

**WILLIAM VOEGELI**

**Hillary's Authoritarian Progressivism**

**KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON**

**The 'Christian Fascism' Myth**

# NATIONAL REVIEW

## Can Pat Toomey Save the Senate?

**THE PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVATIVE IN THE  
FIGHT OF HIS LIFE** **JOHN J. MILLER**

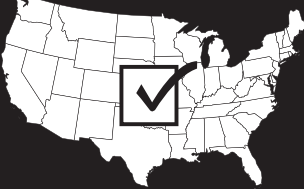
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**2016**

**UNITED STATES**

**DISTRIBUTION NOTICE:**




**■ TRYING TO KEEP UP:** Rapid shipments of heavy packages containing Vault Bricks loaded with valuable .999 solid U.S. State Silver Bars are flowing around the clock from the private vaults of the Lincoln Treasury to U.S. State residents who call 1-866-779-6706 EXT. FMS1228 to beat the 7-day deadline.

# U.S. State Silver Bars go to residents in 49 states

*U.S. residents who find their state listed below in bold get first dibs at just the \$57 minimum set for state residents while all non state residents must pay \$134, if any silver bars remain*

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**NATIONWIDE** – The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

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This is not a misprint. For the next 7 days residents who find their state on the Distribution List above in bold are getting individual State Silver Bars at just the state minimum of \$57 set by the Lincoln Treasury. That’s why everyone should be taking full Vault Bricks loaded with five U.S. State Silver Bars before they’re all gone.

And here’s the best part. Every state resident who gets at least two Vault Bricks

is also getting free shipping and free handling. That’s a real steal because all other state residents must pay over six hundred dollars for each State Vault Brick.

Just a few weeks ago, nobody knew that the only U.S. State Silver Bars locked away in the private vaults of the Lincoln Treasury would be allocated to the Federated Mint for a limited release to residents in 49 states. Every single one of the 50 U.S. State Silver Bars are date numbered in the order they ratified the Constitution and were admitted into the Union beginning in the late 1700s.

“As Executive Advisor to the Lincoln Treasury I get paid to deliver breaking news. So, for anyone who hasn’t heard yet, highly collectible

U.S. State Silver Bars are now being handed over at just the state minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury to residents in 49 states who beat the offer deadline, which is why I pushed for this announcement to be widely advertised,” said Mary Ellen Withrow, the emeritus 40th Treasurer of the United States of America.

“These bars are solid .999 pure fine silver and will always be a valuable precious metal which is why everyone is snapping up as many as they can before they’re all gone,” Withrow said.

There’s one thing Withrow wants to make very clear. State residents only have seven days to call the Toll Free Order Hotlines to get the U.S. State Silver Bars.

“These valuable U.S. State

Silver Bars are impossible to get at banks, credit unions or the U.S. Mint. In fact, they’re only being handed over at state minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury to U.S. residents who call the Toll Free Hotline before the deadline ends seven days from today’s publication date”, said Timothy J. Shissler, Executive Director of Vault Operations at the private Lincoln Treasury.

To make it fair, special Toll Free Overflow Hotlines have been set up to ensure all residents have an equal chance to get them.

Rapid shipments to state residents are scheduled to begin with the first calls being accepted at precisely

*(Continued on next page)*  
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**SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE**

(Continued from previous page)

8:30am today.

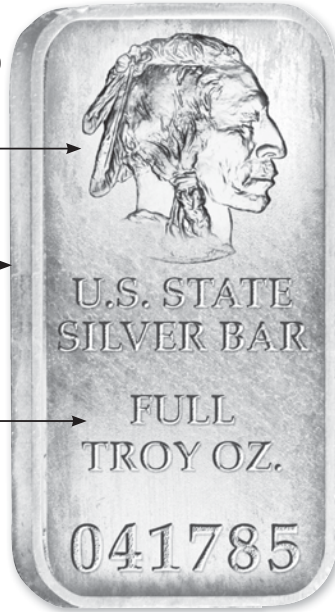
“We’re bracing for all the calls and doing everything we can to make sure no one gets left out, but the U.S. State Silver Bars are only being handed over at just the state resident minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury for the next seven days or until they’re all gone, whichever comes first. For now, residents can get the U.S. State Silver Bars at just the state minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury as long as they call before the order deadline ends,” confirmed Shissler.

“With so many state residents trying to get these U.S. State Silver Bars, lines are busy so keep trying. All calls will be answered,” Shissler said. ■

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES FULL TROY OUNCE SOLID .999 FINE SILVER

FRONT

CERTIFIED SOLID SILVER PRECIOUS METAL



DATE NUMBERED IN WHICH THE STATE RATIFIED THE CONSTITUTION AND WAS ADMITTED INTO UNION

BACK

ALL 49 STATES LISTED TO THE LEFT AVAILABLE. 1 STATE ALREADY SOLD OUT.

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PHOTO ENLARGEMENT SHOWS ENGRAVING DETAIL

**RESIDENTS IN 49 STATES: COVER JUST \$57 STATE MINIMUM**

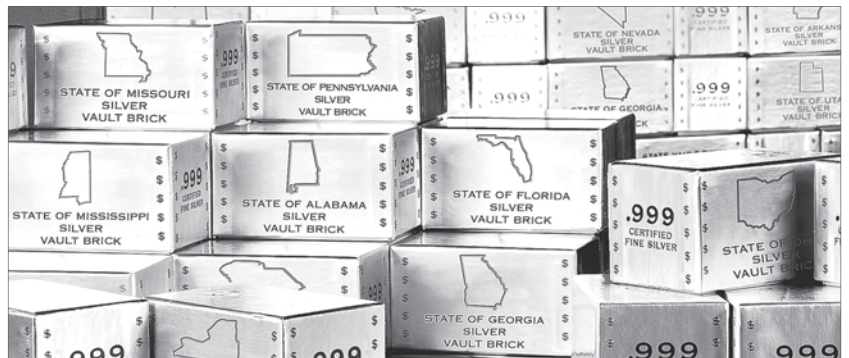
**Call ► 1-866-779-6706 EXT. FMS1228 beginning at 8:30am**

1. If all lines are busy call this special toll free overflow hotline: **1-866-779-6707 EXT. FMS1228**
2. Residents who find their state on the Distribution List on the left in bold and beat the deadline are authorized to get individual State Silver Bars at just state minimum of \$57 set by the Lincoln Treasury. That’s why everyone should be taking full Vault Bricks loaded with five State Silver Bars before they’re all gone. And here’s the best part. Every state resident who gets at least two Vault Bricks is also getting free shipping and free handling. That’s a real steal because all other state residents must pay over six hundred dollars for each State Vault Brick.

**ALL OTHER STATE RESIDENTS: MUST REMIT \$134 PER STATE SILVER BAR**

1. No State Silver Bars will be issued to any resident living outside of the 49 states listed to the left in bold at state resident minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury.
2. If you are a U.S. resident living outside of the 49 states listed to the left in bold you are required to pay \$134 for each State Silver Bar for a total of six hundred seventy dollars plus shipping and handling for each sealed State Vault Brick loaded with five U.S. State Silver Bars. This same offer may be made at a later date or in a different geographic location. Non-state residents call: **1-866-732-3137 EXT. FMS1228**

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■ **A SNEAK PEAK INSIDE SILVER VAULT BRICKS:** Pictured left reveals for the very first time the valuable .999 pure fine silver bars inside each State Silver Vault Brick. Pictured right are the State Silver Vault Bricks containing the only U.S. State Silver Bars known to exist with the double forged state proclamation. Residents who find their state listed to the left in bold are authorized to get individual State Silver Bars at just \$57 state resident minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury. That’s why everyone should be taking full Vault Bricks loaded with five State Silver Bars before they’re all gone. And here’s the best part. Every state resident who gets at least two Vault Bricks is also getting free shipping and free handling. That’s a real steal because all other state residents must pay over six hundred dollars for each State Vault Brick.

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Most Republican officeholders have endorsed Donald Trump for president, even when they've done it grudgingly. Senator Pat Toomey, however, has refused. As he wrestles with the anxieties that so many conservatives have felt about Trump, Toomey will choose between sticking to a principle that puzzles people whose votes he needs and making a compromise that he probably fears will haunt him later. *John J. Miller*



COVER: THOMAS REIS

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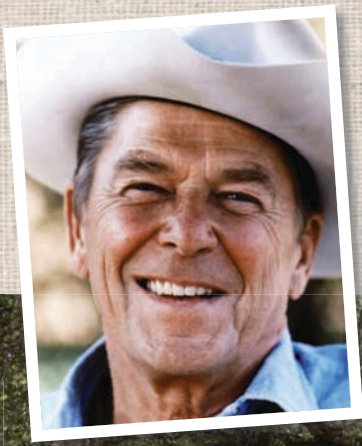
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NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by NATIONAL REVIEW, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. © National Review, Inc., 2016. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 433015, Palm Coast, Fla. 32143-3015; phone, 386-246-0118, Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 433015, Palm Coast, Fla. 32143-3015. Printed in the U.S.A. RATES: \$59.00 a year (24 issues). Add \$21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.



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## The Patriot Guard Riders

I very much enjoyed Kevin D. Williamson's article "Thoughts and Prayers in Baton Rouge" (August 15), as I have enjoyed most of his work in NATIONAL REVIEW. There was one thing that caught my attention particularly, a description of "a biker in a leather vest emblazed PATRIOT GUARD," a description that leads me to wish to acquaint NATIONAL REVIEW's readers with the organization the man was representing.

The Patriot Guard Riders are an excellent example of American civil society in action, something all conservatives should applaud and support. Their roots lie in the protests organized at funerals of fallen soldiers by the members of the Westboro Baptist Church after the repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Aware that no legal action could be taken to stop this indecency, but unwilling to do nothing, concerned citizens—mostly but not exclusively veterans—began asking the families of the fallen soldiers whether they might ride escort at the funerals. The Patriot Guard Riders, displaying large American flags, stood in lines between the funeral services and the protesters, sometimes singing patriotic songs or revving their motorcycles to drown out the protesters' chants.



There were, as far as I know, no threats or incidents of violence against the protesters, but the protests soon fizzled out in the face of opposition. The Patriot Guard Riders did not fizzle out, and today they are organized in dozens of chapters, with over 200,000 members. They provide honor escorts to military, police, and firefighter funerals at the request of the bereaved families, as well as honor escorts to indigent and homeless veterans and other acts of charity and support for those who guard and defend our freedom.

Glenn Scherer  
Wylie, Texas

## CORRECTION

In the August 29 issue of NATIONAL REVIEW, J. D. Vance's article "Two Underclasses" asserted that, in 2004, George W. Bush received the highest share of the Asian vote of any Republican presidential candidate. In fact, he received a higher share of the Asian vote in 2004 than he had in 2000, but not the highest share ever. We regret the error.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to [letters@nationalreview.com](mailto:letters@nationalreview.com).

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# The Week

■ So far the candidates have stuck with what they do best: Hillary lying and Trump firing people.

■ It is clear why Hillary Clinton did not want to give up the e-mails recently released by the Obama administration in response to ongoing litigation from Judicial Watch: They reveal precisely the Clinton Foundation corruption that critics have long alleged. Specifically, the e-mails detail Huma Abedin's role—while she was on the State Department's payroll—as a fixer for the Clinton Foundation, making sure that influential friends overseas, especially donors, had access to the U.S. secretary of state. In several e-mail exchanges, Clinton Foundation operative Doug Band pesters a solicitous Abedin to get meetings or do other favors for friends of the foundation, including Crown Prince Salman of Bahrain, who donated millions to the Clinton Global Initiative. There is a case to be made—and it should be made—that Clinton obstructed justice and made false statements to investigators regarding her private server and e-mails. The FBI dropped the ball on that, but that ball can be picked up again. Yes, it is awkward to conduct a criminal investigation during a presidential campaign. It is more awkward to conduct one involving a sitting president. But either option is more desirable than declaring elected officials, or at least one family of elected officials, above the law.

■ CNN recently revealed that Cheryl Mills, while working as Clinton's chief of staff at the State Department, also interviewed applicants for an executive position at the Clinton Foundation. That might seem to violate Clinton's commitment, when she took office, to avoid activities that would “create conflicts or the appearance of conflicts” of interest. But Mills's attorney explained that she was simply doing unpaid work “for a charitable foundation.” Who says America's volunteer spirit is dead?

■ According to the *New York Times*, Clinton told the FBI that former secretary of state Colin Powell “advised her to use a personal e-mail account.” In a statement, Powell confirmed that he wrote an e-mail “describing his use of his personal AOL e-mail account” but noted that it was strictly “for unclassified messages” and that he used “a secure State computer on his desk to manage classified information.” Hillary seems to have ignored that detail. But more to the point, Powell never set up an unsecured e-mail server in his residence to avoid transparency requirements, and Clinton had been using her private server for a year before she and Powell ever corresponded. Powell pointed this out to *People* magazine, grousing (accurately) that “her people have been trying to pin it on me.” In fairness to the Clinton camp, shifting blame is a pretty tough habit to break.

■ Clinton released her most recent tax returns in August in a (so far unsuccessful) attempt to pressure Donald Trump into following suit. They served mostly to confirm what is already well known about the Clintons—that they have enriched



themselves by trading on their past and presumed future tenure in the White House: The pair earned more than \$10 million from speaking fees, consulting, and book proceeds in 2015. Their charitable giving, amounting to about a tenth of their income, went almost exclusively to the Clinton Family Foundation—a separate entity from the Clinton Foundation, one that serves as a conduit to it. (The Clinton Family Foundation funneled \$1.8 million to the Clinton Foundation in 2014.) While the Clinton Foundation does some charitable work, its primary beneficiaries are the Clintons and their associates—not exactly the deserving poor.

■ Last fall, Clinton's campaign website proclaimed that “every survivor of sexual assault” has “the right to be believed.” This spring, shortly after Juanita Broaddrick reiterated her 38-year-old rape accusation against Bill Clinton on Twitter—a claim that, in its detail and consistency over the years, remains troublingly credible—the campaign scrubbed “You have the right to be believed” from its site. Not every survivor is equal, it turns out.

■ The Trump “pivot” has become a running joke. Every time we've been told he was about to shift into a more responsible mode, he has reverted back to his usual bluster and lack of dis-



## DOCTOR'S MEMORY BREAKTHROUGH

# One Simple Trick to Reversing Memory Loss

World's Leading Brain Expert and Winner of the Prestigious Kennedy Award, Unveils Exciting News For the Scattered, Unfocused and Forgetful

By Steven Wuzubia  
Health Correspondent;

**Clearwater, Florida:** Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D., is a former visiting professor at Duke University, recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize and author of more than 200 international scientific papers on human body cells. But now he's come up with what the medical world considers his greatest accomplishment — A vital compound. so powerful, it's reported to repair... even regrow damaged brain cells. In layman's terms — Bring back your memory power. And leave you feeling more focused and clear-headed than you have in years!

Dr. Shinitzky explains this phenomenon in simple terms; "Science has shown when your brain nutrient levels drop, you can start to experience memory problems and overall mental fatigue. Your ability to concentrate and stay focused becomes compromised. And gradually, a "mental fog" sets in. It can damage every aspect of your life". Not only do brain cells die but they become dysfunctional as if they begin to fade away as we age. This affects our ability to have mental clarity and focus and impacts our ability to remember things that were easy for us to do in our 20's and 30's.

Scientists think the biggest cause of brain deterioration in older people is the decreased functioning of membranes and molecules that surround the brain cells. These really are the transmitters that connect the tissues or the brain cells to one another that help us with our sharp memory, clear thinking and mental focus, even our powers to reason well. "When we are in our 20's" according to Dr. Shinitzky "our body produces key substances like phosphatidylserine and phosphatidic acid"...unfortunately they are believed to be critical essential nutrients that just fade away with age, much like our memories often do leading to further mental deterioration.

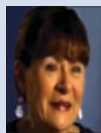
As we get older it becomes more frustrating as there is little comfort when you forget names... misplace your keys...or just feel "a little confused". And even though your foggy memory gets laughed off as just another "senior moment," it's not very funny when it keeps happening to you.

## The Missing Link is Found and Tested

It's hard to pronounce that's for sure, but it certainly appears from the astounding clinical research that this one vital nutrient phosphatidylserine (PS) can really make a huge difference in our mental wellness. 17 different double blind studies with placebo controlled groups have been involved in the clinical research of PS with patients between the ages of 55-80 years of age. Periodically the researchers gave these patients memory and cognitive tests and the results were simply amazing:

- 1) PS patients outperformed placebo patients in All 5 Tests - 100% Success Rate
- 2) After only 45 days there was a measurable improvement in mental function
- 3) After 90 days, there was an impressive and amazing improvement in mental function

The group taking phosphatidylserine, not only enjoyed sharper memory, but listen to this... they were also more upbeat and remarkably more happy. In contrast, the moods of the individuals who took the placebo (starch pill), remained unaffected....no mental or mood improvement at all.



## My Memory Started to Scare Me.

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- Ethel Macagnoney



*Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D. a former visiting professor at Duke University and a recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize*

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cipline. The latest effort involves the elevation of longtime Republican pollster Kellyanne Conway to campaign manager and Breitbart “News” honcho Steve Bannon to campaign CEO. Lately, Trump has indeed stuck to script at his rallies, tried to focus the attention on Clinton, and even expressed vague regret for things he said that might have offended people, in a non-apology apology meant to cover a multitude of sins. If Trump hopes to begin to change perceptions of him, he has to continue in this mode not for one week or two, but for the duration of the race. What his campaign hopes to achieve with the pivot is an approximation of the presidential demeanor that normal candidates cultivate from the outset rather than 80 days from the election.

■ The Trump campaign shakeup left Paul Manafort out in the cold. Manafort provided a relatively professional, stabilizing influence in the campaign when it otherwise had none, but it’s still shocking that he managed to run the campaign of an American presidential candidate. His sleazy connections to pro-Russian interests began to catch up to him when it emerged that his name showed up nearly two dozen times from 2007 to 2012 in a “black ledger” of the Putinist Ukrainian political party he had worked for. The ledger had Manafort slated for \$12.7 million in off-the-books cash payments. Manafort’s defense was that he didn’t get the money. Then it emerged that he had a fixer with connections to Russian intelligence trying to collect. He was ousted in short order—to crawl, we hope, back under some rock.

■ Trump’s call for the rapid mass deportation of all illegal immigrants never made sense except as way to flank his primary contenders to the right, and now he is in the process of recalibrating. Even if the political will existed for the forcible



removal of every illegal alien in the country (it doesn’t and never will), the federal government wouldn’t be capable of such a massive administrative and law-enforcement task. Mindful of general-election politics, Trump is now bowing to this reality, and he has further muddied the waters by reportedly sounding somewhat sympathetic to legalization in a meeting with Hispanic supporters. A serious, politically defensible alternative to this morass is the one outlined by Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies: enforcement at the border and especially at the workplace, such that over time the illegal population declines (people will leave if it is harder to work here). Then, eventually, there can be a discussion about legalizing the segment of the illegal population here the long-

est, in exchange for lower levels of overall and especially of low-skilled immigration. This is an eminently sensible policy that happens to coincide with the broad contours of public opinion. Trump, and every other Republican, would be well served to adopt it.

■ The predictable gnashing of teeth followed Trump’s support for “extreme vetting” of aliens who seek to come to the United States from regions notorious for exporting terrorism, including a proposal for an ideological test aimed at “halting the spread of radical Islam.” The vetting is a refinement of the temporary categorical ban on Muslim immigration Trump earlier proposed. It is not a “religious test,” as critics say (and the Constitution allows us to limit immigration however we please). Trump seeks to sift out aliens “who do not believe in our Constitution, or who support bigotry and hatred.” Allowing only immigrants willing to support the Constitution is an entirely legitimate—and traditional—aim of immigration policy. And the classical, repressive sharia that Islamists seek to impose on society is antithetical to the Constitution. Any ideological test would hardly be foolproof—immigrants could always lie—but it would set down a symbolic marker about the lowest common denominator of membership in our society.

■ Obama’s payment of a ransom to Iran for the release of four American hostages is an abomination. The president agreed to a prisoner exchange of Iranians detained over real criminal offenses for Americans imprisoned on bogus “spying” charges. He worked to conceal the additional payment. We were sketchily told that \$1.7 billion was transferred to Tehran to settle a totally separate, failed arms deal (involving funds the shah had paid before the 1979 Khomeini revolution). In reality, the administration secretly shipped the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism \$400 million in untraceable foreign currency the same day the hostages were released. Obama’s indignant denial that he had paid a ransom collapsed when it emerged that the cash had been retained as “leverage” until the plane transporting the hostages took off from Tehran. The administration has refused to discuss the remaining \$1.3 billion, although it appears that the Treasury made 13 separate transfers of \$99,999,999.99 each to Iran from a dodgy fund for settling agency lawsuits—a bizarrely structured transaction raising new doubts about Obama’s claim that it was legal restrictions that forced him to pay the first \$400 million in cash. The administration has been acting like it has something to hide—because it does.

■ As part of their general shift to the left, liberals have been turning against the welfare reform of 1996: They say it has made deep poverty much worse. But, as Scott Winship shows in a new paper for the Manhattan Institute, their case relies on flawed statistics. The official poverty metric used by the Census Bureau employs a measure of inflation that other authorities, including the Congressional Budget Office and the Federal Reserve, reject because it overstates the true figure. For that reason, official poverty numbers understate how much better poor people have been doing over time. Winship finds that when a better measure of inflation is used, non-cash government benefits such as food stamps are acknowledged, and similar adjustments are made, child poverty is now at an all-time low. The percentage of children living in households that make less than

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half a poverty-line income has also fallen. The principles of welfare reform—that aid should come attached to the requirement that able-bodied adults work, and that states should have flexibility—could stand to be applied to other anti-poverty programs. The chief problem with welfare reform, in other words, is that there has not been enough of it.

■ The last time Louisiana was underwater and the president was on vacation, it was a national scandal. This time, we don't have the benefit of Kanye West's telling us that the president, who has been amusing himself in Martha's Vineyard, doesn't care about black folks. The flooding around Baton Rouge is the worst natural disaster since Superstorm Sandy; it has left thousands homeless and many thousands more without electricity, and access to food and fuel is a challenge in some areas. But Baton Rouge isn't a media center like New York or a party destination like New Orleans, so media attention to the flood and to the notably laid-back response of the president has been muted. Obama made it clear that he was content to watch the action from his golf cart until Trump went down to Louisiana and embarrassed him into motion. While the politicians were posturing, the people of Louisiana reminded us of the usefulness and impor-

report largely ignores the burden that crime places on neighborhoods where it's most prevalent, and instead uses the fact that cops focused on certain high-crime districts as evidence of bias. African Americans will continue to suffer in Baltimore and elsewhere if officials insist on finding ways to blame cops while ignoring lawlessness that's destroying communities.

■ The federal government is very interested in the toilet habits of Texas schoolchildren, for reasons that are not entirely obvious. The Obama administration had ordered that schools change their policies to permit transgender students to use whichever facilities comport with their personal sense of self, meaning that they could elect to use those reserved to members of the biologically opposite sex. The administration threatened retaliatory measures, and Texas sued to stop them. (Where would Americans be without Texas suing the federal government every ten minutes?) The federal judge hearing the case ruled in favor of Texas, as he should have: The law in question, Title IX, is, as the judge put it, "not ambiguous." Imagine that! It "specifically permits educational institutions to provide separate toilets, locker rooms, and showers based on sex, provided that the separate facilities are comparable." Texas's proposed compromise is humane, permitting students who are uncomfortable using the

## African Americans will **continue to suffer** in Baltimore and elsewhere if officials insist on finding ways to blame cops while ignoring lawlessness that's destroying communities.

tance of civil society: The "Cajun Navy"—a group of boat-piloting volunteers—swung into action, rescuing people and pets and moving supplies through flooded areas where trucks can't go. "We don't wait for help," one volunteer said. "We are the help."

■ Here we go again. In Milwaukee, a black police officer shot an armed black suspect, and a riot ensued. Can we at long last dispense with the notion that "Black Lives Matter" is a peaceful movement? Or one committed at all to justice or the rule of law? Milwaukee combined body cameras, a "model" law requiring independent investigations of police shootings, and a police chief so focused on transforming police-community relations that he was profiled on public radio's popular program *This American Life*. Yet Milwaukee still faced riots. One is left wondering which reforms—short of the police leaving themselves and others completely vulnerable to criminals—will appease the radicals.

■ Just days after the prosecution against officers in the Freddie Gray case fell apart, the Department of Justice directed attention back to the Baltimore Police Department with a report charging it with racist policing. Instances of excessive force and unaccountability for misconduct detailed in the report are lamentable, and the Baltimore police should be pushed to do better, but the accusations that discretionary enforcement disproportionately targets African Americans are flawed. The study uses population rather than rates of criminal offending as the benchmark for arrests, a standard methodological error of the Left. And the

facilities that match their sex to have access to private restrooms, changing rooms, and the like. Because this reasonable and sympathetic compromise is a compromise, the transgender lobby feels compelled to overturn it: Its goal is not political accommodation but cultural concession.

■ Amid last spring's furor over a North Carolina bill requiring people to use public bathrooms that correspond to their sex, the popular retail chain Target made a big show of announcing that its patrons and employees would be allowed to use whichever "restroom or fitting-room facility" matches their "gender identity." Now, more quietly, Target will build single-stall bathrooms in hundreds of stores that don't already have them—at a cost of more than \$20 million. "Some of our guests clearly are uncomfortable with our policy, and some are supportive," said Cathy Smith, Target's chief financial officer. We wonder whether Target's quarterly sales—down 7.2 percent—and declining traffic, the first decrease in two years, had something to do with this. The lesson: Keep the political posturing out of the privies.

■ Sometimes, the good guys win a round. The sponsor of California's S.B. 1146—a state bill that would require Christian colleges that admit even a single student who has received state grants to conform to California's extreme policies on sexual orientation and gender identity—decided to pull the most troubling parts of the bill. California conservatives launched a public-education campaign, organized protests, and assembled a multi-faith coalition for religious freedom. They didn't just leave the fight to lawyers, and they prevailed, for now. The bill

# American Innovation: From Muscle Cars to COPD Treatment

BY STEVEN HOWELL | *Staff Writer*

American drive has fueled automotive development for most of a century. Those who remember the mid-1960s recall cars that turned heads with their sleek styling and the roar of their engines, and our heads have been turned ever since.

In the 1920s, bootleggers modified cars for speed, handling and cargo capacity. By the '40s, moonshiners had turned to racing. Their modifications inspired the Oldsmobile Rocket 88, the first mass-production muscle car.

The Rocket 88 had a high-compression, overhead-valve V8 in the same lightweight body as the Olds 76, designed for a six-cylinder engine. Organizations like the U.S. Automobile Club began sanctioning their own races, and the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing formed in 1947.

Throughout the 50s, automakers made groundbreaking innovations like Chevrolet's mechanical fuel injection, yet American cars grew in size and weight each year, requiring ever-bigger engines. For those willing to spend extra for speed, carmakers offered many performance-enhancing options.

The American automotive industry advanced rapidly since Henry Ford rolled out the first Model T. In 2005, Ford beefed up the Mustang with a massive engine, Dodge's Charger and Challenger have made a comeback, Chevy's Camaro produces 580hp and Cadillac has produced the 556-HP CTS-V.

With such enthusiasm for cars, why has America lagged in other areas? How have we neglected the third-leading cause of death in America, chronic obstructive pul-



What happens when the same level of research and development that produced classic muscle cars like the Dodge Challenger is applied to the treatment of chronic lung disease?

monary disease (COPD)? While the car industry advanced from the first GT model to the latest 600-horsepower muscle cars, treatment options for COPD stagnated. We've researched under the hood, but not on who's behind the wheel.

Traditional treatments for lung disease include medications, oxygen and transplant, but these treat only symptoms, not the condition itself.

The need for options has prompted a shift in COPD treatment using stem cells. Three years ago, a medical clinic called the Lung Institute began using stem cell therapy to potentially restore lung function.

Medical professionals extract stem cells from blood or bone marrow, concentrate them and return them to the patient. Once reintroduced, these cells can promote lung tissue healing and potentially improve function. Patient reports show this therapy is improving patients' quality of life.

While most medical advances are refinements of traditional treatments, the advent of stem cell therapy constitutes a significant leap forward. If you suffer from lung disease, climb into the driver's seat, and take charge of your own healthcare. ■

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If you or a loved one suffers from a chronic lung disease, contact the Lung Institute to find out if stem cell treatments are right for you.

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might return, and the fight be renewed, but at least there is a blueprint for success: one that conservatives in other states would do well to emulate.

■ The Navajo Nation is suing the Environmental Protection Agency in federal district court in New Mexico for damages resulting from the agency's accidental release of millions of gallons of toxic sludge from the closed Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colo., last summer. The water—loaded with arsenic, lead, and other heavy-metal contaminants—flowed downstream into three states, turning the Animas and San Juan Rivers of Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah bright yellow. “Efforts to be made whole over the past year have been met with resistance, delays, and second-guessing,” the Navajo wrote in their court filing. The tribe says the EPA “ignored warning signs for years” and “failed to prepare for known risks of a mine blowout” while working at the site. While the EPA says that it is taking responsibility for the cleanup and that its water-quality experts believe the rivers' waters are now safe for agriculture and irrigation, the agency is still looking at whether to designate the Gold King Mine a Superfund cleanup site. If anything is “safe,” it's the assumption that this mess will go on and on, taking years and untold millions to resolve.

■ Colorado voters will decide in November whether to approve a ballot measure that would legalize physician-assisted suicide for adults diagnosed with terminal illness. Supporters of the measure prefer the euphemism “medical aid in dying” and have pushed media to adopt the term. One local news outlet in the state, 9News, explained that it would continue to use the word “suicide” when reporting on the measure, citing a duty to inform the public using “simple, direct language.” They note that the dictionary definition of the term (“the action of killing oneself intentionally”) accurately describes what the ballot measure would legalize. Advocates of the proposed law clearly believe that such plain language will hurt their cause—which ought to cause them to reexamine their support.

■ One item on Russian president Vladimir Putin's agenda is to force Ukraine to do what he wants, which is to accept loss of territory and ultimately become a dependency. He's been using the trick Adolf Hitler perfected of sending his own men to commit an act of sabotage against others and then claiming the others did it. The Pentagon has identified eight staging areas along Ukraine's eastern border with Russia where some 40,000 Russian troops are now positioned. Double that number, with accompanying armor and air-force units, are due to take part in forthcoming exercises. The Pentagon considers an outright invasion unlikely but offers no plan of action of its own. Putin hopes that “common sense” will prevail, meaning that everyone decides simply to bend to his intimidation.

■ Russian aircraft have been taking off from the Iranian base of Hamadan to bomb targets in Syria, in effect to come to the rescue of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad at a moment when his staying power looks shaky. This cuts flight time and greatly increases the payload, as the unfortunate citizens of Aleppo discovered when the Tupolevs and Sukhois were overhead. Iran has never previously granted foreign forces permission to use the country's military facilities. More than merely propping up the Assad regime,

Russia has hugely increased its presence and its influence in the Middle East. A disconsolate Washington spokesman said of this Russian success, “It's unfortunate but not surprising.” In fact he, like everyone else, seems to have discovered from news bulletins what the Russians were up to. By way of response, Secretary of State John Kerry reassured the audience at his press conference that he was busy telephoning his opposite number in Russia.

■ The burkini is beachwear designed for the Muslim woman who wants to remain fully covered, or is compelled to do so, or something in between. The garment covers the whole body except the face; that is what the French are objecting to. Cannes is a resort as smart as any on the Mediterranean shore, and its mayor, David Lisnard, has banned the burkini on the grounds that it is “the symbol of Islamic extremism.” Either the ban is a defense of secular values, or it is an intolerable example of men telling women what they may and may not wear. A fight about burkinis broke out on the beach at Sisco, a small town in Corsica, and it took a hundred gendarmes several hours to stop it. Some Moroccans were arrested, and five people ended up in the hospital. A court has found the ban is legal, and a sprinkling of mayors has followed the example of Cannes—all this in the country that gave the can-can and haute couture to the rest of the world.

■ America has established lasting dominance over Russia in the Olympics the same way it established dominance in the Cold War: through prosperity and freedom, plus technological advances. Most recently, advances in counter-doping chemistry forced the Russians to resort to old-fashioned, low-tech sample-switching, which proved to be far from foolproof (the Russians' sole track athlete deemed clean enough to compete this year contended in the long jump until she, too, was disqualified for doping). The result: This year's Russian team finished a miserable fourth, behind the U.S., our British cousins, and China. So for the time being, American athletic dominance is undisputed, and unlike our hard-earned global military leadership, this is something even Obama can't give away. In apparent response to all this, the EU Parliament pointed out on Facebook that although “Europe” is not an actual country, if it were one, its medal count would have been even higher than America's. That's lame enough to justify Brexit all by itself.

■ Israeli athletes at the Olympics were directed toward a bus and attempted to board it. Lebanese athletes already on it wouldn't let them. The Israelis were “looking for trouble,” the head of Lebanon's delegation later explained. Organizers of the Summer Games in Rio promptly summoned Lebanon's Olympic Committee and said, Enough. Other instances of anti-Israelism marred what was supposed to be an uninterrupted celebration of sportsmanship, but at least the offenses did not go unanswered. After Islam El Shehaby, one of its athletes in the judo competition, refused to shake hands with his Israeli opponent, the Egyptian Olympic Committee sent him home early, as the International Olympic Committee reprimanded him and took the occasion to remind the Egyptian delegation about “Olympic values.” If athletes competed in graciously enduring the incivility of opponents, Israel would run away in the medal count.

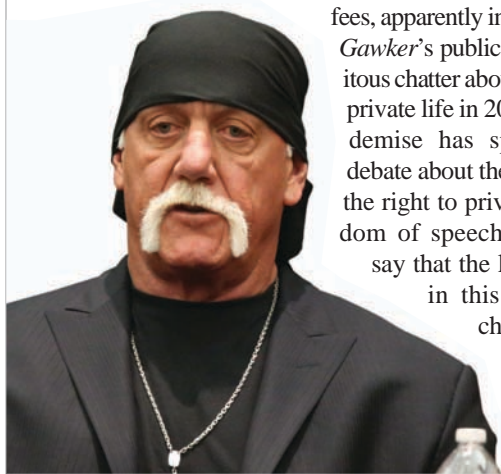
■ The U.S. Department of Agriculture is a favorite target of budget cutters, and while defenders say the department does much

useful work, it's hard not to feel like cranking up the chainsaw when one sees this *College Fix* headline: "USDA teams up with Iowa law school and Cyndi Lauper to celebrate lesbian farmers." This event, which the USDA website says was held in "Des Moines, IA" (pro tip: If you want rural cred, learn to spell "Des Moines"), was part of the department's #RuralPride campaign, which seeks to "elevate the voices of the LGBT community living in rural America." What all this has to do with the department's main mission of rigging agricultural markets remains unexplained. Gay or straight, cis or trans, the USDA should stick to its core competency of subsidizing the overproduction of corn.

■ Of course, there are still plenty of sensible people in the Hawkeye State. This year's presidential caucuses gave proof of that, and now the University of Iowa deserves applause for deciding against establishment of a "bias assessment and response team" to investigate allegations of shaming, triggering, privilege denial, and other forms of campus heterodoxy. A university administrator explained that other colleges' experience with such bodies shows that they usually turn into mere "scolding panels"—which in fact often seems to be exactly the point. Congratulations to the school on resisting the trend.

■ *Gawker*, the Internet gossip publication, published its last post on August 22, a few months shy of its 14th birthday. Terry G. Bollea, a.k.a. the retired professional wrestler Hulk Hogan, had sued the site for posting, four years ago, a tape of him having sex with the estranged wife of the radio personality Bubba the Love Sponge. This spring, a jury found *Gawker* guilty of invading Bollea's privacy, and the court awarded him \$140 million in damages, to be paid by the website's parent company, Gawker Media, which filed for bankruptcy in June. Its assets, including *Deadspin*, *Jezebel*, and several other websites, were sold to Univision, which promptly closed the *Gawker* flagship. The entrepreneur

Peter Thiel helped pay Bollea's legal fees, apparently in retaliation for *Gawker*'s publication of gratuitous chatter about Thiel's own private life in 2007. *Gawker*'s demise has sparked some debate about the line between the right to privacy and freedom of speech. Those who say that the line is blurred in this case should check their own standards of decency.



■ Ruins of a synagogue built about 2,000 years ago were recently uncovered in Tel Rekish, near Mount Tabor, not far from Nazareth. Of the eight synagogues that modern archeologists have found from the Second Temple era and that are located in the territory of present-day Israel, this is the first in a rural

setting. Mordechai Aviam, who led the dig, estimates that the simple structure, complete with pillars and benches, was in use for about a hundred years. If any of those overlapped with Jesus's residence in the region, the chances that the synagogue was among those at which he taught "as he went through all the towns and villages" of Galilee (Matthew 9:35) would seem high. The past is a foreign country to which we can travel only in our imagination, but here's a solid, stone bridge to it.

■ The LGBT Left has gotten an immense amount of mileage from the notion that sexual orientation and gender identity are much like race—that one's orientation is fixed and immutable at birth, and that one's gender identity is "innate" and can differ from biological sex. While it has been enormously successful as a political strategy, there's just one problem: It goes well beyond the science. Writing in *The New Atlantis*, Paul McHugh and Lawrence Mayer conducted a "study of studies"—looking at the best available scientific evidence regarding a host of LGBT issues—and found that reality is far messier and more confusing than politicized fictions. People do change their self-identification. There is no proof that sexual orientation is fixed by genetics. The majority of "transgender" kids grow out of their gender-identity issues. None of this erases the case for kind, decent, and equitable treatment of all individuals. It does, however, threaten the use of "science" as a political bulldozer. The LGBT Left faces a choice: Deal with reality or call opponents bigots. If the past is any guide, McHugh and Mayer should prepare for the personal attacks.

■ In a March 2015 memo that has recently come to public attention, Princeton University ordered its staff to remove words that contain gender references from their writing. Thus "garbage-man" becomes "garbage collector," "mankind" becomes "humanity," "actress" becomes "actor," and so forth. Directives of this sort have been around since the 1970s, but this time it's different, because Princeton is rejecting not just the favoring of one gender over another but the very notion of gender. Not only are "-man" suffixes and gendered pronouns forbidden, but even such workarounds as "s/he" or "his or her" are now treated as offensive. Why? Because the "gender binary is the traditional view on human gender, which does not take into consideration individuals who identify as otherwise, including and not limited to transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, and/or intersex." Traditionalists who are opinion-non-conforming will be subjected to the usual academic penalties. Liberalism has often been likened to a religion, and we are now seeing both the Inquisition and the *Credo quia absurdum est*.

■ The editor of the "trans-friendly" website Autostraddle recently issued a lengthy apology for publishing a "problematic" review of the Seth Rogen animated movie *Sausage Party*. While it is difficult to capture the entirety of this exhaustive apology, stated among the offenses of the review were the following: Salma Hayek's portrayal of an "animated queer taco" was "racist and reinforced harmful stereotypes"; the taco was labeled a "lesbian when it seemed more likely that she was bisexual"; the "sexual encounter between the taco and the hot-dog bun" might not have been consensual. Additionally, a non-Latina writer had been permitted to write about a caricature of a Latina. Finally, the editor expressed shame over having been "blinded by [her] own whiteness existing inside a system of

JOHN PENNY/GRAFT-POOL/BETTY IMAGES

white supremacy,” a fact that led her to publish the review without taking the requisite steps to ensure that no one could possibly be offended by it. Though the apology inspired questions about whether it might be satire, it seems to have been published in all seriousness.

■ “Father God,” his students at Fairfield Prep, a boys’ school in Connecticut, called the Reverend John Joseph McLaughlin, S.J., a stern, sharp-tongued priest who barked ruthlessly at error and foolishness, like a pedantic drill sergeant. He was over the top and clearly knew it—he knew everything—but never cracked a smile. Jesuit schoolteachers of his generation had perfected a certain style of seriocomic playacting. In politics, the young Father McLaughlin converted from the Democratic to the Republican party, ran for Congress from Rhode Island, and lost. He prevailed on Pat Buchanan, a Jesuit-school alumnus, to get him a job writing speeches for President Nixon, who soon left the White House. McLaughlin soon left the priesthood and went to work writing for *NATIONAL REVIEW*. In 1982, he launched *The McLaughlin Group*, on which he and other pundits chatted in front of cameras, and millions of viewers, for half an hour on Sunday mornings. He encouraged shouting. A pioneer of long-form political commentary for TV, he helped define the genre. He never missed a show until the end. His signature signoff to his broadcasts was a crisp “Bye-bye!” Dead at 89. *Requiescat in pace.*

## HEALTH CARE

**Aetna Out**

WHEN the cynically misnamed Affordable Care Act was passed, Democrats and their media megaphones assured the American public that it was a carefully crafted piece of policy architecture. Time would tell, and now it is telling—with predictable results highlighted by Aetna’s decision to stop offering individual insurance plans through the Obamacare exchanges in most locations. Aetna says that the Obamacare insurance pool is older and sicker than expected, which means much higher costs. Even as insurance premiums soar, Aetna is losing money on most of its individual plans under Obamacare, and so it will join dozens of other insurers in ceasing to sell them.

When he was arguing for his health-care program, President Barack Obama promised that the new law would reduce premiums by as much as \$2,500 per family per year. Something close to the opposite has happened, with insurance premiums continuing to rise, some by 8 to 10 percent a year, some much more dramatically. That isn’t expected to slow down; it is expected to increase. And this process feeds on itself: Sicker risk pools mean the insurers will need to raise rates again, which means the risk pool may grow even less healthy, and so on. Aetna found that it couldn’t make money this way, and the company saw no reason to expect that to change. Aetna had proposed merging with Humana in the hopes that the new, larger firm would be better able to adapt to the

artificially constrained insurance marketplace created by Obamacare. But the Obama administration blocked that merger. Aetna, out of options, gave up.

Politicians sometimes forget that a right of exit exists for the people and firms that do the actual work and create the actual wealth that makes life in these United States possible. All those regulations, mandates, and price controls on insurance companies sound like brilliant social engineering, right up until the moment the insurance companies stop selling insurance.

The insurers are, let’s not forget, guilty parties here, too. Obamacare might be a headache for them now, but it was sold to them as one of the greatest pieces of corporate welfare in all of history: Most industries would kill for a federal mandate requiring *every single American family* to buy their product. The insurance companies thought they were getting on a crony-capitalism gravy train. Instead, they ended up under it.

We would welcome the complete repeal of the Affordable Care Act, but Republicans are poorly positioned to accomplish that, and we fear that they will be no better placed come January. Tinkering at the edges of the system is unlikely to work. House Republicans have recently proposed a set of measures that would make for a workable, economically rational alternative to Obamacare. But since Democrats will not put up with a formal repeal, Republicans should at least look for ways to lift those regulatory restrictions on coverage and make more room for functional consumer markets.

Alas, Republican nominee Donald Trump has floated *more* government intervention in the health-care system, sometimes with an eye toward Canada. Hillary Rodham Clinton, for her part, currently is pushing a so-called public option. In other words, when faced with the fact that insurers with long experience in pricing health coverage can’t seem to make the economics of the exchanges work, her solution is to create a brand-new insurer with no experience and have federal bureaucrats run it. That proposal does not suggest that she has learned much from Obamacare’s troubles.

Though Barack Obama will defend the ACA until his last breath, this mess will be his main domestic legacy, and his administration will be remembered as a time of missed chances and squandered opportunities. But the work of reform remains, if any have a mind and a stomach for it.





# 3 Foods KILLING You From The Inside



There are many foods that we should be avoiding in order to stay healthy and look our best. Being healthy and looking good is a big priority for many of us.

The problem is that there are 3 foods in particular, which have been banned in many countries, yet here in the U.S. they are legal. These foods may cause us to gain weight and may actually killing you from the inside.

These foods are in your home and you are most likely consuming them every day.

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Many of these foods have been disguised as “health foods.”

The truth about these foods is that they may be killing you from the inside.

Many doctors are now calling these “death foods.” These are foods that you should stop eating right now!

Please go to [www.KillerFood25.com](http://www.KillerFood25.com) now to watch this shocking video.

These are all foods that we have in our home and we consume every day.

These foods are banned in many countries and may be extremely harmful to your health.

Please go to [www.KillerFood25.com](http://www.KillerFood25.com) to find out these foods.

PS. Many food manufacturers market these foods as health foods and you may be thinking that you are eating healthy. So please watch this shocking presentation at [www.KillerFood25.com](http://www.KillerFood25.com)



# Mourning in America

*Reagan led a healthy society; ours is fragmented and decaying*

BY DAVID FRENCH

WAS 15 years old when Ronald Reagan won his reelection campaign, and after all these years I still remember his legendary “Morning in America” campaign ad. Looking back at it even in this cynical age, one can recapture the feeling. The music seems maudlin, the voice a little too grandfatherly, but the ad told a true story. America was back.

It was back in a very specific way, however, one that in some ways now seems quaint. Yes, the ad speaks of jobs, inflation, and interest rates, but also of homes and marriages—boasting that on that very day 2,000 families would buy new homes and 6,500 men and women would get married. It was painting a picture of an American ideal—of the nuclear family, employed and hopeful, optimistic about the future.

To say that the ad—and the associated campaign—worked is an understatement. Younger Americans can’t comprehend a true electoral landslide. They’ve never seen one. Reagan’s victory was breathtaking in scope. He won 49 states and almost 59 percent of the popular vote—a margin of almost 17 million out of 92 million votes cast. In today’s polarized times we can’t conceive of such margins. Donald Trump could commit a grotesque gaffe every day for the rest of

the 2016 presidential campaign and *still* not sink to Walter Mondale levels.

So, yes, it is understandable that Republicans look back wistfully to Reagan. The economy actually *grew*. America was *strong*. It wasn’t utopia, of course. America has never been a utopia. But there is not a sensible politician alive who wouldn’t be thrilled to emulate not just Reagan’s economic record, but also his ability to unite and inspire an entire nation.

It’s time, however, for conservatives to turn the page—not so much because there is anything at all wrong with Reaganomics or with Reagan’s vision, but because Reagan’s America is no more. To echo Barack Obama, the nation has “fundamentally transformed.” To paraphrase Bruce Springsteen, that country’s gone, boys, and it ain’t ever coming back.

When Reagan came to the presidency in 1981, America was a far more culturally and religiously homogenous nation, with more stable families, than it is today. Its culture was strong, but its politics were weak. Nixon’s corruption, the various OPEC-driven energy crises, and the looming Soviet threat were all problems well within the capacity of conventional politics to overcome—especially when combined with the immense strength of the American people and the American economy.

To put it another way, when Reagan came to office, the culture was primed for resurgence; a good president had only to create the right conditions for success. And now? Our culture is weak, *and* our politics are weak. Our nation is far less sound—beset with cultural problems that lie far beyond the capacity of any politician to fix.

One needn’t spend much time comparing the regulatory and tax structures then and now. Reagan inherited a much lighter regulatory environment and a much more oppressive tax regime. He slashed taxes, and while they’ve climbed some, they are still nowhere near the crippling rates of the Carter era, when top earners paid a 70 percent marginal rate and inflation kept pushing Americans into higher tax brackets.

As for regulations—there are now about 350,000 more federal regulations than when Reagan left office, bringing the total estimated impact of federal regulation to more than \$2 trillion annually. What is more difficult to do—cut tax rates or unwind hundreds of thousands of complex rules sustaining vast federal bureaucracies?

But economic policy tells only part of the story. Reagan was pushing the throttle on an economy still largely populated by intact families—one that had yet to see the maladies of underclass behavior trickle up to the economically vital American middle class.

In 1980, despite the fact that the sexual revolution was well under way, only 18.4 percent of births were to unmarried women, with those births concentrated in the lower economic classes. By 2014, that number had hit 40.2 percent, with those births spreading up into the middle class. The spike represented a combination of increasing birth rates for unmarried women and decreasing rates for married women. Between 1980 and 2014, the percentage of married women who had children dropped from 97 percent to 89 percent.

The differences in outcomes between intact families and single-parent families are so profound that the Heritage Foundation’s Robert Rector could rightly describe family differences as creating a “two-caste society.” Marriage and education represent the dividing line between prosperity and poverty.

At the same time, Americans no longer agree on many of the most basic tenets of faith and morality. We don’t agree on what’s right. America’s deepest beliefs are shifting, and a largely Christian country is splintering along religious lines. The

generational changes are staggering. In a 2013 Brookings Institution survey, a full 78 percent of the “silent generation”—the generation preceding the Baby Boom—classified themselves as religious conservatives or religious moderates. Even Baby Boomers were 70 percent conservative or moderate. Millennials, by contrast, are 45 percent non-religious or religious progressives.

Pew surveys show Christians declining “sharply” as a share of the American population, with the religiously unaffiliated experiencing the greatest growth. Dig deeper into the data, however, and the picture becomes more complex. It turns out that Americans are growing both more religious and more secular. In other words, while the percentage of unaffiliated Americans is experiencing great growth, the number of Evangelical Protestants in the country is also continuing to grow.

This is not a small matter. Contrary to pop-cultural belief, people of different faiths don’t “believe the same things, just with different labels.” Americans have comforted themselves with this nonsense largely because our religious homogeneity taught us to view religious differences mainly as denominational, not categorical. Yet the difference between Muslim and Christian is far greater than the difference between Baptist and Catholic. Atheists share few core beliefs with Pentecostals.

And that brings me to the final point—fracturing. It should surprise no one that a nation increasingly split by faith and family is also growing ever more polarized politically. The data are overwhelming. The Pew Foundation has amply documented the rise in negative feelings between Democrats and Republicans. The net “cold” rating that members of each major party give the other one—do they feel “very” or “partly” cold about the opposition?—has roughly doubled since the Reagan years, and most partisanship is “negative partisanship.” In other words, a person belongs to his party more because he dislikes the other side than because he likes his own. It’s polarization based on antipathy.

The political consequences are obvious enough. Reagan passed his economic agenda—including his tax reforms—through a Democratic-controlled legislature. Yes, he made compromises, and those compromises have long been presented as an argument that Reagan wasn’t a true “small government” conservative—but he implemented the core of his agenda.

President Obama, by contrast, passed his signal reform, Obamacare, over unanimous Republican objection, and there’s no prospect that a potential President Trump would face any less opposition from Democrats in Congress or a President Hillary Clinton less opposition from Republicans. Unwilling or unable to reach compromise, future presidents will be increasingly tempted, like Obama, to resort to executive fiat to implement their policies.

In short, in the new, fundamentally transformed America, political reform isn’t agreed to; it’s imposed. And the measure of a politician is how quickly or thoroughly he can take advantage of temporary majorities or favorable courts to force permanent or near-permanent change on the temporary minority.

Faced with the grim reality of Trump, it’s tempting to wax nostalgic for better days. And a review of Reagan’s speeches is both inspiring and depressing. He knew how to connect with the American people—to call out the “better angels of our nature”—but he was connecting with a different nation. We believe different things now, and live different lives. Not only are many millions of families ill equipped to seize economic opportunity—they’re less likely to agree on what opportunity looks like.

It can be morning again in America, but that morning won’t come primarily through politics. That’s not to say that our economy can’t grow faster—it can. And that’s not to say that the middle class can’t do better—it can. But the kind of renewal and unity our nation experienced in 1984 is beyond our political reach.

Instead, now is the time for mourning in America. The fact that our educated upper class can achieve at the highest levels is cold comfort when the daily lives of the working and (increasingly) the middle classes are burdened not so much by bad politics as by bad choices—choices no political “outsider” can overcome.

Reagan helped unleash the enormous human capital of the American nation. But our nation has spent much of the last 30 years squandering that human capital, in the grip of cultural forces that create problems politics can’t solve. In 1981, America not only had a new leader, it possessed a people who were ready, willing, and able to shed the burden of bad leadership and unite behind a common vision. In 2016, our leaders are different, our people are different, and our loss of national character has become the greatest burden of all. NR

# The Christian-Fascist Fantasy

*Whatever happened to our supposed homegrown ‘Taliban’?*

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

TEN winters ago, Chris Hedges authored a book bearing the unsubtle, positively hysterical title “American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America.” It was published not by some obscure fringe outfit one step removed from the mimeograph but by Simon & Schuster, which in the book’s marketing copy advertised its terror that Christians of Pat Robertson’s ilk presented “a very real threat to our freedom and our way of life.” The book was reviewed respectfully, though not always positively, everywhere from the *New York Times* to *O: The Oprah Magazine*, which is no celebrity vanity project but a valuable part of the Hearst publishing empire. Hedges, a product of Loomis Chaffee School, Colgate, and Harvard, went on to win a Pulitzer prize as part of the *New York Times* team covering international terrorism.

The book’s argument—that a secretive movement of authoritarian Christians organized along the lines of the great totalitarian movements of the 20th century was on the verge of seizing power through violence—was preposterous, pure conspiracy-theory nonsense of the Bilderberg and Bohemian Grove variety. But that was not of interest to Francine Prose (real name!) of *O*, who wrote that Hedges had uncovered nested conspiracies “that pose a clear and present danger to our precious and fragile republic.”

“Clear and present danger” was an interesting choice of phrase—it is the formulation the Supreme Court used to determine when the federal government might violate liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment or other civil rights. Prose is not (merely) some left-wing conspiracy kook: She is today a visiting professor at Bard College and the former president of PEN American Center.

She surely was not so ignorant as to be unaware that she was glancingly making an argument for censorship, the violation of religious liberties, and the suspension of civil rights in response to an anti-American conspiracy that, viewed from a decade down the road, kinda sorta seems to not quite *exist*, much less to present a “clear and present danger to our precious and fragile republic.” *Publishers Weekly* took a similarly sympathetic view of attacking the political rights of an unpopular religious minority, citing “a democratic society’s suicidal tolerance for intolerant movements” that constitute “a serious and growing threat to the very concept and practice of an open society.”

Rick Perlstein of the *New York Times* considered the same evidence and found reason to doubt Hedges’s apocalyptic certitude, faulting the author for leaning

York State—but never mind. The Left believes that there really should be a Christian Taliban, whether one actually exists or doesn’t.

Consequently, *The American Interest* wrote breathlessly of a “Christian Taliban” at West Point, while *Daily Kos* uncovered a “Christian Taliban” at the Air Force Academy. Ah, but that was then; it’s also now: In July 2016, Sirius XM host Thom Hartmann claimed that a “Christian Taliban” had taken over the Republican party . . . which was on the cusp of nominating the thrice-married, socially liberal, pro-gay, pro-abortion-until-five-minutes-ago Donald Trump as its standard-bearer.

Needless to say, the “global Christian empire” sustained by “a mass movement fueled by unbridled nationalism and a hatred for the open society”—

Ten years ago, Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton were on record as opponents of homosexual marriage, and Elena Kagan argued that there was no constitutional right to homosexual marriage. But homosexual marriage is today the law of the land. In 2003, one could, in theory, go to jail for homosexual acts; today, one can go to jail for refusing to participate in the public consecration of such acts, sexual outlaws having been replaced by nonconformist bakers and fundamentalist flower arrangers in our national rogues’ gallery. No one is being executed for using contraception—quite the contrary: The Little Sisters of the Poor, an order of Catholic nuns, has had to go all the way to the Supreme Court seeking some relief from the Obama administration’s insistence that the group of

## There is very little evidence that the so-called Christian Right—which is in fact not especially Christian or conservative as those terms are conventionally understood—has much **meaningful influence** on public policy.

so heavily upon the “supposed imminence of mass violence” when “he can’t point to any actual existing violence among the people he’s reporting on.” But as Perlstein is excruciatingly well positioned to appreciate, there is no penalty in American intellectual circles for being wildly, grotesquely wrong about conservative Christians.

The Left characterized George W. Bush’s modest pro-life activism as the institution of a “Christian Taliban” (American progressives have never managed to get their heads around the fact that Islamic law is notably liberal on the question of abortion), with Stephen Pizzo, writing on *Alternet*, quoting Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry on contraception and adding: “The [Bush] administration moved quickly to install similarly-minded Christian fundamentalists to positions of authority and influence over all matters relating to reproductive and sexual health.” That never actually happened—if you want to know how many Republicans are minded similarly to Randall Terry, consider his 7 percent showing in his primary-election bid for a House seat from New

York State—did not come to pass. Embarrassing for Chris Hedges, sure, but it wasn’t just one dotty crank with a day job at the *New York Times*. Similar books had preceded his, with titles such as “Eternal Hostility: The Struggle between Theocracy and Democracy.” The author of that book spelled out the secret Christian agenda, which would

replace democracy with a theocratic elite that would govern by imposing their interpretation of “Biblical Law.” Reconstructionism would eliminate not only democracy but many of its manifestations, such as labor unions, civil rights laws, and public schools. Women would be generally relegated to hearth and home. Insufficiently Christian men would be denied citizenship, perhaps executed. So severe is this theocracy that it would extend capital punishment beyond such crimes as kidnapping, rape, and murder to include, among other things, blasphemy, heresy, adultery, and homosexuality.

What actually happened was something close to the opposite.

elderly celibates must provide birth control to its members, who do not wish to use it and who in fact consider the forced purchase of it a violation of their consciences and their First Amendment rights.

There is, in fact, almost no evidence that the vast conspiracy of Christian theocrats plotting to overthrow the republic ever existed as anything other than after-eight talk among a couple of cranky Calvinist theologians. More generally, there is very little evidence that the so-called Christian Right—which is in fact not especially Christian or conservative as those terms are conventionally understood—has much meaningful influence on public policy. A few textbook reviewers in Texas might get froggy over evolution from time to time, but they react similarly to controversial topics that have nothing to do with Sunday-school lessons, notably global warming.

That isn’t Christian fundamentalism in action—it is populism in action.

Much has been made of purported Evangelical support for the candidacy of Donald Trump, under headlines that have a familiar Chris Hedges flavor,

e.g., Heather Digby Parton’s “Evangelicals Love Donald Trump . . . Why It’s So Scary.” Another left-wing writer described Trump’s rise as a consequence of “GOP evangelical narcissism.” These are a funny kind of Christian fundamentalist, though: As all those late-primary think pieces on Evangelicals and Trump were being written, nobody was paying any attention to the polls, which consistently found that church-going Evangelicals supported Trump at *half* the level of unchurched voters. Trump is popular in Appalachia and the Rust Belt, among people J. D. Vance describes in his recent memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*: people who may describe themselves as Christian hard-liners but whose lives, habits, and real-world religious practice belie that claim. Once, they were a counter-counterculture, and today they are closer to a simple counterculture. Like all countercultures, they are suspicious of authority and claims of authority: They may scoff at global warming as a scam and a conspiracy, the conventional account of evolution as contrary to the plain evidence of their eyes, etc., but they are just as likely to believe that quantitative easing is a conspiracy organized by a gentlemen’s club in Monte Rio, Calif., and that the moon landings were faked. They are not members of a Christian Taliban—if there were such a thing, they would be Exhibit A in its indictment of secular, materialistic, consumerist, hedonistic American society.

But there isn’t a Christian Taliban. One might generously call the diagnosis of Hedges et al. an exaggeration, but in practical terms it is closer to an invention. The widespread movement, the federal agencies larded with covert Christian operatives, the nation on the precipice of civil unrest—none of this actually exists. Not in the real world.

But political rhetoric is not the real world. The Left is selling an odd and ambitious agenda: turning the United States into a Scandinavian welfare state, not as those exist today (after decades of reform largely at the hands of center-right parties) but as they existed in the 1970s, American society as one big public utility administered by one big DMV in Washington. That’s a tough sell, and tough sells need enemies. Choosing to make an unpopular reli-

gious minority the face of all that is wrong with a society isn’t exactly unprecedented, nor is alternating those attacks with related aggression against hated economic minorities. The socialist world has shown itself perfectly capable of scapegoating Jews and Kulaks in tight series. The United States is not on the verge of a Stalinist terror, but the mechanics are roughly the same.

We—we Americans, not conservatives alone—must be clear-eyed and clear-headed about what is happening in our politics right now. The Right certainly has its problems as Trump’s vapid populism encounters the jackboot dreams of his worst followers. But the picture for the Left is in the long run much more worrisome: The Democratic party already has conducted a Senate vote to repeal free-speech guarantees of the First Amendment in order to suspend the political activities of hated political rivals, or at least to smother them with federal regulation. Hillary Rodham Clinton has made a very high-profile promise to pursue that goal, which makes sense: The fundamental issue at question in *Citizens United* was whether the federal government might censor a political film critical of none other than Mrs. Clinton, and the Clintons’ pursuit of self-interest always has been remarkably linear.

Ten years ago, the largely imaginary conservative Christian bogeymen were presented as a “clear and present danger” to the United States, which is to say as enemies of the state, by the progressive intellectual class and its cultural organs. The Left dreamed of overriding the Bill of Rights to silence its rivals through prosecution then, and that dream has become more grandiose in the decade since. New bogeymen will be invented, and new criminal cases against them will be invented, too: Witness the current investigation and prosecution by Democratic attorneys general of institutions promoting dissident ideas about global warming, or the criminalization of certain kinds of counseling for unhappy homosexuals, or the ongoing project to follow directly in the Soviet example and declare the conservative political temperament a form of mental illness.

There is indeed an American fascism at work, but not where Chris Hedges imagined it.

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# Four Myths About Trade

*True free trade is still optimal, but its advocates are stuck in the 20th century*

BY ROBERT D. ATKINSON

THE content and tenor of debate in this presidential-election season has Washington's pro-trade establishment in a panic, wondering what has happened to the previous consensus about the merits of global economic integration. Yet rather than question their long-held assumptions, establishmentarians have concluded that the problem must be with the American people and the political demagogues leading them astray. The less charitable among them dismiss opponents as "less educated" isolationists, nationalists, or ethnocentrists. The more charitable assume that if trade supporters would just slow down and enunciate clearly—TRADE IS GOOD!—then maybe the unwashed would get the message.

But what if it's the experts who are wrong, not the voters? Could it be that establishmentarians are stuck in the 20th century, while voters have moved on to the 21st? As my colleague Stephen Ezell and I wrote in our book *Innovation Economics: The Race for Global Advantage*, most in the Washington policy establishment share a deeply held view about trade and globalization that is grounded in four key assumptions, all of which came to be accepted in the post-World War II period, when the United States was the world's dominant economic power. None are open to serious question in elite circles, but the truth is that they all are outdated, and that we must achieve a more accurate understanding of trade if we hope to defend and promote it in a compelling way.

The first assumption is that America is the world's economic leader because it is the most open, entrepreneurial, and market-driven economy. The idea is that we will prosper if we open our economy to the world because we will be dealing with economies that are unable to be as

competitive. But the reality is that while the U.S. economy retains many of the strengths it built up in the post-war era, other countries have caught up in numerous areas by developing their own strengths. In fact, the United States now runs the largest trade deficit of any nation in history. Meanwhile, according to the Heritage Foundation, the United States is not even in the top ten when it comes to economic freedom. And America ranks even lower when it comes to entrepreneurship, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

The Washington trade establishment's second core belief is that trade is an unalloyed good, even if other nations engage in mercantilism. Willem Buiter, a Cambridge University economist and a former head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, spoke for many in the trade establishment when he wrote in a 2003 letter to the editor of the *Financial Times*: "Remember: unilateral trade liberalization is not a 'concession' or a 'sacrifice' that one should be compensated for. It is an act of enlightened self-interest. Reciprocal trade liberalization enhances the gains, but is not necessary for the gains to be present." In other words, it doesn't matter if other nations massively subsidize their exporters, require U.S. companies to hand over the keys to their technology in exchange for market access, or engage in other forms of mercantilist behavior. As one congressional-subcommittee chairman replied when asked whether China's mercantilism hurts the U.S. economy, "Adam Smith proved that mercantilists only hurt themselves."

Because the establishment believes trade is good under even the most lopsided of circumstances, it sees the issue in black-and-white terms. There are only two camps: free-traders and protectionists. And confronting foreign protectionists risks making us protectionists. Better to embrace free trade and let other countries be mercantilists, the establishment argues, than to engage in a "trade war." America should show misguided nations by force of example, rather than prosecution before international bodies, why mercantilism is bad. But China and others are proving that this is folly. In industry after industry, including the advanced innovation-based industries that are America's future, they are gam-

ing the rules of global trade to hold others back while they leap forward.

To be clear, reciprocal free trade between two nations is the optimal condition, as both of the trading nations and the global economy will benefit. But one-sided trade (with nations that are mercantilists) has not produced net gains for the U.S. economy over the last 15 years. Therefore, having the United States push back on mercantilist nations by limiting trade with them, particularly as a tactic to pressure them to roll back their mercantilist policies, would be in our interest. Limiting trade would definitely not be in our interest if applied to nations that generally abide by the global trading rules (such as Canada and Mexico, for example).

Third, the Washington trade establishment clings to the doctrine of "comparative advantage." First postulated by 19th-century economist David Ricardo, the theory holds that nations have natural advantages in certain goods (e.g., the English in textiles and the Portuguese in wine) and each does better when it specializes in these industries. A corollary is that whatever an economy produces is determined by the market and therefore optimal, unless it is distorted by economic policy. Thus, the United States has evolved to be a big producer and exporter of wastepaper because we have a comparative advantage in garbage, and any attempt to change that would be sub-optimal. This implies that any industrial structure that results from trade, even if it is mercantilist trade, is optimal. Lest you doubt that many in the establishment believe this, consider that when the head of a leading pro-trade think tank was asked how much manufacturing we could lose to foreign competitors and still be okay, his response was "All of it."

But today this doctrine is flawed for two reasons. First, most trade is not in goods and services based on national endowments, such as arable land, energy supplies, and raw materials, as it was in the pre-WWII era. Most is in goods and services based on specific technological capabilities and business advantages, none of which are unique to any particular nation, but all of which are affected by good or bad economic policies. Second, exporting large amounts of waste while at the same time running a trade deficit in high-tech goods (in excess of \$100 billion a year) is not a reflection of our particular

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comparative advantage. It's a reflection of having lost competitive advantage to other nations in many higher-value-added industries, in part because of foreign mercantilist policies and domestic economic-policy failures.

However, establishmentarians know that voters have a different view, which is why they go to Herculean lengths to deny that the country's losses in manufacturing have been due to trade. They can't very well dispute the fact that between 2000 and 2011 America lost one-third of its manufacturing jobs, including jobs in high-tech manufacturing. But they blame the loss on technology-driven productivity. Council on Foreign Relations scholar Roland Stephen echoes this view when he writes that "manufacturing's productivity gains allowed output to rise while employment fell."

But this is misleading because, as Brookings economists Martin Baily and Barry Bosworth write, manufacturing-output growth "is largely due to the spectacular performance of one subsector of manufacturing: computers and electronics." In other words, because of Moore's Law—the doubling of the number of transistors on a chip every 18 to 24 months—and the unique way the U.S. government measures output in the industry (unlike other nations, which measure chips and computers, the U.S. government measures transistors), productivity in this sector grew a phenomenal 800 percent in this period, compared with around 30 percent for the rest of manufacturing. Indeed, as the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), of which I am president, has written, this sector, which accounted for 8 percent of manufacturing jobs in 2000, contributed 120 percent of U.S. manufacturing-output growth in the 2000s. Output in the rest of manufacturing actually declined, something that had never happened in the post-war period. ITIF estimates that, when this and other factors are accounted for, about two-thirds of manufacturing jobs were lost to trade.

To be sure, technological innovation, like trade, can displace jobs. But unlike technology, which raises GDP and increases wages, foreign mercantilism acts to reduce both of these. This gets to the last and most important tenet of the establishment's trade doctrine: Because the United States leads the global economy,

because mercantilists hurt only themselves, and because our current industrial structure is always optimal or close to it, the economy as a whole must benefit from trade even though some individuals may be hurt. But as Tufts professor Daniel Drezner writes, "even if the aggregate gains have massively outweighed the losses, it's hard to deny that trade has wreaked some serious carnage on some parts of the American economy."

It follows that the only correct solution is to give more help to the victims of trade and hope they will stop complaining. For the Washington trade establishment, there is nothing wrong that can't be fixed by expanding Trade Adjustment Assistance, the federal program that helps workers hurt by trade. Do that, and most Americans will be back on the trade bus.

But reality is not as neat and tidy as this 20th-century model. The truth is that if we are to have any hope of succeeding in the 21st-century global economy and turning popular sentiment away from protectionism, our leaders will have to offer up more than just the fig leaf of adjustment assistance or the false narrative that it's technology's fault.

Rather, the trade establishment needs to confront two core problems that keep America from fully benefiting from 21st-century globalization. The first is that many nations do not play by the official rules of global trade, as enacted largely by the World Trade Organization; they engage in a host of unfair mercantilist practices, including intellectual-property theft, forced technology transfer, local-production requirements, currency manipulation, unfair subsidies, standards manipulation, and more.

It is naïve and wrong to believe that one-sided free trade (with the United States being free and many of its competitors being mercantilist) will lead to an increase in global economic welfare (certainly relative to free trade but also relative to reduced trade with mercantilist nations), much less U.S. economic welfare. It is true that mercantilists often hurt themselves, but they almost always hurt the U.S. and global economies, too. So it is incumbent upon the U.S. government to vigilantly enforce trade rules, such as by bringing many more trade-enforcement cases to the WTO, pressuring global aid organizations to cut funding to mercantilist nations, limiting the ability of companies in mer-

cantilist nations to buy U.S. firms, and more. Congress should give the next administration greater resources and an express mandate to do so.

The second problem stems from the fact that when the trade consensus was first formed, the U.S. economy was so dominant that hardly anyone could imagine the country might need a competitiveness strategy. Today we are far from dominant.

It's sheer fantasy to think that most firms in America will necessarily win if we simply open up more markets. Some firms will do well, but without a robust national competitiveness strategy, many won't. Those who favor trade should be first in line calling on Congress to put such a strategy in place. It must begin with reducing the effective tax rate on corporations. To believe that America can thrive in the global economy with the world's highest statutory corporate-tax rates and among the highest effective corporate-tax rates, especially for manufacturers, is to ignore the intense global competitive realities of the 21st century. Tax reform then needs to be complemented with two other key items: a regulatory-reform strategy particularly aimed at reducing burdens on industries that compete globally, and increased funding for programs that help exporters, such as the Export-Import Bank, the new National Network for Manufacturing Innovation, and a robust apprenticeship program for manufacturing workers.

It's clear that even if we enforce trade rules more vigorously and enact a national competitiveness strategy, opposition to trade will not vanish. Some on the left will continue to reject globalization because they long for an economy sheltered from global competition in which labor unions can more easily obtain uncompetitive wages and regulators can impose their will with impunity. Likewise, some on the nativist Right will continue to want as little as possible to do with the rest of the world. But most voters are more pragmatic than that, so it's likely that if Congress and the next administration develop a credible new globalization doctrine for the 21st century—melding tough trade enforcement with a robust national competitiveness agenda—then necessary trade-opening steps like the Trans-Pacific Partnership will once again be on the table and the U.S. economy will begin to thrive once again. NR

# The Greatest Movie Ever Made

*One hundred years after its release, Intolerance offers an inspiring vision of love and history*

BY ARMOND WHITE

FOR many critics and scholars—myself among them—D. W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* is the greatest film ever made. A century later we are as close to its subject as we are distant from its art. Political specifics, moral arguments, and movie styles may look different today, yet the only real difference is Griffith’s still-daring ingenuity, which calls for a more open-minded reception than in our simplistic habits we are accustomed to: It calls for an optimistic, united popular audience, which Griffith took for granted.

When *Intolerance* premiered on September 5, 1916, its opening intertitles introduced silent-movie viewers to an extraordinary narrative device: “Our play is made up of four separate stories, laid in different periods of history, each with its own set of characters.” Employing a prologue and two acts, Griffith called it “a sun-play,” marked by florid melodramatics developed from Emersonian Transcendentalism, which film scholar Bill R. Scalia has described as “calling for an original American literature,” for “poets with the ability to ‘see’ past the material, apparent world to the world of eternal forms, which shaped nature in accordance with a divine moral imperative. Through this connection, man-as-poet would discover God in himself.”

Griffith’s idea of cinematic “sun-play” to illuminate a darkened world might sound cornball to cynical Millennials, but his sincere, way-out-there expression of emotion and spirituality gave immediacy to each period story. In place of the saccharine, he interweaves four tales of religious and political persecution: the

invasion of Belshazzar’s Babylonian kingdom by Cyrus’s Persian army; Christ’s crucifixion; the Catholics’ massacre of the Huguenot Protestants in 16th-century France; and, in the early 20th century, a young couple wronged by urban reformers.

*Intolerance* (available now from Cohen Media Group, on Blu-ray) derives from that moment when the mass audience—particularly the audience for the kinetic arts—was first being created, before niche marketing and solidified genres began to segregate peoples’ tastes, as is so egregiously the case with separate categories for film, television, and video games. Yet then, as now, the fact of artistic expression is that artists will ignore or take up social issues, seeking to persuade or else risking inevitable contradiction. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was a perfect example of this. It was based on the primal issues of slavery, U.S. Civil War lore, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, all of which I have discussed at NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE (February 18, 2015). *The Birth of a Nation* was not just America’s first film epic. It was the country’s first political film, and the considerable outcry it raised compelled Griffith to make a follow-up—a grand statement—that would clarify his position on both bigotry and censorship.

With the almost three-hour *Intolerance*, Griffith got ahead of the controversy in an elaborate, over-ambitious way that recalled a politician’s tactical choices and an artist’s idiosyncrasies. Griffith sublimated his political apologetics into the emotional and moral defense of love (which later in the film is aligned with “universal justice”). The four stories present cultural, social, moral, and political arguments for achieving and preserving humane values—the debate over which is still especially pertinent 100 years later.

Griffith used a disarming strategy. Instead of walking back the positions on race and class that many people attributed to him based on the complicated *Birth of a Nation*, Griffith in *Intolerance* doubled down, offering a large-scale, sentimental expression of his politics. He projected his combined sense of history, social conditions, literature, and religion openheartedly, achieving the guilelessness that *The Birth of a Nation* had seemed to lack. Attempting to create mankind’s ultimate Big Picture as a spiritual speculation, Griffith concocted an existentialist point of view before that philosophical concept

had gained currency. It is visualized in the central motif of a woman (portrayed by the actress Lillian Gish) rocking a cradle while behind her sit a trio of white-robed women representing the three Fates. Griffith adds to this the recurring motto “Out of the cradle, endlessly rocking . . .”

That line comes from Walt Whitman’s “Child’s Remembrance” (1859, and incorporated into the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*)—in the early 20th century, a reference almost as common as a Biblical quote. The narrative of *Intolerance* is rooted in popular literary and storytelling modes. There’s evidence of Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* in both the modern-day and the Babylon tales and of Biblical influence in the Christ story; there are hints of Shakespearean court intrigue in the Huguenot saga (as well as in each section’s sumptuous, poetic details). The mix of simple characterization and complex events evokes the cultural lore of Twain as well as the soaring emotional fecundity of grand opera. With his photographers Billy Bitzer and Karl Brown, Griffith introduced innovative cinematic techniques, tinting scenes in varied colors for mood, for example, and giving images extra height and panoramic breadth to accentuate dramatic moments. All this makes *Intolerance* an unparalleled art experiment. Griffith achieved a persuasive moral argument by matching classical themes to contemporary issues. But the film’s social experiment—purposely consolidating moral precepts, social experience, and language—was also a success.

Imagine a contemporary director embarking on a film that chastises intolerance. I don’t mean those topical, politically correct diatribes against gun violence, the death penalty, or the Hollywood blacklist or in defense of abortion or gay marriage (*Batman Returns*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, *Juno*, *Brokeback Mountain*) but a movie about the timeless, global theme—of man’s inhumanity to man—that encompasses almost all of world history.

We are constantly subjected to the methods by which filmmakers appeal to already-indoctrinated viewers, preaching to a choir accustomed to the biases of mainstream media. Griffith worked before America’s entry into World War I, in a perhaps less fractious era, which allowed him to address a filmgoing public as yet uncorrupted. This audience, through convention and habit, automatically understood

*Mr. White is the author of The Resistance: Ten Years of Pop Culture That Shook the World and, most recently, New Position: The Prince Chronicles.*



expositions by Shakespeare, Dickens, Emerson, Whitman, and the Bible and shared those modes of expression, the collective pandect, and the implied collective ideologies. (*Intolerance*, like *Birth* and Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm*, set during the French Revolution, was one of the rare movies to use footnotes, unashamedly citing the literary and painting sources of Griffith's visual re-creations.) Griffith could reference, and proceed from, a common cultural fount to articulate his vision.

"Each story shows how hatred and intolerance through all the ages have battled against love and charity," *Intolerance's* intertitles explain. "Therefore, you will see our play turning from one of the four stories to another as the common theme unfolds in each." And it is Griffith's sophisticated use of love as a theme—perceiving both romantic and political ideas in jeopardized situations—that prevents the film from being mawkish or hackneyed.

A vow by busybody Reformists ("We must have laws to make people good") begins Griffith's epic and evokes that incessant cry for legislation as a response to new crises, evident also in our own era of political correctness (though, of course, the conservative and liberal positions in that regard have switched). We know how single- and narrow-minded partisanship affects lives, and this is where Griffith's insight proves profound.

The film's themes blend and connect—betrayals, deprivations, feasts, dances, even the stress and tensions of war and social conflict. The Babylon sequence contains a four-wheel flamethrower (*before* America's entry into World War I); the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre features genocidal butchery modeled after pogroms (*before* the Holocaust); the modern romance between Dear One (Mae Marsh) and The Boy (Robert Harron) derives from a labor strike based on a Federal Industrial Commission report. History repeats the old conceits but appears fresh and piercing when seen in new contexts. Note how an intertitle describing "The Last Sacrament" leads to The Boy in prison, walking to the gallows and receiving

absolution from a priest; through his invention of cross-cutting, Griffith achieves miraculous fluency.

*Intolerance* transcends rhetorical devices used to manipulate political positions. At the film's peak, the intertitles drop out altogether. Emotion and intellect are stirred through pure visual energy, by the leaps and bounds of Griffith's imagination triggering our own—both

side a train to save an innocent's man's life; the dynamic scene is summarized by the intertitle "No. 8 [chases] after the train, leaps with new impulse." Here Griffith features motorized speed, or locomotion, to announce cinema as an art that advances physical and intellectual momentum.

Instead of presenting issues as a banal political filmmaker would, Griffith argues with artistic telepathy—dramas of joy or grief are conveyed through the characters' gestures, demeanor, and facial expressions. The battle of ancient Babylon as it is overtaken by Cyrus involves a betrayal of faith, the destruction of language, and the end of civilization. It is depicted in scenes of heartbreak in the past so that, in the end, the modern tale—the film's central story—takes on greater richness and resonance.

Griffith ends *Intolerance* with prophecy: "Perfect love shall bring peace forevermore." As if inspired by the Book of Revelation, the image of angels descending to earth as soldiers and then laying down their arms as children gambol in meadows would seem berserk if it were not so elating and audacious. During the first miracle in the Christ sequence, the image of a crucifix is superimposed on a likeness of the Nazarene; that device is repeated in the coda but now with blinding halation, the shape of a cross engulfing

the screen. Imagine an icon of Judeo-Christian inspiration overtaking a 21st-century film. (Spielberg's standing as a modern Griffith has changed, to judge from recent films of his, which are overtly political and lack his early ecumenical approach.)

From the psychological precision of the acting to the eye-dazzling imagery of the legendary Babylon-court tableau, *Intolerance* personalizes political history, conflating it with love. Griffith used cinema to examine both history and love deeply, proposing that, in his view, they are undeniably inextricable. That is still the boldest of all political propositions. Try to find a contemporary politician or filmmaker who would dare.

NR



throughout recorded time and while keeping contrapuntal time with the separate events being depicted. (In his silent-movie genius, Griffith anticipated the jumpily edited phenomenology of French New Wave director Alain Resnais.) The storytelling is both expansive and detailed (from ancient battles boasting a believable cast of thousands to urban-crime tragedies and intimate courtship scenes—the sublime kiss between Dear One and The Boy) in ways that give the narrative a contract-and-release, accordion-like expanse. For a century now, filmgoers, taking deep, bated breaths, have watched the four stories of *Intolerance* move toward a simultaneous climax. The Friendless One (Miriam Cooper) in a racing car chases along-



Senator Pat Toomey talks with constituents in State College, Pa.

# Toomey's Travails

*Will the Trump-resisting Pennsylvania senator retain his seat?*

BY JOHN J. MILLER

*Central Pennsylvania*

As Senator Pat Toomey walked into a packed room at the Morris Family Restaurant in Bloomsburg, Pa., an old man sitting in a corner shouted: “If you don’t support him, I don’t support you!” Harvey Eckert, a retired federal employee, pointed to his red baseball cap with the familiar words: “Make America Great Again.” Toomey heard Eckert’s booming voice but kept moving between rows of tables where local Republicans ate omelets and hash browns. On the opposite side of the room, the GOP senator made his pitch for reelection, talking about economic growth, national security, and law enforcement, his voice competing against the clatter of forks, knives, and breakfast plates.

When he finished, Toomey took questions—and the first one came in the form of a statement from David J. McElwee, a gun dealer in a red blazer: “It’s very important to us that you support the Republican nominee.” He handed Toomey an envelope. It contained a letter in which McElwee pledged to vote for the senator, “but that is all.” And so instead of discussing the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons, a new transfer of terrorists out of the prison at Guantanamo Bay, or the dilemma of sanctuary cities (topics Toomey had raised in his brief remarks), the senator found himself explaining his views on the subject that has dominated American political life for the last year: Donald Trump.

The scene took place on August 16—Toomey’s first stop on the third day of an eight-day RV trip across the Keystone State—in what promises to be one of the closest Senate elections of 2016. Most Republican officeholders have endorsed Donald Trump for president, even when they’ve done it grudgingly. Toomey, however, has refused. “I’m not alone among Republicans with reservations,” he said at the Morris Family Restaurant. Toomey mentioned Trump’s long history of supporting Democrats, his calls for government-run health care, and his suggestion that his sister belongs on the Supreme Court, even though she’s a liberal. “Hillary Clinton is not acceptable to me,” Toomey added, apparently to avoid potential confusion. On this point, at least, his audience was in complete agreement.

EVER since 2010, when Toomey won his first election to the Senate by just two percentage points, Democrats have marked him for defeat. Just as Trump probably needs to carry Pennsylvania to become president, Democrats almost certainly must beat Toomey to capture a majority in the Senate. It won’t be easy: Toomey has never lost to a Democrat. And although Toomey has compiled a conservative voting record—the American Conservative Union gives him a lifetime

score of 93—he has also developed a reputation as a Republican who can work with Democrats to break the Washington gridlock that most people say they despise. On guns, he has called for expanded background checks, to the satisfaction of former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg (who endorsed Toomey for reelection on August 1). On gays, he favored repealing the ban on out-and-proud military personnel. On budgets, he has shown a willingness to fight deficits by erasing tax breaks. In other words, Toomey is the kind of Republican senator that a ticket-splitting mom in suburban Philadelphia might support.

Toomey also has made at least one painful concession to Trump’s populism: Writing in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on August 17, the senator walked away from a history of backing free-trade agreements and came out against the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the pending twelve-nation pact that Trump has opposed with vigor. “TPP is not a good deal for Pennsylvania,” wrote Toomey. “I cannot support it.”

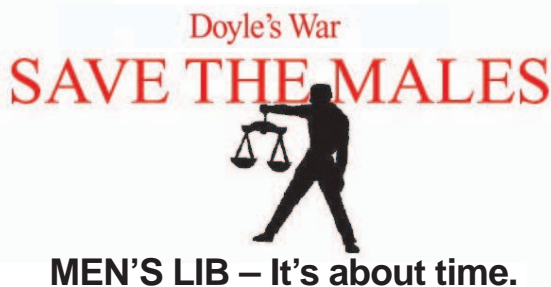
On the matter of Trump himself, however, Toomey hasn’t budged—and he’s hearing about it from rank-and-file Republicans who don’t understand why their GOP senator refuses to get behind their GOP presidential nominee. Toomey hasn’t ruled out an endorsement: “I’m hoping Donald Trump can become a candidate I enthusiastically support,” he said in Lewisburg, after speaking to Republicans at the Cherry Alley Cafe. “I’m not there yet.”

As he wrestles with the anxieties that so many conservatives have felt about Trump, Toomey will choose between sticking to a principle that puzzles people whose votes he needs and making a compromise that he probably fears will

haunt him later. His decision, and the question of whether he runs ahead of or behind Trump on November 8, will shape the post-election recriminations of 2016.

THE 54-year-old Toomey was born in Rhode Island, worked on Wall Street, and moved to Pennsylvania in 1991 to open a restaurant in Allentown. In 1998, he ran for Congress from the Lehigh Valley region, winning a seat that a retiring Democrat had held for three terms. Toomey went on to serve six years, keeping a term-limits pledge to serve no more. Yet he didn’t drop out of politics. In 2004, he took on Arlen Specter, a longtime Republican senator with a liberal voting record, for the GOP nomination. In an insurgent bid that prefigured the tea-party eruptions of several years later, Toomey lost by just 17,000 votes out of more than a million cast. Along the way, he became a kind of conservative folk hero. In May 2008, he wrote an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal* with a provocative headline: “In Defense of RINO Hunting.” (As most conservatives know, “RINO” is an old put-down, standing for “Republican in Name Only.”) When Toomey announced a new challenge to Specter in 2010, the RINO incumbent switched parties and lost the Democratic primary. Meanwhile, Toomey coasted to the Republican nomination and won the general election.

This year, Toomey faces Katie McGinty, a Democrat who has never held elective office. She has worked for a series of officeholders, though, starting out as an environmental-policy adviser to Al Gore in the Senate. Later, she moved into Bill Clinton’s administration and then served as Pennsylvania’s

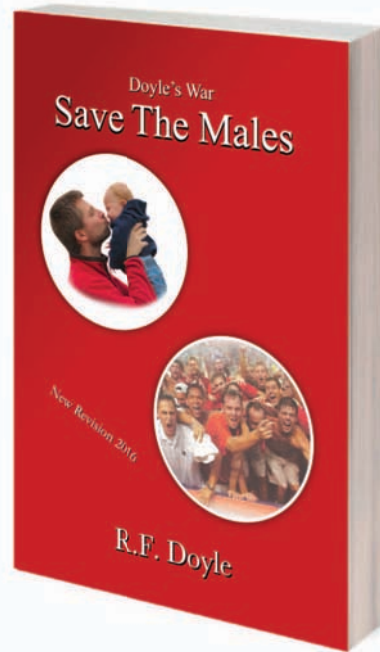


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Received wisdom is that women & sainted single moms are more discriminated against than men. Such hoaxes are promoted by mod/lib/fem. types and sensitive, new age guys. Feminism metastasizing and indiscriminate welfare are ideological blinders damaging society. Men’s sorry situation results largely from misplaced chivalry (or its perversion) and misandry that are elephants in the room no one notices, or pretends not to. Swamped with foreigners, war becomes serious; jihadists and ideologues must be defeated by real men, not pretend soldiers.

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environmental secretary. She supports Obamacare and abortion rights, wants to boost the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, and promises not to reform Social Security or Medicare. She has made mistakes that a more experienced candidate, previously vetted by the press and the public, might have avoided, such as claiming to be the first in her family to go to college. In June, a pair of *BuzzFeed* reporters revealed that she has an older brother who graduated from La Salle University before she was even out of high school. McGinty's résumé also has the whiff of insider politics: She has bounced between government posts that required her to write and enforce environmental regulations and the boards of corporations that must live by those rules. Shortly after she joined Iberdrola USA, the company received \$10 million in stimulus spending from the state to build a wind farm.

Most recently, McGinty was chief of staff to Pennsylvania's governor, Tom Wolf. In this post, she collaborated in proposing a \$4.6 billion tax hike, or what Toomey delights in calling "the biggest tax increase in Pennsylvania history." It failed, thanks to a state legislature with a GOP majority—proof that even though Pennsylvania hasn't given its electoral votes to a Republican since 1988, it's still a swing state where Republicans can win.

Through June, polls showed Toomey holding a steady lead over McGinty. In July, however, the Center for Responsive Politics revealed that liberal groups had dumped more than \$10 million into anti-Toomey attack ads: "the most outside money benefiting Dems" of any Senate race in the country, according to reporter Ashley Balcerzak. The latest surveys of likely voters have put McGinty a few points ahead but also within the margin of error. "We're in the battle of our lifetimes," said Toomey at a stop in Lewistown.

Toomey knew this was coming, and he has spent most of his term in the Senate trying to balance principle and prudence—his commitments to conservatism with his concerns about electability. He has remained devoted to several of the conservative movement's big-ticket items, voting to repeal Obamacare and defund Planned Parenthood and calling for ambitious entitlement reforms. He also searches for ways to make incremental gains. "I'm for eliminating the ethanol mandate," he said in an interview on August 19. "It's terrible policy." He describes it as a form of corporate welfare that drives up the cost of gas and groceries. He also thinks that a bill to wipe it out entirely would go nowhere. So last year he worked with Senator Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, to propose legislation to get rid of most of it. "She and I disagree on a lot of things, but I was happy to team up with her," he said. "I'm always trying to make progress, moving policy in a direction where I want to see it go. I'll always take half a loaf, then go back for more later."

On a few matters, though, conservatives have wondered whether he has compromised too much. Before joining the Senate, for example, Toomey supported the confirmation of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. (As a senator, he voted against the confirmation of Elena Kagan and now opposes Merrick Garland, President Obama's pick to replace Antonin Scalia.) In 2013, following the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, he joined with Democratic senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia to push for expanded gun-sale background checks. The National Rifle Association

avored Toomey in 2010, but it won't this year: "The NRA will not be endorsing him for reelection," said spokesperson Jennifer Baker. Toomey takes the rebuke in stride: "They can do what they want to do. I support the Second Amendment, and Katie McGinty does not."

No matter what he's talking about, Toomey maintains a measured tone: It's difficult to imagine him angry. When he wants to express outrage, he lets the weight of his words rather than the volume of his voice deliver his message. That's how he discusses the problem of sanctuary cities, which forbid local police to cooperate with federal officials on immigration-related matters, and the case of Ramon Aguirre-Ochoa, an illegal alien from Honduras who was arrested on July 26 in Philadelphia for raping a child. "This is about the most heinous crime that can be committed," said Toomey at the Restless Oaks Restaurant in McElhattan.

Philadelphia's special rules for dealing with illegal aliens in its custody are to blame, according to Toomey. In 2014, Aguirre-Ochoa was arrested for aggravated assault. Last year, however, Philadelphia dropped the charges. Rather than turning Aguirre-Ochoa over to immigration authorities, the city released him, in accordance with a policy that even Democrat Ed Rendell, the former mayor of Philadelphia and former governor of Pennsylvania, has condemned. "This is the kind of madness we have all around us," Toomey told his lunchtime audience.

He isn't jumping on a new controversy as much as keeping up an old cause: Last fall, long before he'd even heard Aguirre-Ochoa's name, he offered legislation to block sanctuary cities from receiving certain forms of federal aid. It failed to get 60 votes in the Senate. This was an early response to the ways in which Trump already had changed the politics of immigration, and Toomey pressed the matter again this year, with his latest effort also falling to a filibuster on July 6. "I have been on the tip of the spear trying to end sanctuary cities," he said. "I'm not giving up this fight."

Toomey's campaign is probably preparing the television ads about sanctuary cities and Aguirre-Ochoa right now. The senator, however, didn't have to wait. On his swing through central Pennsylvania, he mentioned sanctuary cities at just about every stop, from greasy spoons in small towns to a sports bar in State College, as Olympic basketball and field hockey played on televisions above his head. Yet Republican voters kept asking him about the presidential race. At a closed-door meeting at the GOP headquarters in Mifflin County—organizers tossed out a pair of McGinty supporters who tried to infiltrate, hoping to record the senator's remarks—Toomey once again talked about his opponent's liberalism, sanctuary cities, and more. When he finished, however, Toomey faced another barrage: "Are you going to support Trump?" blared Jim Smith, a retired businessman from Lewistown, from the back of the room. "You're making it very difficult for us to keep supporting you."

**E**ARLIER this year, Toomey endorsed Marco Rubio for the Republican presidential nomination. By the time of Pennsylvania's primary on April 26, however, Rubio was long gone. Toomey voted for Ted Cruz. Most Republicans in his state favored Trump. "When Trump took every county,

I saw that he was the only train leaving the station,” said Congressman Glenn Thompson, before he and Toomey spoke at a dairy farm in Spruce Creek. Should Toomey now follow Thompson’s example? “That’s for him to decide,” said Thompson, a Pennsylvania Republican who also once supported Rubio. “He needs to get reelected.”

Not every Pennsylvania Republican has endorsed Trump. Former governor Tom Ridge, who served as secretary of homeland security in the George W. Bush administration, announced in May that he won’t vote for either Clinton or Trump. Yet Ridge has the luxury of not having to justify himself, over and over again, to people who show up at Republican gatherings.

Toomey explained his views on Trump most clearly in a column for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on May 9, shortly after Trump became the presumptive nominee. “I object to much in his manner and his policies. His vulgarity, particularly toward women, is appalling. His lack of appreciation for Constitutional limits on executive powers is deeply concerning.” He also cited Trump’s stances on eminent domain, Muslim immigration, and foreign policy. “I have never been a rubber stamp for my party’s positions or its candidates,” added Toomey—a true statement that in another context might draw hoots of approval from voters who like to think they’re bucking a political establishment.

When Toomey continues to withhold his own support, he’s either doing an admirable job of sticking to his anti-Trump principles or making the cool calculation that an association with Trump will hurt him more in the southeastern part of the state than it will help him elsewhere. The senator knows that he won’t prevail in Philadelphia and its environs, where Democrats dominate, but he needs to keep his losses there to a minimum while also eking out a win in the Pittsburgh area and running up his total everywhere else. This was his formula for victory in 2010, and it’s how he hopes to repeat his success this year. A Franklin & Marshall College poll of likely voters released on August 4 showed a virtual tie between McGinty and Toomey (39 percent to 38 percent, respectively, with 23 percent undecided). Among registered voters, Toomey ran ahead of Trump in the southeastern part of the state but behind Trump in the places where Toomey needs to do well.

At the meeting in Mifflin County, and elsewhere, Toomey defended his position on Trump. “I want to see him bring the Republican party together,” he said. He mentioned a couple of encouraging signs, such as Trump’s list of potential Supreme Court nominees, all of them conservative, plus Trump’s selection of Indiana governor Mike Pence as a running mate: “He’s a great choice.” Toomey also suggested that his non-endorsement has paid dividends: “Conservatives withholding support have contributed to these constructive developments. So I think there’s been some progress. I’d like to see more.”

That morning, in the parking lot of the Moore Family Restaurant, David J. McElwee—the gun dealer in a red blazer—talked about what was in the envelope, besides a letter, that he had handed to Toomey a few minutes earlier. “I gave him a TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT bumper sticker,” he said. “I told him it would look good on his RV.”

I followed that RV over the hills and through the valleys of central Pennsylvania. The bumper sticker never went on. **NR**

# Her Wish Is Her Command

*Hillary Clinton’s vacuous philosophy is  
a recipe for coercion*

**BY WILLIAM VOEGELI**

‘H ILLARY, Eleanor Roosevelt would love you.’ Thus, in 2000, did retiring New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan introduce Hillary Clinton as the candidate anointed to be his successor.

While many first ladies exert influence behind the scenes, Eleanor Roosevelt and Hillary Clinton had high public profiles, speaking and writing extensively on the issues of the day, making allies and enemies. One question raised repeatedly during the 1930s was whether Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt shared the same philosophy of government or held significantly different worldviews.

Sixty years later, political observers were asking whether there were fundamental differences between Hillary’s approach to governance and *her* husband’s. Since no other first lady has pursued a political career after leaving the White House, much less secured a nomination that would let her return there by winning a presidential election of her own, the question is even more compelling today.

So, is Clintonism one body of thought, or two? The Clintons’ rhetorical oeuvre makes clear that the best answer is zero. Again and again, for a quarter century, their every attempt to connect and rationalize individual policy proposals culminates in sour nothings, windy declarations as solemn as they are vacuous.

According to one journalistic assessment, the pillars of Thomas Dewey’s failed, hyper-cautious 1948 presidential campaign were: “Agriculture is important. Our rivers are full of fish. You cannot have freedom without liberty. The future lies ahead.” Dewey never actually said any of those things, of course. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, really did say in an economic-policy speech this year, “I believe in an America always moving toward the future.”

This inanity is not a new problem. Consider the two most important speeches the president and the first lady gave in 1993. In his inaugural address, Bill Clinton said, “Each generation of Americans must define what it means to be an American.” Further, “the urgent question of our time is whether we can make change our friend and not our enemy.” Less than three months later, in a speech ostensibly about health-care policy, Hillary Clinton told a bemused University of Texas audience that “we lack meaning in our individual lives and meaning collectively, we lack a sense that our lives are part of some greater effort, that

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we are connected to one another.” Her solution exceeded the responsibilities of a president’s spouse, but then it also exceeded the capacities of any public official, private citizen, or national institution: “Let us be willing to remold society by redefining what it means to be a human being in the 20th century, moving into a new millennium.”

The earnest, incoherent moralism that characterized Clintonism at the outset remains its salient feature. In her recent acceptance speech, Hillary Clinton offered “the words of our Methodist faith” that she had learned as a girl: “Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as ever you can.”

It’s quite impossible to disagree with this credo, which is both its appeal and its fatal flaw. The hard questions, the moral and practical ones that matter, are about *how* to do good, not whether. The pious tautology that it’s good to do good but bad to do bad tells us nothing about choosing between goods when there are trade-offs or conflicts, weighing costs against benefits, comparing short-term attainments with long-term risks, or reckoning second-order effects. It’s useless, in other words, for grappling with every problem that makes our moral and political lives so hard.

The Clintons, to be fair, are not the only Democrats who have resorted to expansive, empty statements of purpose. In the aftermath of Dallas, when Lyndon Johnson was first informed of the late President Kennedy’s desire for a federal anti-poverty initiative, he said, “That’s my kind of program. It will help people.”

In 1979, James Fallows recounted why he had left his job as President Jimmy Carter’s chief speechwriter: “Carter believes fifty things, but no one thing. He holds explicit, thorough positions on every issue under the sun, but he has no large view of the relations between them.” Because “Carter thinks in lists, not arguments,” Fallows wrote, “the only thing that finally gives coherence to the items of his creed is that he happens to believe them all.”

Barack Obama presents a more complicated case, since it is so evident that he both feels a greater need than ordinary politicians—even ordinary presidents—to explain himself and has absolute confidence in his ability to do so. Indeed, the failure of his high-flown efforts in the direction of political philosophy explains why Democrats less audacious and hopeful than he think the prudent course is to throw clichés at the problem.

Charles R. Kesler argued in *I Am the Change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism* (2012) that Obama’s speeches and writings are marked, and wrecked, by the determination to have big things both ways. On one hand, he wants the moral commitment and passion generated by the idealist’s conviction that liberal causes are undeniably, profoundly just. Thus, Obama wrote in *The Audacity of Hope* (2006) that the self-evident truths in the Declaration of Independence “describe not only the foundations of our government but the substance of our common creed.” On the other, he wants American life to exhibit deference and comity, which in his view necessitates “a rejection of absolute truth.” Any such absolutism, Obama said, risks ascribing “infallibility” to “any idea or ideology or theology or ‘ism,’ any tyrannical consistency that might lock future generations into a single, unalterable course.” Obama’s attempt to resolve this contradiction is a shambles. By the end of *Audacity*, he is reduced to discussing how we “pursue our own absolute truths,” as though America

were a nation of individuals living in moral and metaphysical silos. We cannot be certain that any cause is just, he continued, but idealism requires us to act “as if we are certain.”

IT has now been more than a century since progressivism reconfigured American liberalism by discarding the Founding’s commitment to constitutional structures and limits, which were intended to secure inalienable natural rights and sustain government by the consent of the governed. Progressives introduced a new determination to organize and improve modern life by applying, vigorously and if need be forcibly, the insights being uncovered by a clerisy of social scientists. Eleanor Roosevelt, for example, believed that the emergency posed by World War II called for government experts to rationalize every aspect of national life. Three months after Pearl Harbor, she contended that “all of us—men in the services, and men and women at home—should be drafted and told what is the job we are to do.” Only through such regimentation could each of us confidently gain the satisfaction that comes from knowing he was “complying with the wishes and doing the things which those in authority thought should be done.”

The -ism of progressivism is the belief that movement toward a better future is a goal, a right, and the highest imperative. “Progress,” in its most direct, literal sense, simply means getting closer to some objective, one both comprehensible and manifestly superior to the current state of affairs. The early progressives believed that ascertaining and mastering the processes that shaped society and history would move mankind to a better future, just as understanding the natural laws of the physical universe had improved the human condition through steam engines, telegraphs, anesthetics, and other modern marvels.

Liberalism, however, came to regard its faith in progress as untenable. The rejection was, in part, a reaction to historical developments. Complying with the wishes of those in authority lost much of its appeal when the authorities turned out to be men such as Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy, smart fools who provided detailed charts and graphs to justify each augmentation of America’s catastrophic misadventure in Vietnam. At home, liberals came to detest the progressivism of Robert Moses and other power brokers, experts whose idea of urban renewal was to bulldoze any city block that had the temerity to evince charm or social cohesion in ways not part of a government agency’s master plan.

More fundamentally, the liberal rejection of progress has been theoretical. “Relativism rounded on liberalism,” Kesler writes, which created the “crisis” of his book’s subtitle: Liberalism no longer believes in itself. According to historian Andrew Hartman, William James’s famous assertion in *Pragmatism* (1907)—“The true’ . . . is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as ‘the right’ is only the expedient in the way of our behaving”—has come to provide the “air that historians breathe.” The academic Left’s success in imparting that lesson to generations of college students has made “anti-foundationalism,” as they say in the faculty lounge, the air that liberalism breathes. Progress no longer means getting closer to any particular goal, because progressives now insist that our understanding of what it means to progress, to get better, will constantly change, in defiant rejection of any tyrannical

consistency. Who are we to lock future generations, or even our own generation, into a single, unalterable course?

One might suppose that the determination that everything is relative would make today's liberals as tentative in their moral and political judgments as Eleanor Roosevelt-style progressives had been confident. The effect, however, has been exactly the opposite. If all moral dispositions are "values," idiosyncrasies arbitrarily acquired and held, it's more gratifying to assert, "Nobody else's values are better than mine" than to concede, "My values are no better than anyone else's."

Though conservatives find liberal sanctimony insufferable, complaining about it is beside the point. Self-righteousness is the only kind of righteousness liberalism now affords to dedicated idealists pursuing their own "absolute" truths. Values such as social justice, doing all the good you can, or enthusing over that distinct category of government programs meant to help people "represent the consensus position among the most enlightened thinkers," in the words of political scientist James Ceaser. "If enough of these thinkers tell themselves and those who follow them that something is 'true,' then it must be so." If the sole validation of a political opinion is the character of the people who endorse it, the notion that respectable, reasonable people might oppose the liberal project creates intolerable cognitive dissonance. The only resolution is to hold the truth to be self-evident that liberalism's antagonists are all bigoted, greedy, callous, and fanatical. Thus, liberals' eagerness to ascribe conservatism to conservatives' moral and mental defects is more functional than scornful.

INEVITABLY, then, assessments of Hillary Clinton's policy agenda are inextricable from her self-presentation as a politician and a person. Attempting, over 20 years ago, to explain why so many Americans preferred hearing fingernails on a chalkboard to watching the first lady on television, Peggy Noonan cited Mrs. Clinton's "air of apple-cheeked certitude." Noonan discerned in that demeanor not just a policy orientation but the "implicit insistence throughout [Clinton's] career that hers were the politics of moral decency and therefore those who opposed her politics were obviously of a lower moral order."

The Clintons' long effort to convey the key attributes of that moral decency is, as noted, a work in progress that has never *made* any progress. The junkyard of bellowed, didactic banalities that constitute Mrs. Clinton's inventory of pronouncements is not, however, simply a random assortment. Two recurring themes suggest how she understands the larger purpose of her political career.

The first is the determination to secure a better future. In keeping with anti-foundationalism, however, all questions about the attributes that would make one future better than another, or than the present, are left unasked and unanswered. Since liberalism has discarded the idea of a human nature with any particular intrinsic qualities, human flourishing can mean nothing other or more than facilitating the pursuit, by as many people as possible, of as many of their aspirations as possible. Upon ending her 2008 presidential campaign, Clinton said, "I entered this race because I have an old-fashioned conviction that public service is about helping people solve their problems and live their dreams."



ROMAN GENN

The second theme amounts to a sprawling elaboration of the feminist axiom that the personal is political. Its original meaning was that catcalls from construction workers, or the awarding of a coveted promotion to an inferior male co-worker, were not just affronts but consequences flowing directly from the power structures that feminists had to discern and dismantle. The underlying idea was that men and women were so fundamentally similar that the detail of being one or the other should, in a just world, have a negligible impact on how any individual's life unfolds. As an undergraduate at Wellesley in the late 1960s, and then a law student at Yale, Hillary Rodham was certainly well acquainted with this viewpoint. It's hard to believe she didn't share it, at least in part.

In her maturity, however, Mrs. Clinton has drawn heavily on the older, supposedly discredited idea that women are innately, distinctively preoccupied with family cohesion and, above all, children's well-being. On that basis she has asserted, over and over, that the personal is political *and* the political is personal. To care for a child now requires acute, often alarmed, cognizance of the endless list of social and economic conditions that can help or hinder children's development. Citizenship, whether it consists of volunteering for some community-improvement project or voting for candidates dedicated to helping children, is an extension of responsible parenthood. To govern a modern nation, by the same token, requires fully grasping the array of trends and problems besetting families. Public officials must, accordingly, subordinate all other policy concerns to fashioning government responses that meet and master those challenges. As a result, leadership is a kind of parenthood writ large.

Clinton has shown no reluctance about resorting to mawkishness to make this point. In her address to the 1996 Democratic convention that renominated her husband, she said, "I wish we could be sitting around a kitchen table, just us, talking about our hopes and fears about our children's futures," since "our family, like your family, is part of a larger community that can help or hurt our best efforts to raise our child." The speech's conclusion was even more ghoulish: "Sometimes late at night, when I see Chelsea doing her homework or watching TV or talking to a friend on the phone, I think to myself, Her life and the lives of millions of boys and girls will be better because of what all of us are doing together. They will face fewer obstacles and more possibilities."

Hillary Clinton's efforts to synthesize the personal and the political have necessarily entailed synthesizing her own public persona. Plan A, that by virtue of her supposed expertise and intelligence she would be her elected husband's quasi-official copresident, was jettisoned in 1994 after her health-care task force failed even to produce a plan the Democratic Congress would vote on. Plan B was described by journalist Caitlin Flanagan: "Hillary wanted to be seen as warm, spontaneous to the point of being a little bit silly sometimes; someone who always has a wrinkle in her eye whenever children are around."

Mrs. Clinton has largely stuck with this option, building not just a personality but a philosophy upon it, the most ambitious statement being her book *It Takes a Village* (1996). The smaller problem with this choice is that decades of trying to act the part have not diminished Clinton's excruciating inauthenticity. As Flanagan wrote, "there's nothing more uncomfortable than witnessing someone straining to be natural." The more serious

difficulty is that Clinton's approach sentimentalizes the crisis of liberalism while doing nothing to solve it. A passionate concern with how people *are* continues to contradict the detached refusal to be judgmental about what they *do*. A century ago, most Americans lived in small towns—actual villages. The sensibility that formed progressivism was appalled, not impressed. As the novelist E. L. Doctorow once wrote, small-town life was "responsible for one of the raging themes of American literature, the soul-murdering complacency of our provinces." Gopher Prairie, for example, the fictional Minnesota town deplored in Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, is relentlessly judgmental, always ready to condemn any departure from the consensus view about right and wrong ways to raise a child and conduct a life.

Now, few Americans live in such villages. Recognizing this fact, Clinton's book stipulates that the village "can no longer be defined as a place on a map, or a list of people or organizations." Nevertheless, "its essence remains the same: It is the network of values and relationships that support and affect our lives." This expansive redefinition makes it difficult to specify what, if anything, the village is *not*. As she said in her 1996 convention speech, "to raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family." But it also requires teachers, clergy, businesspeople, community leaders, and "those who protect our health and safety." Indeed, "it takes all of us." And "it takes a president."

Twenty years ago, as half of one of the most scrutinized, most mysterious marriages in American political history, Hillary Clinton could do no more than stand by her man and endorse a president she said was necessary to raising happy, healthy, hopeful children. Now she is on the verge of being such a president herself, not only the first female commander-in-chief but, by her own account, the first social worker-in-chief of any description. If elected, she will have more power than ever before to help people solve their problems and live their dreams.

As the late political scientist Jean Bethke Elshtain noted, however, Clinton's amorphous village, indispensable to raising children despite being everywhere yet nowhere, consists of "organizations and initiatives and policies and experts fanning out across the countryside to 'help' people in various ways, whether the people in question have asked for it or not." Elshtain saw Clinton's blithe self-assurance, dangerous to her political cause and to the objects of her solicitude, in the fact that *It Takes a Village* invariably shows the people who have received help responding with "gratitude and appreciation, never irritation or perplexity or 'mind your own business.'" The busybodies of yesteryear's small villages were censorious. But because the credentialed ones in the new global village are therapeutic, the possibility that they will be similarly overbearing or resented seems never to occur to Clinton.

In 2008, Hillary Clinton encouraged the idea that she was running for Bill Clinton's third term. In 2016, she has done more to suggest she is running for Barack Obama's. If elected, however, the result is likely to confirm Daniel Patrick Moynihan's suggestion: Her apotheosis will be to serve President Eleanor Roosevelt's first term. Unlike 1942, 2016 offers no global crisis giving rise to the idea of drafting every American and telling each what to do. Rather, Clinton's success will turn on whether Americans, when assured it is for the abiding need to pursue their dreams and raise their children, are amenable or resistant to complying with the government's wishes and doing the things those in authority think should be done.

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# Our Medicaid Mess

*Spending more and more, getting less and less*

BY OREN CASS

**F**ROM 1975 to 2015, social spending by federal and state governments quadrupled in constant dollars, to more than \$1 trillion. America now spends enough to give every person in poverty more than \$20,000 per year. And yet lamentations for a collapsing safety net are rising in both volume and pitch.

In the past year, an essayist for *The Economist* told of how, after the 1970s, “the welfare state ceased its expansion and began to retreat.” A staff writer for *The Atlantic* warned that the net is “thin and getting thinner,” the *New York Times*’s economics columnist bemoaned a “tightening of the screws,” and *The Week* titled a column “The Grotesque Injustice of Starving 1 Million Unemployed Americans.”

Because of Medicaid, the safety net feels weaker as it grows heavier, exposing bigger gaps even as it spreads. Bad design and political pressure have allowed this one program to dominate our ever-expanding anti-poverty system. Medicaid now accounts for most of what we spend to aid the poor, even though the program aligns badly with the needs of low-income households and offers stunningly little value for its cost. The opportunity to improve support for the poor without increasing spending by reallocating funds from Medicaid to better uses is great.

This should be an obvious area of bipartisan compromise. While the battle rages over total spending levels, all sides should want to maximize the results each tax dollar produces. Instead, virtue is too often measured by who will write the largest check, and questioning Medicaid is equated with callous indifference to the poor.

As is typically the case with misallocated resources, removing distortions and allowing choice would offer a remedy. If the federal government eliminated the incentives that reward Medicaid spending over other anti-poverty strategies and gave flexibility to states, localities, and even individual households to direct anti-poverty resources, the trillion-dollar safety net could accomplish much more than it does now.

**T**HE best way to understand the safety net’s evolution is to track total government spending aimed at low-income households relative to the total number of people in poverty. Social Security and Medicare don’t count, because they are “earned” entitlements paid largely independent of the recipient’s income.

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Of course, not every safety-net dollar reaches someone below the poverty line. But the population in poverty gives us an idea of the level of need in society against which to judge the resources society dedicates to that need. When social spending increases in response to an increasing number of people living in poverty, the safety net has widened but there has been no increase in support per person. When social spending increases faster than does the number of people in poverty, the safety net has thickened and each person can receive more support.

In the past 40 years, the safety net has both widened and thickened dramatically. The population in poverty and the amount of spending per person both doubled; total spending quadrupled. The extraordinary thickening—from \$12,000 per person to \$23,000—consumed a bonanza of resources that should have been sufficient for an effective strategy to help low-income households move out of poverty. Instead, more than 90 percent of the increased spending per person went to health care—almost entirely Medicaid, for which total annual spending rose from \$55 billion to \$568 billion (all figures are in 2015 dollars).

That allocation of resources might make sense if health care were the top priority for low-income households, if it were the keystone of economic opportunity, and if Medicaid delivered it well. None of those things is true. Obviously, low-income households without access to Medicaid would not allocate 90 percent of their own resources to health care, or even 50 percent. In fact, households that consumed \$10,000 to \$20,000 in 2012 and were ineligible for Medicaid or chose not to enroll allocated only 8 percent of their spending to health care. Housing accounted for 42 percent, food for 24 percent, transportation for 10 percent.

Nor did households that consumed slightly more prioritize health care when allocating their additional resources. Households with \$20,000 to \$30,000 of annual consumption spent only 9 percent of their additional funds on health care. This low priority for health care continues further up the income ladder, where it has frustrated implementation of the Affordable Care Act: Even among middle-class households eligible for subsidies to buy their own health insurance, the majority have chosen to remain uninsured.

But might it be that government knows best, wisely allocating funds to health care that low-income households lack the foresight or discipline to allocate well themselves? It would seem not. Studies repeatedly find that Medicaid recipients not only achieve worse outcomes than do people with private insurance, but they also achieve worse outcomes than the uninsured do. In a randomized controlled study in Oregon in 2008, uninsured residents were assigned to receive Medicaid or not; the study concluded that “Medicaid coverage generated no significant improvements in measured physical health outcomes in the first 2 years.” A subsequent analysis found that each dollar of Medicaid spending generated only 20 to 40 cents of value for the recipients based on what they showed a willingness to pay for and how their health was affected.

Critics of the Oregon study complain that it was “underpowered,” meaning that it followed too few individuals for too short a time. (Such concerns were few and far between when the study’s preliminary results hinted at a rosier outcome.) But longer-term studies have corroborated the finding. In April, for instance, Stanford’s Raj Chetty and his colleagues published a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that found no

significant relationship between health-care access and life expectancy for the poor in a given area.

Asked that same month by *Vox*'s Dylan Matthews about the efficacy of public health-care subsidies for low-income households, Jason Furman, chairman of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers, offered three defenses, each less coherent than the last. First, he said, was health: "The Oregon study gave us pretty clear evidence of certain health benefits, both self-reported, how people felt about their health, and in areas like mental health." Fair enough, though defining Medicaid's primary value as helping people feel better about their health is faint praise.

Second, he said, "It's a way to get more money or more resources in the hands of people [who] need it, addressing the inequality that we were talking about before, the progressivity." This is no defense of health-care spending at all. It argues for a generous safety net, but not for emphasizing one type of benefit over another.

Third, Furman made the following, almost incomprehensible statement: "Giving someone a dollar versus giving them insurance. If they really need it, they get a lot more than a dollar and if they didn't, maybe they don't get anything is more valuable even if the average cost is just a dollar than giving someone a dollar." He might mean that insurance coverage with an expected value of one dollar appears wasteful to those who don't get sick, but that one dollar is very valuable to those who do get sick; so, overall, the insurance is worth more than one dollar.

If this is what Furman means, the claim is not correct. Presumably insurance with an expected value of a dollar is worth about the same as a dollar and, given the choice, an individual would rather receive a dollar with which to buy the insurance or anything else than automatically receive the insurance. More important, the argument begs the question. Yes, if the insurance is worth a dollar, then the insurance is as good as a dollar. But the evidence suggests instead that a dollar spent on Medicaid is worth far less to the recipient than a dollar. Under those circumstances, one cannot defend it by suggesting that maybe it is worth a dollar after all.

The missing link in Furman's logic is opportunity cost—what else could a dollar spent on Medicaid have achieved? If Furman is defending Medicaid against outright cuts, not against reallocation to better uses, he begins to make more sense. Something, he believes reasonably, is better than nothing. Yet that reasoning underscores the real flaw of the Oregon study, and of Medicaid boosterism generally, which is that Medicaid gets compared only with no Medicaid. A study that better reflected the trade-off facing policymakers would assign Medicaid to half the participants while giving the other half housing vouchers and wage subsidies of comparable cost, which might promote not only better health but greater economic opportunity as well. Would Medicaid then look like an effective strategy, even for health outcomes alone?

Researchers from the Yale School of Public Health attempted to answer that question by comparing health outcomes in each state to that state's ratio of health-care spending to other social spending. Sure enough, as they explain in the May issue of *Health Affairs*, the states allocating a smaller proportion of their social spending to health care achieved better health outcomes on measures from obesity to mental health to mortality.

None of which suggests that Medicaid should be eliminated. Health care obviously has value and belongs in the suite of government services for the poor. But it is only one support among many, with no special claim to improving health—let alone delivering the economic opportunity that should form the core of an effective anti-poverty strategy. Understanding how this program came to dominate the safety net is the first step toward restoring balance.

THE problem with America's safety net is less that it's an ineffective anti-poverty strategy than that it's no strategy whatsoever. Its major programs were created at different times by different laws, they are run by different agencies with different funding structures, and each new addition is simply piled atop those that came before. Its thickening looks more like an accumulation of random clumps and tangles than careful additions of support.

Medicaid became the center of gravity by an accident of badly designed incentives. The federal government establishes a minimum level of mandatory Medicaid benefits that each state must provide, but it also invites the states to expand from there, providing additional services to additional groups of recipients. Each state must pay a share of these additional costs itself, but for every dollar it spends, it receives matching federal funds—one federal dollar per state dollar for wealthier states, but a ratio as high as five to one for poorer states.

Unsurprisingly, states have responded by massively expanding their Medicaid programs, bringing in the federal dollars. These new programs—which are above and beyond the minimum Medicaid required by federal law—now account for most of Medicaid spending nationwide. Even in those states that refused the optional expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, most Medicaid spending is already optional.

In theory, a state should continue expanding its Medicaid programs until the next dollar it spends produces less than a dollar of value for the recipient (or, given constraints on total spending, less than the dollar could produce if spent otherwise). But a state dollar spent on Medicaid brings with it the value of the matching federal dollar or dollars, too. So a state will act rationally by continuing to expand Medicaid long after its dollar returns less than a dollar, and in most cases even after it returns less than 50 cents.

For instance, a state that receives two federal dollars per Medicaid dollar spent will pursue an expansion that is worth only 40 cents on the dollar, because each dollar it spends will trigger three dollars in total spending and thus \$1.20 of value. This will be the rational choice even if it knows that some other use of the money (unmatched by federal funds) would be twice as valuable. The federal government might also know that the state's allocation is senseless, but it has tied the leash around its own waist and is now along for the ride.

Consider the Oregon experiment in this context—specifically, the finding that additional Medicaid spending yielded approximately 30 cents of value on the dollar for recipients. At that time, Oregon received a federal match of \$2.65 per state dollar spent. So to generate a dollar of spending, the state had to commit only 27 cents. Of course, it expanded Medicaid to the point where each dollar spent yielded only 30

cents in value. And while the rest of the money may not have done much good for the poor, it still sloshed lucratively through the state's medical system.

Checks that might otherwise constrain spending are not present for Medicaid. As an entitlement program, it gets fully funded each year regardless of how high spending goes. (A program such as Section 8 housing vouchers, by contrast, is limited by what Congress appropriates; currently only 25 percent of eligible households receive the benefit.) Meanwhile, the unique emotional salience of health care makes any suggestion of cuts politically perilous.

Perhaps health care has achieved special status because it is a universal worry, and one whose costs can seem imposing even to higher-income Americans. Perhaps, as suggested by a paper published in May in the *American Journal of Political Science*, people across cultures and of varying political views perceive patients as less responsible for their plight than a group such as the unemployed and therefore as more deserving of assistance. Perhaps it comes down to storytelling: The news report of a single transplant denied delivers a harder punch than the one about 50 families living in substandard housing and consigned to hours-long commutes.

## The goal should be to **eliminate the distortions** that channel funds poorly and to remove the barriers that hold misallocations in place.

Those reasons might explain the misallocation of resources, but they don't justify it. Kowtowing to the illogic and to the accompanying accusations that reform will "abuse poor people and particularly black people"—as City University of New York professor David Himmelstein characterized block-grant proposals in a recent CUNY broadcast—only hurts the low-income households that must rely on a less effective safety net as a result.

The key to moving forward is to focus on opportunity cost: the fact that we are accomplishing less than we could. Reallocating money to education, transportation, child care, housing, and wage subsidies will surely do more to alleviate financial distress and will probably improve health outcomes as well. Further, a safety net oriented toward such programs would provide far greater economic opportunity, helping people rise out of poverty and rely less on government support over time.

**M**EDICAID is the largest pool of safety-net resources and the most obviously misallocated one. But it is far from the only one. The same pattern of uncoordinated agencies, distorted incentives, and ineffective programs repeats itself throughout the safety-net programs. And the same kinds of reforms that would allow Medicaid's funds to flow to better uses would undam other areas as well.

The solution is not to cap and cut Medicaid through a traditional block grant or to reassign its dollars to other federal programs. Neither approach lets resources find their best use. Rather, the goal should be to eliminate the distortions that channel funds poorly and to remove the barriers that hold misallocations in place. Stop telling states they get a bigger reward for one use of

funds (health care) than for another; and stop offering other federal funds through a defined set of creaky federal programs on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Safety-net dollars will stretch further when states have the freedom to allocate resources to existing programs or use them for entirely different programs of their own design. No state should be forced down any new path: If you like your current plan, as the saying goes, you can keep it. But states that think they can do better should be encouraged to try.

The most aggressive reform would be a Flex Fund, as I described in these pages in October 2013. Such a fund would consolidate each state's share of federal social spending as a lump sum without strings attached. The federal government would play the role of tax collector and redistribute resources to poorer states, but the day-to-day role of safety-net provider would fall squarely to states and localities. That model should be the long-term goal, but two other, more incremental steps could be a start.

One option, focused on Medicaid specifically, would be new waivers that allow states to repurpose Medicaid dollars not only to other health-care programs (an option available today) but also to other programs entirely. For instance, each state could choose to shift up to 25 percent of its Medicaid funds into an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to subsidize the

earnings of low-income households. President Obama and Speaker Ryan both support an expansion of the EITC that would cost approximately \$6 billion, yet the proposal has stalled over whether to pay for it with a tax increase or with funds taken from another program. Surely all sides can agree that the safety net would be stronger with that expansion in place and Medicaid spending 1 percent lower. If not, could they at least agree to let states make their own choice in the matter and learn from the result?

A second option, offering states wider flexibility, could replace the distortionary matching of Medicaid funds with a "universal match" that rewarded states with a comparable ratio of federal dollars for whatever anti-poverty initiatives they pursued—if a dollar spent on Medicaid earned two federal dollars, so should a dollar spent on child care. (For this reform to be budget-neutral, the ratio's level in each state would have to be lower than its current Medicaid ratio.) The best use of each dollar, not varying ratios of federal largesse to state spending, would define the rational allocation of resources. This mechanism could operate solely within the existing federal programs, or it could apply to matching funds for state-led initiatives as well.

If only half the safety net's increased benefits per person over the past 40 years had gone to health care, instead of more than 90 percent, Medicaid would still be its largest component. But annual spending on other anti-poverty efforts could be \$200 billion higher, enough to provide every household in poverty with options such as child care, a car, a housing voucher, a subsidized job—in other words, a real chance to move out of poverty, not just to survive another year of it. And for those whose most pressing need actually is the health-care access that Medicaid offers? We could still provide that, too.

NR



# The Long View

BY ROB LONG

## OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

THE McLAUGHLIN GROUP  
(CELESTIAL EDITION)

Sunday, August 28, 2016

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Issue One! Gipper Two or Trump Is Through! As polls widen in the swing states, some Trump supporters are urging the Manhattan billionaire to follow the lead of Ronald Reagan's 1980 election strategy and move to appeal to the moderate center of the electorate. Others urge the style of Reagan's 1984 reelection campaign, "Let Trump Be Trump!" What is the correct strategy for the Republican nominee with fewer than 90 days left to go—Reagan 1980 or Reagan 1984, I ask you, President Reagan!

**PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN:** (laughing) John, really. Come on. This is heaven. Give it a rest. Come and have a drink with us.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Incorrect! I ask you the same question, William F. Buckley Jr.!

**WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.:** John, President Reagan and I are going to the sunroom for a cocktail. Stop barking at everyone. And take a look around the place. There aren't that many Jesuits up here. Don't make them regret the one they've allowed in.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** The answer is, 1980!

**PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN:** I actually agree with that. And although the Eleventh Commandment forbids me to speak ill of a fellow Republican, I'd like to say that the fellow down there with the orange whatnot and the hair and so forth—

**WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.:** —isn't actually a Republican, so fire away!

**PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN:** You make a fair point, Bill!

**WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.:** How about that drink?

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Issue Two! Huma Ruma? Huma Abedin, the close associate and right hand to Democratic nominee and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, is under fire for her carelessness with classified information. She is reported to have left top-secret documents on the front seat of her car during a state visit to India. In addition, there have been reports that she interceded in government business in order to help Clinton Foundation donors. Are Huma's days with the candidate numbered? I ask you, syndicated columnist Jack Germond.

**MORT ZUCKERMAN:** I'm available to answer that, by the way.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Mort Zuckerman! Editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report* and publisher of the *New York Daily News*! Why are you here? You are not dead!

**MORT ZUCKERMAN:** No, but I just wanted you and your booker to know that I'm available in any case. I have my own very powerful satellite link and am happy to appear. Just say the word.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Good to know! Jack Germond, is Huma Abedin on the way out?

**JACK GERMOND:** What? Who knows? Stupid question. And let go of my robe.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** You are all mistaken! She is in fact on her way out.

**JACK GERMOND:** I could have sworn I was in heaven.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** You are!

**JACK GERMOND:** Highly unlikely if you're here, too. And I'm not kidding. Let go of my robe.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Issue Three! Iran Up a Big Tab! Revelations this week that the Obama administration did, in fact, pay \$400 million to Iranian officials to secure the release of Americans held in captivity. This after weeks of denying any such deal took place and, in fact, lying about

the entire transaction. Will this scandal finally turn the media against the president they've protected and covered for these past eight years? I ask you, Bob Novak.

**ROBERT NOVAK:** John, once again you've asked a question that no intelligent person needs to ask. Of course not. The liberals in the media will cover for this guy until he's safely appointed the president of Harvard University. It's not Trump who could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and get away with it. It's this guy.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Eleanor?

**ROBERT NOVAK:** She's not here, John. Still alive and kicking and fit as a fiddle.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Clarence?

**ROBERT NOVAK:** Same deal.

**MORT ZUCKERMAN:** Again, happy and willing to appear anytime.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Predictions! On a scale of one to ten, one being utter impossibility and ten being metaphysical certitude, what are the chances that all of us can agree to meet back here every Friday for this roundtable discussion? I ask you, syndicated columnist Jack Germond.

**JACK GERMOND:** Zero. I have a figure-drawing class on Fridays.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** President Ronald Reagan!

**PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN:** Oh, well, John. Gosh. You know I'd love to. But there are things to attend to up here and, well, gosh, Nancy keeps me pretty busy and she's the boss—

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** William F. Buckley Jr.!

**WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.:** I'll say a four. No, a three. I tape *Firing Line* on Fridays, you see. Regrets, etc., etc.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Robert Novak!

**ROBERT NOVAK:** Nine. I'm not busy.

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** The answer is, ten!

**MORT ZUCKERMAN:** So, you don't need me? Are you sure?

**JOHN McLAUGHLIN:** Bye-bye!

## Professions of Privilege

SOME people wake up in the morning and think, “Ah, the promise of coffee and a Danish. A new day awaits!” Some hear the alarm and think, “Capitalism has made us slaves to the alarm clock. I’d better write a story about how we should ban alarm clocks.” The latter type probably writes at *Slate* or *Salon* or *Slaton* or *Salote*, where everyone looks at the world through a murky window smeared with the tears of perpetually peeved progressives. Take L. V. Anderson, who wrote a piece titled “Stop Tweeting Your #Firstsevenjobs: It’s just a way to disguise your privilege.”

To explain: People on Twitter were listing their first seven jobs. Just as a lark. Something to do. It would be harmless, except nothing is harmless. Everything is awful.

It’s helpful when people get scoldy about your Privilege, because it means you can safely disregard anything they say after that. They aren’t listening to what you think you’re saying. They’re translating your words through a matrix that amplifies their willful incomprehension. If you say, “Sorry I’m late, traffic was tough,” they hear, “My economic status permits me to have an individual means of transportation whose expense drains resources away from transit systems that would benefit the poor, and allows me to imagine that my difficulties on the highway are comparable to those of people who must rely on the bus.” As you can imagine, these people are insufferable, but at least the rest of us have the compensation of assuming they are personally unhappy.

The problem, according to Anderson, is this: People listed their jobs but didn’t rip them open to expose the glistening, alabaster-white privilege contained within. You should’ve run them past a professional Privilege Dowser, who can find unearned advantages anywhere. Like this:

“Well, when I was ten, I was a paper boy, and—”

Your family could afford a bike, and newspaper-reading communities are generally more affluent. So that’s two strikes against you.

“Then I was a bag boy at the Piggly Wiggly down the street.”

Down the street? Isn’t that special. Most poor people live in food deserts, where mothers crawl across empty expanses of asphalt towards a shimmering mirage of a head of lettuce. And by using “boy,” do you realize how gendered your vita looks? Did you consider the historic underrepresentation of queer butch teens in the grocery industry? Are you AWARE of the marginalization of women in the bagging sector, because men were supposedly good at spatial arrangement, and running the register was “women’s work”?

“Uh—it was a summer job. I was also a lifeguard—”

Riiight, and there’s nothing problematic about a white male sitting high up on a wood throne looking over a harem, but do go on.

“Okay, well, in college—yes, that sounds pretty privileged, but it was an ag-school branch of the state system, pretty much a cow college.”

A system designed to perpetuate industrial farming and livestock management, reducing crop diversity with Monsanto-patented GMOs and bovine growth hormones, but do go on.

“Yeah, well, I didn’t have financial assistance, and I didn’t want to take out loans, so I took five years to get my B.A., and I worked mostly as a waiter at a Vietnamese restaurant.”

And you didn’t find that troubling.

“No, why? The owner was a cool dude. Came here in ’75.”

It didn’t trouble you that the owner fled a country ruined by American militarism and imperialism, and that you not only suffered no consequences for the Vietnam war but actually profited from it.

“My uncle served in Vietnam and lost an eye.”

The one-eyed uncle is king in a land of people blinded by Dow Chemical munitions. Go on. After college?

“Well, I worked at a parking ramp for a year and tended bar. I wanted to use my accounting-major skills but times were tight, and I ended up managing the bar, then going over to this other restaurant the owner had, and I guess that’s where I really fell in love with the food-service business. So my last job out of the seven is ‘restaurant-chain owner,’ because one day I realized we were selling a lot of chicken burgers and thought that might be an idea for a new kind of restaurant.”

You should be aware of the conditions of commercial-poultry operations. The abuse of undocumented workers. The environmental impact of using millions of gallons of chlorinated water to chill the dead meat. The Islamophobia that prohibits some line workers from observing the requirements of their faith. As with all your other jobs, you don’t see these things, because you’re blinded by your own advantages.

“I’m sorry. Should I not have been a person where I was? Is that the problem? What are your seven jobs?”

Happy you asked. Formed the first Progressive Caucus in high school, and was editor of the newsletter. Ran the incinerator at a Women’s Health Center. Designed websites for the Socialist People’s Worker Party. Handled social media for the Socialist People’s Worker Party Party, a monthly event that incorporated hip-hop and anarcho-trash/punk bands. Did Web design for Guber, a start-up peanut-delivery system—it’s like Uber, except for goobers. Now I write a column for *Slate* about people who anger me because I can just see my dad at the dinner table, saying, “Any of your friends have real jobs?”

“Okay. Cool. Say, that’s only six jobs. You know, Chik’n Burg’r will be hiring soon, and it would be a privilege to have you as an employee.”

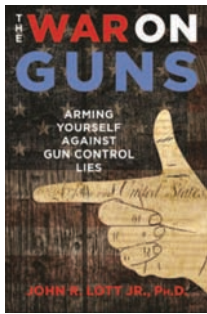
SHUT. UP.

NR

# Books, Arts & Manners

## Target Practice

CHARLES C. W. COOKE



*The War on Guns: Arming Yourself against Gun-Control Lies*, by John R. Lott Jr. (Regnery, 256 pp., \$27.99)

**I**N the course of this God-awful, drink-inspiring, litter-runt of a presidential election, it has become common to hear it said in certain of the Right's more histrionic quarters that conservatism has failed and needs to be burned swiftly to the ground.

As a proposition, this has little to recommend it. One rarely improves upon the prospects of anything by setting fire to it, and, besides, the claim itself has the intractable problem of being false. In fact, conservatism has achieved an enormous amount in the last half century, and, had it been permitted to take the Republican party's reins this year, it could have continued to do so into the future. The presidential veto being what it is, the Right's national role over the last decade or so has been to stand athwart progressivism yelling "Stop." In the states, however—where most of the real governing is done—reform has been relentless and meaningful. Consider, if you will, that both Michigan and Wisconsin are now "right to work" jurisdictions—a development that would have been unthinkable just a few short years ago; consider that more than half of the nation's education systems now boast some form of school-choice program; and consider that the last five years have played backdrop to more than a quarter of all of the state-level abortion regulations enacted into law since

1973. Where they have been able to gain a foothold, Republican officeholders have been busy and they have been effective, and the country as a whole has been improved by their work.

Those who remain skeptical of this defense need not take my word for it. Instead, they might look no further than to the right of the people to keep and bear arms, the swift and deep restoration of which has astonished even the most optimistic of the Second Amendment's many ardent advocates. Thirty years ago, concealed-carry licenses were the playthings of the rich and the connected; now, all 50 states have permitting regimes. Twenty-five years ago, almost half of Americans wanted to ban handguns completely; today, to so much as broach that unlovely idea is to commit instant electoral suicide. In the 1990s, Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford took to the *New York Times* to urge the imposition of more gun control, while President George H. W. Bush publicly left the NRA; today, such maneuvers would be politically unimaginable. The idea of an assault-weapons ban, which once enjoyed the support of 77 percent of the general public, is long gone—perhaps never to return. And, most important of all, the revisionist interpretation of the Second Amendment that had been so cynically picked up within leftward-leaning academic and legal circles lies today in tatters, having been ripped apart not only by Antonin Scalia and his Supreme Court majority, but by a scrupulous group of progressive lawyers who proved unwilling to trade historical truth for political expedience. The "gun-control moment" has passed.

That being so, one could be forgiven for wondering why John R. Lott Jr. has felt the need, in 2016, to write a long and defensive book titled "The War on Guns." Surely, if there is indeed a "war," it is he and his side who are winning it? By rehearsing every argument he can think of, is he not out wandering the poppy-laden fields, bayoneting the last of the wounded?

The answer to these questions is both yes and no. Certainly, Lott and his associates are winning *now*. But there are dark clouds on the far horizon, and they are moving ever closer. Politically, the coming Trumpocalypse is likely to yield a

political landscape that is less favorable to gun-rights champions than has been the status quo. Culturally, it remains the case that pro-Second Amendment news is kept out of the national media and away from the public's ears. And, while they have been all but vanquished in the court of public opinion, America's flush anti-gun outfits have begun to organize and to spend in earnest. Who is to say that 2017 will continue the three-decade trend?

Not Lott, evidently. And so, faced by this trio of threats, he has contrived to pre-empt the coming onslaught—to get his blows in before the next battle has begun. Taken in toto, *The War on Guns* is no less than a nonstop debunking of the most popular and the most abiding of the gun-control movement's talking points. It is not a polemic. It is not a from-the-ground-up argument for self-defense. It is not a historical or explanatory stricture. It's a sustained game of whack-a-mole. Up pops the claim, and in comes the hammer. Bang! Bang! Bang! And that's why you're wrong.

Believe that most academics are in favor of more gun control? Bang, you're wrong. Convinced that extending background checks is a no-brainer? Bang, you're wrong. Outraged that research into "gun violence" is outlawed in the United States? Bang, bang, and bang again. Nothing escapes Lott's gaze: not the idea that American gun violence is unique among the world's nations; not the claim that Australia's harsh restrictions yielded a worthwhile outcome; not the recent hysteria over the prevalence of "mass shootings"; not the fallacious belief that "Stand Your Ground" laws hurt, rather than help, minorities. One by one, Lott examines his opponents' critiques. And, one by one, he addresses them. At his best, he dismantles shoddy and mendacious work with the skill of an experienced surgeon. At his worst, he presents the best possible counter-cases with misplaced confidence. Still, in both cases, the corrective is welcome.

Some of the scams that Lott exposes are indeed extraordinary. We are all accustomed to hearing that "keeping a gun in the home is associated with an increased risk of homicide," Lott notes, and yet few people know just how weak the link is between those two proposi-

tions. And *how*. As Lott records, the most cited study in favor of this theory assumes as part of its methodology “that if someone died from a gun shot, and a gun was owned in the home, . . . it was the gun in the home that killed that person.” But this, to put it politely, is entirely false. In fact, “in only eight of [the] 444 homicide cases” included in the study “was the gun that had been kept in the home the murder weapon.” As Lott concludes trenchantly at the end of his debunking, to claim that guns are killing people in their homes because intruders bring guns into those homes is akin to claiming that hospitals are killing people because dying people are brought there in extremis.

Games such as these are routinely played within the “public-health literature,” the traditional purpose of which is not to establish the truth but to provide anti-gun politicians with snappy sound bites that they can pass off to the public as

line, “Children fight it out in glitzy Las Vegas for a large cash prize.”

“It is hard to debate guns if you don’t know much about the subject,” Lott contends at the beginning of Chapter 10. And, clearly, most people *don’t* know much about the subject. It is for this reason, Lott argues, that the press can get away with conflating “automatic” and “semi-automatic”; with confusing “Stand Your Ground” and self-defense; and with pretending that gun shows are exempt from the usual rules. It is for this reason that politicians sell gun registries as panaceas when nowhere in North America are police able “to point to a single instance of gun registration aiding the investigation of a violent crime.” It is for this reason that so much money is spent in “producing false and misleading information”: because those who produce it “have seen from polls that it makes a difference.” And, ultimately, it is for this

## ‘It is hard to **debate guns** if you don’t know much about the subject,’ John R. Lott Jr. contends.

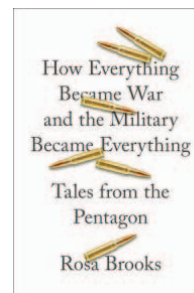
“science.” Lott points to a lovely example of this from the journal *Pediatrics*, which in 2014 published a paper claiming that incidents involving firearms sent 7,391 “children” per year to the hospital and 453 to the morgue. Because these numbers were alarming, the press was quick to jump all over the story—and in the sort of saccharine tones that are reserved for tales of helpless infants and innocent kids. What nobody watching at home knew, however, was that *Pediatrics* had used an extremely broad definition of both “children” and “incidents”—a definition, it turns out, that included anybody under the age of 20 and covered all sorts of behaviors, up to and including assault. In fact, as Lott points out, the vast majority (76 percent) of those included in the “children” category were 17, 18, or 19 years old, and two-thirds of their injuries were sustained as a result of criminal assaults—mostly in urban areas. Which is to say that *Pediatrics* had played a clever rhetorical trick upon its audience and laundered adult crime into bambino sympathy. One wonders what we will hear next on the evening news. Perhaps *Pediatrics* will issue a study on the heavyweight-boxing results, under the dramatic head-

reason that, at what looks like a high point for the Second Amendment, John Lott has written a book such as this one.

For all but the most obsessive follower of the debate, *The War on Guns* will make dry reading; at root, this is a volume about social science and methodologies and little else besides. And yet, despite its wonkish bent, Lott’s work is by no means without value. On the contrary: The book’s subtitle is “Arming Yourself against Gun-Control Lies,” and its author has done precisely that. From time to time, I receive e-mails or letters from neutral or interested readers who want to find the best argument against a given anti-gun meme. Previously, those arguments have been spread across the Internet and the literature, hidden in a thousand different, often hard-to-reach places. Now, thanks to John R. Lott Jr., they exist in one quick-to-access place. Whether one agrees with every single one of his conclusions (I don’t) is beside the point. Discussions need to start from somewhere, and this book is an excellent overture to a more balanced and more honest contest of ideas. Let us hope it is not as urgently necessary as the daily news suggests it may soon prove to be. **NR**

# Mission Creep

MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS



*How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon*, by Rosa Brooks (Simon & Schuster, 448 pp., \$29.95)

**I**N 1992, an Air Force lieutenant colonel named Charles Dunlap published an essay in *Parameters*, the journal of the Army War College. Titled “The Origins of the Coup of 2012,” the article, which Dunlap described as a fictional “darkly imagined excursion into the future,” takes the form of a letter from an officer condemned to death for opposing a military coup that has taken place in the United States. The letter argues that the coup was the result of trends that were already observable in 1992. The condemned letter writer’s thesis is that after years of being handed the tough jobs the rest of the government seemed incapable of handling, the U.S. military, with the acquiescence of the American people and their government, simply took over.

Dunlap’s protagonist writes: “Faced with intractable national problems on one hand, and an energetic and capable military on the other, it can be all too seductive to start viewing the military as a cost-effective solution. We made a terrible mistake when we allowed the armed forces to be diverted from its original purpose.”

*Mr. Owens is the dean of academics at the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C., the editor of Orbis, and the author of US Civil–Military Relations after 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil–Military Bargain.*

Of course, there has been no military coup in America. But in many other respects, Dunlap's essay is amazingly prescient regarding the consequences of the trends he identified, exacerbated by 9/11 a decade later. These consequences are among the subjects of Rosa Brooks's remarkable new book. Echoing Dunlap's doomed author, she writes: "Americans increasingly treat the military as an all-purpose tool for fixing anything that happens to be broken."

Subtitled "Tales from the Pentagon," this interesting work is not exactly a memoir (although the author tells many interesting stories) but rather a reflection on war, the military, and national-security law in our time. On one hand, Brooks's perspective is that of a somewhat amused outsider trying

Brooks begins by introducing the tensions and dilemmas that arise as "war bursts out of its traditional boundaries." She cites *Unrestricted Warfare*, a 1999 book by two Chinese officers that predicted that the battlefield in future war will be everywhere: "The boundaries lying between the two worlds of war and non-war, of military and non-military, will be totally destroyed" in a world of global interconnectedness and omnipresent social media. She then addresses the ways in which the U.S. military has adapted to these new conditions. Here, Brooks offers many useful insights regarding U.S. civil-military relations. She observes that although the U.S. military has been at war for a decade and a half, most Americans know as much about

the Bretton Woods system in an attempt to prevent the conditions that led to the two great wars of the 20th century. She examines how the trickle-down of "war rules" affects all aspects of society, "from policing and immigration policy to courtroom evidentiary rules and governmental commitments to transparency, gradually eroding the foundations of democracy and individual rights." Finally, she suggests some steps to prevent the world from sliding back into chaos and cruelty—by rethinking the military, to make abuses of power less likely.

Brooks is a clear and entertaining writer. Her readers, especially those who know little or nothing about the military, the Pentagon bureaucracy, and human-rights law, will learn a great

## 'Americans increasingly treat the military as an all-purpose tool for fixing anything that happens to be broken,' writes Rosa Brooks.

to make sense of the Pentagon's competing organizational cultures and bureaucracies; on the other, that of an advocate of strict U.S. adherence to international law.

Brooks, a law professor at Georgetown, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, and a columnist for *Foreign Policy*, served from April 2009 to July 2011 as counselor to the undersecretary of defense for policy, Michele Flournoy (who is almost certainly a lock to become secretary of defense if Hillary Clinton wins the 2016 election). During her time at the Pentagon, Brooks also headed a Pentagon office dedicated to rule of law and humanitarian policy. Her previous work for George Soros's Open Society Institute led some conservatives to denounce her Pentagon appointment.

Brooks has an interesting background. The daughter of radical parents, she was raised in the hothouse of anti-war politics but came to appreciate the military as a force that could be utilized on behalf of humanitarian causes, such as ending genocide and enforcing international law on behalf of human rights. Along the way, she married an Army Special Forces officer and spent time as a military wife in Fort Carson, Colo.

the U.S. military as they know about the surface of the moon. At the societal level, the civil-military "gap" that observers identified in the 1990s has only gotten worse. At the level of policy and strategy, civilian and military leaders tend to be distrustful of each other. Civilians often believe that the military leadership is trying to box them in on policy decisions—for example, troop levels in various theaters. Military leaders all too often believe that civilians don't want to hear the advice they are obligated to give. The key to healthy civil-military relations is mutual trust, something that Brooks shows is sorely lacking today. Her observations about U.S. civil-military relations are by far the most interesting part of *How Everything Became War*.

Brooks then takes a look back at how societies have tried to "define, contain, and tame" war. Great cataclysms have often led human beings to try to make war less frequent or costly. The Thirty Years' War led to the Peace of Westphalia, which established state sovereignty as a way of taming the excesses of religious war. World War II led to the creation of international institutions such as the United Nations and

deal. Those who do know about them will nod in agreement as she recounts her adventures. After all, it is not for nothing that the Pentagon is often called the "five-sided puzzle palace." Her sense of humor is quite acute.

Among the strongest parts of the book are her personal stories about her visits to, among other locations, Guantanamo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Uganda, as well as her observations about working in the Pentagon. In contrast, the sections on international and human-rights law—Brooks's legal specialization—tend to be somewhat pedantic and, I believe, fundamentally wrong. She is a sharp critic of the George W. Bush administration's policies, from the invasion of Iraq to its handling of detainees. She expected a change with the election of Barack Obama but was disappointed that he continued many of those policies, and indeed—in the case of unmanned-aircraft strikes—went far beyond his predecessor's actions, proving that it's easier to be president when you're not.

She is particularly hard on the Bush-administration lawyers. She accuses John Yoo, one of the Justice Department lawyers who provided the legal



justification for enhanced interrogation, of unethical behavior: “When Bush-administration lawyers . . . argued that waterboarding and the like didn’t legally constitute torture, they were not simply mistaken about the conclusions warranted by statute, treaty, and case law, they were engaging in illegitimate and unethical forms of legal argumentation, ignoring and selectively misreading various relevant texts in order to reach a predetermined conclusion.”

Brooks uses the same sports metaphor that General Michael Hayden, former director of both the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, does in his recent book *Playing to the Edge: American Intelligence in the Age of Terror*—but their conclusions are different. She accuses the Bush lawyers of “cheating” by crossing the “line,” while Hayden argues that national-security law requires us to get as close to the line as possible without crossing it. We should, he said, “have chalk on our cleats” but not go out of bounds. In Hayden’s view, Yoo’s job was to determine where the line between torture and not-torture lay. Brooks’s view is shaped by a law-enforcement perspective, while the Yoo-Hayden view is informed by a national-security perspective. The main problem with Brooks’s legal perspective is that she takes her bearings from international humanitarian law rather than the Constitution. Superseding the Constitution and American law with a purported international legal consensus is dangerously wrong.

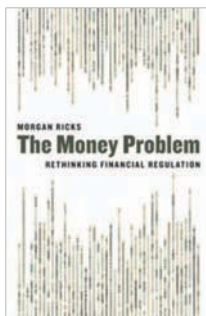
There is a final irony here. If the military has become the “all-purpose tool” that Brooks laments, people like her are largely to blame. She, after all, embraces the use of the military for humanitarian purposes. The military’s resistance to such missions in the early 1990s sparked a civil–military debate that still resonates today.

These reservations aside, Rosa Brooks has written an important and insightful book. As retired Marine general James Mattis has observed about *How War Became Everything*: “It’s as if we have been sleep walking into this new world and Rosa has turned on a flashlight to show what we are doing and where we are going.”

NR

# Cash Value

DAVID BECKWORTH



*The Money Problem: Rethinking Financial Regulation*, by Morgan Ricks (Chicago, 336 pp., \$45)

IT has been almost a decade since the outbreak of the Great Recession, and its causes are still being debated. This uncertainty over why it occurred does not bode well for the prevention of future recessions. Fortunately, former Treasury official Morgan Ricks’s new book provides a fresh take on the crisis that sharpens our understanding of it. It does so by looking at the design of our monetary system and considering its implications for financial stability. This novel approach is useful not only for thinking about the prevention of future recessions, but also for better understanding what exactly money is.

Ricks begins the book by arguing that the reason we still have financial crises is that monetary assets are still susceptible to bank runs. This susceptibility was realized in 2007–08 during a massive bank run that, according to Ricks, triggered the Great Recession. This observation may seem odd to some observers, since there were no bank runs by households and small businesses during this time, of the kind that there had been during the Great Depression. This focus on retail investors, however, overlooks the fact that institutional investors, such as corporate treasurers, pension managers, and money-market-fund managers, *did*

*Mr. Beckworth, formerly an economist at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, is a research fellow at the Mercatus Center.*

run on their banks in 2007. So to truly understand the origins of the crisis, one has to understand this part of the monetary system.

Ricks notes that institutional investors, like retail investors, desire monetary assets that can readily provide purchasing power when needed. Retail investors can turn to checking accounts, savings accounts, time deposits, and money-market accounts provided by their banks. These options are not practical for institutional investors, given the large sums of money with which they transact. Consequently, they turn to such assets as a repurchase agreement (“repo”), asset-backed commercial paper, and euro-dollars issued by large financial firms on Wall Street.

To illustrate how these institutional money assets are similar to retail money assets, it is useful to compare the workings of a checking account with those of a repo. A retail investor, such as an individual who deposits funds into a checking account, has a monetary asset he can quickly turn into purchasing power. From the bank’s perspective, the deposit is a short-term, fixed-value dollar liability.

An institutional investor, such as a corporate treasurer, can similarly put funds into a repo, a short-term loan to a financial firm that typically gets rolled over every night. Since the loan gets rolled over regularly, the investor can quickly turn the repo into purchasing power. It too, then, is effectively a monetary asset for the institutional investor. From the financial firm’s perspective, the repo is a short-term, fixed-value dollar liability.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, bank runs were on retail money assets. During the Great Recession of 2007–09, bank runs were on institutional money assets. In both cases, fears that financial firms would default on their short-term, fixed-value dollar liabilities caused investors to withdraw funds. These pressures forced banks and other financial firms to scale back their money-creating activities. As a result, the money supply tanked and the economy was pushed into a recession.

But one would not know this fact about the Great Recession unless one looked at a broad measure of the money supply that included both retail and institutional money assets. One such measure is the M4 money-supply measurement

# 2016 Post-Election Cruise

**PLEASE JOIN** Victor Davis Hanson, Sheriff David Clarke, Heather Higgins, Steven Hayward, Dinesh D'Souza, Bing West, Jonah Goldberg, Andrew McCarthy, John Podhoretz, Kevin D. Williamson, Neal Freeman, John Yoo, Rich Lowry, James Lileks, Eliana Johnson, Charles C. W. Cooke, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Jim Geraghty, Katherine Timpf, John J. Miller, John Hillen, David French, Reihan Salam, Rob Long, and Charmaine Yoest as we visit Ft. Lauderdale, Half Moon Cay, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, and Key West!

Join us on the *National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise, certain to be the conservative event of the year. Featuring an all-star cast, this affordable trip—prices start at \$1,999 a person (based on double occupancy), and just \$2,699 for a single—will take place November 13–20, 2016, aboard Holland America Line's beautiful MS *Nieuw Amsterdam*.

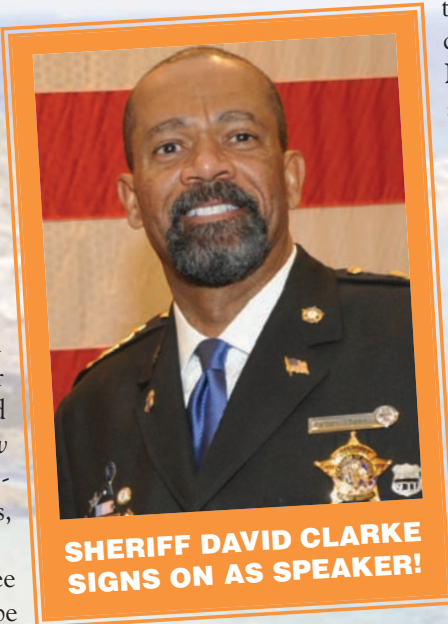
From politics, the elections, the presidency, and domestic policy to economics, national security, and foreign affairs, there's so much to debate and review, and that's precisely what our conservative analysts, writers, and experts will do on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, your luxury getaway for fascinating discussion of events, trends, and the 2016 elections.

We're thrilled to announce: Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke will be joining our terrific line-up of speakers, which will also include historian Victor Davis Hanson, terrorism and defense experts Bing West, Andrew McCarthy, and John Hillen, Independent Women's Forum chairman Heather Higgins, conservative moviemaker Dinesh

D'Souza, best-selling author and policy expert Steven Hayward, pro-life champion Charmaine Yoest, conservative legal expert John Yoo, NRO editor-in-chief Rich Lowry, *Commentary* editor John Podhoretz, former NR Washington Editor and Buckley expert Neal Freeman, NR senior editors Jonah Goldberg, Jay Nordlinger and Ramesh Ponnuru, NR essayists David French, Charles Cooke, Kevin Williamson, and Reihan Salam, NR Washington Editor Eliana Johnson, NR columnists Rob Long and James Lileks, ace political writers Jim Geraghty and John Miller, and culture-scene reporter Kat Timpf.

We're expecting over 400 people to attend. They'll enjoy our exclusive event program, which will include eight scintillating seminars featuring NR's editors and guest speakers; two fun "Night Owl" sessions; three revelrous pool-side cocktail receptions; late-night "smoker" featuring superior H. Upmann cigars (and complimentary cognac); and intimate dining on at least two evenings with a guest speaker.

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**SHERIFF DAVID CLARKE SIGNS ON AS SPEAKER!**

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DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
SUN/Nov. 13	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		4:00PM	evening cocktail reception
MON/Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
TUE/Nov. 15	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
WED/Nov. 16	Georgetown, Grand Cayman	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 17	Cozumel, Mexico	11:00AM	11:00PM	morning seminar late-night Smoker
FRI/Nov. 18	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars "Night Owl" session
SAT/Nov. 19	Key West, FL	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
SUN/Nov. 20	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		Debark

# THE CONSERVATIVE EVENT OF THE YEAR — DON'T MISS IT!

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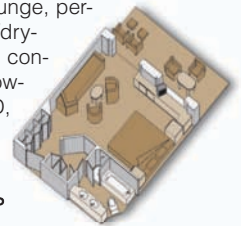
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<b>Categories C to N</b>	17-younger: \$ 567	18-up: \$ 748
<b>Category VC</b>	17-younger: \$ 617	18-up: \$ 798
<b>Categories SS &amp; SA</b>	17-younger: \$ 670	18-up: \$ 851

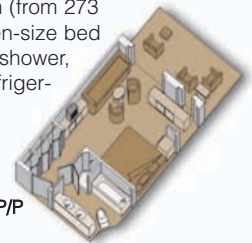
**DELUXE SUITE** Magnificent quarters (from 506 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge, personal concierge, complimentary laundry/dry-cleaning service, large private verandah, convertible king-size bed, whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator,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



**Category SA**

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 4,899 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 7,599</b>

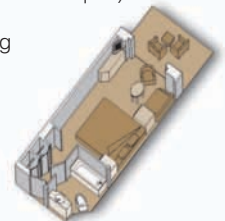
**SUPERIOR SUITE** Grand stateroom (from 273 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe, and much more.



**Category SS**

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 3,799 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 5,999</b>

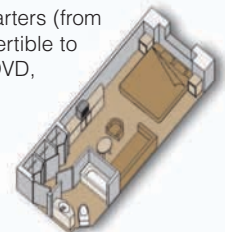
**DELUXE OUTSIDE** Spacious cabin (from 213 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bath/shower, sitting area, mini-bar, TV/DVD, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



**Category VA**

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,899 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 4,299</b>

**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**

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,399 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 3,299</b>

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



**Category J**

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 1,999 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,699</b>





produced by the Center for Financial Stability. During the crisis, it fell more than \$2 trillion. Most observers, however, look at narrow measures such as the M2 money supply, which measures only retail assets. It was relatively stable throughout the crisis. Ricks contends that this outdated view of money not only creates false impressions about the stability of the money supply but also limits the scope of Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation coverage and its ability to prevent bank runs.

One of Ricks's main points is that the threat of systemic financial crisis will continue as long as bank-run-induced falls in the money supply remain possible. He makes a convincing case that pursuing such other fixes as macroprudential regulation, avoiding excessive debt growth, and better management of asset-price growth will not by themselves solve the problem. He also shows that fixes such as going to 100 percent reserve banking or insisting on significantly higher capital requirements might be counterproductive and actually reduce the money supply below its optimal amount.

Ricks proposes a provocative solution that he believes would prevent the disruptive bank runs from wreaking havoc on the money supply. First, he would restrict all monetary-asset creation—or the issuance of short-term, fixed-value liabilities—to properly chartered banks. That would eliminate most of the money creation being done by financial firms for institutional investors. In the M4 money supply, for example, institutional money assets created by this “shadow banking” system are currently about \$6 trillion, compared with roughly \$1.5 trillion in institutional money assets that are created by the federal government (i.e., Treasury bills). This means a sizable number of financial firms in the shadow-banking system would have to become chartered banks or quit issuing short-term, fixed-value liabilities. Though it is not entirely clear in the book, the financial firms' becoming chartered banks seems the most likely outcome under Ricks's plan. (If they got out of the business of issuing these liabilities, the result would be a vast reduction in the money supply.)

Second, Ricks would extend FDIC protection to all these new chartered

banks and thus effectively cover all the M4 money assets. This would arguably stop all bank runs and thereby prevent the collapse of the money supply. Since this would eliminate most, if not all, of the financial-stability concerns, Ricks would also scale down and simplify other banking regulations.

This proposal is controversial, because it would considerably extend the scope of federal insurance coverage. As Ricks notes, however, the bailout of the shadow-banking system during the crisis suggests there already is an implicit government backstop; his proposals would simply make it explicit. Still, they would expand a messy bureaucracy and possibly create new problems. Ricks, however, believes that even this would be preferable to having another systemic financial crisis. He points to the savings-and-loans crisis of the 1980s: It was expensive and

messy, but it did not cause a financial crisis or a recession, because there was deposit insurance.

One question his book does not address is whether better monetary policy could be a solution to the bank panics. The central argument of the book is that runs on money assets lead to banking panics that, in turn, create recessions. Runs on money assets, though, are simply money-demand shocks. Consequently, a monetary policy that better responded to money-demand shocks might be an easier and cleaner fix than expanding the FDIC. The financial panic of 2007–09, however, suggests that implementing this solution might be easier said than done.

Overall, *The Money Problem* makes an important contribution to our understanding of the Great Recession by focusing on the monetary nature of the financial panic. It deserves to be widely read. NR

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## ELEGY TO AN ORANGE IN PHOENIX, OR A MODERN WOMAN

Fooled, briefly, by its own blossom  
Into believing it belongs in the barren  
World it was brought to and has sought to  
Make its own, the winsome  
Thing lifts and cocks its slight heron  
Head through a soft slipknot of  
Dust and loose clay,

And grows, taking warmth into itself  
Certain that the seeds  
It was born with will infallibly root,  
Whatever the soil coating the earthy shelf  
They find themselves (and their needs)  
Upon. It is easy to impute  
Kindness to a warm day.

Ripe fruit is a treasure if it is scarce  
And if warmth passes, but in easy days  
It is merely a change of color.  
The sweet thing falls on sparse  
Need, and lies alone on the clays  
Of a strange land, where rats gnaw her  
Pips and slink away.

Precious poignant thing!  
Like the petulant, matchless rhyme it is  
At the end of a fruitful line—  
Who will catch it gently, this beautiful excess  
Which, like the Plague,  
Now even the swollen rats regret?

—JANE SCHARL

# A Salzburg Sampler

JAY NORDLINGER

*Salzburg, Austria*

**T**HE Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is the resident band of the Salzburg Festival. It spends most of its time in the opera pit. But it gets out onstage now and then, for a concert. One Saturday night, the VPO was led by Zubin Mehta, the famed, veteran conductor.

He is 80. Is that possible? That's what the calendar says. He moves more slowly than before, as he emerges from the wings, and returns to the music. But there's still an air of glamour about him. Even of danger. Handsome devil.

Two seasons ago, I heard him in New York, with this same orchestra. Lord, was he dull. He barely rose above the level of phoning it in. Donald Trump sometimes phones in his interviews—literally. But he is never dull (for better or worse).

In Salzburg, Mehta was infinitely better than in New York.

His concert in the Great Festival Hall began with a short piece by Arvo Pärt, the Estonian—born in 1935, the year before Mehta. This was *Swansong*, adapted from a larger work of Pärt's, *Littlemore Tractus*, which was composed in honor of the Newman bicentennial: the 200th anniversary of John Henry Newman's birth. That celebration took place in 2001.

*Swansong* is gem-like, neatly crafted. It is clear, sweet, sad—and inevitable. It simply unfolds. A conductor does not have to invest it with emotion. The emotion is embedded. Mehta knew this, and brought it forth, or let it be.

Next on the program was a Mahler song-cycle, *Kindertotenlieder*, or *Songs on the Death of Children*. The soloist was Matthias Goerne, the German baritone. Usually, this cycle is sung by a woman. But they do not have exclusive control of it.

Goerne showed the goods that have made him famous: an extraordinarily beautiful voice; extraordinarily beautiful German; long, long breaths. He also showed his assortment of stage mannerisms, which include swaying and self-conducting.

For the first few songs, he demonstrated one of his weaknesses: gilding the lily; laying it on thick. He sang line by line, phrase by phrase. He drowned the sense of the whole. Moreover, you could never forget him and his interpreting. He would not get out of the way, to let you hear the music.

But then he did. He found a mental groove—and the songs did their work.

Two years ago, I interviewed Christa Ludwig, the legendary German mezzo-soprano, and one of the foremost exponents of the *Kindertotenlieder*. She told me something rather surprising. When she was young and childless, she got very emotional in this cycle. One night, in Brussels, she had to leave the stage. "I was crying. I couldn't sing anymore." But when she had a child of her own, she had no such problems in the *Kindertotenlieder*. "I was too sentimental when I didn't have a child. You have not to be sentimental in Mahler. That's it. No, because if it is sentimental, it is not right."

After intermission, Mehta conducted a Bruckner symphony, the Fourth (nicknamed the "Romantic"). He conducted without a score. He has lived with this work for a long, long time. He conducted it with command—a gentle, unobtrusive command. Often, he was relaxed, but not flaccid. And the Vienna players bathed you with their distinct, glowing sound.

At the end, a woman near me let out a gasp—a gasp that indicated, "How can anything be so wonderful?"

Some years ago, I read a writer trying to be hip about Bruckner. He wanted to debunk the traditional view of that composer. With a bit of a sneer, he said, "Bruckner was more than a simple man devoutly writing musical love letters to God." I thought, "I have never heard a better description of Bruckner symphonies: musical love letters to God."

I used that very phrase to title a piece of my own about Bruckner—crediting, if that's the word, that other fellow. Whatever his intentions, he nailed it.

Two nights after the Mehta-VPO concert, the audience filed in to another festival hall: the House for Mozart. Sheep were on the stage. What were they doing there? They turned out to symbolize sacrifice—and not necessarily of the sheepy kind.

Salzburg was presenting a new opera, *The Exterminating Angel*, by the British

composer Thomas Adès. It is based on the 1962 film of the same title. To be most precise, that film is called "El ángel exterminador." Its director is Luis Buñuel, the Spaniard, who was known for surrealism.

Hence, the story. Guests arrive for a dinner party. After a while, they find they cannot leave the room. They are unable to cross the threshold. Why is unclear, even to them—maybe especially to them. In due course, they get hungry, and mad, and murderous, and other very bad things.

In an interview, Adès said that he saw this movie when he was 13 or 14, and "it stayed with me to the point of obsession." He was raised in a surrealistic environment, so to speak. His mother, Dawn, is an art historian, with a specialty in surrealism: Buñuel, Dalí, and the rest.

Listening to some passages in her son's score, I thought, "You can almost hear the clocks melt."

The libretto is in English, and it was fashioned by Tom Cairns, in collaboration with the composer himself. Cairns is an Irishman known primarily as a director: of theater, TV, movies, and opera. He directed *The Exterminating Angel* in Salzburg. Adès conducted the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Salzburg Bach Choir, et al. (He is also a good—a very good—pianist, by the way.)

His score is one of extremes: extreme emotions, extreme dynamics, extreme vocal ranges. Adès is steeped in music and its history, and you can hear influences, or possible influences. Prokofiev, for one. Debussy, for another. There is at least one hammer blow, ferocious, à la Mahler. But Adès is his own man.

The music is nervous and nutty. It depicts confusion, degradation, and hallucination. It is on the edge, and over it. The score includes martial music, love music, a ghoulish lullaby—whatever is necessary to tell the awful tale.

I thought of a word often applied to Berlioz: "phantasmagorical." It also occurred to me that Adès likes to play with death, and is adept at it. Another recent work is *Totentanz*, or *Dance of Death*, a kind of cantata for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and orchestra.

Early on in the opera, a character says, "Strange things are happening." That is an understatement. Later, a bear comes on the scene, and, by that point, this seems practically normal.



A scene from *The Exterminating Angel*, by Thomas Adès

At intermission, I ran into a friend of mine, who is an actor in Hollywood. He said, “I can’t help thinking of *The Twilight Zone*. ‘You are about to enter another dimension. A dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind.’”

What is *The Exterminating Angel* about, really? I think it’s up to the individual audience member to decide. But my best guess is: mesmerism, helplessness, volition. We are in a mental realm (the twilight zone?). In a thousand ways, people all over the world find it impossible to leave the room. They cannot cross the threshold, even though it’s completely unobstructed. They are self-trapped.

The cast in Salzburg was full of excellent singers, including a couple of British veterans: Sir Thomas Allen and Sir John Tomlinson. They were premiering new music, no doubt, in the 1960s. And they are still doing it, in the 2010s.

I have cited one character. Here is another, remarking on the predicament of herself and the other guests: “I find it highly original. I adore anything that deviates from the norm.” To which another guest replies, “Yes, we’ve all

noticed that, Silvia. I don’t like this one bit, but I didn’t say anything because I was too polite.”

Speaking for myself, I would pay good money not to see this opera again. I liked it as much as nightmares. But I recognize its brilliance—and the general brilliance of its composer. Adès can be counted on to write interesting and skillful music, whether it’s for you or me or not.

Later in the same week, not sheep but Yuja Wang occupied the stage of the House for Mozart. The Chinese-born pianist was playing with the Camerata Salzburg, under Lionel Bringuier, a French conductor. She played two works: Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* and Ravel’s *Concerto in G*.

Do you know the story about Gershwin and Ravel? The Tin Pan Alley genius telegrams Ravel over in Paris: “Can I take lessons from you?” Ravel wires back, “How much money did you make last year?” Gershwin answers, “A million dollars.” Ravel asks, “Can I take lessons from *you*?”

Enough of my storytelling. You’ll want to know what Yuja was wearing—

for she is famous, or infamous, for skimpy, scandalous outfits. I have long referred to them as “stripper-wear.” The question was, “Will she tone it down for Salzburg?” And the answer was: “Not on your life.”

She came out in an itty-bitty green number, all sparkly. Along with it came high, high heels. Okay, the *Rhapsody*.

Wang plays this piece well, but not on this night. She missed notes, freely. She improvised, unsuccessfully. She pounded, which is rare for her. In fact, I’m not sure I had ever heard her do it. Worst, she just wasn’t very idiomatic.

After intermission, she returned in a different outfit—same deal, I think, but silver. And she played the Ravel superbly. She was refined, sly, jazzy, French, propulsive—everything. You could argue with her about this or that. I like the long trill at the end of the middle movement slower and sultrier. But this was first-class playing, inarguably.

In an interview two years ago, she said, “I can dress in long skirts when I am 40.” She has eleven years to go. May her Ravel be as good, and her Gershwin match. NR

Film  
**True West**

ROSS DOUTHAT

**F**INALLY, in these torpid August weeks, a good summer movie. One with real movie stars, one grizzled (Jeff Bridges) and one young (Chris Pine), playing real human beings, and doing so without costumes and masks—well, except for the costume of a Texas Ranger and the mask that men put on when they set out to rob a bank.

The movie is *Hell or High Water*. Pine is the robber, Bridges the Ranger, and Ben Foster, doing his usual terrific burn, is the robber's brother, the actual criminal in the family. This detail becomes clear as we watch their first two bank robberies go down: Pine's character is grim and cautious and honorable, his brother is freestyling and having the time of his life. The heists themselves are nothing fancy, no *Ocean's Eleven* or Michael Mann-style capers, just a series of cash grabs at the scattered branches of the Texas Midland Bank, a lender whose vulnerable outposts are scattered across the parched West Texas plains.

Their speed and simplicity, the absence of dumb mistakes (no vault-cracking greed, no packs of bills because those might be marked), makes Bridges's lawman, Marcus Hamilton, suspect that the robbers aren't just tweakers or thrill-seekers, that they actually have a plan. His fellow Ranger, Alberto Parker, whose half-Comanche, half-Mexican background inspires a lively patter of racist humor from Bridges' character, accuses his partner of looking for a last rush of drama before he shuffles into retirement. Which Marcus clearly is, but he isn't wrong about his quarry: There is a plan, and it belongs to Pine's Toby, the brother who was a relatively respectable citizen until recently.

Now, though, his mother is in the grave, and Texas Midland Bank is coming for her land, promising foreclosure unless he can get his hands on some substantial cash. Toby's had a bad run—divorced and distant from his kids, working drilling jobs that keep vanishing out from under him (and everyone else in West Texas, to judge by the boarded-up storefronts in every town they pass through). But he knows a

Chris Pine in *Hell or High Water*

secret about his mother's farmland, one that makes it an inheritance worth keeping—or worth passing on to his sons, to give them the leg up that he and his reckless brother never had. And what better way to keep it in the family than to swipe the necessary money from the very bank that bled his mother dry?

*Hell or High Water* is a newfangled western, but it's also a Great Recession story, in the style of *Breaking Bad*, though without that show's nightmarish moral descent. Toby keeps our sympathy, mostly, and when things go bad it's usually the fault of Foster's Tanner, the brother who knows only the wrong side of the law and whose instinct is always to push, and push, and push again—sometimes charmingly, sometimes boldly, sometimes disastrously, and always with a fatalistic credo: "I never known nobody to get away with *anything*."

The brothers are archetypes, as are their pursuers, and the movie's major themes—the cruelty of American commerce, the West gradually being taken from the kind of man who won it—are not exactly subtle. A small-town witness tells the lawmen that he sat there "long enough to watch a bank get robbed that's been robbing me for years," while a splash of bank-wall graffiti reads like a Trump voter's credo ("three tours in Iraq but no bailout for people like us"). There's a random cowboy driving cattle across the road who shouts about how out of date he feels, and Parker's distinctive ethnic mix is underlined at every turn—his Comanche lineage a reminder of the last lords of these plains and what became of them, his Mexican side a hint of the future coming to replace these Yankee cowboys before long.

But the director, David MacKenzie, and the screenwriter, Taylor Sheridan (who penned last year's border melodrama

*Sicario*), know how to work effectively in a minor key as well. The smaller scenes and details—the kind of grace notes missing from most of Hollywood's major entertainments nowadays—keep the movie's archetypes from thudding: an encounter between Toby and a friendly waitress, the two Rangers talking religion in a motel room while a televangelist preaches on TV, a trip to a T-bone-steak restaurant where the only question is which side you don't want, plus a series of only-in-Texas moments in which civilians caught in the crossfire turn out to be eager to pull their own guns and get involved.

Is the movie itself small? Well, it's tightly focused, basically a four-character drama (Toby's ex-wife and lawyer seem as if they might have had more dialogue in an earlier script draft), without the metaphysical horizons of, say, *No Country for Old Men* or the budget of a typical action blockbuster.

But it has major stars, it's thick with gunfights and never dull, it belongs to a classic American genre . . . so there's no *necessary* reason why it couldn't have rolled out on 3,000 screens and been given the marketing push of a *Ghostbusters* or *Star Trek* or *Jason Bourne*. Except that it's not a sequel or a comic book or a pre-sold property, so it's getting a soft, art-house opening—put it in 500 theaters, hope for good reviews (it's gotten them) and word of mouth and maybe an Oscar nod for Bridges, and declare victory if it makes \$35 million and does well on video-on-demand.

But if everyone who saw the latest Bourne retreat (current gross, \$140 million; quality level, low) went to see *Hell or High Water* instead—well, I won't say that it would change the way Hollywood does business nowadays, because it wouldn't. But in a small way it would make the world a better place. **NR**



# Birth of The Cool



RICHARD BROOKHISER

**F**IFTY years ago this summer, a folk-revival group-turned-rock band had a hit that colonized the airwaves. *All aroun', people lookin' half dead, walkin' on the sidewalk hotter than a match head.* Still true, gentlemen.

Meteorology and media work together to make the days seem even more inhospitable; the thermometer says  $x$ , but the geek, adding factors  $y$  and  $z$ , says the temperature really feels like  $x$  plus 10. *X PLUS 10* screams the weather app and, for oldsters, the front page of the next day's tabloid. But  $x$  is plenty bad. The first Europeans to settle on these shores could not believe the extremes of normal American climate. The cold of winter was more immediately deadly, but summer's heat was enervating, punishing. For centuries, Americans refused to adjust their habits to the new reality; D. W. Brogan, a sympathetic Englishman of the last century, noted that as late as 1925 William Jennings Bryan caused comment by appearing in court during the Scopes trial in shirt sleeves. Now celebrities take nude selfies for slight or no reason. The sun still regards them pitilessly.

Heat is a lagging indicator; the light of the dog days actually has the same slant as the light of April. But moisture in the air makes things fuzzier; clouds pile up in huge high masses. If you look at the flank of a building just right, the reflected blue in the grid of the windows matches the blue of the surrounding sky, giving a 40-story stone hulk the flimsiness of a stage set.

Glass bounces light like boys burn a grasshopper with a lens for sport; asphalt and pavement hold heat. Dogs get picked up, small ones anyway, by kindly masters, or wear socks on their feet; would you walk barefoot on that match head? Buildings block the breezes that city dwellers once counted on for relief, and that can still be caught on riverfronts, or on certain heights. The ubiquitous sidewalk scaffolding traps the fetid humors of the day. You notice, and appreciate, streets with mature trees, or little parks similarly blessed. My daily walk to my gym takes me down a block that is not dangerous or squalid, simply drab and cheap; the Russian souvenir place closed, a taco shop opened. But on these days its procession of locust trees, 20 to 30 years old, makes it seem like Tara.

How do they do it, the helmeted men laying pipe in holes in the ground? The farmers from neighboring states stand-

to the south, the city of his dreams. The city crept north to embrace it; for decades it sat, wedged miserably between a tenement and the church that used it as a rectory. Just the other year it was relocated and refurbished, in time to greet fanboys and -girls of the musical. Three generations after Hamilton, bearded worthies and their wives summered at grand Catskill hotels. Only one is now left; the beards are still there, in the photographs that decorate the dark-wood-paneled hallways. Current guests give them a glance as they pass, then go back to their devices.

Upstate can get hot as blazes, too, of course, but elevation and shade take the edge off. So do thunderstorms, sailing in from the west. Cow meteorologists predict them; lying down means rain. You hear and see the storms, rumbling and flashing, before they arrive. Someone puts a lid on the sky; a hummingbird sits

The thermometer says  $x$ , but the geek, adding factors  $y$  and  $z$ , says **the temperature** really feels like  $x$  plus 10.

ing behind their spreads of peaches and tomatoes? Some don't do it—when some daredevils wanted to play flâneur at the outside tables of my favorite restaurant, the maitresse d' told them to come inside, she wasn't going to ask her staff to serve them out there.

Tastes change. Do city dwellers forsake black? There was a piece in the newspaper about the little black summer dress, so not entirely. But the eye craves white. The dog days encourage dieting and temperance. Four-alarm spices, oddly, are okay (they come from countries where heat is the norm), but not anything that sticks to the ribs. And nothing stronger than spritzers, please. I can make my wife make a face simply by uttering the words cassoulet or Malbec. Casual moviegoers go more faithfully. I saw a documentary on Hieronymus Bosch: 90 minutes of demons anally probing men with bird's heads. No matter: If the theater is cool, hell is outside.

All who can, flee. Two centuries ago the 1 percent discovered Harlem. Alexander Hamilton built himself an elegant little summer house on 30-plus acres, from which he could see the Hudson, Harlem, and East Rivers and, far away

on a witch-hazel branch, under cover. Nothing; will it miss us? Then the trees shake and the rain comes down in sheets. The gutters gargle, there is that leak in the porch roof again. The whole show may last only half an hour or less, and storms in the grip of summer do not clear the air. But they keep things green, which keeps us hopeful.

One of my upstate friends sleeps in his car. He discovered the trick one night while waiting in the cellphone lot at JFK to pick up a belated arrival. My friend has sleep apnea, beds are no longer restful for him. In the hot weather, he drives his car into the woods, on paths he has made for taking out logs. He rolls down the windows and has, he says, a grand time. If he has to relieve himself he uses an old toilet that he found at the dump and has placed, sans plumbing, in a convenient spot. Birds wake him in the morning. If the night air gets chilly (fat chance!), he tucks his arms inside a sweater. A mouse that has taken up residence in the car has been entertaining him, running back and forth above the windshield. Once he woke up to feel it on his chest; he swatted it away.

We cool any way we can.

NR

## Cry Not for *Gawker*

**G**AWKER is dead. And we're all supposed to have gone to pieces over it.

Well it isn't, and I haven't.

*Gawker* isn't dead just because the switch was thrown on the content pump while the \$140 million judgment against it wends its way through appellate courts. We live in a young century that is already on its third *Spider-Man* reboot. I somehow doubt so famous a property—much less such an infamous one—will long lay in repose. The brand of Internet Awful it invented is waxing, not waning, and the unmoored Millennial miserables it caters to are only tightening their grip on the culture.

Notwithstanding that, many in the press have seized on this moment before *Gawker*'s zombie resuscitation to eulogize it. The most common mood seems to be First Amendment-fueled grief cut with plenty of "to be sure"s about the site's poor taste and questionable editorial judgment. This from Trevor Timm, director of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, strikes me as the modal lament:

The Hogan case certainly brings up a lot of tangled questions about the tension between privacy and free speech and it's certainly understandable that many people have found *Gawker*'s decision to publish a clip of Hulk Hogan's sex tape deplorable. (It's also true that *Gawker* did a lot of exemplary investigative journalism.) But condemning a specific story and cheering the demise of a media organization at the hands of the legal system are two very different things.

I'm a big fan of the First Amendment, and I'm a big fan of privacy, and I don't think the *Gawker* case raises any questions—tangled or otherwise—about the tension between the two.

Hulk Hogan (whose real name is Terry Bollea) was filmed, without his consent, having sex. According to the anti-harassment organization Without My Consent, the tort of intrusion has three elements under Florida law: "(1) there must be a private quarter; (2) there must be some physical or electronic intrusion into that private quarter; and (3) the intrusion must be highly offensive to a reasonable person." What happened to Hogan, who was filmed by an acquaintance while a guest in his home, is pretty much *per se* intrusion, and Hogan ultimately settled a lawsuit against said acquaintance on that score.

He sued *Gawker*, which obtained and published the video, on a related tort, covering "the publication of private facts that are offensive; and are not of public concern." *Gawker*'s lawyers argued that Hogan's public boasts about his sex life made it a matter of public concern, which seems to me facially idiotic. But even if you buy it, there is no plausible case for the newsworthiness of publishing the tape itself. Indeed, if *Gawker* had merely obtained the tape, viewed it, and written about its contents, they'd probably still be happily cranking out posts such as "The Worst 100 White Men, Ranked."

A. J. Daulerio, the former publisher at *Gawker* who made the decision to run an edited version of the Hogan tape (and the same man who flippantly replied "Four" when asked in a deposition how young a participant—or victim—in a hypothetical sex tape would have to be for *Gawker* to decide against running it), acknowledged this during the trial. "Mr. Bollea's penis had no news value, did it?" Hogan's attorney Shane Voght asked. "No," Daulerio replied.

The distress over the fact that Hogan's case was bankrolled by the billionaire Peter Thiel strikes me as overcooked, too. In a sanctimonious post entitled "*Gawker* Was Murdered by Gaslight," *Gawker* writer Tom Scocca asks for our pity. "If you want to write stories that might anger a billionaire," he writes, "you need to work for another billionaire yourself, or for a billion-dollar corporation. The law will not protect you. There is no freedom in this world but power and money."

It strikes me that this worry could easily be turned on its head. What about *Gawker*'s many victims without the financial resources to chase a massive media company through the courts? What about, for instance, the Indiana University student who woke up one morning to see *Gawker* had published video of her drunken sexual encounter in a sports-bar restroom—an encounter Daulerio himself later admitted "was possibly rape"? Would media mavens be dropping their monocles if Thiel had bankrolled efforts to seek relief for *her* humiliation?

Look, we should absolutely be worried about "lawfare," about a world in which frivolous litigation is used to intimidate or silence critics. But many states, including Florida, have statutory protections in place against such suits. And in any case, as meticulously noted by Kim Strassel in her recent book *The Intimidation Game*, the real Lord of Lawfare is the State, whose resources make Thiel's look like a rounding error—and who have guns.

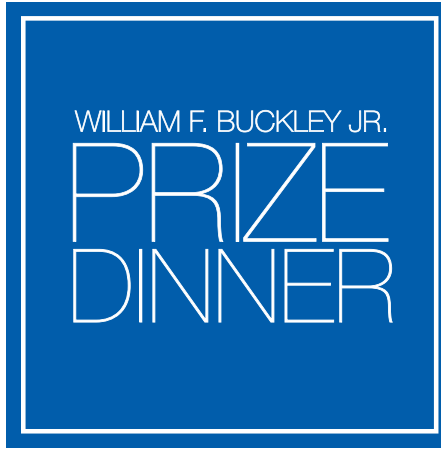
It is possibly true that, alongside its cheap Dadaism and leering nihilism, *Gawker* did, as Timm writes, "exemplary investigative journalism." But it seems superfluous to point out that no piece matching that description led to a successful \$140 million lawsuit. And nothing about the Hogan verdict precludes other outlets from publishing important investigative work—even work that afflicts the comfortable—so long as it doesn't run up against casebook definitions of invasion of privacy.

I suppose I shouldn't close without noting that I made it onto the pages of *Gawker* a few times myself, and never with fellow feeling. Most vividly, I recall being plunked by *Gawker*'s perfectly named Max Read for suggesting there was something creepy about Planned Parenthood sympathizers' hacking the Susan G. Komen Foundation website in response to the latter group's gall at turning off the spigot to the former.

Bizarre is a view of reproductive privacy that considers the dismemberment of fetuses none of our business but marks footage of Hogan's hulk, as it were, a public good. R.I.P. **NR**

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