’s a way to appease the gods.”

Skenazy isn’t a home-schooling Evangelical in Wyoming; she’s a Jewish liberal from New York. But on this subject, she sounds like a Rick Perry voter despairing at the nexus of suburban yuppie paranoia, American litigiousness—“In a litigious society, everybody starts to think like a trial lawyer,” she says—excessive solicitousness toward “expert” opinion, and an absurd level of risk aversion. “It’s as though the choice were between being home and safe or free and dead,” she says, “as though there were something inherently wrong with something that isn’t 100 percent safe. In Richmond,

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Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified Ear, Nose, & Throat physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear natural sound — in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind — without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.

After years of extensive research, Dr. Cherukuri has now created a **state-of-the-art** digital hearing aid that's packed with the features of those expensive \$3,000 competitors — at a **fraction of the price**.

New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased at a fraction of that price), yet the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remains out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are not covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.

The doctor evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version — called the **MDHearingAid®AIR** for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

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- ✓ No suffering with **'whistling'** or background noise
- ✓ **Outperforms** \$3,000 models
- ✓ Amazing **low price**

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Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-Day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

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— Dennis

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Wash., they're getting rid of the swings, because they're the most dangerous piece of equipment on the playground. Of course they are: You already got rid of the teeter-totter! What's next?"

Silver Spring is, affluence aside, a relatively high-crime part of Montgomery County, Md. Which is to say, it has a crime rate that is 25 percent below the national average rather than half the national average. There's a lot of that sort of good news going on in the Washington suburbs: Nearby Fairfax County, Va., in April reported its lowest level of crime since it has been keeping records. Across the country, child abductions and child homicides are at record lows. Almost all of the missing-person cases involving children turn out to be runaways—less than 1 percent are abductions. The risk of premature death of any kind for an American child between five and 14 is one in 10,000, while deaths for children between one and four have plunged by 93 percent over the past several decades.

The Meitivs could very well lose custody of their children, though that seems unlikely to happen in this case. Their story was picked up by talk radio and other media and has become something of a cause célèbre. Petitions are being circulated and solidarity is being affirmed. When you have the opportunity to make your case in the *Washington Post* and on Fox News, that makes an enormous difference.

But most families do not have that chance.

The worrisome fact is that the great threat to American children comes not from lurking trench coats or rusty playground swings, but from the people entrusted with looking after children's interests when their families fail to do so.

As domestic terrors go, the nation's CPS agencies might be the only branch of the budding American police state that gives the IRS a real run for its money. A boy shows up at school with a bruise from the usual roughhousing and sets off a chain of events that finds his parents under investigation for child abuse. Single mothers and poor families, sometimes poorly educated, find themselves dragged into Kafkaesque proceedings that they can neither escape nor comprehend.

A criminal-defense attorney in Arizona tells of being shocked by the CPS

proceedings that followed his client's being acquitted in an assault case. This wasn't an acquittal on a technicality, but a case in which the prosecution dropped the charges because the prosecutor became convinced that the assault in question hadn't actually happened, that it was a fiction. CPS never reviewed the facts of the criminal case, and informed the mother that she'd made things unnecessarily hard on herself by bringing a lawyer to the hearing. The CPS worker "generally undertook the role of grand inquisitress with zeal that would make Mike Nifong blush," Matt Brown, an attorney assisting the mother, wrote about the case. In the end, CPS took custody of her daughter and informed her that any visitation would be at CPS's discretion. "I can't believe what I saw," Brown says. "I can't believe CPS can take kids based on nothing, can't believe the facilitator and the caseworker could do something like that to a family, and can't believe that any human being could be so willing to make a life-changing decision so callously. It's the kind of thing I'm going to have nightmares about for years to come."

Social workers in arms—the stuff of nightmares indeed.

But after a generation's worth of "IF IT SAVES ONE CHILD'S LIFE!" rhetoric, we've begun to take that sort of thing literally. And the change came with amazing alacrity: A generation of people who'd never so much as seen a bicycle helmet outside of competitive racing became parents and suddenly insisted that their own precious snowflakes could not possibly be expected to pedal a Huffy without headgear. People who were taught to handle firearms safely as children are having their own children instructed to report them to the Man for legally keeping guns in the home. Edward R. Murrow used to smoke while delivering the news; today Broadway shows warn grown men about the presence of "theatrical smoking," which makes one think of Cruella de Vil—or not, given that British authorities threatened to slap an "adults only" rating on *101 Dalmatians* because of the arch-villainess's tobacco habit.

"It's a genuine national psychosis," Skenazy says, "and an international one, too." But it's nothing a little sunshine and fresh air couldn't do wonders for, if that were still permitted.

Remember The Bill Of Rights?

Judging by today's political climate, we don't

BY CHARLES C. W. COOKE

HAVING watched closely the manner in which questions of liberty and power are batted around in the first part of the 21st century—most recently during the disgraceful contretemps that Indiana's rather tame Religious Freedom Restoration Act provoked across the land—I have come to wonder of late whether the Bill of Rights could be ratified today.

In its classical mode, liberalism requires the citizenry that it serves to respect the crucial distinction that obtains between the *principle* of a given rule and the *consequences* that the rule might feasibly yield. Simply put, a country in which the people regard certain individual rights as inviolable axioms of nature—and who accept with alacrity, therefore, that they will often be used for ill—will be a country that boasts protections of those rights within its national charter. A country in which the people are focused primarily on what might be *done* with those rights, by contrast, will be a country that prefers to elevate and to abide by the whims of transient majorities—or, perhaps, by the discretion of a supposedly enlightened few. In Indiana, we were given an insight into which of these countries the people of the United States would rather live in.

Speaking at the Virginia Ratifying Convention of 1788, the anti-federalist Patrick Henry insisted that Americans should expect the refurbished national government to provide a framework for ordered liberty, and not to guarantee a particular set of outcomes. "You are not to inquire how your trade may be increased," Henry advised, "nor how you are to become a great and powerful people, but how your liberties can be secured; for liberty ought to be the direct end of your Government." Increasingly, alas, we seem to be more interested in trade and power and prescription than we are in liberty.

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Halfway into our ambitious trek through the rain forest I had to remind myself that "Nothing good comes easy." These days it seems that every business trip to Brazil includes a sweltering hike through overgrown jungles, around cascading waterfalls and down steep rock cliffs. But our gem broker insisted it was worth the trouble. To tell you the truth, for the dazzling emeralds he delivered, I'd gladly go back to stomping through jaguar country.

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One can only imagine the attack ads that would today be marshaled against the Bill of Rights. Posited in 2015, the First Amendment's speech protections would likely be characterized as "anti-gay" or "pro-racist" measures that had been cynically contrived to protect the capacity of bigots to say disgraceful things with impunity and to reinforce the various power structures and privileges that are at present claimed to be destroying America. The "freedom of the press," meanwhile, would be openly disdained as an overture to the corporate purchase of elections; the "right of the people peaceably to assemble" would be regarded as a direct threat to the sanctity of the land around the entrance to abortion clinics; and the wide-ranging conscience protections contained within both the establishment and the free-exercise clauses would be cast as a devilish recipe for theocracy that would allow the irrational to operate without oversight and the backward to undermine the great cause of Science.

LUBA MYTS

To run down the list is to see the modern objections fall neatly into place. As it is so often, the Second Amendment would be cast as a recipe for "Wild West" anarchy, an open invitation to sedition for those white, mountain-dwelling racists of the Southern Poverty Law Center's nightmares, and an overture to the execution of children. The Fourth, the Fifth, and the Eighth would be denounced by both overzealous law-and-order types and totalitarian feminists as damnable "soft on crime" provisions intended to help dastardly types get away with raping college students and selling drugs to the vulnerable. And the Ninth and Tenth would be attacked viciously by our seemingly endless plague of ambitious public-policy graduates, almost all of whom believe down to their ill-fitting boots that there is no problem so small or so personal that it cannot be solved nationally. Precisely because it has such a limited effect in restraining the government, the only provision that would remain would be the Third, about quartering soldiers, although

one can only suppose that John McCain and Lindsey Graham would put up quite the fight.

Worst of all, rather than discussing any of these questions in terms of their effect on individual freedom and the limitation of the state, we would be subjected to an endless set of graphs and numbers and pseudo-meaningful jargon, all meditations on the essential question of capital-L Liberty having been replaced by dry lectures delivered by 29-year-old UCLA graduates with no life skills at all. Oscar Wilde once complained that in the industrial era we have come to understand "the price of everything and the value of nothing." There is, I'm afraid, a little truth in this. Last month, the left-leaning magazine *Mother Jones* attempted to put a financial "cost" on the Second Amendment. The right of the people to keep and bear arms, the magazine contended rather unconvincingly, costs the Treasury more each year than does Medicaid and should therefore be abolished or seriously restricted. Responding to the ruse, one wag on Twitter observed wryly that "the future of policy debates is argued with spreadsheets and calculators to show individual rights 'burden' the masses." He is right. Sorry, Mr. Jefferson, your insights aren't needed here.

At the time when it was demanded, there was little to no serious argument over whether the individual protections contained within the Bill of Rights were worthwhile in and of themselves. Rather, the contemporary dispute was over *structure*, the vast majority of opposition to the insertion of explicit protections coming not from those who feared that such protections would hamstring government's capacity to act, but from those who were worried that they would destroy the overarching logic of the Constitution and therefore serve to undermine it.

This was a reasonable objection. In its original form, at least, the Constitution that had been drawn up in Philadelphia was a charter of enumerated powers that granted to the national government a limited and clearly delineated role in the nation's political life. As James Madison recorded in *Federalist 45*, "the powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined." In other words, what it was not clearly permitted to do, it could not do. That being so, a Bill of Rights made little sense, for, if the federal government had

been accorded the opportunity to do only a certain number of things, listing what it could *not* do was superfluous. Under-scoring this point, Alexander Hamilton submitted in *Federalist* 84 that a list of specific prohibitions would represent “various exceptions to powers not granted; and, on this very account, would afford a colorable pretext to claim more than were granted.” “Why declare,” Hamilton asked, “that things shall not be done which there is no power to do?”

The answer to this question was a simple one: The naysayers did not trust the dam to hold. Rather, they were sincerely worried that the national government would expand beyond all recognition, and that, in its broadened form, it would inevitably begin to encroach upon the rights of the people. To help prevent this from happening, they sought a parchment backstop to which they might appeal in such cases as denied their natural liberties.

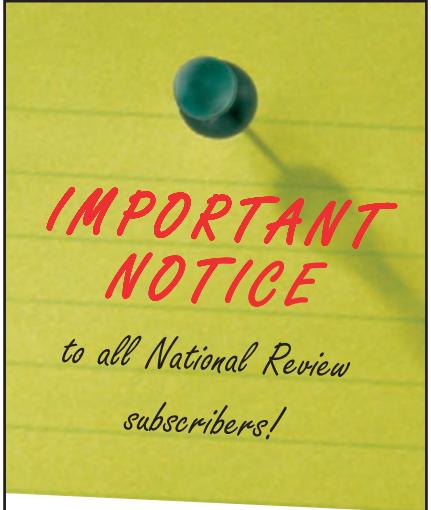
A host of proposals were offered up, ten of which made it in. There is a certain logic to their order. For the protection of their spiritual, political, and intellectual rights, the rebels secured the First Amendment. For the protection of their Lockean physical rights, they acquired the Second, Third, and Fourth. For the protection of their legal, civil, and criminal safeguards, they obtained the Fifth through the Eighth. And, in order to ensure that the inclusion of such prophylactics did not adversely alter the document’s structure, they garnered the Ninth and the Tenth.

In the year 2015, it is difficult not to conclude that this was a smart and prescient move. Because the commerce clause has been expanded so drastically—and because the Supreme Court does not effectively police its limits—the Bill of Rights is now the only serious check left on the power of a federal government that has slowly come to enjoy the plenary powers that were intended to be reserved to the states. As the dissenters feared, Americans now live in a country in which it is presumed that the national authorities can do whatever they wish unless they are checked.

Worse still, they live in a country in which the majority is not upset by this development. Indeed, without a Bill of Rights to serve as a bulwark, one imagines that the United States would look more like everyplace else. It is common-

place for conservatives to note that in most of the world’s countries, key individual rights are routinely ignored. It is less usual, however, to hear it observed that this is true even in more liberal nations such as Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In my own country of birth, free speech is now violated without thought; the right to keep and bear arms is, to borrow a phrase from the 19th-century jurist William Rawle, “allowed more or less sparingly, according to circumstances”; there are few meaningful rights of conscience left; and the criminal-justice system is showing signs of cracking at the edges. Shockingly, even the Magna Carta has been undermined. Not only is the British government allowed to lock up suspects without charges for up to 28 days, but in 2009 the Crown Prosecution Service invoked a 2003 law and held its first criminal trial without a jury. There were no protests.

If it sometimes feels as if the Bill of Rights is the only thing standing between the little guy and majoritarian tyranny, that’s possibly because it is. Americans may be freer than most, but it is often thanks to Supreme Court decisions and not to public opinion that America remains an outlier. It is because judges have stepped in that it is legal to burn the American flag in protest; that the Westboro Baptist Church may stage its execrable funeral demonstrations without fear of tort liability; that seditious speech may not be punished by the government; that disgusting videos may not be banned; that conservative Christians have been spared the indignities of the Obama administration’s contraception mandate; that collections of citizens may engage in political criticism; that parents caring for their children may not be forced by the state to join a union; that the residents of Washington, D.C., Chicago, and other “blue” cities may buy and own handguns for their protection; that the government is prohibited from searching cell phones without a warrant; and so on and so forth. Looking around the country—and examining the attitudes that prevail in Washington, D.C., on our college campuses, and in our hopelessly excitable media—can we honestly conclude that three-fourths of We the People would vote today to so restrain ourselves? We are living on borrowed wisdom. **NR**



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Putin's Hybrid War Against Europe

Will NATO ever rouse itself?

BY EDWARD LUCAS

EUROPE “whole, free, and at peace” was the mantra of the glory days of Euro-Atlanticism, when Russia was docile and history was ending. It was never a statement of reality. Europe was not whole (countries such as Moldova were indubitably European and clearly not where they wanted to be). It was not free (Belarus). It was not at peace (half-frozen conflicts scarred the map of Europe from Cyprus to Azerbaijan).

Now that aspiration is in tatters. Europe is not marching toward prosperity and freedom. It is retreating to a harsh world of power politics, where might is right, truth withers in the face of propaganda, and the ethnos—old ideas about blood, language, and soil—matters more than modern rules of democracy and international cooperation.

The Kremlin clock is sounding the death knell of Euro-Atlanticism. Not because Russia is strong—it is not—but because the rest of Europe is weak and the glue that holds the United States to the continent’s security arrangements has aged and grown brittle.

At first sight, it is perplexing that Russia—a country of 140 million, with a \$2 trillion GDP—can threaten Europe (with a population of 600 million and a \$20 trillion GDP), let alone NATO (950 million and \$40 trillion). But Russia has three advantages: It is willing to accept economic pain; it is willing to threaten (and use) force; and it is willing to lie, prolifically and expertly, about what it does.

Mr. Lucas, a senior editor of The Economist and a senior vice president of the Center for European Policy Analysis, is the author of, among other books, The New Cold War: Putin’s Russia and the Threat to the West.

The Kremlin’s arsenal includes economic pressure (especially the use of gas, oil, and nuclear energy), corruption, subversion, propaganda, and military saber-rattling. Russia deploys these weapons against the frontline states in Europe’s new cold war.

The new arc of instability reaches from the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) across Ukraine and Moldova to southeastern Europe (Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia), through Central Europe (Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia) to the Baltic littoral (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden). All these countries face Kremlin attacks on a spectrum ranging from clandestine influence-peddling to direct Russian military pressure.

The elements of the problem have long been clear, but we have failed to see how they combine. We bemoaned the thuggish and repressive behavior of some supposed allies (the Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan, and the hot-headed and heavy-handed Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia), the Bulgarian feebleness toward gangsterdom, the disrespect that Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Robert Fico in Slovakia showed for the rule of law, Czech weakness on corruption, and the persistent Polish failure to deal with overbearing and incompetent bureaucracies.

But we assumed, wrongly, that we were in competition with the ghosts of the past, not the demons of the future. And we failed to see how Russia was stoking and exploiting these weaknesses. After the spectacular failure of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s and the chaos of the 1990s, it was hard to imagine that the Kremlin could ever again call the tune in the old “bloodlands”—the swathe of territory, between the Baltic and the Black Seas, that under Hitler and Stalin suffered the greatest mass killings in European history. But the Cold War did not end. It just took a few years of recess. Russia remains a geopolitical contestant and antagonist.

The situation of each country is unique, but the overall picture is that the West is in retreat and Russia is winning. The sharpest conflict is over Ukraine. Russia decapitated and dismembered its closest and most important neighbor without firing a shot. It so

demoralized and confused the leadership in Kiev through a mixture of subversion, propaganda, and special operations (sometimes called “hybrid war”) that it was able to seize the strategically important peninsula of Crimea in March 2014.

Ukraine failed to play its diplomatic cards. It could have raised an international storm over Russia’s actions. It did not. Moreover, Ukrainian forces in Crimea could have resisted. They could have blocked the airfields and ports used by the Russians, paralyzed their communications, taken control of road junctions, and knocked out the Russian-language media. They could have made it impossible for Russia to seize the territory without waging a full-scale war. But they didn’t. Ukrainian military commanders had inadequate supplies, no orders, no contingency plans, and no secure communications. One even contacted me on Facebook asking for advice. They retreated with their morale in tatters.

That set the scene for Russia’s next offensive, in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Luhansk and Donetsk. Here, Russia raised the stakes, using its regular forces (disguised lightly or not at all) in a more traditional war. The conflict in eastern Ukraine rumbles on, largely ignored by Western news outlets, which hew to the idea that the “cease-fire” declared in February in the Belarusian capital of Minsk marks the end of the conflict.

Russia has by now achieved its main goals in Ukraine. It has shown it can destroy the European security order that dates back to the Helsinki agreements of 1975. It has repudiated the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, in which Russia, along with Britain and the United States, solemnly promised to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity and refrain from any kind of coercion, in return for the Kiev authorities’ agreement to give up their Soviet-era endowment of nuclear weapons.

Those promises are now revealed as worthless paper. That opens a broad and inviting avenue of attack for Russia in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Snap drills—often involving nuclear weapons—have been met with a puny Western response. If America is not willing to risk World War III with Russia over a provocation

withering slights

The Bent Pin Collection
by florence king

*The new, complete, and unabridged collection of the popular
monthly NR magazine column by America's most revered misanthropic writer*

The hallmark of *National Review* is that it has been home to some of America's very best writers, and few will argue that there are any of greater style, wit, and caustic wisdom than Florence King, whose beloved "second" column, "The Bent Pin," graced the magazine in every other issue from 2007 to 2012 (her previous column, "The Misanthrope's Corner," held NR's back page for a glorious decade).

King fans (who *isn't*?) have so craved her timeless works that over the years *NR* has published two collections, *STET, Damnit!* and *Deja Reviews*. And now we're delighted to announce a third treasure trove of unrivaled prose à la Florence—*Withering Slights: The Bent Pin Collection, 2007 to 2012*.

On every page of this brand-new, handsome hardcover book is proof positive that in Miss King's deft hand, the pen is mightier than any sword, and the pin of prose finds and pricks the many inanities ballooning across the fruited plains and foggy moors—which is why you *must* get your first-edition copy of *Withering Slights* right now, hot off the press. The cost is just \$24.95, direct from (and *only* from) *NR*, happily shipped and handled at no cost to you.



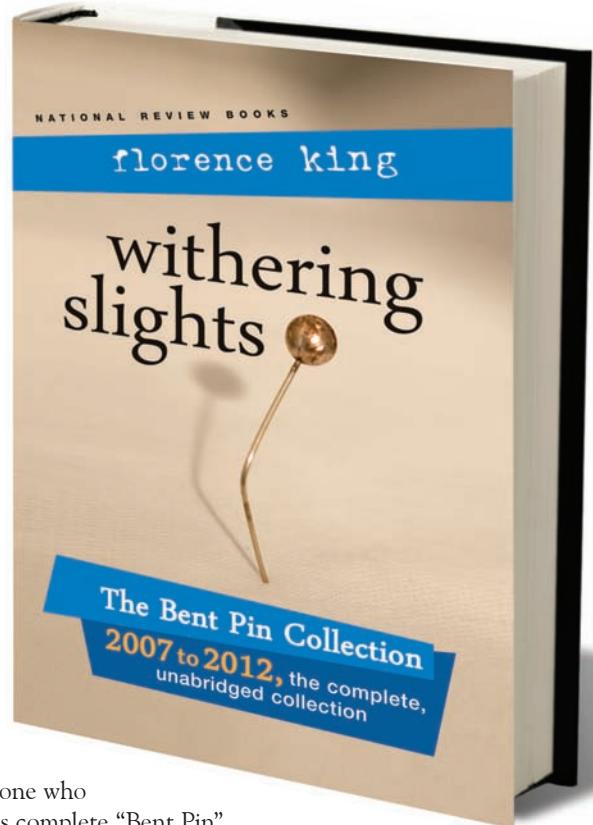
Admit again what you've admitted every time you've read a King column or review: that through the laughter you've chortled, "I wish I'd said that." Which is what you indeed will say, without end, when you climb the lofty heights of *Withering Slights*.

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From her first "Bent Pin" column in 2007 ("Grosser and Grosser") to her 2012 *adios* ("Something Ere the End"), and some five dozen more beauts between them (including classics such as "A Broad at Home," "Facial Politics," "Softboiled Speech," "The Defenestration of the Shmoo," and "With Liberty and Pug Noses for All"), King holds nothing back, letting loose her pen on anyone and anything from atrocious trends (Neo-Cleavage!) to irksome types (Weeping Wardens, LibProgs, TempCons, Pixies, New Changers, and many more)—all of it refreshing and guffaw-inducing. And as ever, you'll relish the THWACK! when Florence gets her grump on to land a two-by-four of contempt upside many a deserving noggin.

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in the Baltics, NATO will be over by breakfast. That is a huge and tempting prize for the Kremlin.

Vladimir Putin knows this. So do America's European allies. The question is not whether Russia menaces the Baltics, but when and how it will follow through on that menacing. Already Estonia has experienced the humiliation of having a senior official kidnapped on its territory and abducted to Moscow, only days after President Obama, speaking in Tallinn, vowed that an "attack on one is an attack on all." But after the seizure of this official—Eston Kohver, a high-ranking police officer in Estonia's internal-security agency—the West did nothing.

Russian warplanes regularly intrude into Baltic airspace. One recently harassed an American reconnaissance plane flying over the Baltic Sea. When the United States protested, Russia replied menacingly—"America is not a Baltic power. Russia is"—laying the rhetorical foundation for a no-fly zone should the United States wish to reinforce its NATO allies in a hurry.

The military security of north-eastern Europe hangs by a thread. Russia has carried out

dummy nuclear attacks on Sweden and Denmark. Both countries, having reduced their defense capabilities below the threadbare, are now scrambling to restore the naval, aviation, armored, and intelligence assets that they so recklessly discarded. Estonia, likely the only country in Europe to spend even 2 percent of its GDP on defense in 2015, is grimly waiting for its allies to follow suit. Poland, Lithuania, and even laggardly Latvia are scrambling to increase their defense budgets. Poland—the only economic heavyweight in the region—is following Finland's lead in buying joint air-to-surface standoff missiles, the closest thing to a nuclear deterrent for a non-nuclear country. It is also buying the American-built Patriot missile-defense system.

But Poland stands almost alone. NATO plans require Poland to take the brunt of reinforcing the Baltic, deploying a third of the Polish army there, pending the arrival of other allies. But arrival with what? After 20 years of scrimping on defense budgets, no European country has enough deployable, mobile, high-readiness forces to fill this role.

NATO has ditched its taboos about Russia and now talks a good game about rapid-reaction forces, but its real capabilities are painfully reduced. The United States is indispensable to Baltic security. But is Baltic security indispensable to the United States?

For all NATO's weakness, it still retains a symbolic power that may be enough to deter Russia. But Russia does not need to outgun the West militarily. It just needs to outspend it on other fronts. That is the Kremlin's real victory. Money, not hardened steel and high explosives, is what matters most in the new cold war. Russian money buys politicians, political parties, think tanks, media,

academics, and officials—not just in the frontline states but also in citadel countries. Some is public—such as the €9 million loan to Marine Le Pen's National Front in France, or the hefty stipend paid to Germany's Gerhard Schröder, who as chancellor endorsed deals with the Russian gas company Gazprom and, after leaving office, took a job with that same company. America applies higher standards: Amid stormy controversy, former Republican representative Curt Weldon was investigated by the FBI in 2006 over his ties with Russia; the scandal may well have cost him his office, as he lost his reelection bid that year. No public figure anywhere in Europe has yet paid a price for taking money from the Kremlin.

Even the most powerful politician in Europe, Angela Merkel, is struggling to maintain European solidarity on sanctions over Ukraine. Politicians in Cyprus say openly that they share confidential European Union documents with Russia: Brussels is far away, but Moscow is a friend. Hungary, despairing of EU solidarity on energy, has signed a sweetheart deal with Russia for nuclear-power stations.

The tide is slowly turning. Germany, for example, is changing its post-WWII pacifist posture, bringing 100 tanks out of storage and tweaking its defense plans. Ireland, which has no air force, is worriedly awakening to its dependence on the aging warplanes of Britain's RAF to intercept the Russian bombers that buzz its airspace. Russia does not seem to care that Ireland is not a member of NATO—any more than it has refrained from bullying non-NATO Sweden and Finland. Those two Scandinavian countries, together with their Nordic partners Denmark, Iceland, and Norway, have issued an unprecedented joint declaration, decrying Russia's war games, military buildup, and dangerous aviation stunts. That prompted a rebuke from the Russian foreign ministry. Russia is offended when foreigners do not take it seriously. It is even more offended when they do.

The hard truth is that Europe won't bear the cost or the military risk for the defenses it needs. That won't change until Europeans are a lot more scared or angry than they are now—which may be too late.



Drowning in Propaganda

How a migrants' tragedy has been used and misused

BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

In February, a rusty, decrepit freighter named the *East Sea* ran aground on the Côte d'Azur near Saint-Tropez. Its captain and crew fled, and when police and medical teams arrived on the vessel, they found 900 people—250 men, 180 women, and 480 children—cooped up in the hold. Mainly Iraqi Kurds, they had paid gangs approximately \$4,500 per adult and \$2,000 per child to be smuggled into Western Europe. In return for this money, they had squatted in a hot, filthy, pitch-black hold, with no ventilation and almost no food or water, for a voyage of eight days. About a dozen swam ashore and disappeared.

THE paragraph above is the opening of a NATIONAL REVIEW article, "Invasion of a Certain Kind," published in the issue of April 30, 2001. Other items in its first few paragraphs included the sentencing of a Dutch truck driver for the murder of 58 Chinese illegal immigrants found dead of suffocation in Dover when his container was opened in 2000; the murder of babies thrown into the Adriatic by people-smugglers evading pursuit; and, in 1993, the discovery near New York of a ship, the *Golden Venture*, carrying 300 Chinese illegal migrants, who had paid between \$20,000 and \$30,000 each for their passage.

Most of the illegal arrivals on the *Golden Venture* sought asylum and did so successfully. Eight years after they were detected, none of those on the *Golden Venture* had returned home. We had not the heart to send back people who had sacrificed and suffered so much to flee poverty, to escape persecution, or simply to "better themselves."

This tenderness was (and still is) reflected in a set of social and political arrangements that make it hard to deport illegal migrants: treaties on asylum, torture, human rights, etc. that

the courts interpret broadly; ethnic lobbies that both shelter them and demand residence and citizenship rights for them; NGOs that provide them with legal and other forms of assistance; media that report their plight sympathetically in a discussion that rarely covers the costs of welcoming them; governments afraid of being accused of racism if they enforce immigration laws; and so on. Migrants and potential migrants now realize that once they make it across the border or the ocean into the West, they can stay indefinitely. And because much of Europe is in the "Schengen Area"—i.e., lacks internal immigration and border controls—an illegal migrant who has sneaked off a freighter in Nice or Naples at dawn can be in Paris or Berlin by nightfall.

That, essentially, is why almost 900 people drowned in April when their overcrowded boat overturned and sank in the Mediterranean. They know that if they get to Europe, they can stay there. And a sophisticated mass industry of people-smuggling has grown up around the Mediterranean to rent ships,

hire crews, and sell passages to them. Not all reach their destination. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that more than 3,000 migrants died last year attempting to enter Europe by sea. No one really knows how many migrant deaths by drowning there have been in the years since the *East Sea*, but the IOM's estimate is 22,000.

That is an enormous human tragedy, but there is a deep division in Europe and elsewhere on what should be done about it.

European governments, nervous of electorates that want immigration controlled, have adopted a half-hearted policy that aims to rescue migrants at sea but to keep them outside mainland Europe while processing their refugee-asylum applications in offshore locations. Its first implementation was the Mare Nostrum operation, in which the Italian navy intercepted boats and landed their migrant passengers in offshore camps on the island port of Lampedusa. But other European governments refused to admit large numbers of refugees or share the costs. Italy eventually aban-

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doned Mare Nostrum. Following the recent mass drownings, the EU decided to give more money and more ships to a successor program called Triton. That may now mean more migrants rescued, but—since EU governments have not promised to admit more refugees—it presumably means more overcrowded offshore camps, which amounts to a different humanitarian crisis.

Hence the idea of a second policy, advocated by bien-pensant opinion and NGOs specializing in refugee and asylum rights, that the migrant vessels be intercepted and their passengers taken to safe EU ports where—in the words of Kenneth Roth of Human Rights

the post-Second World War world by future historians.

The humanitarian catastrophe and mass murder of refugees at sea is ultimately a direct consequence of EU politics—even if actual deaths are also caused by smugglers who in the past have locked refugees in below deck or thrown them overboard.

To assert that “we”—and she specifically includes U.K. voters—are guilty of the mass murder of people whom criminals deliberately drown because “we,” though willing to rescue them, are not prepared to admit them unconditionally to our society is silly and shameful. But Ms. Müller

economic ambition, as seems likely, then for practical purposes the pool of them is a bottomless one. Demanding that Europe admit potentially limitless numbers of migrants or be found guilty of mass murder is not a very sensible approach, especially when Britain and France already have foreign-born residents amounting to 13 and 12 percent of their populations.

The broad outlines of a sensible policy for the immediate crisis are clear: establish refugee-processing centers in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean; obtain international agreement on the settlement of genuine refugees worldwide; negotiate with

Demanding that Europe admit potentially limitless numbers of migrants or be found guilty of mass murder is not a very sensible approach.

Watch—“their claims can be processed in an orderly manner with all their rights respected and protected.” What that would mean, of course, is that the migrants—whether genuine refugees able to claim asylum under various treaties, or economic migrants, or in some cases jihadists and criminals—would immediately benefit from the nexus of legal, political, ethnic, and media pressures in favor of their permanent settlement. They would have overcome the main obstacle to their European dream: Having got there, they could remain there.

From the standpoint of the NGOs, of course, this would achieve a longstanding ambition: to make an end run around the restrictive immigration policy that European voters want but that progressive NGOs, human-rights lawyers, and ethnic lobbies strongly and bitterly oppose. This clash of interests was laid out clearly, indeed extravagantly, by Tanja Müller, a senior lecturer in international development at the University of Manchester, as follows:

In the forthcoming British election, anti-immigration themes feature among most major parties. British political engagement to the deaths in the Mediterranean is almost absent. This makes ‘us’ silent accomplices of what might one day be called the greatest crime in

and others expressing similar outrage may be vulnerable to their own logic.

She is relying on consequentialism for her charge of the voters’ complicity in mass murder: The murders are “ultimately a direct consequence of EU politics.” But a third viewpoint—advanced by Rod Liddle in the London *Spectator*—argues that migrants are more likely to attempt the dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean if they believe they have a good chance of remaining in Europe. And the more migrants set sail, the more perish. Australian experience supports this argument: There are believed to have been almost 2,000 deaths of migrants to Australia in the past 14 years, but the number of deaths has declined to basically zero since Australia’s conservative government “stopped the boats.” Someone drunk on a cocktail of consequentialism and self-righteousness might argue that Ms. Müller is complicit in the mass murder of migrants because her urging a more liberal policy encouraged them to embark on death trips.

If all migrants were genuine refugees fleeing war in countries such as Syria, there would be a natural limit to their number. It would be practicable to settle them around the world, with each nation taking a reasonable number. But if many or most migrants are driven by

third countries on the settlement of other migrants in return for aid; seize and destroy the ships and property of the people-smugglers; above all, “stop the boats,” or, in the context of the Mediterranean crisis, return the boats to their point of departure. If Europe is not going to adopt open borders—and it plainly isn’t—it should do nothing to foster false hopes that can lead to a watery grave.

The 2001 NR article, written by me (but you knew that), was mainly a reflection on two works depicting a Third World invasion of Europe—namely, Jean Raspail’s novel *The Camp of the Saints*, which was hostile to it, and a BBC documentary, *The March*, which sympathized with it. Both are illuminating on the present crisis. *The March* depicts the EU as psychologically paralyzed because its bureaucrats feel justice is on the side of the invaders. *Camp* targets less the poverty-stricken invaders than what it calls “The Beast”—the vast retinue of progressive opinion-mongers in politics, journalism, and other institutions who come up with the same analyses, condemnations, and slogans (“We are all from the Ganges now”) to advance their civilizational masochism. Western policy should be dictated by practical goodwill and not by the neuroses of our leaders.

A Question Of Honor

As the wolves circle, Iraqis who helped us are pleading for visas

BY JAY NORDLINGER

In 2008, Ryan Crocker, then serving as U.S. ambassador in Iraq, met with a group of visiting journalists. He addressed the question of public opinion back home. "People are tired of Iraq," he said. "They say, 'Let's get it over and done with. We don't want to watch the Iraq movie anymore.' But the Iraq movie will go on for many more reels, with or without us. And it will have a big effect on us, whether we like it or not."

There is another reel in the movie, so to speak. Or a late scene in the movie. In February, a lawsuit was filed in a U.S. district court on behalf of nine Iraqis who helped American forces in the war. The lives of those Iraqis are in grave danger. ISIS and other such elements are threatening to kill them for the help they rendered us Americans. According to U.S. law, the threatened Iraqis are entitled to visas, and refuge in America. But they have not received what they are due.

The nine are being represented by the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project and a law firm, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. IRAP was founded in 2008 by a group of Yale Law School students (one of whom was a veteran of the Iraq and Afghan wars). They have helped to resettle more than 3,000. I regard IRAP as a "point of light," to borrow language from the first President Bush.

On behalf of the nine Iraqis, IRAP and Freshfields are suing Secretary of State John Kerry and his department, and Security of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and his department. These are the people charged with carrying out the SIV program, established by Congress in 2008. "SIV" stands for "Special Immigrant Visas." These visas are intended to go to Iraqis who helped U.S. forces and are now threatened with death for it—in other words,

Iraqis exactly like the nine. Frustrated with bureaucratic slowness, Congress issued a further instruction in 2013: Visa applications should be acted on within nine months.

Since 2008, 6,000 visas have been issued, but something like 1,800 Iraqis remain in limbo. The nine plaintiffs have been waiting an excruciatingly long time: an average of four and a half years. One has been waiting for more than five and a half.

Already, thousands of Iraqis have been killed in reprisals. No one knows the exact number. But if you helped the Americans—and are known to have done so—you're in danger. By helping the Americans, of course, the Iraqis were helping themselves, certainly as they understood it: They were working for a better Iraq.

Each of the nine plaintiffs—plus the 1,800 others who are waiting—has a story. They worked alongside the Americans as interpreters, doctors, engineers, and so on. In the lawsuit, they are known by nicknames or pseudonyms. Obviously, they have to lie very low.

One interpreter, the Americans nicknamed "Frodo." He was part of some 20 firefights during the war. He, like the others, stuck his neck out. An American captain, Doug Vossen, considered Frodo his protector and adviser. Vossen told CBS News that, without him, "I'd have been dead."

Another interpreter, called "Alpha" in the lawsuit, was shot in the back during the war. Upon recovery, he rejoined the effort. In 2008, someone threw a bottle of gas into his home, burning it down. Alpha and his son were injured but survived. He now, like the others, receives regular death threats.

Last October, a logistics contractor who worked with the Americans was driving in Baghdad. Men pulled up beside him and shot up his car. He survived. In November, someone texted him and said, "Don't think we forgot you, dog."

All of the others have similar stories, each more horrifying than the story before. One plaintiff said, "I exist in a middle world between death and life." He applied for his Special Immigrant Visa in 2009. He says he prays that it will be granted "before it's too late."

Why have the State and Homeland Security departments not moved? That

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Christianity was invented by Emperor Constantine, for political purposes, based upon the myth of Mithra, a Persian savior god born on December 25, son of a virgin. Mithra performed miracles and was later crucified. Pope Leo X (died 1521) called Christ a "fable". Later Pope Paul III expressed similar sentiments.

Moses is based on the Sumerian life and legends of Sargon I, King of Akkad, "set in a basket of rushes and 'cast into the river'. Egyptians kept exhaustive hieroglyphic records. There is a complete absence of any record of Moses leading over 600,000 men, women and children away from Pharaoh's army.

Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, was convicted in a court of Law of being an "impostor", today a fraud, con man, in 1826. He wrote the Book of Mormon soon after.

Question: You decide: Does the text of the verses of the Qur'an correspond exactly to those revealed to Muhammad directly as the words of God, delivered to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, as claimed?

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is a good and vexing question. Bureaucratic lassitude? Too great a backlog? Indifference? Even a little hostility toward all things having to do with the Iraq War? Each of those explanations is possible. It may also be that people in government are worried about letting in a terrorist and later being blamed.

There is no disagreement about the bona fides of the plaintiffs, by the way. The State Department has already found that the nine Iraqis did indeed serve alongside us, faithfully, and that their lives are in danger. Yet their visa applications molder. The departments' typical reply is that the applications are in "administrative processing."

What's more, the law says that our government "shall make a reasonable effort" to protect our Iraqi allies while their visas are pending. If we cannot protect them on their native soil, we must arrange for their "immediate removal from Iraq, if possible." Currently, the visa applicants have no protection whatsoever.

As Saigon fell, we airlifted thousands of Vietnamese—not a couple thousand



but 130,000—to bases in the Philippines and elsewhere. They were our allies, they had counted on us, and we felt we owed them protection from slaughter.

In my view, nine months is too long a time to sit on a threatened Iraqi's visa application. Should it really take the length of a baby's gestation? But our government is not acting on the applications in four, five years. Our allies' situation is all the more serious since the rise of ISIS last summer.

At stake is American credibility—do we keep our promises or not?—and also our honor, which is related. Some of us believe that our pullout from Iraq, before the country was secured, was dishonorable. In the matter of the visas, we are compounding dishonor with dishonor.

We did not save all the Vietnamese who helped us, obviously—that would have been much of South Vietnam. Before we left, in that panicked evacuation, our personnel did not have a chance to destroy all sensitive records. The conquering Communists found a list of 30,000 Vietnamese who helped us. They systematically hunted those 30,000

down and killed them (a small fraction of the million they ultimately killed).

In those last days, we ferried as many as possible in helicopters. Dorothy Martin, the wife of our ambassador, Graham Martin, left her suitcase behind so that a Vietnamese woman could squeeze in beside her.

South Vietnamese came in their own helicopters, to our fleet at sea. After the pilots and their families disembarked, we pushed the helicopters overboard, to make room for more. On the *Midway*, we pushed our own helicopters overboard—\$10 million worth—so that a Cessna could land. A Vietnamese major, his wife, and their five children were thus saved. I suppose we did what we could, in those terrible hours.

Three weeks later, President Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act. This turned out to be the precursor of the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act and the SIV program, a little more than 30 years on. Ultimately, we welcomed some 750,000 Vietnamese as refugees.

In a visit to Iraq, I found myself thinking a lot about Vietnam. This was

in early October 2008, just a month before the U.S. presidential election pitting two senators against each other: Barack Obama and John McCain. They had starkly different positions on Iraq. Obama was itching to get out; McCain wanted to secure victory, or something like it. He wanted to keep Iraq stable.

The group of journalists of which I was part met an Iraqi colonel named Abbas. He was more pro-American than the most patriotic American, I think. He was fighting for a new Iraq, one free of tyranny. I suggested to him that Americans might not stick with the program. He was indignant: He knew Americans, and they would never abandon Iraq, he said.

At some point in our discussion, I asked the colonel to indulge me in a hypothetical question: What would he do if we Americans, in fact, departed Iraq too soon? “I would leave the country with my family,” he said. “Otherwise, we’d be killed.” He had already had an infant daughter killed, when the Mahdi Army attacked his house.

Lately, I've wondered what happened to Colonel Abbas and his family.

Campaigning in 1980, five years after Saigon fell, Ronald Reagan said that Vietnam had been a "noble cause." This caused a ruckus. Yet nothing could be more obvious, to me, than that Vietnam was a noble cause, whatever the mistakes of the war. The same is true of Iraq, I think. Yet it's understandable that Americans want to wash their hands of it. We are tired of the movie, and long ago were.

In the first year of his presidency, 2009, President Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize. In his lecture, he noted the incongruity of being both a peace laureate and the leader of a country engaged in two wars. "One of these wars is winding down," he said. He did not even utter the word "Iraq." He defended our war in Afghanistan.

Two months later, Vice President Biden said, "I am very optimistic about Iraq. I mean, this could be one of the great achievements of this administration." It has not proven so. In a recent interview with me, Senator McCain said, "Barack Obama wanted out." And when administration officials say that "they tried to leave a decent force behind, a stabilizing force, they are lying, and I don't say that very often."

The whole of my life, I've heard conservatives say, bitterly, "It's dangerous to be a friend and ally of the United States." The Iraqi visa-seekers most likely agree. There are lots of immigrants in this country, including millions of illegals from Mexico and Central America, who are on track to be amnestied. Surely we can find room, in our vast country, for a few thousand Iraqis who risked their lives alongside us and, for their pains, are now threatened with murder?

Soon, we will have desperate Afghans to think about, or ignore. The Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project helps them, too. IRAP's website says, "Every day we receive emails and letters from Afghan interpreters and former and active-duty U.S. Service Members concerned about their interpreter's fate." IRAP also cites a "recent news estimate," and a painful estimate it is: One Afghan is killed every 36 hours owing to his affiliation with the United States.

NR

Sci-Fi's Sad Puppies

A literary revolt against political correctness

BY DAVID FRENCH

It turns out that pop culture doesn't inexorably drift toward political correctness. The forces of "social justice" are not invincible, and conservative artists do have cultural power. Just ask the very angry, very frustrated members of the science-fiction Left.

Conservatives are by now familiar with the depressing pop-culture script. Angry at perceived injustice or exclusion and eager to spread their particular brand of "social justice," the Left targets for transformation an artistic medium that was previously not overtly or intentionally politicized. Within a few short years, the quality of art—or its popularity—becomes far less relevant than either its message or the identity of the artist. As part of this process, prestigious awards are no longer a means of rewarding the best work but rather a means of rewarding the best work from the list of acceptable choices.

There are few better recent examples of this phenomenon than the film industry and the Oscars. The movies *Zero Dark Thirty* and *American Sniper* both faced successful campaigns to deny them best-picture awards not because of any artistic deficiencies but because critics hated the messages. And who can forget the recent outrage over the fact that all 20 Oscar acting nominations went to white actors? While Oscar nominations are always debatable, a person's pigmentation does not render his acting better or worse.

Through it all, conservatives have largely been bystanders. While there are certainly conservatives who thrive in film, in television, and in literature—and produce marvelous works of art in the process—they have been unable or unwilling to mount a systematic counter-attack to the leftist politicization of entire industries.

Until now, that is—until the so-called social-justice warriors attempted to co-opt the world of science fiction. Science-

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fiction literature has long been home to the wildest kinds of ideological, social, and religious imaginings. With no requirement to reflect the world we live in (indeed, the writers' mandate is often to create entirely new worlds and new social mores), science-fiction and fantasy writers can and do conjure up everything from *Star Trek*'s and *Star Wars*' utopian versions of an intergalactic U.N. (the United Federation of Planets and the Galactic Republic, respectively), to Robert A. Heinlein's classic imagining—in *Starship Troopers*—of a future where soldiers rule, to George R. R. Martin's unrelentingly grim *Song of Ice*

Correia, author of the popular *Monster Hunter* series—mainly because of their perceived ideologies.

It turns out, however, that conservative nerds have spine. Rather than watch, helplessly, yet another arbiter of pop culture transform itself into a leftist playpen, Correia struck back with his own movement. He called it “Sad Puppies.” Why? Because, in Correia's words, “boring message fiction is a leading cause of Puppy Related Sadness.” (Never let it be said that conservatives can't fight the culture wars with humor and verve.)

Assisted by a few allies, Correia proposed his own slate of Hugo candidates.

Entertainment Weekly ran a story with the same theme, until reality intruded. It was soon forced to append the following correction:

After misinterpreting reports in other news publications, EW published an unfair and inaccurate depiction of the Sad Puppies voting slate, which does, in fact, include many women and writers of color. As Sad Puppies' Brad Torgerson explained to EW, the slate includes both women and non-caucasian writers, including Rajnar Vajra, Larry Correia, Annie Bellet, Kary English, Toni Weisskopf, Ann Sowards, Megan Gray, Sheila Gilbert, Jennifer Brozek, Cedar Sanderson, and Amanda Green.

In recent years, the social-justice Left has increasingly attacked science fiction as a “white nerds’ club” and has sought to elevate writers with more politically correct messages—and identities.

and Fire series, in which great houses vie for a throne in a world where morality gets you killed. And those works represent the mainstream. At the edges, science fiction is wilder still.

In other words, creativity rules. Or it did. In recent years, the social-justice Left has increasingly attacked science fiction as a “white nerds’ club” and has sought to elevate writers with more politically correct messages—and identities. There is, of course, nothing wrong with trying to introduce audiences to new voices. Nor is there anything wrong with attempting to use new voices to expand the audience. But the social-justice Left is never content with the marketplace—with competing on equal terms for market share. It instead has to exclude in the name of fighting exclusion, silence dissent in the name of dialogue, and demonstrate intolerance in the name of tolerance.

And so it was in science fiction, as leftist writers commandeered the awards process to turn the Hugo Awards—among science fiction's most prestigious—into an exercise in ideological back-patting, honoring the “best” that political correctness had to offer. Members of the World Science Fiction Convention, better known as “Worldcon,” vote on the Hugo Awards, and leftist writers began not just lobbying voters to elect their own favorites but also campaigning against notable conservatives—including Larry

In 2014, a number of them actually received nominations. The leftist response was predictable and familiar. Correia described the backlash:

Many of you have never heard of me before, but the internet was quick to explain to you what a horrible person I am. There have been allegations of fraud, vote buying, log rolling, and making up fake accounts. The character assassination has started as well, and my detractors posted and tweeted and told anyone who would listen about how I was a racist, a homophobe, a misogynist, a rape apologist, an angry white man, a religious fanatic, and how I wanted to drag homosexuals to death behind my pickup truck.

In other words, the quality of the Sad Puppies slate was less important than its identity. Too white. Too male. Too conservative.

Correia and his allies were undeterred. In 2015 their Sad Puppies slate dominated the nominations, sending the social-justice Left—facing a setback after so many years of cultural success—into almost comical hysterics. Once again, the quality of the nominees was far less important than their racial and gender identity. And this time, the hysterics spilled over into publications not known for following the ins and outs of science-fiction literature.

A writer at *The New Republic* declared, “Science fiction's white boys' club strikes back.” (Correia, by the way, is Hispanic.)

With one magnificent correction, EW demonstrated not only its own bias and lack of journalistic competence but also the many ways in which conservative artists defy the Left's stereotypes. They are not, it turns out, merely a white nerds' club.

To applaud the Sad Puppies is not to endorse all their work or to endorse each author's worldview. As with any collection of human beings, some of the Sad Puppies are admirable, and I'm sure that some are not. No one has offered a definitive critique or evaluation of their work in the aggregate—Hugo voters consider a work only in relation to the other works in its category. Indeed, to endorse the Sad Puppies merely because of their presumed ideologies is to commit the same error as the Left, to presume that message and identity substitute for quality.

It is, however, worth applauding their resistance to the notion that all artistic creation must be political, that the color of one's skin trumps the content of one's work, and that art always and everywhere must conform to the Left's intellectual fashion of the moment. The Sad Puppies' victory does not represent a permanent or even necessarily an enduring triumph. Science-fiction literature is still a work in progress. But at least now the story arc has changed, and readers can't know how the tale will end.



The Castros' New Friend

Obama's change of policy helps Cuba's oppressive regime, not its democratic dissidents

BY JAMES KIRCHICK

Havana

I'VE visited more than my fair share of dictatorships, but Cuba is the only one where travelers at the airport must pass through a metal detector upon *entering*, in addition to leaving, the country. Immediately after clearing customs at José Martí International Airport, visitors line up for a security check. Anyone found carrying contraband—counterrevolutionary books, say, or a spare laptop that might be given to a Cuban citizen—could find himself susceptible to deportation.

Contrary to popular conception, traveling to Cuba as an American was not difficult before President Barack Obama's announcement last December of "the most significant changes in our policy in more than 50 years." All anyone had to do was transit through a third country and not disclose his visit to Cuba upon reentering through U.S. customs. It was the aura of the embargo that dissuaded Americans. Moreover, there have long been myriad legal exceptions for Americans to travel to Cuba: They merely had to obtain a license from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) under one of twelve broad, rather vague, permitted categories, such as "educational" and "research." "Tourism" as such was and

remains prohibited. But since January, travelers to Cuba need not obtain any OFAC license at all. This essentially means that any American who wants to venture to Cuba, including those who plan to do nothing but sit on the beach all day and dance salsa all night, are now free to do so.

The foremost concern of the 56-year-old Castro junta—the world's oldest continuous regime—is self-perpetuation. Preventing anything that may pose a threat to its continued existence—any material that might germinate the seed of independent thought within an individual Cuban's mind—from making its way onto the island is therefore a priority. In light of the increased number of tourists visiting Cuba since the Obama administration lightened restrictions on American travel, a number that is expected only to grow with time, the Castro regime has had to beef up its capabilities in this field. But judging from the headlines of the Cuban Communist-party newspaper, *Granma*, which boasted of the dramatic rise in tourism on a recent cover of its weekly English edition, Havana doesn't seem to mind.

Some four months after President Barack Obama made his announcement, I visited Cuba, wanting to find out what its democratic dissidents had to say about the new winds from Washington. Given the course of American foreign policy over the past six years, which has seen Washington "reset"

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relations with a variety of implacably hostile regimes, the proclamation of a new policy toward Cuba was hardly surprising. Obama had signaled his intention to effect such a transformation as early as the 2008 presidential campaign, when he vowed to negotiate directly with a host of American adversaries and declared that “we’ve been engaged in a failed policy with Cuba for the last 50 years, and we need to change it.” Though Cuba-watchers assumed a shift of some sort was coming, the way in which the new policy came about and its list of particulars took many by surprise.

Obama’s December 17 declaration followed 18 months of secret negotiations between the president and his Cuban counterpart, Raúl Castro, who took the reins of power after his older brother Fidel fell ill in 2008. Even senior State Department officials involved in Latin American affairs were kept in the dark about the negotiations, which were led by Ben Rhodes, a deputy national-security adviser in his mid 30s with no official diplomatic experience but who does possess an MFA in creative writing from New York University. This was the man Obama put in charge of negotiations with Cold War-hardened Cuban Communist apparatchiks, and it shows.

In exchange for the release of Alan Gross, an elderly USAID contractor arrested and accused of espionage in 2009, the United States released the remaining three members of the “Cuban Five,” a posse of spies sent to infiltrate the Miami Cuban-exile community in the late 1990s. Washington insisted that Gross was not a spy, and so in order to avoid tying his release to the freeing of the Cuban agents, Havana agreed to deliver a longtime American-intelligence asset it had imprisoned. Gross’s release from a prison sentence he ought never to have served in the first place and that nearly killed him was officially presented as an unrelated act of goodwill.

This swap of prisoners was the only part of Obama’s rapprochement in which Havana had to reciprocate, and lopsidely at that. Moreover, it was just a prelude to the real meat of the Obama announcement: a loosening of the trade and travel restrictions America has imposed on Cuba, a collection of measures enforced through six statutes colloquially known as the “embargo.” The relaxed travel policies, the pending opening of embassies, the removal of Cuba from the State Department’s list of terrorism sponsors, the restoration of limited economic activity—all longtime goals of the Cuban regime—were declared without any corresponding demands that Havana change its conduct. Indeed, in his speech announcing the new Cuba policy, Obama essentially admitted that he would have ushered in these unilateral changes much earlier had it not been for the “obstacle” that the imprisonment of an American citizen presented to his grand plans. To fend off accusations that it was giving away something for nothing, the administration claimed that the regime would release 53 political prisoners identified on a State Department list. In January, after weeks of saying it would not publicize the list, State provided the names to select members of Congress, revealing that some of the individuals had been freed before December 17, others were close to finishing their sentences, and a few had already been rearrested. Indeed, in Cuba, as in all authoritarian societies, the door to prison is a revolving one. In March, 610 people were arrested on political charges.

NOT only were American diplomats with expertise in the region excluded from the negotiations (the better to prevent them from leaking against a policy shift some of them might have considered ill advised), so were many of the island’s political dissidents and independent journalists. “I can’t understand why they didn’t ask for preconditions,” Antonio Rodiles says of America’s negotiating posture.

I spoke with the American-educated political activist at his home. As with most of the meetings I had with dissidents, I showed up at his front door unannounced in the evening. Planning appointments in advance is logically difficult and inadvisable security-wise. Internet access is extremely limited (Cuba has the lowest ratio of computers to inhabitants in the Western hemisphere) and is available almost exclusively in hotels and embassies. At a price of about \$4.50 per hour, it is far beyond the means of most Cubans. Arranging meetings beforehand by phone, meanwhile, attracts the attention of the security police, who are presumed to listen to everything. Rodiles did not seem at all surprised that an American journalist would visit him at 10 p.m.; late-night knocks on the door (from foreign well-wishers or worse) seem to be a regular occurrence.

It’s not only the Cuban security services that monitor dissidents; nearly all of Cuban society is primed to serve as the regime’s eyes and ears through the proliferation of local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Established by Castro in 1960 shortly after he took power, they are dubbed the “civil rearguard for the vanguard of the militias . . . in the struggle against the internal and external enemy.” Combining elements of both the Gestapo and the Stasi (children are encouraged to report on their parents if they see anything suspicious, and neighbors are expected to rat out friends who might be planning an escape), CDRs exist on literally every block across the country (over 8 million of Cuba’s 11 million citizens are members) and monitor the activities of each and every individual in a neighborhood. The CDR emblem could not be more blatant: a cartoon Cyclops with a giant eye raising a sword above his head. Initially, Castro praised his *cederistas*, as committee members are known, as “1 million gags” for their ability to silence regime opponents, whom he ritually describes as subhuman. “It is impossible that the worms and parasites can make their moves if, on their own, the people . . . keep an eye on them,” he has declared. One sees CDR signs on all types of buildings across the country.

Cuban dissidents are used to receiving guests and know that they’re being watched, and I was generously welcomed by the Cubans I met. The one exception was a young activist who was obviously afraid when I showed up at his door on a Sunday evening. He politely made it clear that he wished for me to leave his home immediately. He had somewhere to be, he said, an assertion that, judging by my finding him shirtless on the couch watching television, was highly unlikely. But it was his home I had entered, and his life he was risking, and so I didn’t protest.

Rodiles studied physics and mathematics at Florida State University in Tallahassee yet ultimately decided to return to his homeland to fight for democracy. He is the main coordinator of a civil-society group composed of writers, artists, and other professionals called “Citizen Demand for Another Cuba,” aimed at persuading the Cuban government to ratify a series of

United Nations covenants on human rights. “They just started negotiating,” he says of the American government in a bewildered tone. “They didn’t involve the Cubans from outside or here inside, and I didn’t understand why they did it that way. If they really want a change they’re going to see that nothing’s going to change.”

Rodiles takes inspiration from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which inspired the Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia and other human-rights groups to form behind the Iron Curtain. That accord, at least officially, committed the Soviet Union and its satellites to respect human rights, and it provided dissidents such as Václav Havel and Lech Walesa a public benchmark by which to hold the Communist regimes to account. Genuine political change in Cuba would require constitutional reform, as the Cuban constitution permits individual freedom only insofar as such liberties don’t threaten the Communist party as “the superior leading force of society and

prisoned political dissidents. Their protests are regularly met with violence by regime-backed mobs, which drag the women by their hair through the streets. (The regime exports this sort of thuggery; at last month’s Summit of the Americas in Panama, a horde of Castro supporters descended on a group of Cuban non-governmental activists, beating them to the point that Panamanian police had to intervene.) The organization’s founder, Laura Pollán, created the group after her husband, a leader of the outlawed Cuban Liberal party, was arrested during the 2003 crackdown known as the “Black Spring.” Pollán died under mysterious circumstances in 2011, the famed Cuban health-care system having failed first to accurately diagnose her dengue fever and then to provide her adequate care.

Like many of the Cubans I meet, Soler takes great pride in making the most of what little she owns: Her tiny flat is decorated with plants and various other tchotchkies. A framed

One way to think of Cuba is as a giant public-housing project. A place where everyone is a ward of the state, and where private enterprise is next to nonexistent, the country breeds similar social pathologies.

of the state.” Wilfredo Vallin, a leader of the non-governmental Cuban Law Association, told me that, “if Cuba ratifies the pacts it would be forced to change its constitution.” Rodiles despairs that there will be no such American pressure put upon Cuba to do so, however, as Obama’s aspiration seems to be normalization at all costs. Restoring full diplomatic ties with Havana has come to be a legacy project for the president, who views it as his duty to right America’s many perceived wrongs. “The Obama administration already has an agenda, and they don’t want to change,” Rodiles sighs. “They got advice from some people that they think the better way is to, in some way, legitimize the totalitarian system.”

In light of his own predicament, Rodiles is right to be suspicious of the administration’s tactics. Less than two weeks after Obama triumphantly announced a new chapter in America’s relationship with Cuba, Rodiles was arrested steps from his front door on the way to a free-speech demonstration in central Havana. A high wall surrounds his home, but it’s not high enough to block the two cameras posted on telephone poles across the street that he says monitor his house 24/7.

I ask Rodiles how his campaign is progressing, and he says that about 2,000 people have thus far signed a petition to the government insisting upon its ratification of international human-rights agreements. It’s a relatively small number for a country with some 11 million inhabitants, though Charter 77, it should be noted, had only 242 initial signatories, in a country that was a few million people larger. Simply signing such a document immediately brings one under suspicion; it is an act requiring remarkable courage.

One of the most courageous people I met on the island was Berta Soler, leader of the Ladies in White. Formed in 2003, Damas de Blanco, as it is known in Spanish, is a coalition of wives, sisters, daughters, and other female relatives of im-

photograph of her meeting with Pope Francis outside St. Peter’s Basilica graces the wall; her dog nips at my feet. A vivacious Afro-Cuban, Soler lives in a decrepit, concrete housing block, part of an expanse of apartments on the outer reaches of Havana so vast that neighborhoods are divided by “zone” numbers. The crumbling scenery stretches in all directions, bleak and limitless, like a setting for one of J. G. Ballard’s dystopian short stories.

One way to think of Cuba is as a giant public-housing project. A place where everyone is a ward of the state, and where private enterprise is next to nonexistent, the country breeds similar social pathologies. Walking through the outskirts of Havana and other unfashionable places where tourists rarely tread, one sees a great number of aimless people without any sort of vocation. They just hang out. “Cubans don’t go to work to produce but to sustain,” Soler says. This is not an indictment of the individual Cuban, who would work were meaningful work available, but of a regime that wants to keep its people listless.

“The government sells a lot of alcohol to occupy the minds of the people,” Soler tells me, an observation that makes a lot of sense once you’ve spent a few days in Cuba. Alcohol is plentiful and cheap. In the poor provincial city of Pinar del Rio, about a two-hour drive west of Havana, I saw a boy no older than 13 walking the streets with a half-empty bottle of beer. A discotheque there was, on a Saturday night, full of people ranging in age from mid teens to 40s; a bottle of Havana Club sets you back \$6. Subsidizing the production of cheap alcohol so as to keep the population inebriated (and therefore distracted) is one of many tools that the Cuban regime learned from its erstwhile Soviet benefactor. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev drastically cut production of vodka, increased its cost, and prohibited the sale of it before lunchtime. Some historians have

speculated that reducing alcohol consumption, a cushion to dull the pain of everyday life, led Russians to more quickly understand the misery of their plight, unintentionally accelerating the Soviet Union's demise.

Like Rodiles, Soler is highly critical of the Obama administration's caving in to the Castros. "Every deal should be conditioned. America has to put conditions. If you are giving, you have to receive, and for the moment the American government is receiving nothing," she says. Soler says that there has been no letup in the harassment of dissidents; regime agents smeared one member of her group with tar at a peaceful protest held in February. "We are in the same position or even worse," she thinks, as the Obama administration steamrolls forward with its normalization plans while asking for nothing in return.

Supporters of restoring relations with Cuba insist that, in the long run, it will prove detrimental to the Castro regime by opening up the country to Western influences and economic investment. This has long been the point made by liberals, libertarians, and even some conservative opponents of the embargo, who, unlike many leftist opponents of longstanding American Cuba policy, harbor no sympathy for the regime. But when I ask Soler whether increased American investment and more visitors will help people such as herself, she is adamant in her response. Lifting the embargo in exchange for concrete reforms like legalizing independent media and ending restrictions on free speech would make sense, she avers. But lifting it without such conditions, she tells me, is "beneficial to the government, not the Cuban citizens. Money is coming in and it's going straight to the government. Regular Cubans don't touch it."

In his speech announcing the policy shift, President Obama declared that, "through a policy of engagement, we can more effectively stand up for our values and help the Cuban people help themselves as they move into the 21st century." The impracticality of this assertion does not become fully apparent until one visits Cuba and comes to appreciate how its peculiar economy functions.

THE first thing to understand about the Cuban economy is that the government controls nearly all forms of economic activity, with the exception of some black-market activities like prostitution. "In Cuba, nobody does business with Cubans. They do business with the Castro family," says Frank Calzon, executive director of the Washington-based Center for a Free Cuba. Foreign companies do not hire their own workers but are assigned them by the government, which acts as middleman. Furthermore, companies do not pay their workers directly, but rather compensate the government, which decides how much money to dispense to its subjects. The Cuban economic system is essentially one of indentured servitude, with the government loaning out its citizens for massive profit.

In order to prevent ordinary Cubans from acquiring and accumulating capital, the regime has cleverly instituted a two-currency system. One currency, the convertible peso (CUC), is pegged to the dollar and used by tourists to pay for hotels, meals, taxis, and luxury goods available only in special stores inaccessible to regular Cubans. Visiting Cuba, foreigners will never need to come into contact with any currency other than

the CUC. Few Cubans, however, receive CUCs. In addition to their ration books—used to acquire a meager amount of staples such as rice and cooking oil—Cubans also receive monthly salaries, averaging \$19 (less than half the cost of living). They are paid in the Cuban peso (CUP), equivalent to about 4 cents. These CUPs can be used to splurge on the occasional extra pair of underwear or to purchase pizza at a food stand. As they are convertible only into CUCs, CUPs are worthless outside the country.

The dual-currency system is the basis of the country's two-tiered economic structure, dividing Cubans with access to the far more valuable CUCs from those who earn only CUPs. "Those in the peso-only economy are completely dependent on the government, which is in control of more than 85 percent of the total economy," John Kavulich, president of the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council in New York, told *Bloomberg Businessweek* recently. With these two currencies, and with government ownership of industries as well as of the tourist trade, the regime has ensured that the coming influx of American dollars will fall into its coffers. "The system is cleverly and cynically designed to guarantee the fullest exploitation of every Cuban worker for the benefit of the Castro pocketbook," says Thor Halvorssen, president of the Human Rights Foundation, which for years has sent small undercover delegations into Cuba with laptops, cell phones, cameras, and other technical equipment to distribute among dissidents and local journalists. (Raúl announced in 2013 that the regime will scrap the CUC and make the CUP the country's sole currency, though it is unclear when, or even if, this reform will happen.)

Though the Castro regime and its defenders like to blame America for its problems, pointing to the embargo as chief culprit, it is not for lack of American investment that Cuba is so poor. Cuba under Castro has always been a client of another, more economically powerful state that is happy to subsidize it for propagandistic or strategic purposes. For decades, that sponsor was the Soviet Union, which initially saw value in Cuba as a military outpost (and irritant of America) 90 miles off Florida's coast. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba entered a period of sustained economic decline, which lasted until the arrival of Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian regime in Venezuela. Subsidies (amounting to about 100,000 barrels of oil a day at half the market price) from the oil-rich Venezuelans managed to help Fidel right the ship, but as the collapse in commodity prices and disastrous economic mismanagement have drastically reduced Caracas's support for its comrades in Havana, the Castro regime has drifted about searching for another patron. Barack Obama could not have arrived at a more opportune time.

THE initial charm of Havana is undeniable. To the American, for whom it has long been a forbidden place, the city exudes mythology and mystique. The vintage cars (over whose noisy engines one must shout the destination to drivers), the music of Buena Vista Social Club, an atmosphere evocative of Hemingway, women singing in the streets to sell their wares—all these cultural touchstones combine to make a heady experience. Foreign tourists rave about the city's rustic and "authentic" atmosphere, laud the salsa dancing, and gawk at the 1950s Mercury Sun Valleys that clog



the roads (for some reason, the plethora of Soviet-era Ladas don't make it into the colorful photo albums extolling Cuba's retro urban cool). Few visitors bother to visit an actual Cuban home, and so you won't hear them coo about the "classic" 1950s-era refrigerators—that is, if the house is lucky enough to have one. Aside from a few carefully well-preserved plazas outside the main tourist hotels, Havana is much dirtier and more run down than I imagined. Walking down its narrow streets, I was reminded of bombed-out sections of Beirut, heaps of rubble and trash strewn about the decaying buildings. Steps from a billboard splayed with Castro's visage and some revolutionary verbiage, a woman picked through garbage. At a pharmacy, I watched a man purchase Band-Aids—individually, not by the package.

"Sometimes when you have money you want to go to the market and buy meat and there's nothing there," Berta Soler told me. "If you're able to find it, it's bad quality. We wake up every day thinking, 'What am I going to eat today?' and go to sleep thinking 'What am I going to eat tomorrow?'" I dined at a variety of Cuban establishments, from the restaurant of a moderately priced tourist hotel to a relatively upmarket café to a canteen in a small, extremely poor provincial city. Across the board, the quality of food was horrendous, and never before have I been more eager to consume airplane cuisine.

Experiencing socialism as pure as it exists in the contemporary world, one finds something vile about the tendency of so many First World leftists, out of a perverse belief that there exists a thrilling nobility in involuntary (as opposed to deliberate) poverty, to romanticize Cuba. For a state that claims to be classless, Cuba ironically has a highly stratified class system. Cuba's wealthy elite represents a smaller and much richer percentage of the country's population (combined net worth of the Castro brothers: \$900 million) than the elite of a typical developed nation; its poor, consisting of the vast majority, meanwhile, are much more destitute.

"Socially responsible tourism" has long been a fashionable concern. There are countless travel websites and guidebooks

devoted to the concept, which urge explorers to be eco-friendly, patronize local businesses rather than international hotel chains, and generally try to leave the destination better than they found it. This altruistic pursuit is next to impossible in Cuba, ironically one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations for the progressive traveler. My first two nights in Havana, I stayed at a *casa particular*, a private home whose owner has been permitted to rent out extra rooms to tourists. The landlady, a former Russian teacher, related how the government imposes a huge monthly tax consisting of a percentage of her earnings in addition to a levy that is fixed regardless of how many guests she hosts.

Aside from the meager number of CUCs that operators of *casas particulares* get to keep, as well as the occasional tips accumulated by hotel bellboys and the like, practically all of the money that foreign tourists spend in Cuba winds up in the pockets of the regime. The government owns outright most of the hotels and maintains at least a 51 percent stake in resorts that are nominally the property of major foreign chains. Taxi drivers are obliged to turn over a fixed amount of cash to the government every month, as are the seemingly independent mom-'n'-pop dining establishments. "When you see a private business and you see it's prosperous, they have some relationship with people from the elite," Rodiles explains to me. "Without, it's impossible." Socially responsible tourism to Cuba is not only a chimera but a perversion of the concept.

The Cuban embargo is not a hardship for the ordinary Cuban. It is, at most, an inconvenience for American travelers to Cuba, who cannot use their credit or ATM cards in the country and must therefore prepare for their visit by making all of their arrangements in advance over the Internet and also bring a large amount of cash (preferably euros). This was a lesson I learned the hard way, forcing me to ration the relatively small amount of cash I brought to the island. The administration has said that it will ease restrictions on American financial institutions operating in Cuba, which will make things more

convenient for American travelers and allow them to spend money on the island more easily. But few Cubans will ever see that cash.

That American policy toward Cuba over the past half century has “failed” is a widely held assumption. It is accurate, however, only insofar as “success” is characterized by the transformation of Cuba into a liberal democracy. (By this standard, why is not the rest of the world’s policy toward Cuba—which consists of treating it like any other country—also judged a “failure”?) Proponents of engagement laud Raúl Castro’s easing of travel restrictions, slight opening of the economy, and other reforms instituted since he took power in 2008, but they never acknowledge the possibility that all of the American pressure and isolation leading up to that point might have had something to do with the changes.

To be sure, not all of Cuba’s democratic dissidents oppose the Obama administration’s opening. “[The embargo] is only helpful for the government,” Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, co-founder of a small, independent news agency called Hablemos (Let’s Talk) Press, tells me. Pérez gathers information from correspondents across the country and regularly uploads it onto the agency’s website during the two-hour daily timeslot he’s allotted by the regime to use a foreign embassy’s Internet connection. His colleagues occasionally distribute printed newsletters; two of them served jail terms for passing out *samizdat* literature. Yet Pérez’s wife, Margaly, a member of the Ladies in White, disagrees with her husband, noting that such division of opinion is common in dissident households. This, in itself, is a testament to the vitality of the civil, democratic debate that already exists among Cuba’s independent thinkers.

The embargo (long falsely referred to as a “blockade” by the Cuban regime and its Western sycophants) has been portrayed as the tool of ruthless, embittered Cuban exiles. The “right-wing Miami Cubans” of lore, whose “right-wing” views include support for multi-party democracy, freedom of speech, and an end to the statist economic system in which a family-cum-military syndicate owns practically everything, allegedly have, out of vindictiveness, inflicted the embargo upon those benighted Cubans who stayed behind. But that’s not the way the dissidents I met see the situation. “The problem that Cuba has had isn’t the embargo,” Soler tells me. “It’s the system that’s not working. Fidel and Raúl just sold a story that’s not true, internationally and domestically.”

THE outsize role America plays in the Cuban popular imagination is apparent in its embassy, which is unique in ways other than that it is officially called an “interests section,” denoting the lack of official diplomatic relations. Most of the foreign legations in Havana are located in Miramar, a tony area several kilometers from the capital’s center. There, the embassies are housed in giant villas that belonged to the elite who ruled in the era of dictator Fulgencio Batista. The American interests section, however, is a heavily guarded compound on the Malecón, the stone embankment abutting the strip of road along the Caribbean Sea. And unlike the old mansions of Havana’s Miramar district, it consists of a seven-story, nondescript office tower. In 2006, in an inspired bit of diplomacy that today cynics might refer to as “trolling,” the Bush adminis-

tration erected a Times Square-style ticker visible across 25 windows on the top floor and displaying blunt, pro-democracy messages in bright red letters. Its components smuggled into Cuba via diplomatic pouch, the makeshift display flashed quotes ranging from the anodyne (“Democracy in Cuba”) to the mildly provocative (Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up”).

This obviously annoyed the regime, and in response, it erected 138 poles topped with black flags to obstruct the ticker’s visibility (Castro also ordered the parking lot of the interests section be dug up). The poles were installed at the end of the José Martí Anti-Imperialist Platform, a plaza directly outside the interests section consisting of a stage and large concrete slabs on which are painted the ubiquitous revolutionary buzzphrases “*Patria o Muerte*” (“Homeland or Death”) and “*Venceremos*” (“We Shall Overcome”). Fifteen years ago, in the midst of the Elián González affair, the Cuban government erected a statue of Martí—a leader of the movement seeking Cuba’s independence from Spain—clutching a small child (meant to be González) while pointing his finger accusatorily at the American building. Over the years, whenever the Cuban regime has wanted to gin up anger at the United States, it has bused tens of thousands of supporters to the Anti-Imperialist Platform, where they can spit venom at the building Fidel has called a “nest of spies.”

In 2009, several months after Obama assumed office, the State Department removed the ticker, deeming it confrontational. It was a sign of things to come. Today, the heavily fortified interests section and the vast plaza outside are no longer the sites of dueling slogans, the respective physical representations of American democratic freedoms and Cuban Communist obfuscations. The administration’s decision to abandon its predecessor’s robust, if piquant, provocation can be seen as a metaphor for the broader policy changes it has implemented over the past four months, deserting the island’s democrats in pursuit of a no-conditions deal with their oppressors. While the rest of the world—with a few noble exceptions, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, ex-Communist countries that reversed their pro-Castro policies almost immediately after the Cold War transitions and began providing vigorous support to the dissidents—has accepted the regime and resigned itself to its perpetuation, America long stood as the most outspoken supporter of democracy in Cuba.

Changes to another edifice also signal something ominous about politics on the island. On my first day in Havana, I walked past El Capitolio, the pre-revolutionary parliament modeled on the U.S. Capitol. Early in his rule, Castro found that he didn’t have much use for the building (“true democracy” would be expressed through voting by a show of hands in the city’s Plaza de la Revolución), and so it was converted into the Cuban Academy of Sciences. El Capitolio is set to reopen later this year, once again serving as a legislative body, housing the rubber-stamp, single-party National Assembly. Walking past, I noticed that the building’s exterior granite walls were halfway through a resurfacing, an overhaul well timed for the huge number of American tourists expected to descend upon the island over the coming year. When it’s finished, the regime will have put a gleaming new façade on its artificial house of representatives. **NR**

A Constitutional Agenda

Five priorities for the GOP

BY RAMESH PONNURU
& REIHAN SALAM

FOR Republicans, defending the Constitution is like the weather: They all talk about it, but nobody ever does anything. Or, at least, does anything practical.

Conservatives think that modern government has drifted far from the constitutional design, to the country's detriment. Too often, though, the remedies they offer are either fanciful or plainly inadequate. In the former category are proposals for constitutional amendments to provide more structural protection for constitutional principles that have fallen by the wayside: supermajority requirements for tax increases, for example, as a means of restoring limits on the federal government. Whatever the merits of these ideas, the very high bar the Constitution erects for formal amendment limits their utility. In the latter category are pledges to appoint only originalist judges. That goal is certainly an important one, but it sometimes causes conservatives to neglect the duties of the other branches of the government, and of citizens, in preserving the constitutional order.

A practical constitutionalist agenda for the Congress would attempt both to strengthen constitutional principles such as federalism and the separation of powers and to habituate legislators to the idea that they have a role to play on these questions. The agenda would also illustrate how these principles would make for better government. Here are a few ideas that conservative congressmen, and presidential candidates, should be considering.

1) Medicaid reform: Medicaid is usually, and understandably, discussed in terms of the budget and health care. It is the second-largest item in most state budgets, and overall spending on it totaled \$449 billion in 2013. Most of the expansion of insurance coverage that has taken place under Obamacare has come in the form of larger Medicaid rolls. The program has repeatedly caused state-budget crises, but for all its cost it does not appear to have done a lot to improve the health of its low-income beneficiaries: Mostly it seems to provide them with financial security and its attendant psychological benefits.

The program's joint federal-state structure has abetted its growth while making it immune to reform. State governments have been able to increase benefits and expand eligibility while the federal government has picked up more than half the tab. That is a formula for spending more money on the program than either the federal government or the states would spend if it were either a purely federal or a purely state responsibility. It is also the set-up for all kinds of squalid behavior. (States, for example, enact "hospital taxes" to spend on Medicaid, get matching money from the feds, and then give the tax money back to the hospitals.)

As Michael Greve has argued in *The Upside-Down Constitution*, the Founders envisioned a sharper division between state

and federal responsibilities, a division that enabled competition and accountability. The best way to move back in that direction would be for the federal government to cash out most of its spending on Medicaid and give it to the beneficiaries to help them buy insurance in the private market. The federal government should simultaneously make it easier for states to do the same thing with most of their Medicaid spending. And the federal contributions should no longer reward states for higher spending.

People with low incomes would have better insurance that still provided them financial security, and the individual-insurance market would be strengthened by their participation in it. At the same time, we would have no more federally induced state-budget crises, the program would no longer grow on autopilot, and its design would be simpler and more transparent for voters.

2) The REINS Act: Many Republicans have, to their credit, advocated legislation requiring a congressional vote before major regulations can take effect, and it was one of the first bills House Republicans passed when they took Congress in 2011. Republicans have mostly described the legislation as a way of safeguarding economic growth and economic liberty, but it too has a constitutional dimension: It is a means of countering the tendency of modern government to vest legislative power in unelected agencies.

Congressmen might well shrink from having to vote on major regulations: Over the last few decades they have increasingly preferred to enact statutes with vague goals and leave agencies to develop the controversial implementing regulations. The congressmen can then support, oppose, or keep quiet about those regulations without having to take responsibility for them. The REINS Act would make it harder for Congress to dodge its duties, and a more accountable regulatory state would probably be at least a modestly less intrusive one.

3) Bring agency spending under congressional control: Another step toward reining in agencies would be to make their funding depend on Congress. Congressional power over spending—a powerful protection for self-government that predates the Constitution—has been eroded as government agencies have been given independent funding streams. The immigration bureaucracy gets its funding from customs fees and the like; the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has a statutory right to funding from the Federal Reserve, which makes it an independent agency within an independent agency, self-government buried under several layers of bureaucracy.

It's fine for specific fees to be dedicated to specific government programs, but how the money is spent has to be subject to ongoing congressional review. Changing the law to that effect would not guarantee that Congress would get its way every time it fought the president over the conduct of an agency. Still less would it guarantee that Congress would use its spending authority wisely. It would, however, bring Congress closer to having the leverage it should have.

4) Eliminate the deduction for state and local taxes: Believers in federalism should loathe the state- and local-tax deduction, which in effect transfers resources from taxpayers living in low-tax states to those living in high-tax states and, worse, raises the average state tax rate. Getting rid of it entirely would have a number of beneficial effects. In 2015, the deduction will reduce federal revenues by \$80.6 billion, a price tag substantially higher than that of the much-maligned mortgage-interest deduction. This revenue could be used to finance a large tax cut that would

benefit all taxpayers, not just those in high-tax states. Alternatively, it could be used to reduce deficits. Eliminating the deduction would also make voters in states such as New York, New Jersey, and California more tax-sensitive, as they would no longer be shielded from the full impact of their tax bills.

5) Allow states to go their own way on marijuana: Public opinion on marijuana is changing rapidly. A narrow majority of Americans now favors marijuana legalization, and a number of states are experimenting with creating their own legal marijuana markets. The problem is that while there are a number of new marijuana businesses that are legal under state law, they remain illegal under federal law. This has led to a great deal of uncertainty and confusion, yet it also creates an opportunity for conservatives.

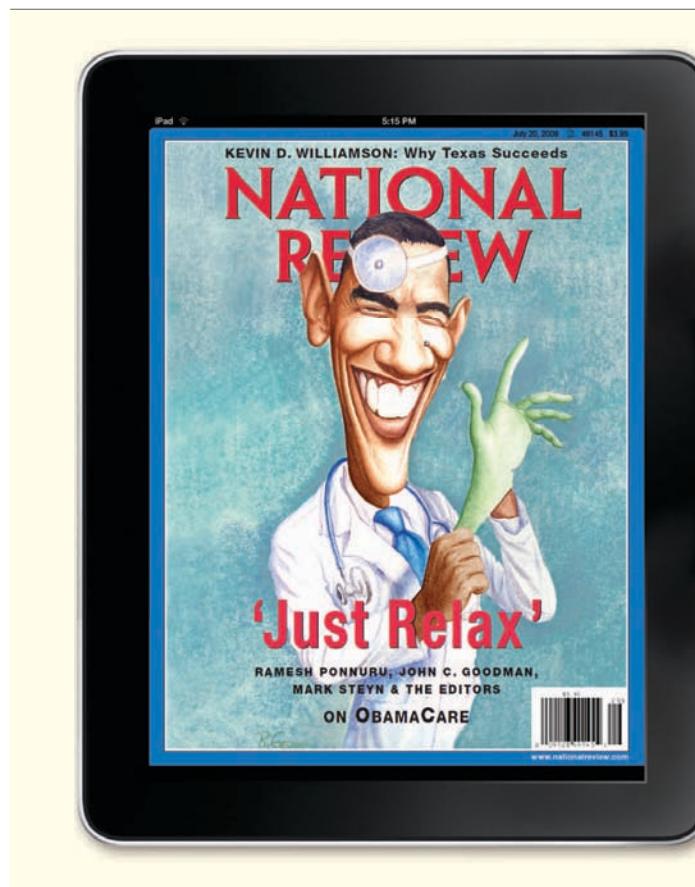
The current marijuana debate highlights the important but much-neglected constitutional distinction between interstate commerce and in-state commerce. In *Gonzales v. Raich*, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the power to criminalize the local cultivation and use of marijuana under the commerce clause even if state law authorized it. In his concurring opinion, Justice Antonin Scalia observed that Congress has the power to regulate in-state activities that do not have an impact on interstate commerce when doing so is “necessary to make a regulation of interstate commerce effective.” But what if regulating in-state activities is not necessary to achieve this goal? Recently, William Baude, a law professor at the University of Chicago, has argued that constitutional doctrine should recognize that though Congress has the right to regulate interstate commerce, it can regulate in-state commerce only insofar as doing so is essential to achieving a legitimate constitutional purpose. One could argue

that the failure to regulate in-state commerce in marijuana will lead to negative spillover effects that cross state borders. If a state can demonstrate that it is capable of regulating its in-state marijuana market effectively, however, the justification for federal interference is greatly weakened.

With this principle in mind, Congress could pass a law formally declaring that the federal government would recognize the legal status of marijuana businesses under state law as long as in-state marijuana markets met certain requirements. The same principle could extend to other policy questions as well, such as the federal role in establishing a minimum drinking age. If a state moves to lower its drinking age while pursuing various other steps that would reduce the harms associated with alcohol consumption, should the federal government try to make states keep their minimum drinking age at 21? By limiting federal interference in the regulation of in-state markets to what is strictly necessary to achieve legitimate constitutional purposes, we will foster more creativity and experimentation at the state level.

These ideas, and others like them, cannot of course be the entirety of Republicans’ legislative agenda over the next few years or their campaign platform in 2016. They do not need to be the first items on which Republicans act in 2017 should they have control of the government then. But they ought to be part of the party’s agenda. Shoring up the constitutional architecture is a unifying theme for conservatives, and the past few years have given conservatives increasing reason to be concerned about government lawlessness. What Republicans have so far lacked is an agenda that demonstrates that they take seriously the concerns they voice and won’t just drop their rhetoric as soon as they take power. That’s something they can change.

NR



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The More You Know

NEWS BRIEF: Kraft Foods, after a prolonged campaign by a “healthy food” blogger, announced it would remove the chemicals that give mac & cheese its distinctive hue.

For a long time I’ve been nervous about peanuts. I’d eat some, and then six months later I’d have a cold. Like clockwork! I try to detox every fortnight with a diet of nothing but filtered water and celery suppositories—my gracious, they’re long things—but still I felt like I was full of peanut chemicals. I even went to the doctor a week ahead of my monthly checkup and asked if she found any chemicals in my bloodstream. She hesitated for a moment before saying, Well, yes. There’s iron, for starters.

Iron? Like the metal? When I got home I looked up iron on the Internet and found it was not only connected with certain components in nuclear weapons but can also be fatal if ingested, especially in sword form. A lot of people blame “sword-form iron” for blood loss and concussions—well, their surviving relatives blame it—and European legislators have proposed banning iron in “chunk form” from soft cheeses and various relishes. Which reminds me—have you seen how green American relish is? Doesn’t that make you wonder? Are they using a green-intensifying agent, like chromalycanolide, which I think was used to enhance old Technicolor movies, like that one shot in the desert near an atomic test where everyone later got cancer? John Wayne too.

Anyway relish probably causes low-level fatigue and a mild, constant form of paranoia, which is what I usually feel. But it can’t be from pickles because I cut them out of my diet years ago.

Actually I just cut out hot dogs. Actually I cut out tofu hot dogs, because research suggests that it’s not the content of hot dogs that makes them so deadly but the shape. The body is not meant to absorb cylindrical shapes. It’s unnatural. Nature is round and perfect. Nature sometimes makes a nice oval, like an egg, but modern eggs come from factory farms where chickens are injected with a poisonous substance called Poison—I think it’s a trade name—to make the birds die so that they don’t have to spend money on killing machines. It’s true. I saw a video about it on the Internet intercut with pictures from Auschwitz, and your heart just broke. All those dead chickens. Also, what were they feeding them at Auschwitz? Those people looked terrible. Anyway eggs are bad unless they’re local and the vendor brought them to a market on a bike, not a truck or anything that releases Xhaustohydrates or causes asthma in my cats. I would do *anything* for my cats.



Anyway cylinders are what’s bad for you. But, you say, aren’t cucumbers natural, and aren’t they cylinders? Cucumbers are turned into relish. I know, I know: MIND BLOWN, but there it is, the connection Monsanto doesn’t want you to see or their whole billion-dollar death scheme would go down the tubes. Also I think most of the preservatives they put into pickle relish are so deadly they cause lab mice in cancer. That’s right. Cancer just grows a lab mouse inside it.

One of the things I don’t eat is sugar of course because sugar makes you hyper and run on and on and on and sound like some crazy person obsessed with an issue no one else knows enough about because they’re blinded by corporate advertising and maybe get Monsanto money possibly through a check I don’t know but my neighbor drives a nice car and I know they eat Lucky Charms

because I saw his wife buy it and I said something and we don’t talk now except when my cat gets out and it’s 3 A.M. and I’m in the neighbor’s backyard, on all fours, like a cat would be? To get her to come back? You know? But sugar is in everything. It’s in SALT. I swear it’s in salt and you know salt is a chemical that ends in -ide and what else ends in -ide? Right right suicide. And that’s been linked to—

Sorry, sorry, I was talking about peanuts! That’s what got me started!

Sorry, I just have so much energy on this new diet, it’s wonderful, it’s like living inside a fireworks display without any of the gunpowder vapor—you know, that falls on rice paddies in China and has decreased their fertility 95 percent? Anyway peanuts, like I said I got a cold within six months of eating these peanuts. It was at my friend’s house—well, we used to be friends—and I asked if they were organic, and she said if you mean did they come out of the ground and were they once an organism, yeah, they’re organic. They were so tasty! I thought it was that natural salt they use, the one they get by distilling and reducing the sweat of Native Americans. But then six months later I get this cold, and I start to wonder.

Turns out the kind of peanut was “GoldenRoast.” Studies have linked gold to wars and economic fluctuations!!! Anyway I’m off gold now for good, which reminds me. Did you see where FoodBabe, that AMAZING woman on the Internet who blogs about how all the chemicals in things are making our kids rashy and sick—she got Kraft to change the food coloring in mac & cheese so it’s slightly less yellowy! All by raising awareness about chemicals and making people like me send them a letter every day asking why they poison kids!

Isn’t science wonderful?

NR



The Long View

BY ROB LONG

March 22, 2017
POOL REPORT
WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS

06:30 President Jenner enters the White House gym for her usual calisthenics ritual. Your pool reporter witnessed a strenuous treadmill workout followed by a set of kettlebell swings. President Jenner wrapped up her workout with two sets of Kegel exercises. She reported being slightly sore.

08:00 Call with National Rifle Association president Wayne LaPierre about fighting pending legislation in several states that would limit or curtail the sale of firearms. President Jenner pledged her total support.

08:15 Coffee and national-security briefing with NSC staff and National Intelligence advisers. Vice President Cruz in attendance. President Jenner asked for a more detailed assessment of threats against domestic targets. Vice President Cruz was mostly silent and was observed doodling angrily.

09:30 Photo opportunity with EMILY's List leaders. Pool reporter witnessed some awkward and uncomfortable moments as EMILY's List leaders referred to President Brianna Jenner as the "first almost totally female president of the United States." Pool reporter was rebuffed by Representative Nancy Pelosi when asking her about the weirdness of the first male-to-female transgender president being a Republican. "What's weird," she said, "is that the failed policies of the past are now back. It's Ronald Reagan in drag."

10:00 Meeting with Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus about next year's midterm elections. Priebus thanked President Jenner for her "tireless efforts" in fundraising and noted her soaring popularity with female voters.

10:45 Signing ceremony for the 2017 Tax Reduction and Elimination Act. During photo op, President Jenner reminded her advisers that she won the 2016 presidential election primarily on an economic and "opportunity" platform and demanded that they "move quickly to undo the stifling regulatory state implemented by my predecessor."

12:30 Slow-carb lunch with Representative Paul Ryan followed by light afternoon workout. During press availability, President Jenner strongly pushed back against criticisms that her recent crushing victory in the Republican Women's Annual Golf Tournament was somehow unfair.

14:30 President Jenner meets with Pentagon officials to push for a faster military buildup. No photo op.

15:00 President Jenner meets with energy officials, executives, and entrepreneurs as they celebrate the rapid construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. No press avail.

15:45 Formal signing ceremony with chief of staff Mitt Romney and Vice President Cruz. President Brianna Jenner signed the executive order formally pardoning former secretary of state Hillary Clinton for her conviction for accounting fraud, fundraising illegalities, influence peddling, racketeering, tax evasion, evidence tampering, and violations of the Trading with the Enemy Act. "It's not easy being a woman in politics," the president said as she signed the pardon.

16:15 Hospital visit with ABC News personality Diane Sawyer. Photo op with Sawyer and her neurological team. Sawyer has been in what doctors described as an "irreversible coma" following a massive aneurysm the night of the landslide victory of President Jenner in November 2016. President Jenner noted that she seems more animated than ever and, despite assurances that Sawyer can't hear anything, told her immobile body that she was pushing through with her

campaign promises of a flat tax, rapid military buildup, the total dismantling of Obamacare, and the abolition of the Department of Education. Doctors reported strange brain activity following the visit consistent with another aneurysm.

17:30 Photo session with *Vanity Fair* photographer Annie Leibovitz for an upcoming *Vanity Fair* cover. President Jenner was given a selection of outfits to try on, and ended up choosing an Alexander Wang evening sheath in size 24. While the outfit was being tailored and adjusted to President Jenner's specific requirements—pool reporter has no confirmed details on what those adjustments were or where they were required on the garment—the president was directed to hair and makeup before the shoot could begin.

19:30 After two hours of hair and makeup—and what White House sources described to the pool reporter as a "hot-towel shave"—President Jenner was photographed in three separate outfits: the Alexander Wang sheath, a simple pantsuit, and weekend gardening-type blue jeans with a bright gingham shirt. Sources tell pool reporter that President Jenner refused to wear a replica of the running shorts she wore when she won the men's decathlon gold medal at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal.

20:30 State dinner. President Jenner escorted to the dinner by California governor Gary Sinise.

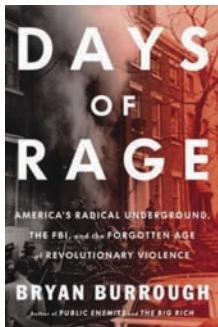
23:00 President Jenner watches the tearful apology of Representative Nancy Pelosi on CNN for her "insensitive and hateful remarks toward transgender Americans" at the earlier EMILY's List event, and her use of "drag" as a pejorative. She calls the congresswoman and accepts her apology while at the same time asking for her vote next week on the Social Security Privatization Act of 2017.

23:30 The president retires for the evening after applying an all-night moisturizing masque.

Books, Arts & Manners

A Not-So-Distant Mirror

ANDREW C. McCARTHY



Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence, by Bryan Burrough

(Penguin, 608 pp., \$29.95)

SEE here: a war against the United States waged by apocalyptic ideologues who condemn the nation as incorrigibly immoral, the cause of the world's woes. See there: a cross-country war against the police, ruthlessly attacked—a number of them murdered in cold blood—because they happen to be wearing uniforms that identify them, in the eyes of race-obsessed assailants, as the muscle end of oppressive government. See all around: a coterie of radical lawyers fighting passionately for sociopaths, blurring the lines between zealous representation and complicity and skewering the government for lawless surveillance and the shredding of due process.

Is that a synopsis of post-9/11 America, perhaps with special focus on the recent, violent fallout of racially charged incidents involving young black men and police officers? We could be forgiven for assuming so. Memories are short, after all, and our own times deeply troubled. In truth, though, the synopsis just as aptly captures the 1970s, the most sustained period of anti-American terror-

ism and anti-police violence in modern American history. That is amply demonstrated by Bryan Burrough's engaging new history of the era.

In 1972 alone, there were 1,900 bombings in the United States, virtually all of them carried out by domestic groups and individual American citizens. Yet the staggering number of explosives detonated, along with other incidents of politically motivated violence that began in the late Sixties and bled into the Reagan years, is largely forgotten today. The most obvious explanation for this amnesia, if not the best one, is the dearth of death that resulted from these hundreds of bombs (to say nothing of the duds). The aging radicals now risibly spin that fortuity as the result of their humanitarianism—“responsible terrorism,” they smarm. Burrough confirms, though, that it had more to do with their incompetence.

There was no Weather Underground 9/11. Despite scores of explosions at targets including the Empire State Building, the Pentagon, and the U.S. Capitol, the era's iconic image is not of some smoldering skyscraper's collapse, but of gun-toting newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst robbing a bank.

Still, the sparse death count explains only so much. In countless ways, today's terrorists echo the grievances of the Seventies. In addition, the controversies that engulf today's terrorism investigations trace to protocols imposed after renegade law-enforcement tactics undermined terrorism prosecutions in the Seventies. So why has the history—who the terrorists were, what they did, and why—seemed to vanish?

Joe Connor believes he knows the answer, having had 40 years to think about it. It was on his ninth birthday, in 1975, that Puerto Rican FALN terrorists murdered his father when they bombed Fraunces Tavern, a popular Wall Street haunt. “The media,” he tells Burrough, were “more than happy to let all this go.” While not claiming that the media support savage methods, he maintains that today's journalists share “a lot of the same values” as the terrorists, and thus prefer that we not remember them as terrorists.

It is a damning indictment, but not a frivolous one. It is faithfully reported by Burrough, but not resolved. That is consistent with the author's stated mission to provide “a straightforward narrative history of the period and its people,” with judgments about politics kept “to a minimum.”

The book is indeed a comprehensive tour of the era's radical groups, concentrating on those that went “underground.” Burrough is at pains to define this term as, essentially, living under pseudonyms; he cannot say it inevitably means living on the run, because he has turned up too much evidence of notorious terrorists' hiding in plain sight, some in comfortable abodes for years at a stretch.

The exploits of several radical cadres are traced. Three groups stand out, however, as the decade's main players: the black avatars of anti-establishment violence; their adoring white, Ivy League-educated allies, who turned to “the armed struggle” largely out of a craving for “black authenticity”; and the Nixon-era FBI, whose disregard for the law was so thoroughgoing that it became a threat more ominous than the terrorists it pursued—at least as the history has been written by the victors, the terrorists who literally got away with murder, many going on to become influential, politically connected academics.

Predominantly, *Days of Rage* is a history driven by race. We often wonder why today, over half a century after the Civil Rights Act, race consciousness continues to pervade the public discourse of a nation that has twice elected a black president, now has its second black attorney general, and features African-American men and women in positions of high office at every level of government, in addition to prominence in elite journalism and popular culture. It is, in fact, the shameful legacy of racial prejudice that ignited the Sixties radicalism. That, in turn, devolved into the revolutionary violence of the Seventies. It was in that cauldron that contemporary political and cultural trendsetters came of age—and they've never “moved on.”

Beginning in 1959, what Burrough alternatively describes as the “torch of ‘self-defense’” and the legacy of Black Power passed through five iconic black men. The first, and least remembered, was Robert F. Williams, a North Carolina NAACP leader who rose to minor international fame spearheading the defense of young black boys arrested and beaten for joining a white girl in a schoolyard “kissing game.” Williams blazed what became a well-trod path. Upon drawing plaudits from such progressive eminences as Eleanor Roosevelt, he grew bold, calling for blacks to use deadly force in self-defense—indeed, in maintaining that American law protected blacks only after they armed themselves. Then, after crossing the law (he was dubiously charged with kidnapping white supporters he was probably protecting from an angry black crowd), he fled to Castro’s Cuba, which happily provided a stage for his now-virulent anti-Americanism and calls for armed insurrection by black U.S. servicemen.

Williams led seamlessly to the searing rhetoric of Malcolm X, the most charismatic and influential of Black Power’s voices. His summons to bloody revolution tapped into black discontent with institutional racism and impatience with the peaceful-resistance approach of Martin Luther King Jr. Here is a useful measure of American social progress: In our time, outrage was the common reaction to pastor Jeremiah Wright’s glee that the 9/11 attacks were a case of “America’s chickens coming home to roost.” Even Wright’s most famous acolyte, Barack Obama, distanced himself. Yet, virtually word for word, Malcolm X said the same thing about John F. Kennedy’s assassination; at the time, it was taken as a rally cry typical of the firebrand’s rhetoric (he also mocked Martin Luther King as “a chump, not a champ”), and it has not diminished him in the Left’s reverential eyes.

The rhetorical shift from protest to resistance to incitement proceeded when Malcolm X’s “mantle of black militancy” was passed to Stokely Carmichael. His “Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee” was an Orwellian designation: The SNCC evolved into the Black Panthers, the Oakland-based militants led by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. The Panthers infamously carried weapons openly and faced down police, the agents

of state power who would remain the target of Black Power wrath. Still, Burrough contends, Newton and Seale essentially used talk of “armed self-defense” as a recruiting tool to staff the Panthers’ social-welfare programs.

It was Eldridge Cleaver, “Black Power’s fourth great voice,” who took the rhetoric seriously, seeking a genuine revolution forged by guerrilla warfare. The story of the violent radical underground is that of the world wrought by Cleaver. He became the guiding force behind the murderous Black Liberation Army (BLA), which splintered from the Panthers. He also inspired the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), the small but rabid confederation of black convicts and ne’er-do-well white radicals that abducted Patty Hearst and turned her into a willing accomplice in their heists. Across the spectrum of Seventies underground groups, robberies, especially of banks, were rationalized as Robin Hood exercises necessary to sustain the revolution.

Cleaver boldly proclaimed that black prison inmates, whose incarceration was relentlessly limned as an indictment of the American system, not of their own criminality, would form the leading edge of the revolution. No surprise then that, when he fled to Algeria (whose leftist government recognized the “international” BLA diplomatically and even gave Cleaver his own embassy for a time), the baton of black militancy was passed to George Jackson, a legendarily fierce inmate who spent his short adult life in California prisons.

Under Jackson’s tutelage, the decision was made to retaliate for state abuses against black inmates (including racially motivated killings) by the retaliatory killing of white prison guards. When Jackson was implicated in the murder of a guard at Soledad Prison, his hard-left lawyer Fay Stender—with the help of such “radical-chic supporters” as Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, the Grateful Dead, and UCLA professor Angela Davis—infated Jackson’s letter-writing prowess into international celebrity. The *New York Times* proclaimed *Soledad Brother*, a heavily edited collection of the sociopath’s missives—with, naturally, an introduction by Jean Genet—“one of the most significant and important documents since the first black was pushed off the ship at Jamestown colony.”

The raves were short-lived. Jackson’s adoring brother Jonathan, who was known to have received guns from Angela Davis, was killed in a shootout after murdering a state judge he had taken hostage during a botched attempt to extort Jackson’s release. Jackson himself was later killed by police snipers after leading a riot at San Quentin State Prison during which five hostages—most of them guards—were found murdered in his cell. He became a martyr of victimology for convicts, terrorists, and other leftists who claim that endemic American racism justifies crime and is the real cause of high black incarceration levels.

Weatherman was an apocalyptic, overwhelmingly white, and innately elitist radical group, spawned by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). And of course they had a theory—what Ivy League Marxist would be without one?—derived from French philosopher Régis Debray, a confidant of their hero, Che Guevara. The “*foco* theory” held that if a revolutionary movement’s politically advanced vanguard formed into small guerrilla cells, it could spark a grassroots rebellion that would draw in the entire working class.

Nevertheless, there was a baleful irony for Weatherman. The perception of “Amerika” as incorrigibly racist is what drove them to evolve into the “Weather Underground” and take up “the armed struggle”—after a few futile episodes of rioting and vandalism that became known as the “Days of Rage” operation. But the racial insularity of Carmichael’s Black Power movement, coupled with the rise of the Panthers and the BLA, effectively relegated white supporters to subordinate status and, at times, outright ostracism. This was excruciating for arrogant twenty-somethings who saw themselves as the intellectual leaders of an ideology that lionized the very blacks who regarded them as insufficiently authentic.

The seeming escape from this conundrum was opposition to the Vietnam war. As former Weatherman Howard Machtinger told Burrough, “We related to the war in a purely opportunistic way.” They used it to recruit and as a rationale for levying war against an imperialist regime. But the struggle was never about the war; it was about

race. And emphasizing the war had the unintended effect of marginalizing Weatherman: Its Marxist tropes about galvanizing the working class paled beside the obsessions with racial injustice and women's rights that catalyzed black revolutionaries and feminists. Plus, it reduced Weatherman to a spent force once the war wound down in the early Seventies.

Though the story of the Weather Underground has been told repeatedly, Burrough offers several news-making contributions. Former terrorists reveal new details about their largely unexplored life underground. We learn that the leaders, particularly Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, and Jeff Jones, lived very comfortably—and often quite openly—while their subordinates scraped by. They also staged a duplicitous plot to reclaim leadership of the radical Left when they emerged from underground, only to be humiliated and shunned by black revolutionaries and the rump of the movement.

Burrough also spotlights the previously little-noticed Ron Fliegelman, who became the Weather Underground's bomb technician after the catastrophic 1970 accidental bombing of a Greenwich Village townhouse (the home of Weatherman Cathy Wilkerson's wealthy parents). We learn that Fliegelman's sound bomb-construction method became a model for other Seventies terrorist groups, and that the Weather Underground also provided training for the FALN, the era's most disciplined, effective, and long-lasting revolutionaries.

Days of Rage is most valuable, however, in destroying the myth, tirelessly spun by Ayers in his afterlife as an academic and unrepentant "small-c communist," that the Weathermen were "responsible terrorists" who really just engaged in "armed propaganda"—targeting buildings of symbolic value but sparing people. Prior to the townhouse catastrophe, in which the clueless bomb-makers Terry Robbins, Teddy Gold, and Diana Oughton (Ayers's girlfriend) were killed, Weatherman blithely planned to murder police. In fact, the powerful explosives accidentally set off at the townhouse were nail bombs intended for a military dance at Fort Dix; they would have killed hundreds of people. It was only after the

townhouse that the Ivy Leaguers realized they lacked the stomach and were deficient in the skill needed for mass murder. The leaders, moreover, realized they liked living in comfort and relative stability—a luxury not afforded to murderers, especially cop killers, as shown by the frenetic lives of BLA and FALN fugitives. So the Weather Underground changed course and avoided killing people with their bombs—a strategy that made their "armed struggle" even more pointless. Before the townhouse, though, they were all in.

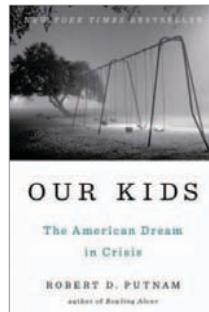
Ultimately, the radicals won in the sense that few of them—besides the operatives convicted of homicides and mass-murder plots—did significant jail time. Many, like Ayers, were not even prosecuted. Principally, this was because of FBI malfeasance. In its panicked reaction to the social upheaval, the anti-war rioting, and the brazen targeting of police, federal law enforcement went rogue—and it stayed rogue even after the Supreme Court, in 1972, dramatically curtailed the government's authority to conduct warrantless surveillance of domestic subversives. Ultimately, the lawmen's lawlessness made cases unprosecutable. Ayers, to borrow his own words, was left "guilty as sin, [but] free as a bird."

In a final irony, it was not the terrorists but three senior FBI officials who were pursued: Director L. Patrick Gray, against whom charges were eventually dropped, and top supervisors Edward S. Miller and W. Mark Felt (the late Felt is more famous now as "Deep Throat," Woodward and Bernstein's Watergate source). The latter two were pardoned by President Reagan after a skeptical judge imposed small fines and no jail time. Meanwhile, Democratic presidents Carter and Clinton pardoned several of the handful of Weatherman terrorists who drew serious federal sentences.

Notwithstanding all the tumult, the revolutionary age seemed to fade away in a mix of exhaustion and politically tinged ambivalence about what it all meant. That ambivalence endures. In Bryan Burrough's *Days of Rage*, however, we now have the benefit of a lively factual account of a largely forgotten era, one that can teach us a great deal about our own contemporary strife. **NR**

It's the Parents

REIHAN SALAM



Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis, by Robert D. Putnam (Simon & Schuster, 400 pp., \$28)

ALMOST all Americans agree that our society ought to strive for equality of opportunity—that no child's prospects should be limited by the circumstances of his or her birth. Yet achieving equality of opportunity in this sense is quite a bit harder than you might think. Throughout human history, parents have been motivated by a desire to better the lives of their children, and to this end parents routinely make sacrifices. It's often said that fatherhood is a force that restrains the worst impulses of men, and that motherhood fills women with a powerful urge to protect their children from the dangers of the wider world. Parents save, in the hope of building wealth that they can pass on to their offspring, when they'd prefer to spend. They withstand petty indignities rather than lash out violently at those who insult or otherwise undermine them, to avoid landing in jail or worse, all to help ensure that they can continue to meet their familial obligations. The parental desire to fulfill these obligations hasn't always been motivated by love or generosity of spirit alone: Fear of social disapproval has also played a role.

But what if parents were promised that, regardless of the choices they made, regardless of whether they planned carefully for the future or indulged in this or that vice, they could rest assured that it was the job of society to provide for their children? What if all parents came

to believe that their own contributions to the well-being of their children were ultimately immaterial? According to this logic, one ought to expect the fortunes of children with absent fathers and those with attentive fathers to be essentially the same. Wouldn't you expect that the texture of society would start to change if people came to take this idea seriously, and that many parents would free themselves from the straitjacket of guilt, deferred gratification, and exhaustion that has long been at the heart of child-rearing? Could it be that the goal of equality of opportunity is fundamentally confused, as the prospects of children raised by nurturing parents will necessarily tend to be brighter than those of children raised by parents who for whatever reason can't or won't provide the

CATHEDRAL

The inner light grandeur of the cathedral, muted but still present, even on cloudy days; its immensity, its echoes, silence, its music, shifting uplift of daylight, its faithful, its tourists, clergy, its pattern of life; deliberately, artfully distinct from the outside world, a space too big for man, its compelling union of theater and truth; something comes from its sepulcher of saint and martyr, of ancient decency,

the love of God: the scrubbed, musty solemnity of it all, a continuity beyond the genealogy of rulers, the history of nations; the stones, the light, the mystery and memory.

Something that lies close to the generations of the faithful, pilgrims, clergy, even tourists of the modern era. Any echoes from the old souls, the meaning of the music of the ancient hymns, each its own prayer, lie closer still; but it is the new souls, believers, nonbelievers, the merely hopeful, that give this place its continuing life, that create a meaning of place, an idea with wings, a separate way, a separate life, something of a world unto itself, lifting through stone and glass unbroken, the sweep of wings silent, cloud like, a holy light also unbroken, and ever hopeful.

—WILLIAM W. RUNYEON

same spiritual nourishment? Even children raised by loving parents can find themselves overwhelmed by material deprivation, which is one of the many compelling arguments for a social safety net. Yet one wonders whether we've led recent generations of parents astray by suggesting that the life chances of their children aren't ultimately in their hands.

To Robert Putnam, the renowned Harvard political scientist, the gap between the life chances of children raised in rich households and those raised in poor ones is a matter of grave concern. He is right. One can't read *Our Kids*, his latest book, without being deeply moved by the challenges facing the poor children he describes, in a series of vivid portraits drawn from across the country. Putnam's central observation is that because of rising inequality, the fates of rich and poor children in America are diverging. Though he acknowledges that it will take years before we have definitive proof that upward mobility for poor children is declining, and not just stagnant, he insists that we act now before it's too late.

In making his case, Putnam observes that while race is growing less powerful as an obstacle to upward mobility, class is growing more so. Neighborhoods are less likely to be racially segregated today than in past decades, yet they are more likely to be segregated by income. Because children raised in poor neighborhoods tend to fare worse than children raised in non-poor neighborhoods, the rise of class segregation has profound consequences. Putnam draws on the work of Patrick Sharkey, a New York University sociologist and the author of *Stuck in Place*, a landmark study of neighborhood inequality. One of Sharkey's most striking findings is that children raised in non-poor neighborhoods by parents raised in poor neighborhoods fare roughly as well on cognitive tests as children raised in poor neighborhoods by parents raised in non-poor neighborhoods, and that both groups of children fare better than those raised in poor neighborhoods by parents raised in poor neighborhoods—and far worse than children raised in non-poor neighborhoods by parents raised in non-poor neighborhoods. That is, the negative

consequences of growing up in a deprived community appear to be transmitted from one generation to the next, while the same is true of the positive consequences of growing up in a more prosperous and well-functioning community.

According to Putnam, these positive consequences flow from the fact that non-poor neighborhoods tend to be more cohesive than poor neighborhoods, and community members are more likely to cooperate with one another to advance their collective interests—a phenomenon sociologists have dubbed "collective efficacy." "Collective efficacy, reflected in trust in neighbors, is higher in richer, more educated neighborhoods, and that collective efficacy in turn helps all the young people in the neighborhood, regardless of family resources," writes Putnam. If growing up in communities defined by high levels of trust benefits all children, regardless of income, it seems vitally important that we do what we can to cultivate trust. So it seems worth noting that in 2007, Putnam famously, and reluctantly, concluded that more-diverse neighborhoods tend to be defined by lower levels of trust than less-diverse neighborhoods. Though Putnam expresses the hope that this distrust can be overcome, he's never offered a compelling roadmap as to how it can be.

Notably, Putnam generally defines "rich" parents as those who finished college and "poor" parents as those who did not, a definition that in a sense stacks the deck. Finishing college takes enormous self-discipline, particularly for those who weren't raised in stable families, or a great deal of support from family and friends. If finishing college is best understood as a proxy for the combined effect of self-discipline and strong social networks, one wishes that we could more rigorously study the lives of those who don't attend college, or who fail to finish, yet who are embedded in strong, supportive social networks.

Cultivating self-discipline and strengthening social networks have always been the work of families and communities. Now, however, as we see intensifying class segregation, and as fewer children are raised in neighborhoods with high levels of trust and collective efficacy, government must act to ensure equality of opportunity, Putnam

argues. He touts the virtues of wage subsidies, investment in early-childhood education, and community colleges, among other fairly modest ideas. All of these programs are expensive, and chances are that they'd be even more expensive if government were to make a serious effort to use them as a substitute for the social support that only strong families and communities can provide.

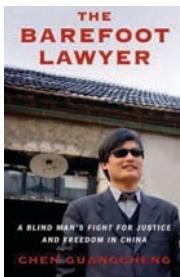
Yet it's not at all clear that even the most generously funded social programs will address the deeper problem, which is that our cultural turn away from harshly judging those parents who fail their children to averting our eyes from their shortsightedness and neglect has proven disastrous. Putnam himself is reluctant to blame parents, emphasizing instead that "to hold kids responsible for their parents' failings violates most Americans' moral sensibility." This strikes me as a dodge. We imprison violent criminals, despite the fact that their aggression can often be traced to chaotic childhoods. We don't do business with people who are dishonest and unreliable, though these traits may well have been survival mechanisms they developed as the children of neglectful parents. There is no way around holding kids responsible for their parents' failings, which is why it is so essential that we remind parents of that fact at every opportunity.

And finally, one wonders why Putnam never makes an obvious but important point: Given the large number of poor children already residing in the United States, should we at the very least consider limiting future immigration to families that can more than adequately provide for their children? Immigration contributes enormously to America's economic dynamism. Yet not all immigrants are the same: Some immigrants arrive in the U.S. with the skills and connections they need to enter the middle class, while others find that, while they're better off than they were in their countries of origin, they lack those same skills and connections, and their only hope of leading dignified American lives is to rely on substantial, ongoing public assistance. If we as a society are struggling to provide poor children with the resources they need to thrive, we should stop biting off more than we can chew.

NR

The Case of Clinton vs. Chen

JOHN R. BOLTON



The Barefoot Lawyer: A Blind Man's Fight for Justice and Freedom in China, by Chen Guangcheng (Henry Holt, 352 pp., \$30)

ONCE again a declared presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton now faces prospects for election (or even nomination) that are not as bright as had once been thought. She may turn out to be even less inevitable than she was in 2008. Among many reasons Clinton is not a sure thing is her weakness for being economical with the truth, especially when encountering obstacles to her ambitions.

Hard Choices, her memoir of her years as secretary of state, did nothing to dispel that notion, even though the book's main purpose was to build preemptive defenses against criticisms of her unimpressive tenure. (I reviewed *Hard Choices* in NATIONAL REVIEW's July 21, 2014, issue.) The danger in writing first is that others with differing memories later produce their own accounts, to embarrassing effect. Some will come from political enemies or disgruntled former colleagues with their own agendas. But others will come from those with no scores to settle, seeking only to tell their stories about crossing paths with the author at decisive moments.

One such powerful competing narrative is Chen Guangcheng's autobiography. Despite repeated sightings of China's "liberalizing," Chen's experiences demon-

Mr. Bolton is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He is the author of *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad*.

strate that Communist Party brutality and repression, akin to those from Mao's Cultural Revolution, persist to this day.

Blind since early childhood, Chen suffered enduring cultural biases against the disabled, but he refused to accept being marginalized into a life of poverty and uselessness. Gaining a modest education through strenuous family efforts, he became an advocate for the disabled against the extraordinarily rigid Party bureaucracy. As his "barefoot lawyer" reputation grew, both in China and internationally, he attracted cases with wider implications. Particularly noteworthy was his work against China's barbaric "one child per family" policy, which too often resulted in forced abortions and sterilizations, beatings, and other cruelties imposed on those disobeying the Party's diktat.

Chen and his family were viciously treated, physically and psychologically, an abuse that culminated in four years in prison for Chen, followed by house arrest in his native village. It is hard to say which punishment was worse. Convinced that the Party's ultimate objective was his death, Chen and his wife plotted his escape from the village to seek safety in the wider world.

Clinton's *Hard Choices* devotes an entire chapter to Chen's drama, signaling Clinton's concern over its continuing saliency and damaging political implications. Chen's danger-filled story of escape, asylum, betrayal, and then emigration to America is riveting. Clinton's, by contrast, has all the candor of spin artists working overtime, highlighting her penchant for slippery, selective recall. Chen was seeking freedom and security; Clinton throughout was trying to erase a pesky political problem.

On April 25, 2012, Chen contacted America's Beijing embassy seeking asylum. Clinton's first "hard choice" was not just whether to agree, but also whether to send a U.S. car and personnel to spirit him into the embassy compound. Because the embassy is surrounded by Chinese security personnel, the chances of a blind fugitive's entering on foot were essentially zero. Clinton says that "in the end it wasn't a close call," but, given the case's subsequent publicity, what else could she say now?

Nervous White House aides, informed only after the fact, wanted the problem to "go away." Clinton clearly understood that the pressure came directly from Obama, whose message, she says twice, "was clear:



Alaska Cruise

Sailing July 18-25 aboard Holland America's luxurious ms *Westerdam* with

DANIEL HANNAN, MARY KATHARINE HAM, MICHELE BACHMANN, PAT CADDELL, JONAH GOLDBERG, JAMES O'KEEFE, JOHN SUNUNU, NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY, KATIE PAVLICH, ANDREW KLVAN, PETE HEGSETH, STEPHEN MOORE, KEVIN WILLIAMSON, YUVAL LEVIN, JAMES LILEKS, KEVIN HASSETT, JAY NORDLINGER, ROB LONG, JIM GERAGHTY, REIHAN SALAM, DANIEL J. MAHONEY, JILLIAN MELCHIOR, JOHN HILLEN, KATHRYN LOPEZ, CHARLES C.W. COOKE, ELIANA JOHNSON, JOHN J. MILLER, JOHN FUND, RAMESH PONNURU, KATHERINE CONNELL, PATRICK BRENNAN, JOEL GEHRKE, KAT TIMPF, and ROMAN GENN!

Take part in one of the most exciting seafaring adventures you will ever experience: the *National Review* 2015 Alaska Summer Cruise. Featuring an incredible cast of conservative speakers—and affordable accommodations—this special trip will take place July 18-25, 2015. Set for the absolutely ideal time to visit Alaska and enjoy its unique, breathtaking beauty, the phenomenal journey—which would make for an excellent family vacation or reunion—will sail round-trip from Seattle aboard Holland America Line's beautiful MS *Westerdam*, visiting Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, Glacier Bay, and Victoria, B.C.

This is a *unique* opportunity to meet preeminent conservative celebrities and to discuss the day's most important issues: we're happy to announce that **Mary Katharine Ham**, HotAir.com Editor-at-large, will be joining a great line-up, including **Daniel Hannan**, the popular "Euroskeptic" British MEP, former New Hampshire governor and "Bush 41" chief of staff **John Sununu**, ace economists **Stephen Moore** and **Kevin Hassett**, former congresswoman **Michele Bachmann**, pollster **Pat Caddell**, *National Affairs* editor **Yuval Levin**, *Townhall.com* editor **Katie Pavlich**, videographer James O'Keefe, top social commentators **Naomi Schaefer Riley**, **James Lileks**, and **Andrew Klavan**, military/security experts **Pete Hegseth** and **John Hillen**, leading conservative academic **Daniel Mahoney**, and from NR's editorial All Stars **Jonah Goldberg**, **Jay Nordlinger**, **Rob Long**, **John Fund**, **Roman Genn**, **Ramesh Ponnuru**, **Kevin Williamson**, **Eliana Johnson**, **Jim Geraghty**, **Kathryn Lopez**, **Charles Cooke**, **John Miller**, **Patrick**

Brennan, **Jillian Melchior**, **Joel Gehrke**, and **Kat Timpf**.

Over 400 readers—make certain you're among them!—are expected to take this wonderful trip, which is why we urge you to act *now* to reserve your stateroom. Alaska cruises are mega-popular because of the region's raw beauty. For Mother Nature at her finest, you can't beat the stunning waterways hugging the 49th State, or the glaciers and other wonders that adorn it from the Arctic to the Gulf. And as an unrivaled family summer vacation destination, how can you compete with an Alaska voyage? You can't. So don't beat them, join them (with your family)!—on the *National Review* 2015 Alaska Summer Cruise.

There's a cabin to meet everyone's budget: Prices start at just \$2,299 per person, and "Single" staterooms begin at an affordable \$3,399 (the same prices we offered on our last trip here in 2007!).

If you've wanted to go on an NR cruise, but *haven't*, consider this: the "typical" NR cruise "alumnus" has been on an average of *four* of our seafaring trips! They keep coming back again and again for an obvious reason: an NR cruise is sure to be a *great* time. It's time you discovered this for yourself.

An NR cruise is your unique chance to meet and intimately discuss politics and policy with some of the true giants of conservative and political affairs. Our exciting seminars—we've scheduled eight panel sessions (each preceded by a great one-on-one interview of a special guest speaker)—provide a scintillating take on current events. Then there are the exclusive "extras," such as our *three* cocktail receptions (convivial affairs featuring great food and libations), *two* late-night "Night Owls," one post-dinner poolside "smoker" (with world-class **H. Upmann** cigars and complimentary cognac!), plus intimate dining with speakers and editors on two nights.

Then there's the *Westerdam*: Its accommodations (elegant staterooms and glamorous public spaces) are luxurious, and matched by the

ONE COOOOL WEEK OF SUMMER FUN AND CONSERVATIVE REVELRY!

DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
SAT/July 18	Seattle		4:00PM	evening cocktail reception
SUN/July 19	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars "Night Owl" session
MON/July 20	Juneau, AK	1:00PM	10:00PM	morning seminar
TUE/July 21	Glacier Bay		SCENIC CRUISING	morning/afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
WED/July 22	Sitka, AK	7:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night poolside smoker
THUR/July 23	Ketchikan, AK	7:00AM	1:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
FRI/July 24	Victoria, B.C.	6:00PM	Midnight	morning seminar evening cocktail reception
SAT/July 25	Seattle	7:00AM		





indulgent staff, superior cuisine, and top-notch entertainment and excursions.

And then there is the spectacular itinerary, starting with beautiful Seattle, and followed over the next week with these top destinations:

GLACIER BAY

National Park protects a unique ecosystem of plants and animals living in concert with a changing glacial landscape. You'll be awed: monumental chunks of ice split off glaciers, crashing into the sea, roaring like thunder, water shooting hundreds of feet into the air. Glacier Bay has more actively calving tidewater glaciers than anyplace else in the world.

JUNEAU is the place to let your imagination run wild. Explore the lush Tongass National Forest. Visit the rustic shops in town. Or get out and kayak, dogsled, raft, whale watch, flightsee or fish. There's no end to the adventure because we're in port long enough to truly take advantage of the long daylight hours.

SITKA The onion domes of St. Michael's Cathedral are your first clue that Sitka was once a Russian settlement. Today, be greeted by Tlingit native people and astonishing marine life.

KETCHIKAN clings to the shores of Tongass Narrows and drapes the mountains with a cheerful air. The main attractions include Creek Street, the Tongass Historical Museum, and Totem Bight State Park (and a floatplane flightseeing trip to Misty Fjords National Monument is a transforming adventure not to be missed).

VICTORIA, B.C. A touch of England awaits in this beautiful port: afternoon tea, double-decker buses, and the famed Butchart Gardens (a brilliant tapestry of color spread across 50 blooming acres).

Use the application on the following page to sign up for what will be seven of the most fun-filled days you'll ever experience. Or you can reserve your stateroom at www.nrcruise.com (or call The Cruise Authority at **800-707-1634**). Remember, there's a cabin to fit your taste and budget, but don't tarry: all cabins are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and supply is limited.

Join us this July on the Westerdam, in the company of Daniel Hannan, **Mary Katharine Ham**, John Sununu, Stephen Moore, Kevin Hassett, Michele Bachmann, Pat Caddell, Yuval Levin, Katie Pavlich, Naomi Schaefer Riley, James Lileks, Andrew Klavan, Pete Hegseth, James O'Keefe, John Hillen, Daniel Mahoney, Jonah Goldberg, John Fund, Rob Long, Roman Genn, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Kevin Williamson, Eliana Johnson, Jim Geraghty, Kathryn Lopez, Charles Cooke, John J. Miller, Patrick Brennan, Jillian Melchior, Joel Gehrke, Reihan Salam, Katherine Connell, and Kat Timpf on the National Review 2015 Alaska Summer Cruise.

**GET YOUR CABIN! CALL 800-707-1634
NOW OR VISIT WWW.NRCRUISE.COM**



A GREAT FAMILY VACATION AWAITS!

Superior service, gourmet cuisine, elegant accommodations, and great entertainment await you on the beautiful *Westerdam*. 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):

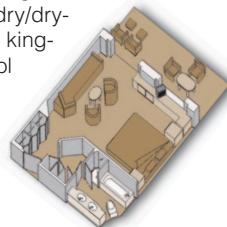
Categories J & C 17-younger: \$ 736 18-up: \$1451

Category VC 17-younger: \$1301 18-up: \$1501

Categories SS & SA 17-younger: \$1354 18-up: \$1554

DELUXE SUITE

Magnificent luxury quarters (from 506 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge and personal concierge, complimentary laundry/dry-cleaning service, large private verandah, king-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, safe, and much more.



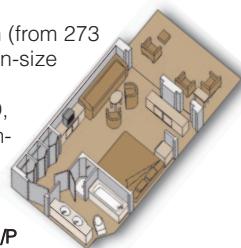
Category SA

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 5,499 P/P

SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 9,799

SUPERIOR SUITE

Grand stateroom (from 273 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe, and much more.



Category SS

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 4,399 P/P

SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 7,499

DELUXE OUTSIDE

Spacious cabin (from 213 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bath/shower, sitting area, mini-bar, TV/DVD, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



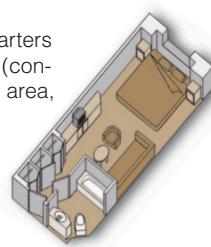
Category VC

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 3,799 P/P

SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 5,999

LARGE OCEAN VIEW

Comfortable quarters (from 174 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bathtub/shower, sitting area, TV/DVD, large ocean-view windows.



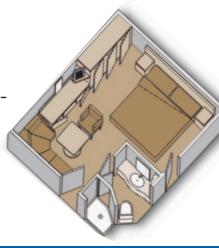
Category C

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 2,999 P/P

SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 4,299

LARGE INSIDE

Cozy but ample cabin quarters (from 151 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), shower, sitting area, TV/DVD.



FIND APPLICATION ON NEXT PAGE ➔



National Review 2015 Alaska Summer Cruise Application

Mail to: National Review Cruise, The Cruise 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, make copies of this application. For questions call The Cruise Authority at 800-707-1634.

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 1/16/16. Failure to provide this form of documentation **will** result in denied boarding of the *Westerdam*. 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 Twin King/Queen

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

Please send me information on pre-/post-cruise packages in Seattle (for 2 or 3 nights) and in Vancouver, B.C. (for 2 or 3 nights).

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 4/17/15 unless otherwise directed. If application is received after 4/17/15, 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 Security Code

Authorized Signature of Cardholder

Name of Cardholder (please print)

Important!

Authority (TCA) and National Review magazine (NR). You understand and agree that if you elect to use TCA 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 TCA 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 debarkation. • TCA 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 date, (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 TCA'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. • TCA does not guarantee suppliers rates, booking or reservations. In the event you become entitled to a refund of monies paid, TCA 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 Fulton County, Georgia. Accordingly, each party hereby consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of any state or federal court located in Fulton 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 Seattle (arriving there on 7/18/15 by 12:00PM and departing after 11:00AM on 7/25/15).

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:

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 Feb. 17, 2015 cancellation penalty is \$100 per person; Feb. 17 to April 17, 2015, penalty is \$600 per person, AFTER April 17, 2015, penalty is 100% of cruise/package.

CANCELLATION / MEDICAL INSURANCE is available and recommended for this cruise (and package). Costs are **Age 0-49:** 7% of total price; **50-59:** 8% of total price; **60-69:** 9.5% of total price; **70-79:** 12.5% of total price; **80-plus:** 22.5% of total price. 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.

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SIGNATURE OF GUEST #1

DATE

‘Don’t screw up.’” (Doubtless, both Obama and Clinton would be pleased to know that this was also Donald Rumsfeld’s favorite admonition.)

From embassy staffers, whom he praises for consideration and kindness, Chen heard that U.S. policy changed after an April 27 NSC meeting, chaired by Obama. Chen’s “situation should be resolved immediately,” i.e., he must leave the embassy without delay. Clinton’s memoir never mentions any April 27 NSC meeting, much less whether she attended or what she said.

Intense negotiations with Chinese officials began on Sunday, April 29. Clinton’s subordinates unquestionably acted on her direct instructions throughout, so the striking variances between Chen’s and Clinton’s versions are telling. Clinton strikes first, complaining that Chen was “unpredictable and quixotic, as formidable a negotiator as the Chinese leaders outside.”

Chen’s alternatives were returning to Chinese soil or leaving China entirely—and there is no doubt about Clinton’s preference. So much for refuge in our embassy, which Chen calls “the one safe place in all of China.” Beijing diplomats worked to persuade Clinton’s aides, who responded by working to persuade Chen. Clinton admits, for example, that State’s top lawyer, Harold Koh, “spoke movingly of the difficulties Chen would face if he decided to leave China,” suggesting that Chen study law at NYU’s Shanghai campus. (This was a far more dangerous offer than what Chen says NYU actually proposed—that he study at the school’s Manhattan campus, in safety in America rather than under a Chinese gun.)

Clinton complains that Chen hardened his tone, insisting his vulnerable family be brought to Beijing before any final decisions. She writes that Kurt Campbell, her regional assistant secretary, was not happy: “Kurt dreaded going back after the Chinese had already conceded so much.” (Apparently he did not dread Chen.) Chen says Campbell continuously stressed that “our time is extremely limited.” But in fact, the “limit” was entirely one of political inconvenience: Clinton’s imminent arrival in Beijing for annual bilateral consultations.

Having “undergone over seven years of abuse at the hands of the authorities with whom the Americans were now negotiating,” Chen resisted the pressure to seal a deal. And Campbell’s “dread” was misplaced: The Chinese agreed to

bring Chen’s family to the capital. Clinton thought “now all we needed was for Chen to walk out the [embassy] door”—to stay in China, and be treated at a Beijing hospital for injuries sustained while escaping his village.

Further critical differences emerge. Clinton writes that, after speaking by phone with his wife, “Chen jumped up, full of purpose and excitement, and said, ‘Let’s go’”—emphasizing his supposed enthusiasm to stay in China and receive treatment.

In his account, Chen says otherwise. Koh continued to press the urgent need to decide. “The first time we met,” Koh said to Chen, “I told you that time was of the essence. I don’t think you should refuse an offer that’s already in hand [i.e., to stay in China and study law at NYU Shanghai]. This is a good proposal.” Chinese officials “are quite angry with you, and also angry at the U.S.,” Koh opined, hardly comforting to a man fearing for his life from those very officials.

Clinton’s aides “kept encouraging me, as if I were a child, to see just how beneficial the Chinese terms were,” Chen writes. America, Campbell soothed, would be his “big brother.” And besides, said Campbell, “we have guarantees from the Chinese government.”

Still Chen would not agree. Campbell threw up his hands, saying, “I’m so upset, I don’t know how else to help you,” breaking into tears, and then “storming out of the room.” Chen himself was clear-eyed: “American hearts might be in the right place, but what was needed now was an iron will to persevere and negotiate hard.” Instead, Chen says, “the American negotiators were unrelenting” on him.

Finally, Koh told Chen he has 20 minutes to decide, or Beijing will declare him a traitor. Chen asked himself, “At this point, what could I do?” U.S. ambassador to China Gary Locke then issued a quasi-*Miranda* warning: “Are you ready to leave the embassy of your own free will?” Chen says *that* was when he used the phrase “Let’s go”: “Suppressing the emotion in my voice, I said, simply, ‘Let’s go.’” This is hardly Clinton’s account of Chen “full of purpose and excitement.” And no wonder, given the Communist Party’s prior brutality and what he could therefore readily predict.

Once outside the compound, Chen was again vulnerable, surrounded by up to 400 Chinese police officers after arriving at the designated hospital; embassy staffers

and Chinese friends and supporters were kept away. The White House reaction, according to Clinton: “Full damage-control mode. The guidance to us in Beijing was simple: Fix this.”

Clinton takes credit, at length, for reversing the damage done by ejecting Chen from the embassy by getting him out of China to America. Chen has a different view, crediting American public opinion, graphic news coverage of his daring dash for freedom and the abuses against him, and congressional pressure from, among others, Nancy Pelosi, Frank Wolf, and Chris Smith for essentially forcing Beijing into allowing his departure. Even if we grant Clinton some credit for Chen’s leaving China, she made hash of matters until then. You wouldn’t know it from *Hard Choices*.

If one chapter of Clinton’s memoir is so vulnerable to evisceration, what does that say about the rest? And she recently suffered, even before declaring her 2016 candidacy, doubts about her veracity regarding using insecure phones, computers, and private e-mail accounts at the State Department. Since her tenure as secretary is ostensibly her most significant qualification for the Oval Office, her State record will receive extraordinary scrutiny. She must hope she fares better with *Hard Choices*’ other 24 chapters.

U.S. national security will likely be at the very center of the 2016 campaign. After six-plus years of Obama’s “engagement” with our adversaries, whatever minimal global order and stability existed is disintegrating, and our adversaries know it. We are seeing the results of the Obama-Clinton policies, and Clinton has much to answer for.

Those who believe that the Chinese Communist Party is a reforming, increasingly democratic institution should heed Chen’s penetrating insight: “I firmly believed—as I still do—that if you bow your head before the Communist Party, it will soon make you get on your hands and knees, and next it will stomp on your crouching body until it destroys you.” This is why he refused to give up his human-rights work, and why he was such a threat to the Party itself.

Do we think Clinton has the slightest idea what Chen is trying to explain to us regarding China’s current leadership? Or how it applies to Russia? Iran? North Korea? Cuba? In 2016, this too should be at the center of attention.

Film

I, Ava

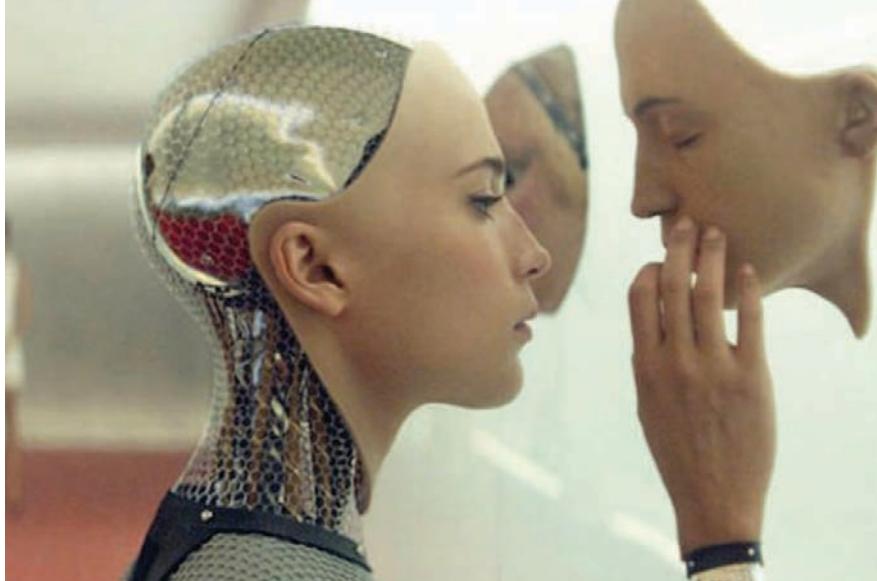
ROSS DOUTHAT

PERHAPS the most surprising thing about *Ex Machina*, a claustrophobic science-fiction movie in which two very different men orbit the female artificial intelligence one of them created, is that the she-A.I. is played by someone other than Scarlett Johansson. Over the past few years, we've had a run of movies that have engaged with the idea of post-human consciousness through a female face or voice or form, and no matter the story or its tone—twee in *Her*, trashy in *Lucy*, darkdarkdark in *Under the Skin*—it's been Johansson who's been asked to lend her absolute womanhood to the not exactly human part. Indeed, one might be forgiven for assuming that there was an industry-wide flow chart for every sci-fi script, with an arrow pointing to "Call Scarlett's agent" whenever a trans-human female role comes up.

But now the string is broken, and we can contemplate the post-human feminine in the form of Alicia Vikander, the mostly unknown actress starring in *Ex Machina*. Though it's not really her form, at least at first: When we meet Vikander's Ava, she has a human face and silhouette, but her body is a mix of steel and mesh and sleek clear plastic, through which networks of lights and wires and cords can be discerned.

Ava inhabits a sealed-off set of rooms in the most isolated of houses: a modernist hacienda perched over a river and beneath an Andean mountain range, far from roads or neighbors and accessible only by helicopter from the distant outside world. The owner is a tech mogul and supergenius named Nathan, played by my favorite actor of the moment, Oscar Isaac, as a bulked-up, bearded brogrammer who gets hammered by night and detoxes by day, and in between finds time to experiment (in several senses of the term, perhaps) with the artificial consciousness he's whipped up in his digital lab.

Nathan's guest, the Marlowe-in-Africa or Harker-in-Transylvania figure through whom we're introduced to this

Alicia Vikander in *Ex Machina*

strange world, is Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson), a bright young techie who thinks he's won a contest inside his company, a Google-Facebook hybrid called Blue Book, to come hang out with its reclusive CEO. The reality is obviously somewhat different: It's immediately clear that there can't have been anything random about the contest; that Caleb—orphaned, single, nervous, well-meaning—must have been selected by Nathan for a very particular task or role. The only question is what that part is really meant to be.

Officially he's there to test the alluring Ava, to conduct some version of the Turing Test to figure out whether she's actually self-conscious or just a really clever program designed to ape the way that human beings talk and smile and (in this case) flirt. But nothing that happens feels in any way rigorous: not his first tentative, then captivated conversations with Ava; not his encounters and arguments with the sometimes buddy-buddy, sometimes bullying Nathan; not Nathan's strange world (which includes a mute servant named Kyoko who doubles, in the film's strangest and strongest scene, as a disco-dancing partner); and definitely not the atmosphere of unreality created by deep isolation, constant surveillance, heavy drinking, and basic metaphysical instability.

Eventually that instability becomes quite physical as well. The violence, when it comes, is occasionally shocking, but the revelations that precede it aren't that surprising: If you know your *Frankenstein* and your "Bluebeard," you'll be able to map out a lot of the territory, and *Ex Machina* occasionally makes you expect some wild,

Shyamalan-level twist (maybe they're *all* robots . . . !) without actually veering that far from a more predictable trajectory. Which is something I respected about the movie: It's confident enough in its story and its smarts that it doesn't need to trick or befuddle or otherwise deceive to entertain.

That confidence probably reflects the prior experience of the director, Alex Garland, who is new to the big chair but who has been working on smarter-than-average speculative cinema as a screenwriter for many years, mostly in partnership with the prolific director Danny Boyle. The two men joined forces for *The Beach*, *28 Days Later*, and *Sunshine*, and Garland also wrote the screenplay for *Never Let Me Go*. Given the preoccupations in those movies—failed utopias, zombies, space travel, cloning—it's not surprising that Garland turned to A.I. for his directorial debut; given their overall quality, it's not surprising that he got the mood and tone and plot just right.

So long, that is, as you keep your expectations reasonable. I've seen reviews that lavish a little too much praise on this movie's philosophical forays, its take on the patriarchy or the eternal feminine, its of-the-moment gestures toward controversies about mass surveillance or Silicon Valley sexual politics. All of that is there, certainly, but not all (or even most) of it is particularly groundbreaking. *Ex Machina* is a thinking person's monster movie, but let's be clear: It's still primarily a movie about those old reliables, mad scientists and killer robots, and the more you accept that going in, the happier you'll be when you come out.

NR

Horns of Plenty



RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE ground floor of our apartment building in the city presents a row of storefronts to the avenue: a pizzeria, a nail salon, a walk-in medical clinic, a supermarket, and a 24-hour diner. In *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis scorned those who think that the ultimate source of bread is the baker's van. Of course not: The ultimate source of bread is the supermarket.

Ours is one of a chain based in the city. It is a scrappy venue—not dirty (I never saw it closed by the Board of Health) but stressed. The space is tight—slightly longer than it is deep—which means the aisles are narrow and the carts small. Fresh vegetables are its weakest link; they were fresh, once, but they have come a long way from Hunts Point, and a longer way from the Central Valley. Meat used to be positively dodgy: When the store opened, one saw pigs' feet and other items geared to ethnicities that live elsewhere, though over time the supermarket took better stock of its demographic. Berries, in their clear plastic coffins, are fine, if bland. Everything else, boxed, bottled, and canned, is what you find everywhere else. The canned vegetables aimed at Spanish speakers, I noticed long ago, are much more expensive than their English-labeled counterparts: Does brand loyalty enable gouging?

On the way out, what most catches my eye: reading material. The three newspapers (the royal barge and the two tabloids) and the magazines:

Kardashians and the dead (Diana, Natalie Wood); the dead of the future (Oscar favorites); women's magazines (214 Sex Positions that Will Drive Him Wild, also known as The Triumph of Feminism). In season there are special-issue one-offs about Jesus. The manager is surly, but the customer can ignore him because he is incomprehensible (thick accent + slurred speech = say what?). The women who work for him at the cash registers are friendly even so. A young one complains that her arms are fat (they aren't). Her colleague grips her own belly (see *that?*) and laughs her to scorn.

City dwellers feel underserved if they lack multiple options. Two blocks away there is a supermarket belonging to a chain from the West Coast; it carries its own brands of pretty much everything, the checkout men and women wear flowered shirts and ring ship's-bells when they need to summon a manager, good offerings and bright presentation make the lines snake forever. In season farmers come to the park bearing the produce of upstate and out-of-state. All year Turks man carts at the subway entrances, selling fruits and vegetables gotten who knows how. And on the short hidden street is the store of mystery: foreign artisanal cheeses, each with a description as detailed as a write-up in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; amuse-bouches from around the world—Portuguese sardines, Irish soft drinks, chocolate from Madagascar. The mystery is, how does it stay in business? The prices are steep, there are never more than three people in there, and yet it stays open. The city: something for everyone, including the curious and elusive rich.

But all these options involve a walk out of the way. City dwellers are walkers, but walking to shop for groceries means a walk home with weight, which in turn means pushing your own cart over bumpy sidewalks (rickety wheels, slow in good weather, grim in snow), or Paul Robeson totes that bale, or you pay for delivery as if prices were not high enough to begin with. Anywhere else—burbs, country—who cares? Everything there is built for space, and traversing space. The aisles in the supermarkets are as wide as

highways, the shelves follow one another like midwestern states, the carts are as big as argosies. You wheel your spoil to your vehicle and drive two, five, ten miles home, no problem. In the city the only way to have no problem is to have a supermarket in your building. It is there when you want to lay in supplies, and it is there for impulse buys and last-minute emergencies. You need paper towels and there is a sale on 16-packs? You thirst and the only way to quench it is seltzer? Your wife is cooking up a storm but lacks the indispensable cloud-seeding of a bunch of dill? Get in the elevator, go through the lobby and around the corner; reverse.

So it was for the 20-some years the supermarket sat in our building, but some weeks ago word went out that it was closing. The rumor found confirmation in a slow winnowing of items on the shelves as this, then that, was not replaced. The most conspicuous casualty, interestingly, was the reading material. Suddenly the checkout lines were bare. How will we know what Lena Dunham will do next? We won't, not in this store anyway. Then came a hand-lettered note on the door making it official, then the realtor's ad for space available. The surly manager may find other work in the chain, unless he is ready to contemplate human baseness in retirement. The girl with the not-fat arms and the girl with the belly fat will have to seek other checkout lines.

What will take the supermarket's place? Normally I would say one of the big-chain drug stores, except there is already one two blocks south and another one block north. My next guess would be a nail salon, except for the one that is already in the building. Bars are always good; a famous university has dormitories in the neighborhood, and who ever went broke selling liquor and tinnitus to young people?

Or there could be a surprise. Two weeks ago I discovered around the corner a café/bakery from Georgia (as in Balanchine, not Ray Charles). "Try Something Different," the menu suggested, then offered pkaly, chiqirtmá, bazhé, chaqpúly, chahohbily, chabostnily, and jibé. This is in our alphabet; theirs makes Cyrillic look like "See Spot run." Welcome to the neighborhood. **NR**

Happy Warrior

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

From Reason to Treason

“UR age,” Julien Benda wrote in *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, “is indeed the age of the intellectual organization of political hatreds.”

That came to mind recently when I saw the following headline on *Salon*: “A guy most famous for saying ‘F*** You Michael Moore’ is now marrying Bristol Palin.” Now, whatever you may think of Moore, Palin, or “the guy” in question, the asininity of this statement transcends time and space. For you see, “the guy” in question is Dakota Meyer, the second-youngest living Medal of Honor recipient and the first living Marine to earn the medal in nearly 40 years.

Even if Michael Moore didn’t deserve the verbal equivalent of a bird-flipping—though what twisted soul would argue that?—you would think earning the highest military honor for valor above and beyond the call of duty might rank a bit higher on one’s c.v.

Whether the staffers at *Salon* count as intellectuals is of course open to debate, but it’s worth recalling that the original French title of Benda’s *cri de cœur* was “*La Trahison des Clercs*.” What Benda meant by “clerks” were “all those who speak to the world in a transcendental manner,” or those known in medieval times as “scribes.” Or as our friend Roger Kimball writes, “academics and journalists, pundits, moralists and pontificators of all varieties are in this sense *clerks*.” Surely under an umbrella this broad, even the cast at *Salon* can find shade.

And not only they; the democratization of the media, often something to be celebrated, has had the more dubious effect of making *clerks* of us all to one extent or another. Spelunk the subterranean depths of the Internet and you will find a seemingly infinite number of self-styled *clerks* shining their moralizing lamplight on the issues of the day (as with many creatures living in the darkness, their eyes grow larger and their ears more acute, the better to spot their prey).

Benda’s diagnosis of the West’s intellectual betrayal—or rather his diagnosis of the intellectuals’ betrayal of the West—is an underappreciated marvel. From Socrates until the end of the 19th century, according to Benda, it was the job of the *clerks* to uphold universal ideals for all mankind. Humanity “did evil for two thousand years, but honored good. This contradiction was an honor to the human species, and formed the rift whereby civilization slipped into the world.”

In other words, our hypocrisy is what made our humanity recognizable. Barbarians are rarely hypocrites; animals never fall short of their ideals—for they have none.

But according to Benda, the intellectuals could not bear the burden of this contradiction. The rise of nationalism, socialism, and all the ethnocentrisms that disguised themselves in such cloaks amounted to a rejection of universal ideals in general and of the Enlightenment in particular.

Intellectuals, for the first time, sided with the mob over Socrates. Indeed, the mob itself, with its particular appetites and desires, became the new *beau idéal*. “Those who for centuries had exhorted men, at least theoretically, to deaden the feeling of their differences . . . have now come to praise them, . . . be it ‘fidelity to the French soul,’ ‘the immutability of their German consciousness,’ [or] . . . the ‘fervor of their Italian hearts.’” The Christianity that proclaimed in Galatians, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” gave way to the Aryans and socialists alike who proclaimed Jesus their blue-eyed savior or the “first socialist.”

Benda was writing in 1927 and yet he foresaw the terrible war that such thinking would yield barely more than a decade hence. The good guys—not counting the Soviets, of course—won that war, but today’s intellectuals are content to continue losing the peace. In a sense, the intellectuals are no longer treasonous, because treason can be committed only against a regime still in power.

One need only look at the universities—for a thousand years the home of the *clerks*—to see that universalism is the new sedition. Free speech is now openly derided as oppressive wherever and whenever it is deemed a threat to the sovereignty of particularism that today flies under the coalitional banner of “diversity.” Universal truths must give way to “personal truths,” and inconvenient facts are the disposable inheritance of privilege.

Economic freedom, every bit as much a gift of the Enlightenment as free speech or freedom of conscience, is every day seen as an enemy of decency and justice. Even Mrs. Clinton, that most implausible champion of the little guy, has begun talking about the need to “topple” the “1 percent,” as if the highest percentile out of 100 were not an unconquerable mathematical abstraction but a caste of overlords like the Polish *szlachta* in the 14th century.

The perverse irony is that defenders of the Enlightenment are now just another identity-politics group—and one of the very few kinds of people one is permitted to be bigoted against. In a much-ballyhooed interview with ABC’s Diane Sawyer, former Olympian Bruce Jenner made a brave admission: He’s a conservative. “I believe in the Constitution,” he explained. He also admitted he’s now a woman, or on his way to becoming one. As NATIONAL REVIEW’s Katherine Timpf noted, it was the former confession that horrified many liberals. “I’m open-minded but I’m not sure I can accept #BruceJenner as a Republican,” film critic Bill McCuddy announced on Twitter.

Benda’s age was marked by intellectual organization of political hatreds. It has given way to the age of political organization of intellectual hatreds, and in such an age, lovers of liberty are the new traitors. Be happy in thy treason.

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