

LIFE ON THE NR CRUISE  
—Rob Long

DAVID FRENCH ON DAKOTA MEYER

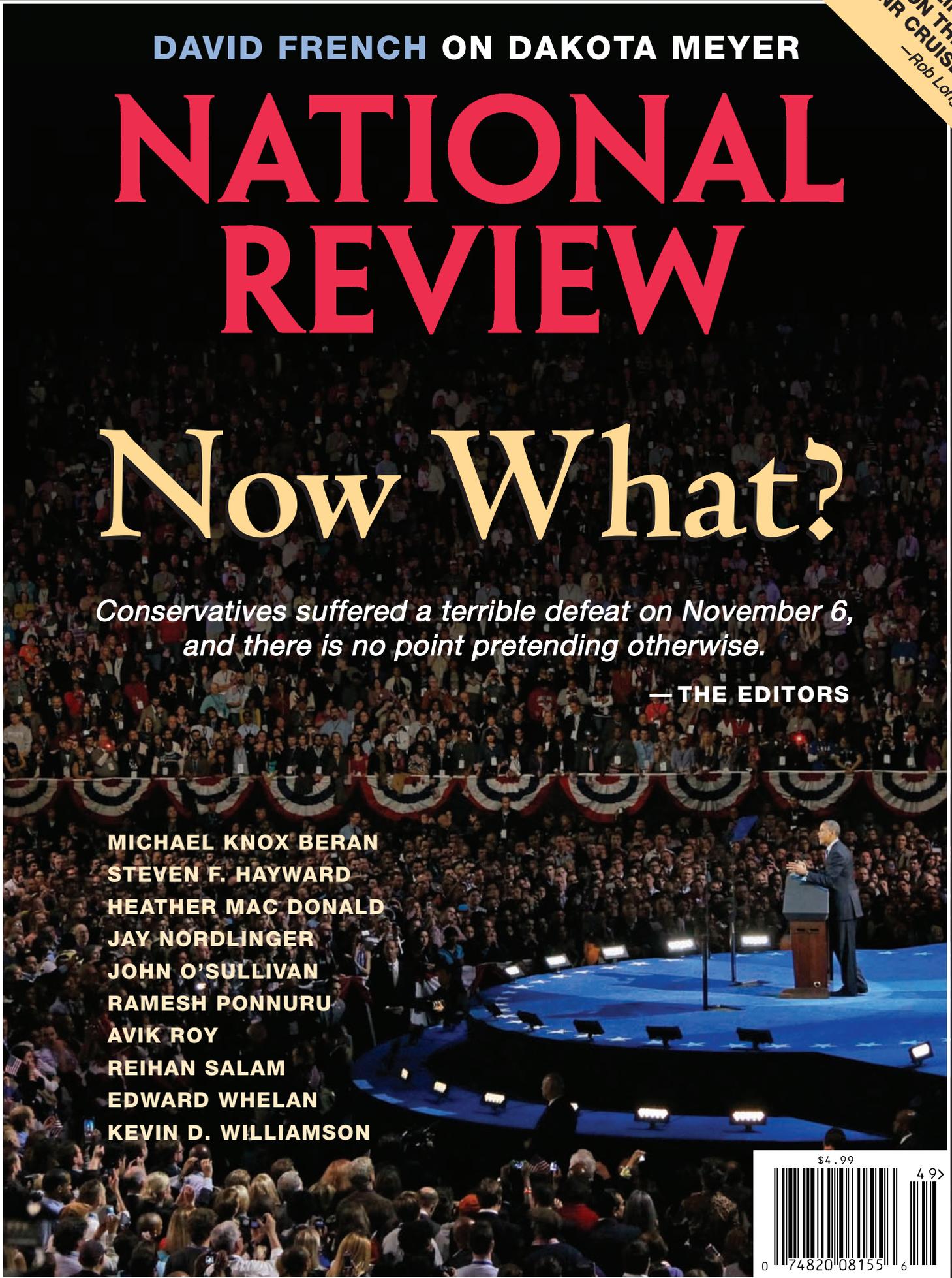
# NATIONAL REVIEW

## Now What?

*Conservatives suffered a terrible defeat on November 6, and there is no point pretending otherwise.*

—THE EDITORS

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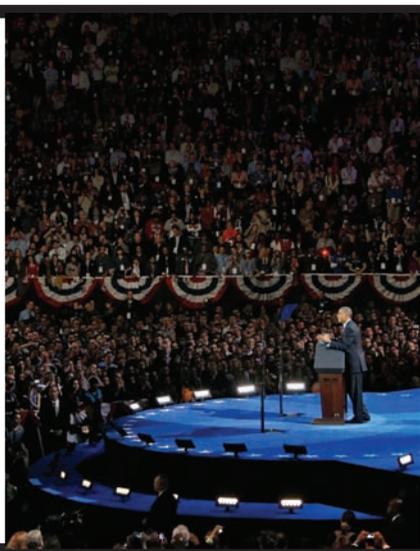


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## The Party's Problem

Republicans have lost the popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections. The most logical explanation for the pattern is that the Republican party is weak—and has been for a long time. *Ramesh Ponnuru*



COVER: CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP PHOTO

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Two Historians

Thank you for articles of great interest on Eugene Genovese ("Up from Leftism," November 14, 2011) and Eric Hobsbawm ("The Tyrants' Historian," October 29, 2012).

It would have been illuminating to compare them in a single article. One used the methods of Marxism to uncover much that had long been hidden about the Old South, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, while the other used Marxist emotionalism and infantilism to defend Stalinism and its crimes and criminals.

During my 38 years on a university faculty of history, I heard more praise of Hobsbawm than of Genovese.



Eugene Genovese

Norman Ravitch  
Savannah, Ga.

Affirmative Action in Action

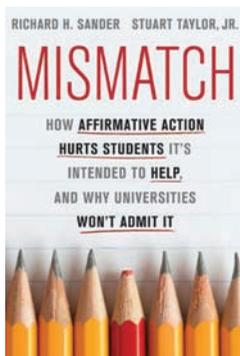
I've just concluded "A Failed Policy" (November 12), Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom's review of the book *Mismatch*, a critique of affirmative action. As a former history instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy, I am intrigued by the review and will be purchasing the book shortly.

The book's authors conclude that policies intended to aid black and Hispanic students in fact "do more harm than good," because they result in students' being admitted to schools for which they are unprepared. I can say from experience that this holds true for the Naval Academy. Professor Bruce Fleming, a tenured English professor at the Naval Academy, has been arguing this case for years, but he has unsurprisingly been dismissed not only within the Navy but also by the wider world of academia.

All service-academy graduates are commissioned officers in their respective services, and they will lead enlisted personnel, perhaps in combat. Unprepared and incompetent service-academy graduates should be a cause of concern for all

Americans, especially parents entrusting their children to recently graduated officers empowered with substantial legal authority.

I'll never forget a midshipman I taught. The midshipman had a combined SAT score of 800: 450 math and 350 English. This individual struggled all semester and could not even cheat effectively: For an assignment on the French Revolution, this person simply Googled "French Revolution" and copied the text at the first link. I failed the student and documented the transgression. But the midshipman was retained.



John Cauthen  
Via e-mail

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



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# The Week

■ At least now, when the president blames the guy in his job four years ago, he'll be right.

■ That was a thumping, make no mistake. A failed president earns another four years; his party cements its hold on the Senate; there will be no legislative repeal of Obamacare, little chance to block left-wing judicial nominees . . . Shall we list the next 20 or 30 bad things Election Day brought us? But cheer up. Liberals will have their own travails (the curse of second terms, the back-loaded weight of their policies). We have lived through worse (the Seventies: the fall of Nixon, the fall of Saigon, bad hair). “A stout heart, a clear conscience, and never despair”—John Quincy Adams to Charles Francis Adams, January 1, 1848.

■ The Benghazi debacle slid into bedroom farce with David Petraeus's resignation as director of the CIA. A week before he was scheduled to testify before Congress, Petraeus stepped down, admitting an affair with Paula Broadwell, his (ahem, over-enthusiastic) biographer. Broadwell was under investigation by the FBI for sending harassing e-mails to another woman who knew Petraeus. There is still much to learn that isn't merely titillating. When did Attorney General Holder—the FBI's boss—know? When did the president? David Petraeus performed prodigies with the Iraq surge; his fall is shameful for him and a shame for his country. But it must not obscure the still-unanswered questions about Benghazi. Why were Ambassador Stevens's requests for increased security ignored? Why, during an hours-long firefight, did the only reinforcements come from Tripoli, not (in force) from Sicily? The press will obsess over the sex scandal, but it will be up to the House, if not the Senate, to dig into the important questions.

■ With taxes set to go up across the board at the start of the year, the politicians are bargaining. Speaker John Boehner says that while he opposes raising tax rates because it would hurt the economy, he is willing to accept a tax reform that raises revenue from high earners if it is coupled with entitlement reform. Some Democrats have talked about letting all the tax rates go up, introducing tax cuts for the middle class alone, and then daring the Republicans to block them. This scenario should not frighten Republicans: The Republican House will surely pass a bill blocking tax increases on anyone, including the middle class. If middle-class taxes go up, voters may well blame the man in the White House, especially since he is part of the party usually associated with higher taxes. Republicans should negotiate in the confidence that they have the power to walk away from the table.

■ One thing Republicans have to do in the wake of the election is step up their technical game. It wasn't just naïfs who believed Dick Morris, who expected a victorious GOP surge; Republican-campaign pollsters themselves thought they were



doing well, or well enough. This myopia covered the popular vote and the swing states, the presidential election and numerous Senate and House races. The pollsters assumed that there would be fewer minority and young voters than in 2008, when in fact the no-shows were working-class whites. Time, evidently, for new pollsters. Another shortfall is cultural: President Obama was mocked for appearing with *The View's* ladies and the Pimp with the Limp (a Miami rapper/DJ), but that's how you reach the public this millennium. James Madison wrote Federalist papers; he also hawked subscriptions for friendly newspapers, spoke in open-air debates, and married a wife who threw great parties for fellow pols. Go, and sulk no more.

■ The election results mean that Obamacare will not be repealed in the next four years. Conservatives should not conclude that it will therefore be a permanent feature of American life. State governments should refuse to establish the exchanges the law envisions: Thanks to a flaw in the law's design, the federal government can establish exchanges itself but cannot legally put its taxes and subsidies into effect without the states' cooperation. (States should also join Oklahoma in its fight to keep the IRS from flouting the law.) Even if the law goes into full effect, its many perversities could require congressional attention. If that happens, Republicans will have major leverage—at least if they offer serious alternative proposals to make insurance affordable, as they should long ago have done.

■ Most American presidents have been well-off, many have been filthy rich, but none like to say so. Wealthy presidents

# Baby Boomers Now Fear Memory Loss More Than Cancer

*Mayo Clinic guidelines detailed in top-selling brain health book may help combat mental decline; reveals natural formula shown to 'help fight memory loss'*

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON –

When do normal, everyday memory problems become a cause for concern? That's a question that crosses the minds of millions of Americans 50 and older, everyday.

According to a MetLife/Harris survey, older Americans are now more concerned about losing their cognitive abilities than they are about cancer, heart disease or stroke.

"There's a dark cloud of uncertainty when it comes to severe memory loss," says America's leading brain expert, Joshua Reynolds. "People are scared and worried."



*Millions of adults are suffering with progressive mental decline, a mind-robbing form of memory loss that can rip apart families and lives. Research has identified measures that may be effective and can be used by anyone.*



Joshua Reynolds

That's why Reynolds is offering adults 50 and older a free bonus supply of the country's top clinically validated memory pill along with a free copy of his enlightening blockbuster, *20/20 Brainpower: 20 Days to a Quicker, Calmer, Sharper Mind*.

His top-selling book contains vital information and easy-to-do proactive measures to help ward off mental decline.

Over the course of a 40-year-long career, Reynolds has done for the human brain what fitness gurus Jack Lalanne and Jane Fonda have done for the body. And he sees big changes ahead.

During his lifetime of research, Reynolds became aware of a common yet easily addressed brain condition that, if left untreated, could have alarming consequences for every adult in America.

## Are Aging Brains Stuck in the Slow Lane?

"We discovered that as your brain ages it can run low on a vital fuel called neurotransmitters," says Reynolds.

"These are like hi-octane additives in gasoline. When the octane drops too low, your car sputters, and loses power. The same thing happens to the brain." "If you're over the age of 45, and experiencing symptoms like mental fatigue and sluggishness, poor concentration, and frequent forgetfulness, says Reynolds, there's a good chance your brain needs a neurotransmitter boost."

A few years ago, Reynolds and a team of scientists began looking for a safe, drug-free way to oxygenate aging brains and replenish sagging levels of neurotransmitters, the brain fuel that's crucial for thinking, focus and memory.

He identified three natural extracts with a long history of safe use that have a 'powerful effect' on aging brains: acetyl-L-carnitine, huperzine, and vinpocetine.

## Memory Molecules

Using precise amounts and ratios of these "three miracle memory molecules," Reynolds' team at Brain Research Labs created Procera AVH, a unique health formula for the human brain.

Reynolds' formula has been called, "a breath of fresh air for aging brains." For professional speaker Sylvia P.

that 'breath of fresh air' came none too soon.

"I started having a hard time staying focused and remembering important information. As a professional speaker in front of hundreds of people, I found it very embarrassing. Plus, it was threatening my career. Since taking Procea AVH, I can now conduct a whole seminar without relying on my notes. I feel like my old self again!"

Reynolds selected one of the leading neuro-cognitive research labs in the world, Brain Sciences Institute, to conduct a clinical study on his formula.

## Match The Memory of Those 10 – 15 Years Younger!

The results stunned the researchers. His formula not only helped improve memory and mental clarity, but also helped users recall like the group 15 years younger. "To a tired, sluggish mind, Procera AVH is the equivalent of splashing ice-cold water on your face," says Reynolds.

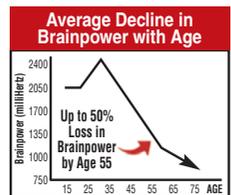


*More people are turning back the clock and living fuller lives by being pro-active with their brain's health and performance.*

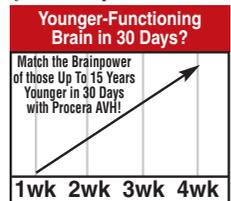
"Neurotransmitters can drop off radically after age of 40. With low levels, your brain lacks sharpness. Pick them up and your brain snaps back awake and alert. Memory improves, and you regain the ability to concentrate."

Users say the effects are like putting on a pair of prescription glasses for the very first time. Everything becomes clear and focused.

Kasey L. of Kansas agrees. "I was having trouble finding words in my brain and remembering things. Now I am as sharp as a tack and I have a memory like an elephant. I will never stop taking it."



*By age 55, the average person loses up to 50% of their brainpower.*



*In a university clinical study Procera AVH was shown to help improve memory to the levels of those up to 15 years younger, effectively increasing a 50-year-old's brainpower to that of a 35-year-old!*

Reynolds' formula seems to help improve a broad range of cognitive capacities, including memory, mental clarity and even promoting a sense of calm and tranquility.

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In a tough economy, many users like the competitive edge that Procera AVH can provide.

After working high energy, high stress positions for 30 years, Sherry W. started her own business. "Keeping up with everything was very hectic," says Sherry.

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Others appreciate Procera AVH's ability to stimulate an

invigorating surge of natural alertness. Roger J. flies commercial jets for a major US airline. "Many of my trips are all-nighters or 'red-eye' flights. I find Procera AVH gives me greater mental energy throughout the flight."

Of course, the mental alertness and focus from taking Procera AVH may offer a feeling of confidence and security to anyone with the safety of others in their hands.

## Get a FREE Bonus Supply!

Plus, a FREE Book, Too! Try Procera AVH Risk-Free today and receive a Free Bonus Supply along with a free copy of Reynolds' medically acclaimed book, *20/20 Brainpower: 20 Days to A Quicker, Calmer, Sharper Mind!*, a \$20 value. Procera AVH is clinically shown to improve memory, mood and mental clarity! And it comes with a 90-day satisfaction guarantee so you can experience the long-term results risk-free, too!

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Reynolds is also including, with the first 500 orders, a FREE supply of his powerful brain detox formula, Ceraplex, scientifically designed to help flush away environmental toxins from the brain to help enhance memory and focus even further. This is a special introductory offer and supplies are limited, so call now.

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**BEFORE** **AFTER**

**Illustration**

*Match the Brainpower of those Up To 15 Years Younger in 30 Days with Procera AVH!*

have hid their silver spoons in various ways. Some used military service: James Monroe (Trenton), Zachary Taylor (Buena Vista), TR (San Juan Hill), JFK (PT-109). Some lied: William Henry Harrison's supporters said he lived in a log cabin (he actually had a comfortable Ohio estate). Mitt Romney wouldn't lie, nor could he. His biography and his C.V. were dramatically plain: He was a rich man's son who had made his own fortune; indeed his business competence was one of his main selling points as a potential chief executive. The cult of the common man enables its own deceptions—what is so common about career Beltway hacks?—but it seems to be inseparable from the democratic model, and it has produced enough good men not to have disgraced that model. Mitt Romney was a good man laboring under a great weight.



■ Four states approved same-sex marriage by referendum—the first time any state had done so—albeit by narrow margins and in blue states. Public opinion has been moving rapidly in favor of the idea. It's still not a good one. The only good reason for public policy to take an interest in marriage is that the institution channels the behavior that creates children into

■ Voters in Colorado and Washington approved ballot measures that legalized marijuana for recreational use, making them the first two states in the country to do so and putting them on a collision course with the feds. Notwithstanding his past with the “Choom Gang,” Barack Obama has been something of a drug warrior, taking on the 16 states in which medical marijuana is legal and describing dispensaries as “drug kingpins and cartels.” No sooner were the returns in from the two votes than federal officials had announced plans to fight back. “This is a symbolic victory for [legalization] advocates, but it will be short-lived,” Kevin Sabet, a former adviser to the Obama administration’s “drug czar,” told curious reporters. Congress should revisit federal law with attention to the message sent by the voters of two states: “Dude, relax.”

■ Proponents of school choice celebrated a pair of victories on Election Night. In Washington State, an initiative to allow the creation of up to 40 charter schools passed by a slim margin. Washington is one of nine states without charter schools, and measures to allow them had been rejected three times since 1996. Georgia voters resoundingly approved a measure allowing the creation of a state commission to authorize charter schools, breaking the stranglehold that union-controlled local school boards currently have on the approval process. The

## Conservatives should continue to resist judicial attempts to force governments to accept the new progressive definition of marriage, and to make the case for marriage properly understood.

responsible child-rearing. (Channels it imperfectly, of course, and more and more imperfectly in recent decades.) We have already moved too far away from that understanding of marriage, and same-sex marriage moves us farther. The shift in opinion makes a federal constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman a pipe dream. Conservatives should, however, continue to resist judicial attempts to force governments to accept the new progressive definition of marriage, to defend the rights of the dissenters from the new orthodoxy, and to make the case, both firmly and charitably, for marriage properly understood.

■ The voters of Massachusetts narrowly rejected a ballot initiative to legalize physician-assisted suicide. Proponents of the measure, which would have allowed doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to patients diagnosed as terminally ill, argued that individuals should be able to choose “death with dignity.” A coalition of disability-rights groups, medical professionals, and religious leaders pointed out that it is almost impossible to ensure that such a choice would be free from coercion, and that allowing doctors to help their patients end their lives turns the Hippocratic Oath on its head. Sean Cardinal O’Malley expressed the hope that “the citizens of the commonwealth will not be seduced by the language ‘dignity, mercy, compassion,’ which [is] used to disguise the sheer brutality of helping someone to kill themselves.” That they were not was a hopeful sign in a bleak election season.

teachers’ unions continue to make the case that their opposition to educational choice is “for the children,” but it seems that parents increasingly see who it’s really for.

■ Asked during a debate about whether abortion should be banned in cases of rape, the Republican Senate candidate for Indiana, Richard Mourdock, did not reply that the issue is almost entirely academic, or stress that we should work against the 98 percent of abortions that take place for other reasons before debating these cases. Instead he said that when women become pregnant as a result of rape, it is God’s will that the babies be born. It was bad enough that his answer highlighted an issue where most people strongly disagree with his view; worse that it could easily be distorted into the claim that Mourdock thinks that rape is sometimes God’s will. The resulting controversy, late in the campaign, sank Mourdock. The Democratic candidate won the seat. After the Todd Akin flap, Mourdock should have known to weigh any words in the vicinity of “rape” carefully. It’s still good advice for pro-lifers going forward.

■ Was it really less than two years ago that President Obama looked down from his lectern in the House chamber and scolded the justices of the Supreme Court for ruling, in *Citizens United v. F.E.C.*, to “open the floodgates” and allow elections to be “bankrolled by America’s most powerful interests”? It seems a different age. All the “dark money” (why not cut to the chase and call it “evil money” next time around?) of the mighty con-

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servative PACs and crusading millionaires has been discharged, without result. The Obama campaign, the Democratic party, and Priorities USA outtraised their Republican counterparts and outspent them by some \$100 million. The president's fund-raising machinery was terrible to behold. Relentless and unbound by tact, it emblazoned the slogans and signifiers of the Obama brand on every bit of mass-producible material culture with a printable surface. It insinuated itself, with open palms, into wedding registries and graduation parties and estate planings. Worst of all, it worked. The corrosive influence of money in politics, indeed.

■ Except for the Bronx, New York City is a collection of islands—Manhattan, Staten Island, western Long Island (Brooklyn and Queens), and a few more in the harbor and along the Atlantic shore. Every low-lying tract was hammered by Hurricane Sandy; much of what wasn't flooded was plunged into darkness by power failures. So how did Mayor

Michael Bloomberg do? He gave incoherent and inaccurate warnings on Saturday, two days before landfall, saying there would be a gradual storm surge (there is no such thing—surges begin slowly, then always speed up); he delayed an evacuation order until late Sunday morning; he proposed to hold the New York City Marathon six days after the hurricane hit, until the protests of cold, hungry, and homeless New Yorkers, and of embarrassed marathoners themselves, made him recant. Bloomberg is the typical big-city big-government mayor: He can insert himself in photo-ops and beg for after-the-fact hand-outs; otherwise he hectors his constituents about cigarettes and Big Gulps. One more year, then good riddance.

■ The case for being worried about climate change, formerly known as global warming, begins with the unobjectionable and escalates to the absurd. The least plausible claim is that specific events, such as the damage inflicted by Hurricane Sandy, are attributable to specific U.S. public-policy decisions. That this

## Smiling Through the 2012 Nakba

I KNOW I've told this story somewhere in NR's pages before, perhaps even in this space. But I'll tell it again. A friend of mine lived in Costa Rica for a while. While there, she went to the movies. She saw the first *Wayne's World* movie in English, but with Spanish subtitles. Fluent in both languages, she liked following the translated dialogue. In one scene, Wayne (played by Mike Myers) says, "Yeah, when monkeys fly out of my butt!"

The translation on the bottom of the screen? "Yes, when Judgment Day comes."

In short, something was lost in translation.

This was Mitt Romney's problem in a nutshell. Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to shovel all of the blame onto Mitt Romney for what shall henceforth be known as the conservative nakba (an Arabic term meaning "disaster" or "calamity," usually used in the Middle East to describe Israel's creation in 1948).

But there's no escaping the fact that "candidates matter." I put that phrase in quotation marks because it is already gelling into a kind-hearted euphemism among conservative pundits for "Romney was a bad candidate." Indeed, a LexisNexis search reveals that I was the first person to point out that Romney speaks conservatism as a second language. He's a smart and decent man—smarter and more decent than yours truly or most people you'll ever meet. Nonetheless, he came to conservatism very late. It is axiomatic: The man who ran to Ted Kennedy's left on the issue of abortion in Massachusetts was not a lifelong conservative.

That in itself isn't damning. Ronald Reagan was a relatively late convert to conservatism (as were a great

many of the first editors of this magazine). But Reagan came to conservatism organically, and he learned to speak its language both through immersion and through conviction. He was also, in the best sense of the word, a great politician.

Mitt Romney, meanwhile, seemed to learn the language by rote, memorizing phrases the way a committed tourist studies a Berlitz phrasebook on the flight across the pond. Add in the man's utterly authentic stiffness and you can see

where his "47 percent" comments came from. At the Conservative Political Action Conference, he told the audience he was "severely conservative"—a phrase that not even severe conservatives have ever thought to use.

Conservatism, and the Republican party it largely controls, faces deep and complicated challenges, to be sure. There are myriad debates to be had over policy, philosophy, branding, what have you. As I write this, there's a

lot of chatter about how Republicans should find some grand bargain on immigration to put the issue behind us. I would like that myself, if it were possible. It vexes me no end that the Left has managed to co-opt the immigrant success story as one of its talking points. But even if some grand amnesty worked beyond our wildest dreams, there's little evidence that Hispanics would suddenly become Republicans. That still takes persuasion. And the plain truth is that voters won't buy even the best conservative ideas if the guy hawking them doesn't speak the language—in English or Spanish. It won't happen if he keeps talking until Judgment Day, or even until monkeys fly out of his butt, whichever comes first.

—JONAH GOLDBERG





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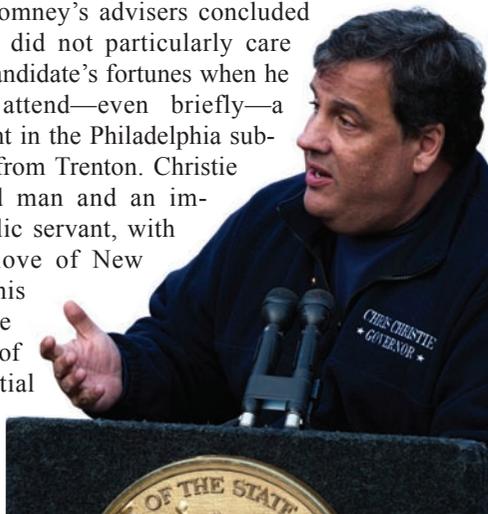
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assertion stands in contravention of the best scientific analysis has not stopped the most unhinged climate alarmists from making it. The more reasonable argument holds that warmer oceans lead to more-intense hurricanes and other extreme weather events. But Sandy was not an unusually powerful hurricane—it inflicted so much damage because it arrived at the confluence of a nor’easter and a high-pressure system and plowed into densely populated urban areas at high tide. In fact, the arrival of powerful hurricanes on our shores is somewhat diminished of late: The last Category 3 hurricane to make landfall was seven years ago, the longest such interval in a century. As Professor Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado points out, 1954–55 saw three back-to-back hurricanes more destructive than Sandy—two in the same month—crashing onto our shores. As so often, the science is complex while the politics are simpleminded. Global-warming hysteria is a fashion, and it is exciting to some people. It would not be accurate to say that it serves no one, but Al Gore’s fortune is not in obvious need of supplementation, and we did not believe Barack Obama’s promise of halting the oceans’ rise the first time around.

■ Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey will spend a long time trying to live down his post-hurricane embrace of President Obama. It was one thing for the governor to welcome the president to his state in the wake of a natural disaster. It was another to praise him fulsomely in the waning days of a hard-fought presidential campaign. Romney’s advisers concluded that Christie did not particularly care about their candidate’s fortunes when he refused to attend—even briefly—a Romney event in the Philadelphia suburbs not far from Trenton. Christie is a talented man and an impressive public servant, with an abiding love of New Jersey, but his choices in the waning days of the presidential campaign will not soon be forgotten.



■ At 3 A.M. on Election Night, MSNBC host Chris Matthews said, of Hurricane Sandy, “I’m so glad we had that storm last week.” When co-host Rachel Maddow gasped, Matthews added: “Not in terms of hurting people. The storm brought in possibilities for good politics,” whereupon Maddow did a prompt outro. The next night a refreshed and rested Matthews apologized: “It was a terrible thing to say, period. I can say it was because I was tired but the fact is I wasn’t thinking of the horrible mess this storm has made of people’s lives.” Matthews apologized because he is basically a decent man. But there is also professional competence to consider. Matthews has been in journalism for a quarter of a century. Journalists were once drilled never to say certain things (e.g., of casualties, however

unexpectedly low, that there were “only” so many). Maybe Matthews needs a much longer rest—say, from here on out.

■ When Hurricane Sandy hit and the power went out, Occupy rejoiced. On Twitter, the outfit gleefully wrote: “No subways. No electricity. No chains.” Somewhere, the Earl of Shaftesbury smiled at Hobbes. The return-to-Eden instincts of the Occupy movement’s would-be savages synthesize the penchant for aimless revolution explored so graphically in the most recent *Batman* movie and the heady disdain for the modern world best expressed by Paul Ehrlich. Occupy types may disdain electricity—and take to the Internet to do it, no less—but the millions to whom modernity has brought heat and light and transportation do not have such luxuries. Indeed, one can only presume that “No hospitals. No water purification. No air-traffic control. No chains” didn’t quite have the same ring to it.

■ House majority leader Eric Cantor, inspired in part by our own Ramesh Ponnuru’s recent article on President Obama’s lawlessness, compiled a grim list of the president’s acts of dubious legality. The pattern that emerges from his report is of a president who rewrites laws to suit an ideological agenda, and in many cases does not even bother to advance any argument that he has the legal authority to do so. Reelected, and continuing to face a Republican House, he will surely continue in the same vein. Hide the women, children, and constitutional lawyers.

■ Remember that cute hippieish girl who stood in front of the arts building seeking contributions for Amnesty International? Oh, come on, you remember her. Now, did you know that she won a Nobel Peace Prize? Well, sort of: AI won the prize in 1977, and she was involved with AI, so she earned the right to call herself a Nobel Prize winner. Sound far-fetched? No more so than the climate scientist Michael Mann’s claim, put forth in a press release and a lawsuit against NR (more about that in due course), to have been “awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.” You see, the International Panel on Climate Change won the prize in 2007, and Mann, who devised the “hockey stick” global-warming graph, reviewed some papers for the IPCC that year. So he gets a participation certificate! Unfortunately for him, the Nobel Prize committee says categorically that Michael Mann has never won a Nobel Prize. We’re not surprised to learn that Professor Mann is not exactly a stickler for accuracy.

■ The troubled Anglican Communion will soon have a new leader. The Right Reverend Justin Welby, currently bishop of Durham, will take office as archbishop of Canterbury in March 2013, succeeding Rowan Williams, whose unfortunate excursions into left-wing politics have caused much heartburn to conservatives both in England and abroad. On strictly religious matters, Welby is from the Church of England’s evangelical (as opposed to high-church) wing. On the current hot-button issues, he is a something of a mixed bag (or, perhaps more



appropriately in this context, a curate's egg): against same-sex marriage, in favor of women bishops. He inherits a global Communion that is ferociously divided on these and other issues—always seemingly on the brink of schism, never quite getting there. We wish him well; as Americans, we find the idea of a “Dr. Welby” being in charge during a tough situation rather reassuring.

■ After winning power this spring, French president François Hollande and his Socialist party began enacting a standard left-wing fiscal package, including 75 percent income-tax rates on the rich, an expanded wealth tax, and even a heavy new tax on beer. But now *liberté*, *fraternité*, and *égalité* have been joined by *réalité*, as both the IMF and a panel appointed by Hollande's own party have warned that high taxes are severely reducing the competitiveness of French industry. In response, Hollande has announced a plan to slash payroll taxes (which can make companies reluctant to hire new employees). It took Hollande and his fellow Socialists only half a year to figure out that excessive taxation is a severe drag on the economy. What's Obama's excuse?

■ Now cracks a less-than-noble effort: A tax on saturated fats in Denmark has been repealed by that country's center-left government. The levy of 16 kroner per kilogram of fats was having little effect on eating habits, and drove consumers across the border to make their sinful purchases. Prices of basic foods, including butter, cheese, and cream, substantially increased; perhaps most appallingly, the nation's largest dairy producer noted that Danish consumers were resorting to lower-quality cheeses. The law's repeal will put an end to one other odd occurrence: shoppers' traveling to Sweden for the lower taxes and cheaper prices.



■ It seems that Paul Revere's apocryphal cry of “The British are coming!” was a popular one. An analysis, published in September, showed that, at one point or another, the British invaded almost 90 percent of the world's countries, with only 22 countries escaping a visit. Only a few of the invaded states were ever officially a part of the Empire, with the remainder being subjected to military presence, threat of force, or sponsored piracy. “Other countries could write similar books,” the author drily quipped, “but they would be much shorter. I don't think anyone could match this, although the Americans had a later start and have been working hard on it in the twentieth century.” With the exception of Sweden and Vatican City, many of the nations that escaped British attention could perhaps have benefited from an invasion—or at least from losing a war or two. “The real trick,” as an Italian character in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* says, “lies in losing wars, in knowing which wars can be lost. Italy has been losing wars for centuries, and just see how splendidly we've done nonetheless.” Come to think of it, that may be the strategic insight behind Obama's defense budget.

■ Religious liberty scored a win when the Israeli government approved *aliya*, or immigration to Israel, for 275 members of the Bnei Menashe, a community of about 7,000 in northeastern India. The Bnei Menashe (Hebrew for “children of Manasseh”) claim descent from one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. In the past two decades, about 1,700 of them have settled in what they

regard as their ancestral home, but the move has been controversial in both India and Israel, and the flow of Bnei Menashe into Gaza and the West Bank has been constricted since 2007. Now their advocates, who include prominent rabbis, expect the entire community to settle in Israel eventually, in increments. Some researchers dispute the historicity of the community's belief that their ancestors were expelled from the Northern Kingdom during the Assyrian exile, but no one doubts the sincerity of their self-identification as Israelites. Around 1951, they say, a few of them set out for Israel on foot before the hilly jungles forced them back. Sixty years later, their children and grandchildren are flying there on El Al, their one-way tickets paid for by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

■ Academic freedom is, as Jonathan Lynn might have written, “one of those irregular verbs”: I honestly explore ideas, you are needlessly provocative, she is a seditious creep. So determined the president of Fordham University in November, when he slammed the College Republicans for inviting Ann Coulter to speak. President Joseph McShane announced that he was “disappointed with the [group's] judgment and maturity.” The authorities stopped short of banning Coulter from the campus, but brought enough pressure to bear on the student group that it saw fit to “regret the controversy” and to “question our decision.” Funnily enough, on closer examination, the group found some of Coulter's past statements disagreeable and promptly disinvited her (which they say they would have done even without the president's criticism). For this, McShane congratulated the club. They had passed the test with “flying colors,” he exclaimed. “There can,” he added, “be no finer testament to the value of a Fordham education and the caliber of our students.” At least if thinking for themselves is not a desired mark of them.

■ There are many ways to victimize vulnerable youngsters, usually in the guise of helping them. Ria Cooper, originally named Brad, became Britain's youngest transsexual at age 17 when she underwent a year's worth of hormone treatment, grew breasts, and started living as a girl. Cooper's medical and psychological treatment (at public expense, of course) was justified as necessary for the patient's mental health, but since anyone could see that Cooper was undergoing an adolescence even more mercurial than that of most teens, the sequel is sadly unsurprising: After dabbling in prostitution and twice attempting suicide, he/she has decided not to have surgery and now wants to be a “trendy gay man.” What would have been wrong with having him wait until adulthood before making this decision? It's hard to see Cooper as anything but a victim of doctors who, in the interests of ideological crusading or surgical vanity, have taken a teen's troubled adolescence and made it immeasurably worse.

■ Philip Roth told a French interviewer that he will be writing no more novels. Quoting Joe Louis, the 79-year-old said, “I did the best I could with what I had.” His best was very good indeed. “Goodbye, Columbus” and the short stories printed with it were a terrific debut—acute, perfectly controlled. *Portnoy's Complaint* was something else—obsessed, narcissistic, hideously unfair; also hilarious. If it is not a masterpiece of literature, it is a masterpiece of stand-up. *American Pastoral* was Roth's great American novel—a portrait of a place (Newark), a community (Jewish), and an era (from World War II to the Sixties); a tragedy

of striving, of laying up treasure in this beautiful, corruptible world. Early or late, Roth deployed the best American prose voice in 70 years—clear and supple, without the tics of so many of his peers (Bellow, Mailer, Updike, Wolfe, Didion, David Foster Wallace . . .). Make that would-be peers. The Nobel Prize givers would honor themselves by acknowledging his achievement.

■ Jacques Barzun was one of the great ornaments of American intellectual life in the 20th century: He had an interest in, and wrote fluently about, topics from baseball to Berlioz to Charles Darwin. His small-“c” catholic approach to the life of the mind is hinted at in something he was quoted as saying about his taste in music: “I look for delight and find it variously in the music of all periods, classes, or lands, not excluding the new musics of John Cage, Harry Partch, and Edgard Varèse.” He served Columbia University for almost 50 years, in various capacities ranging from professor of history to provost and dean of the graduate school. He published more than 40 books, but produced one of his very best at the age of 93: *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present* (2000) was a titanic work of cultural history and became a surprise bestseller. Jacques Barzun has died at 104. R.I.P.

■ Elliott Carter will be known as one of the longest-lived composers ever: He lived from 1908 to 2012, dying at 103. He worked and produced right to the end. An American, Carter was born in the administration of Theodore Roosevelt. He was eight



when the U.S. entered World War I, and remembered it well. He died the day before Obama’s reelection. But there is more to Carter than longevity. He was in the forefront of modernism, taking music in ever more abstract and dissonant directions. He had no use for “neo-Romantics,” considering their attachment to melody, harmony, and so on “deplorable.” Our music critic, Jay Nordlinger, interviewed Carter just before his hundredth birthday. He does not regard Carter’s contributions to music as entirely salutary. Neither does he think they will endure. But he counts Carter one of the smartest and most interesting people he has ever encountered. An amazing mind has passed from the scene. And he proved that there is work to be done after 90, 95, and 100. R.I.P.

■ In New York City it used to be said that simply by looking at someone you could tell what newspaper he read. By the 1970s, with just three papers remaining, the task was simple: The *Daily News* was for the masses, the *Times* was radical chic, and the *Post* was mainstream liberal. Then, in 1976, Rupert Murdoch bought the *Post* and installed Roger Wood, a veteran of Britain’s lively tabloids and Australia’s even livelier ones, as editor. Wood brought in the Page Six gossip column, easily New York’s best; a generous helping of cheesecake; a one-sentence-per-paragraph style; hard-hitting, earthy editorial cartoons; and attention-

grabbing headlines, often in red type. Most daring of all, Wood brought conservatism to famously liberal New York—not just *Daily News*-style working-class populism, but thoughtful essays by authors such as Norman Podhoretz, Thomas Sowell, and George Will. Under

Wood’s stewardship, the paper’s circulation more

**NEW YORK POST**

than doubled, to nearly a million. In recent years, the *Post* has moved upmarket, but it still remains a conservative bastion, and when a juicy story like the Anthony Weiner sexting scandal comes along, people still say, as they did in Wood’s day, “I wonder what tomorrow’s *Post* headline will be.” Dead at 87. R.I.P.

■ Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. In the 1940s and 1950s, Joe Ginsberg, a journeyman catcher, achieved, if not greatness, at least steadiness as a reliable backup for six American League teams. He ended his career by playing two games for the comprehensively inept 1962 Mets, and there can be no greater anticlimax than that. But not long afterwards he had greatness, perhaps even a modest sort of immortality, thrust upon him. For several decades, the “How to Keep Score” page in the Mets’ game program used the lineup from the Mets’ first home game as an example, and as it happened, Ginsberg started that game. So generations of Mets fans knew his name, and many came to imagine him as a mainstay of the team instead of a scrub. Casey Stengel, the Mets’ wise old manager, had foreseen exactly that when he made out the lineup card: “You’ve had 13 years in the big leagues, and I want you to catch the first game in New York. You’ll get more credit for that than for anything else in those 13 years.” Dead at 86, R.I.P.

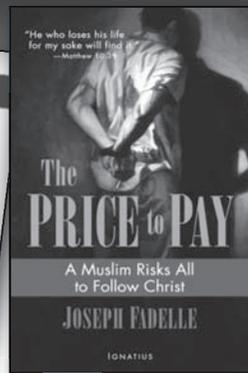
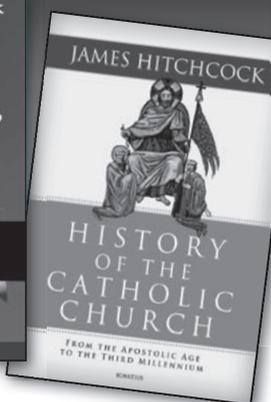
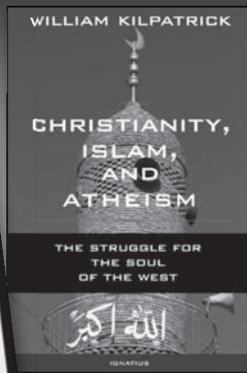
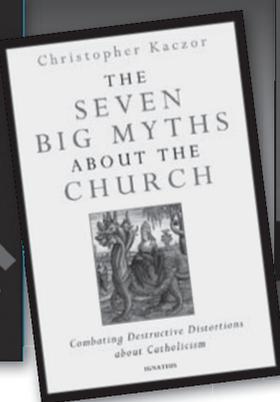
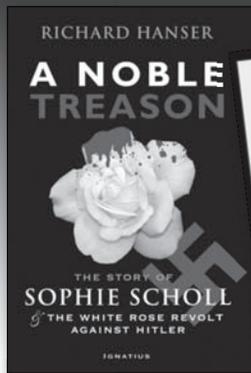
2012

## Learning from Defeat

CONSERVATIVES suffered a terrible defeat on November 6, and there is no point pretending otherwise. President Obama won with an improving but still weak economy, and while running a campaign that was quite liberal by historical standards. His plan for the economy was almost entirely built on government-directed investment and government-based employment, and he supported abortion more strongly than any previous Democratic presidential candidate had. Republicans lost two Senate seats, even in a cycle with far more liberal than conservative seats contested. The House was the only bright spot, and that largely because of a favorable redistricting.

Blame for this debacle is widely shared. Mitt Romney made many mistakes in this campaign. Yet with the exception of his failure to press the case against Obamacare—a failure partly explained but not excused by his own record on health care—those mistakes reflected party-wide decisions. The party hasn’t kept up with the political technologies Democrats are using. More important, Republicans from the top to the bottom of the ticket did little to make the case that conservative policies would make the broad mass of the public better off. It wasn’t a theme of the convention in Tampa, for example, or a consistent theme in Republican ads.

Most of the post-election discussion has dwelt on the predictable demographic divides of sex, race, and age. Most of this conversation will be unproductive. Until conservatives devise a



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domestic agenda, and a way to sell it, that links small-government principles to attractive results, they are going to have a hard time improving their standing with women, Latinos, white men, or young people. And conservatives would be deeply unwise to count on the mere availability of charismatic young conservative officials to make up for that problem.

Social conservatives usually get unfairly blamed for Republican electoral defeats. There is certainly no reason for Republicans to stop defending the right to life, and little prospect that they will. Too many social conservatives have, however, embraced a self-defeating approach to politics—falling, to take a painful example, for Todd Akin’s line that his withdrawal from the Missouri Senate race would be a defeat for their causes. It would have been an advance.

Conservatives are going to have to do all of their rethinking under pressure, because liberalism will not rest. If the president offers a serious reform of entitlements, or some other worthwhile policy, conservatives should be willing to bargain with him. If he continues on the path of his first term—and why would he not, after this election?—we should feel duty-bound to oppose him. We will have to do it more effectively, while articulating better alternatives, than we have so far.

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## The Amnesty Delusion

**R**EPUBLICANS are in danger of embracing “comprehensive” immigration reform—which is to say, amnesty—out of panic. The GOP does need to do better among Hispanics and other voters, but amnesty is not the way to achieve it. Our immigration system is in need of deep reform, but amnesty is not the first item on intelligent reformers’ to-do list, if indeed it belongs on the list at all.

All decent people have a measure of sympathy for those who, driven by desperation, come illegally to the United States seeking work to provide for themselves and their families. That they so frequently work at low wages in miserable conditions and that they are vulnerable to every kind of abuse is reason for deeper sympathy still. But the solution to their plight is not to abandon the law, any more than the solution to the plight of the poor in *Les Misérables* is to legalize the theft of bread. The rule of law exists to alleviate misery, not to mandate it.

CHARLES DHARAPAK/AP

We know from history that immigration amnesties encourage yet more illegal immigration, and the suffering and disorder that go along with it. The growth of an illegal underclass is in the long-term interest of neither the citizens of the United States nor those immigrants who aspire to citizenship. Stopgap measures such as “temporary guest worker” programs simply convert that underclass from de facto to de jure.

There are many steps we can and should take toward improving our national immigration regime. It should be easier for those with job offers—particularly highly skilled, English-speaking professionals—to gain long-term residency in the United States and to embark on a path to citizenship if they so choose. For those who are here illegally, especially those who were brought here as young children, our policy options are not restricted to amnesty or round-ups and mass deportations. Our most effective and most humane option is steady, consistent, judicious workplace enforcement. We do not lack the means to enforce the law, only the political will to do so. And even if our immigration system is broadly liberalized, the law still will need to be enforced. Non-enforcement simply is not a viable permanent state of affairs. Law enforcement would be as necessary after an amnesty as it is today.

Republicans who believe that amnesty would buy them an electoral advantage with Hispanics are deluding themselves. That Hispanics are a natural Republican constituency because of their Catholic and family-oriented traditions is wishful thinking. Hispanics are not uniformly in favor of amnesty for illegals—polls have shown that a segment of the Hispanic population ranging from a large minority to a small majority opposes the policy. Polls also show that a substantial majority of Hispanics support Obamacare, and that Hispanics voted accordingly on Tuesday. Those who see in Hispanics a potential bloc of socially conservative voters should consider that polls consistently find blacks to be slightly more anti-abortion than whites, but they are not exactly lining up behind Rick Santorum. There is very little reason to believe that Hispanic Catholics are any more likely to vote like social conservatives than non-Hispanic Catholics. For that matter, the majority of Hispanic evangelicals voted for Obama in 2008.

The amnesty signed into law by the charismatic and popular President Reagan did not bring Hispanic voters into the Republican party; Republican congressional leaders who believe that sending one to President Obama would redound to their benefit are engaged in a defective political calculus. Nor are Hispanics the only group of voters to consider. Blue-collar whites do not appear to have turned out for Republicans in the expected numbers on Election Day. Support for amnesty will not bring them back. If the policy advanced the national interest, that consideration might not matter. It does when supposed political advantage is the argument for the policy.

The Republican party and the conservative movement simply are not constituted for ethnic pandering, and certainly will not out-pander the party of amnesty and affirmative action. Republicans’ challenge is to convince Hispanics, blacks, women, gays, etc., that the policies of the Obama administration are inimical to their interests as Americans, not as members of any collegium of grievance. That they have consistently failed to do so suggests that Republican leadership is at least as much in need of reform as our immigration code.

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## The Party's Problem

*Republicans will be elected when they advance middle-class interests*

BY RAMESH PONNURU

**T**HE first thing conservatives should understand about the electoral catastrophe that just befell us—and it was a catastrophe—is that any explanation of it that centers on Mitt Romney is mistaken.

Much of the discussion of the race among conservatives has made the opposite assumption. “Romney proved to be the kind of electoral drag many of us suspected he would always be,” wrote one conservative the morning after the election. “It was a flawed candidacy from the start,” wrote two others. “Romney’s caution and ever-shifting policy positions made him seem fearful, which is to say weak. His biography hurt him. . . . And because of his own history in Massachusetts, he could never effectively go after President Obama on Obamacare, the president’s biggest political weakness.” Another called Romney “the worst candidate to win his party’s nomination since WWII.” Still another wrote, “There will be a lot of blame to go around, but, if Republicans are honest, they’ll have to concede that the Romney campaign ran a bad campaign.”

All of these writers are intelligent people (some of them friends of mine). None

of them makes the mistake of assuming that this election should have been easy to win given the weak economy, the public’s dissatisfaction with the status quo, and the unpopularity of Obamacare. They know that the economy has been improving, that the Democratic base in presidential races has been expanding for decades, and that the public still blames George W. Bush and his party for an economic crisis that began during his second term. Nor are they entirely wrong in their diagnoses of Romney’s distinctive weaknesses and errors. They err mainly in attributing too much importance to them.

Romney was not a drag on the Republican party. The Republican party was a drag on him. Aaron Blake pointed out in the *Washington Post* that Romney ran ahead of most of the Republican Senate candidates: He did better than Connie Mack in Florida, George Allen in Virginia, Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin, Denny Rehberg in Montana, Jeff Flake in Arizona, Pete Hoekstra in Michigan, Deb Fischer in Nebraska, Rick Berg in North Dakota, Josh Mandel in Ohio, and of course Todd Akin in Missouri and Richard Mourdock in Indiana. In some cases Romney did a lot

better. (He also did slightly better than Ted Cruz in Texas, a race Blake for some reason ignored.)

None of those candidates were as rich as Romney, and almost all of them had more consistently conservative records than he did. It didn’t help them win more votes. The only Republican Senate candidates who ran significantly ahead of Romney were people running well to his left in blue states, and they lost too.

Akin and Mourdock have received a lot of attention because they fit into the story of the Senate elections of 2010. Most observers believe that Republican-primary voters threw away three Senate seats that year by choosing unelectable extremists over candidates who could have won. This year, Akin and Mourdock each made comments about abortion and rape that doomed them. If not for these five mistakes in candidate selection, Republicans would have 50 seats. So goes the story.

It’s an accurate one as far as it goes. But it is not the story of the 2012 Senate races. Berg, Allen, Thompson, and Rehberg all lost, but they were not unelectable extremists: All of them had won statewide races before. We could try to explain these defeats in terms of each candidate’s particular weaknesses. Blake, the *Post* reporter, hints at such an explanation: “It’s pretty clear that lackluster candidates cost Republicans multiple Senate seats on Election Day.” No. That’s the 2010 story. The 2012 Senate races were more like the ones in 2006 and 2008: wipeouts for Republicans of every description—veterans and newcomers, conservative purists and relative moderates alike.

All these candidates lost not because of the idiosyncrasies of this or that candidate or the flaws of this or that faction of the Republican party. They lost not because of the particular vices of the Tea Party, or of social conservatives, or of the party establishment. The most logical explanation for the pattern is that something common to all Republicans brought them down, and the simplest explanation is that their party is weak—and has been for a long time. Consider the evidence: Republicans have lost the popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections. Since the Senate reached its current size, Democrats have had more than 55 seats 13 times; Republicans, never.

Before settling on this story of party weakness, we need to examine three

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apparent pieces of evidence of strength. The first is that Republicans retained control of the House even as they lost the presidential and Senate races. Republicans are likely to have their second-largest House majority in 60 years. They appear, however, to have narrowly lost the popular vote for the House. One reason they won so many seats anyway is that 2010 was an unusually good Republican year, and Republicans were therefore able to draw the lines of congressional districts following that year's census. What the House success demonstrates, in part, is that Republicans can do well when they choose the voters rather than vice versa. Another reason for the House success, as

only when they split, as in 1912 and 1916. The Great Depression made the Democrats into the dominant party until 1968. Only one Republican won the presidency during that period, and under highly unusual circumstances: He had won World War II, the Democrats had held the presidency for five consecutive terms, and the country was beset by inflation, corruption, and an unpopular war in Korea.

The Democrats lost majority status in 1968—they would lose five of six presidential elections from that year through 1988, and win one by a hair—but Republicans did not gain it. They never held the House and rarely held the Senate during that streak of presidential wins. Why

social issues—for example, stem cells during the George W. Bush presidency—the public sided with the Democrats. On some economic issues, such as taxes during the Reagan presidency, the public sided with Republicans.

The generalization nonetheless holds. Clinton won the White House because of the recession of the early 1990s, of course, but also because the end of the Cold War took foreign policy off the table, badly weakening Republicans, and because he systematically addressed Democratic liabilities on welfare, crime, and other values-laden issues. During the presidential debates of 2004, Bush did well on social-issue questions while being

### The problem isn't so much that Romney was vulnerable to a set of attacks that appear to have discouraged working-class whites from voting; it's that he didn't have anything positive with which to **counter those attacks**.

Michael Barone has observed, is that the geographic distribution of Republican voters within states tends to favor them. That's not much help, though, in amassing a national majority from statewide races.

The second piece of evidence for Republican political strength is that they hold 30 of the 50 governorships. That strength too is misleading. Each of those Republican governors was elected either in a state Romney carried or in the unusually Republican years of 2009 and 2010—or, in most cases, both.

Third is that as recently as eight years ago Republicans won the White House as well as respectable majorities in the House and Senate. Even at that height, though, they had nothing like the dominance in Congress that Democrats had in the late 1970s, or 1993–94, or 2009–10. The Republican success of 2004 partly reflects the fact that it was the first presidential election following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. Even in that good Republican year, though, Republicans went down one Senate seat, net, outside the South (while gaining five in the South).

Republican weakness emerges even more clearly when we look at a longer timescale. From 1896 through 1930, Republicans were the dominant party, holding the White House and Congress most of the time and losing the presidency

didn't Republicans become the dominant party then? It wasn't because of foreign policy: That boosted them during the second half of the Cold War, when the Democrats became the relatively dovish party. That's a big reason Republicans did better at the presidential than at the congressional level. It wasn't because of social issues: The hippies and McGovernites helped make Republicans the party of middle-class values.

What they did not do is make the Republicans the party of middle-class economic interests. Most Americans associated the party with big business and the country club, and did not agree with its impulses on the minimum wage, entitlement programs, and other forms of government activism designed to protect ordinary people from cold markets. Americans came to be skeptical of government activism mainly when they thought it was undermining middle-class values (as they thought welfare undermined the work ethic). And even when voters thought Republicans were better managers of the economy in general, they thought the GOP looked out for the rich rather than the common man.

This pattern of voter preferences—favoring the GOP on values and foreign policy, the Democrats on middle-class economics—persisted for a long time. There were always exceptions. On some

defensive on economic issues. In 2006, when Democrats took Congress, they racked up their biggest margin against a Senate incumbent in Pennsylvania, where they ran a candidate who opposed abortion and same-sex marriage.

For the last 50 years, voters have been alarmed by rapid expansions of government (which goes a long way toward explaining the good Republican years of 1966, 1978, 1980, 1994, and 2010) but also by the prospect of major cuts to government (which goes some way toward explaining 1996 and 2012). In other years, they have held vaguely government-skeptical sentiments while approving most proposals for gradual increases in government assistance (for families paying for college, seniors trying to get prescription drugs, and so on).

After the 2006 and 2008 Democratic blowouts, liberals started to view their victory as the new normal in American politics, the result of inexorable demographic forces. After the 2010 Republican victories, some conservatives began to think that was the new normal. Republicans, they thought, had lost in '06 and '08 because of the Iraq War, the financial crisis, Hurricane Katrina, Bush's big spending, and congressional scandals. Given a straight-up choice between conservatism and liberalism, though, the people would choose the former. The

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2012 results give credibility to the liberal interpretation and subtract it from the conservative one. It's the 2010 election, not the 2008 one, that is starting to look aberrant.

The Iraq War, the financial crisis, and other issues specific to the late Bush years obviously did play a huge role in the 2006 and 2008 defeats. But it's also true that Republicans weren't even arguing that they had a domestic agenda that would yield any direct benefits for most voters, and that has to have hurt them. Taxes had been the most powerful economic issue for Republicans for a generation, but Republicans misunderstood why. In the '80s and '90s, Republicans ran five presidential campaigns promising to make or keep middle-class taxes lower than they would be under Democrats, and won four of them. In 2008 they made no such promise but did say they would lower the corporate tax rate.

In the exit polls in 2008, 60 percent of voters said that McCain was not "in touch with people like them." McCain lost 79 percent of the voters who said that. To get a majority of the popular vote, he would have had to win 96 percent of the 39 percent of voters who were willing to say he passed the threshold test of understanding their concerns. It's amazing he came as close as he did. (Fifty-seven percent of voters said Obama was in touch, and he had to win only 81 percent of them; he got 86 percent.)

In 2012, the exit pollsters asked a different version of the question: "Who is more in touch with people like you?" Obama beat Romney by ten points, even while losing the "better handle the economy" question by one. Romney, unlike McCain, did offer middle-class voters a tax cut, although it's not clear that this fact made its way through the din of the campaign to register with the voters. His campaign made efforts—sporadic rather than sustained—to make the case that his agenda would deliver stronger growth and higher wages. He rarely suggested it would make health care more affordable.

On only one issue did the campaign consistently make the case that Romney would take specific actions that would yield tangible benefits for most Americans: He would allow energy exploration, which would reduce the cost of living for everyone. He devoted time to that theme in his convention speech, which did not touch on affordable health care, higher

wages, or the middle class. The energy argument was sufficiently effective that Obama had to steal some of its rhetoric.

The absence of a middle-class message was the biggest failure of the Romney campaign, and it was not its failure alone. Down-ticket Republican candidates weren't offering anything more—not the established Republicans, not the tea-partiers, not the social conservatives. Conservative activists weren't demanding that Romney or any of these other Republicans do anything more. Some of them were complaining that Romney wasn't "taking the fight to Obama"; few of them were urging him to outline a health-care plan that would reassure voters that replacing Obamacare wouldn't mean taking health insurance away from millions of people.

Romney's infamous "47 percent" gaffe—by which he characterized voters who do not pay income taxes as free-loaders and sure Democratic voters, which they aren't—made for a week of bad media coverage and some devastatingly effective Democratic ads. It was not, however, a line of thinking unique to Romney. It was an exaggerated version of a claim that had become party orthodoxy.

A different Republican presidential nominee might not have made exactly that gaffe, or had a financial-industry background that lent itself to attacks on outsourcing. He would almost certainly have had a similar weakness on economic policy, however, and might have had additional weaknesses too. (Romney at least won independent voters, which it's hard to imagine Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry, or Rick Santorum having done.) To put it differently: The problem isn't so much that Romney was vulnerable to a set of attacks that appear to have discouraged working-class whites from voting; it's that he didn't have anything positive with which to counter those attacks.

The Republican story about how societies prosper—not just the Romney story—dwelt on the heroic entrepreneur stifled by taxes and regulations: an important story with which most people do not identify. The ordinary person does not see himself as a great innovator. He, or she, is trying to make a living and support or maybe start a family. A conservative reform of our health-care system and tax code, among other institutions, might help with these goals. About this person, how-

ever, Republicans have had little to say.

In the days since the election, Republicans have received (and given one another) a lot of advice: Step up the ground game. Soften on immigration and abortion. Embrace same-sex marriage. Appeal more to single women, Hispanics, and young people. Run the younger, more charismatic candidates Republicans have waiting in the wings. Some of this advice is good, and some of it bad. But the weakness of the Republican party predates the emergence of same-sex marriage as an issue, the development of Democratic micro-targeting strategies, and the growth of the Hispanic vote. And wasn't Josh Mandel, the losing Ohio Senate candidate, supposed to be one of those great young conservative hopes? However much charisma and brains the next crop of Republicans brings to their campaigns, they need a stronger party.

The perception that the Republican party serves the interests only of the rich underlies all the demographic weaknesses that get discussed in narrower terms. Hispanics do not vote for the Democrats solely because of immigration. Many of them are poor and lack health insurance, and they hear nothing from the Republicans but a lot from the Democrats about bettering their situation. Young people, too, are economically insecure, especially these days. If Republicans found a way to apply conservative principles in ways that offered tangible benefits to most voters and then talked about this agenda in those terms, they would improve their standing among all of these groups while also increasing their appeal to white working-class voters. For that matter, higher-income voters would prefer candidates who seem practical and solution-oriented. Better "communications skills," that perennial item on the wish list of losing parties, will achieve little if the party does not have an appealing agenda to communicate.

Despair has led many Republicans to question their earlier confidence that America is a "center-right country." It is certainly a country that has strong conservative impulses: skepticism of government, respect for religion, concern for the family. What the country does not have is a center-right party that explains how to act on these impulses to improve the national condition. Until it does, it won't have a center-right political majority either. **NR**

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By Steven Wuzubia; Health Correspondent;

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# Beyond Tax Cuts

*The GOP needs a broader economic agenda*

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

EVERYTHING you think you know about the decline of the U.S. economy is wrong. The United States is today the world's largest manufacturer, as it long has been. Depending on whom you ask, the United States is either the world's largest exporter or the world's second-largest exporter. For all that dumb talk about the menace of "foreign oil," the United States is today a net exporter of petroleum products—we import a lot of cheap crude and export a lot of expensive fuel. The International Energy Agency projects that the United States will become the world's largest oil producer by 2017, surpassing Saudi Arabia. U.S. technology firms such as Apple and Google are the envy of the world—a world that sends its best and brightest to U.S. universities for the purpose of bringing them into contact with the innovative, entrepreneurial culture of which Apple and Google are emblems.

That's a lot of opportunity. And all Republicans can think to talk about is tax cuts?

The poverty of the Republican economic imagination is something to behold. Tax cuts are held up as the cure for everything from stagnant growth to high unemployment to lumbago. And, as it turns out, Mitt Romney was right in one way when he made that "47 percent" remark: People who are net beneficiaries of federal transfers are not very much excited by the possibility of tax cuts. Ronald Reagan boasted of all the people of modest means he had taken off of the tax rolls, and he had good reason for doing so, but once you've taken the income tax out of a voter's life, an income-tax cut is not the way to bring him into your party.

The economics of tax rates is a below-the-surface issue: Even people who do not themselves have direct tax liabilities pay a share of dozens of taxes they've

never heard of. That is because of the counterintuitive fact that individuals operating in free markets pay taxes collectively: If you rent an apartment, you don't get a property-tax bill every year, but you can be sure that you pay most or all of your landlord's property-tax bill, possibly at a higher commercial-property rate and without the income-tax deduction for mortgage interest. Which is to say, as a person who does not get a property-tax bill, you're probably paying a higher real-property-tax rate than somebody who owns a home. Every time you order a Big Mac, McDonald's is negotiating a portion of its tax expenses into the deal. Every business suffering increased costs from Obamacare—which is to say, practically every business—will try to offload a portion of those costs onto consumers. And consumers, in their role as employees, negotiate with their

wrote *conservatives*, not *Republicans*. The unified Republican government under George W. Bush, whatever its other virtues, spent money like nobody's business, and that generation of Republican leaders managed to single-handedly destroy the party's reputation for fiscal restraint. They took a piece of bad luck—the Clinton-Gingrich surpluses were always destined to be temporary as entitlement spending escalated and the millennial boom tapered off—and made it a great deal worse. All of those Democrats braying about how Republicans squandered the surplus would have sounded a lot less convincing if W. & Co. had not described the tax cuts as measures designed to eliminate the surplus. Mission accomplished, geniuses.

The major driver of deficits going forward is of course entitlement spending, and Republicans have some excellent

## The major driver of deficits going forward is entitlement spending, and Republicans have some excellent ideas about entitlement reform.

employers for higher compensation to offset living expenses, of which taxes are a large component for upper-middle to high-income workers—i.e., for those who have the most negotiating power in the marketplace. That's why technology companies, for example, often have to pay a San Jose-based employee more than a comparable Austin-based one. The reality is that taxpayers are in an important sense all in this together. (And never mind the question of whether a tax cut is really a tax cut when you have permanent deficits: As I have argued in these pages, it is more accurate to regard such cuts as tax deferrals, because the real level of taxation is the level of spending. Borrowing just shifts the tax burden into the future.)

So the economics of tax rates is deep, but the politics of tax rates is right on the surface: Tax-cut proposals are politically inert among voters not directly exposed to the taxes to be cut. Reagan's success is the modern Republican's burden.

But conservatives have a great deal to offer the country other than tax cuts.

The first and most important thing they have to offer is fiscal rectitude. Note that I

ideas about entitlement reform. But it would be wrong to write off the rest of the budget as small ball: 20 percent of the greatest Leviathan the planet has ever seen is still a lot of green, and there are very good economic and political reasons for going after it. No, euthanizing Big Bird is not going to balance the budget, but there is a strong case to be made against having state-run media in a free society. Foreign aid is a minuscule fraction of federal outlays, but there is a strong case to be made against shunting funds to people who are, pardon us all for noticing, indistinguishable from our declared enemies. Eventually, that money adds up to something—and so does the messaging.

The Right complains of "crony capitalism" and the Left of "corporate welfare," but in the majority of cases we're talking about the same thing: favoritism for politically connected businesses, often enacted through the tax code but also present in other federal activity. This stuff costs a great deal of money—and it is bad for the economy in that it keeps capital and energy locked up in enterprises that are viable only because they

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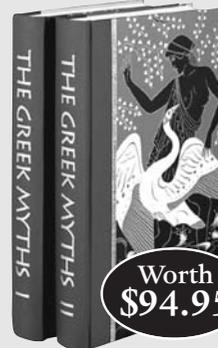
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are in part sustained by politics. Corporate welfare makes markets less efficient, stifles competition, and undermines innovation—and makes the country pay for the privilege. There is no need to let the Left and the ideologues who want to abolish patents dominate the conversation about corporate welfare: An enterprising Republican looking to build a name for himself would not have very far to look for an issue that both bolsters the party's reputation for fiscal responsibility and provides much-needed evidence with which to answer allegations of Republicans' thrall to Big Business. Opposing the GM bailout would have looked a lot better coming from a party that had consistently opposed other examples of cronyism. Ripe targets include the Overseas Private Insurance Corporation, the Small Business Administration, and about half of what the Commerce Department does.

And unless the Republican party is ready to go the full Rothbard and declare itself an anarcho-capitalist outfit (this I do not recommend), it should work to discover a few areas of government in which it finds value beyond those engaged in the sometimes necessary but never profitable business of bombing the tar out of dusty little countries harboring fanatical savages. As conservatives and free marketers, we have our skepticism about the ability of federal bureaucracies to do much of anything right, but there are a great many opportunities for marginal improvements through reallocation of resources. As the economist Tyler Cowen has argued, a dollar spent on medical research is almost always more productive than a dollar spent on health-care benefits. Most of the work done by organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control constitutes a legitimate public good. If Republicans ever get serious about cutting spending, they will be sorely tempted to repackage some of those savings as tax cuts. And while shrinking the federal footprint is a necessary thing—both a moral and an economic good—moving resources from the stuff that government has no business doing to the things that it does constitutes a real improvement, too. Encouraging research at institutions such as the CDC or DARPA, as well as supporting university-based science and technology research, is one of the best uses a federal dollar

ever sees. Republicans who want to be in favor of something rather than against something might take a look at that.

We are in the early stages of an energy renaissance, which will produce many excellent opportunities for manufacturing, heavy industry, technology, and related fields. We also remain a world leader in the original mass-production business: farming. China is already using two-thirds of its annual water consumption for irrigation, and there are real constraints on its ability to continue to expand food production. The production of essential products such as energy and food provide a great many employment opportunities for the people who have suffered the most during the long stagnation in real-money wages that has afflicted the lowest-earning half of Americans for the past several decades. We have plenty of resources for the kids who are bound for Harvard and MIT, but for the up-and-coming generation of non-elite workers, from laborers to managers and professionals, things look grim—and they have for a while. Republicans have some very good and politically popular ideas about education reform: Romney was right to call that his “human capital” agenda. Republicans are uniquely well positioned to take a meat axe to the departments of diversity and the colleges of underwater basketweaving, redirecting scarce resources into programs that will help to prepare students for real-world jobs and connect them with real-world opportunities. Yes, it would be great if the guys working in the Pennsylvania gas fields read Cicero—and they're a bunch of smart guys, so maybe they do—but they also need steady jobs at decent wages. And for those who are not college-bound, it would be an excellent thing if there were fruitful and productive career paths that began at 18 rather than at 28.

But somebody has to build those educational programs. Somebody has to design those economic reforms. Somebody has to make sure that CDC budget doesn't end up going into the pockets of grievance lobbyists or do-nothing contractors. If Republicans can't take a look at our economy, our society, and the situation of our young people at this critical moment in our history, then they are not paying attention and do not deserve to lead. If tax cuts are the best they've got, they're done. **NR**

## O Fortuna

*Victory and defeat are likewise impermanent*

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

**C**ONSERVATIVES are natural pessimists, based on a realism about fallible human nature that fuels our opposition to the coercive utopianism of the Left. The Founders shared this pessimism about human nature and the weakness of democracy, and kept it at the forefront of their minds as they designed our political institutions: “If men were angels,” and all that. But the conservative pessimism after the GOP's poor showing in this election is overdone. The Republican party and the conservative movement were said to be finished after Barry Goldwater's landslide loss in 1964, and again in 1976, when the aftermath of Watergate and Jimmy Carter's narrow presidential win installed Democratic supermajorities in both houses of Congress. In 1977, voters who identified with the Republican party fell to an all-time low of 21 percent.

The Founders, too, would have thought our pessimism excessive. For all of the (well-founded) handwringing about adverse demographics and the critical mass of government dependents, it is ironic that conservatives—who, after all, revere the Constitution—do not take into account the “auxiliary precautions” (in James Madison's phrase) against the collapse of our republic, or against periods when “enlightened men” would not be at the helm. In an often overlooked passage of *Federalist 55* about the “safeguards” against executive usurpation, Madison writes:

As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature that justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other

*Mr. Hayward is the Thomas W. Smith Distinguished Fellow at the Ashbrook Center and the author of the two-volume political biography The Age of Reagan.*

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form. Were the pictures that have been drawn by the political jealousy of some among us faithful likenesses of the human character, the inference would be, that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another.

So, as good and faithful constitutionalists, let's take stock. We have not elected Obama to be plenipotentiary emperor for life; he merely gets to head the executive branch for four more years, with a less compliant Congress than he had in his first term. To be sure, a president can do a lot of damage, but he can't foreclose on the republic on his own. To think so little of the abilities of the 30

everyone is calculating political tactics for future election cycles and contemplating whether and how to handle immigration, abortion, and other wedge issues, few people seem to be taking account of a troubling fact: Romney ran well ahead of many losing GOP Senate candidates in red states such as Montana and North Dakota. It is not sufficient to say that the remedy is "better candidates," though this was surely true in Missouri and Indiana. The disconnection of presidential campaigns from congressional races, and the single-minded focus on the ten battleground states to the exclusion of the other 40, is eroding the kind of rightful partisanship that is necessary for significant transformative governance in the future. Given that

campaigns, but that's a long subject for another day.)

Second and more immediately, the approach of the "fiscal cliff" in a few weeks ought to be regarded as a big opportunity for boldness rather than a narrow window for a defensive compromise. News reports indicate that Obama is settling in for a long slog on taxes and spending. So here's an idea: The House GOP should call the Obama-Krugman bluff—of letting us go over the fiscal cliff on January 1—by passing a sweeping, pro-growth tax-reform package *right now*, and sending it to the Senate, coupled with an announcement that it is not going along with tax increases for anyone unless taxes increase for everyone. The House GOP could even just pass

## The concern about whether this election result means that we have passed the point of no return, and that sufficient "republican virtue" no longer remains in the American people, is out of focus.

Republican governors, not to mention GOP leaders in the House and Senate, is to display a lack of courage and faith about our grand institutions that is unworthy of us.

The concern about whether this election result means that we have passed the point of no return, and that sufficient "republican virtue" no longer remains in the American people, is similarly out of focus. In some vital respects the problem is worse than Obama himself. We need to recognize that, if Obama can cement in place or further extend the welfare state, he will be building on a hundred-year foundation that liberals constructed stone by stone. Beyond repealing Obamacare, it was never clear that a President Romney would have been able to—or was even inclined to—make a sustained effort to roll back the architecture of modern liberalism. Here is a deeper problem for the pessimists to ponder, and if they do so honestly they should conclude that Obama is a symptom more than a cause. There are no quick fixes or gimmicks for this. Symposium to follow.

But there are a couple of breaks with past political practice that we might consider after this loss. First, while

Romney's chances of repealing Obamacare depended on a GOP Senate majority, Romney should have—future GOP nominees please take note—made time for campaign stops with embattled GOP Senate nominees in red states. A few joint TV spots are good, but a more forceful message that asks voters to make a clear partisan choice is better, such as: "I can't succeed as your president, Montana, unless you send Denny Rehberg to Washington to help me." It is political malpractice for the party nominee to neglect the congressional races. (And it is the deliberate genius of modern liberalism to drive this wedge between executive and congressional

Simpson-Bowles, and rightly say they are passing the plan President Obama's own commission recommended. The House should be prepared to let all the Bush tax cuts expire, which will expose the liberal fiction that they helped only "the rich." (The tax increase will happen without a vote to increase taxes, so Republicans will be able to pursue this strategy without violating their no-tax-increase pledges.) It will all be on Obama and Senate Democrats. If Speaker John Boehner is serious that the House GOP has just as much of a mandate as the president, then this is the time to act on it.

A final point is that even conservatives of pessimistic bent ought to orient themselves according to a fragment from T. S. Eliot that longtime NATIONAL REVIEW contributor (and happy pessimist) Russell Kirk liked to quote in these pages:



"Yes, but I broke my campaign promises in good faith!"

If we take the widest and wisest view of a Cause, there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successors' victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph.

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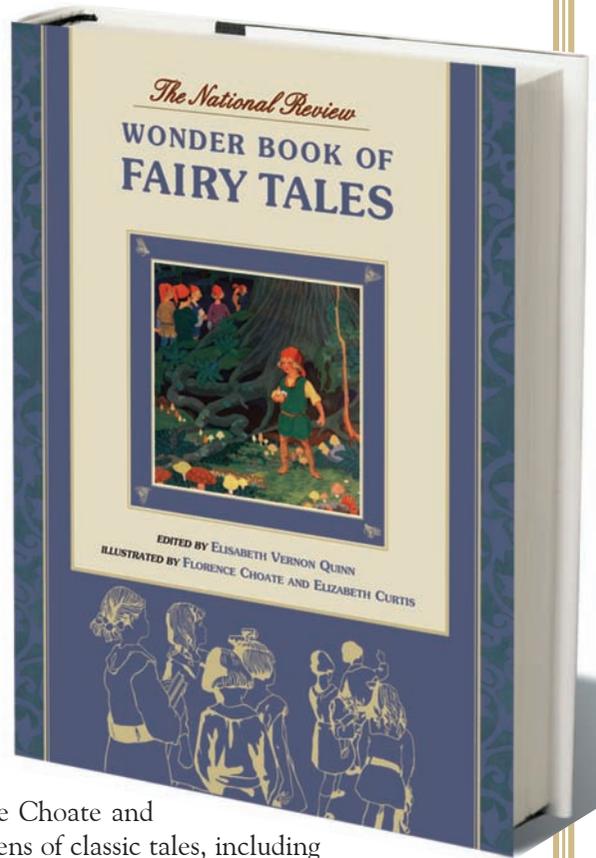
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# Amnesty Is No Solution

*Hispanic voters want big government*

BY HEATHER MAC DONALD

**B**ARACK OBAMA'S popularity with Hispanics—he won 71 percent of the Hispanic vote—has triggered a stampede among Republican political and opinion leaders to support “comprehensive immigration reform.”

The formidable Charles Krauthammer encapsulated the new consensus in his syndicated column. A “single policy change”—amnesty—would fix the Hispanic “problem,” he predicted. Krauthammer employed the same reasoning that open-borders conservatives have endorsed for years: Hispanics “should be a natural Republican constituency,” he argued: “striving immigrant community, religious, Catholic, family-oriented, and socially conservative (on abortion, for example).”

Krauthammer's logic may seem impeccable, but the facts on the ground don't bear him out. It is Democrats' core economic principles—their support of big government and extensive, taxpayer-funded social programs—that draw Hispanics into the Democratic camp, as much as, if not more than, Democrats' opposition to immigration enforcement.

Dismantling Obamacare, for example, was a key plank of the Republican platform this year. On this issue the GOP was in sync with the Catholic Church, which vocally opposed the administration's contraception mandate and charged that it violated religious liberty. How did that play with Hispanics? Not so well, primarily because Hispanics have the lowest rate of health insurance in the country and heavily rely on government-subsidized health care. Sixty-two percent of likely Latino voters support Obama's handling of health care, including his Affordable Care Act, according to a Fox News Latino

poll conducted in September. Only 25 percent of those voters want the act repealed.

No wonder a Latino pollster, in an August interview with *USA Today*, blasted a Spanish-language Romney ad promising to roll back Obamacare. The ad epitomized the Romney campaign's cluelessness about the Hispanic vote, he said.

Republicans' hostility to the Affordable Care Act this year was nearly matched by their contempt for California governor Jerry Brown's voter referendum to raise taxes in order to avoid reforming the state's bloated public sector. Latinos, however, favored the measure by margins of two to one in every pre-election survey. (California's exit poll showed a closer spread—53 to 47 percent—but leading pollsters have thrown the reliability of this year's exit data into doubt.) Brown crowed after the vote: “I think this is the only place in America where a state actually said, ‘Let's raise our taxes for our kids, for our schools, for our California dream.’” Maybe California was the only place *this* year that linked higher taxes to the “dream,” but it will likely not be the last place, given the ever-growing Latino share of the national population. A Pew Hispanic Center poll in 2002 found that 55 percent of the Latino electorate would rather pay higher taxes in order to support a larger government and more public services. The preference for big government is just slightly lower among Latino Republicans, putting them to the economic left of white Democrats. (By comparison, 77 percent of white Republicans would prefer a smaller government and lower taxes.)

California's Hispanic population nearly equals its white population, making the state the leading edge of this country's immigration-driven demographic transformation. California Latinos' allegiance to the Democratic party and platform trumps their “social values” and ethnic loyalty, as I discuss in the current issue of *City Journal*. Hispanics backed San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom for California lieutenant governor in 2010, rejecting incumbent Abel Maldonado, a Hispanic Republican previously appointed to the position by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Newsom, who had extra-legally and unilaterally instructed San Francisco officials to marry gay couples in 2004, was the epitome of a

tax-and-spend liberal, and was endorsed by the state's biggest Spanish-language daily on precisely that ground. In the 2010 race for state attorney general, Hispanic voters also helped elect ultra-liberal San Francisco district attorney Kamala Harris over three-term Los Angeles district attorney Steve Cooley, a law-and-order moderate. Even Latinos in Cooley's hometown went for Harris. Whites of all party affiliations, by contrast, favored Cooley over Harris.

But wait! open-borders Republicans will insist. In 1994, Californians passed Proposition 187, a voter initiative denying most government benefits to illegal aliens. Then-governor Pete Wilson, a Republican, prominently backed the initiative. Surely it is the memory of Proposition 187 that repels California Latinos from their natural Republican home?

Actually, no. It is the Republican party's purported economic philosophy (“The party favors only the rich”; “Republicans are selfish and out for themselves”; “Republicans don't represent the average person”) that is the bigger turnoff for Latinos, compared with its immigration positions, according to a 2011 survey of Hispanic voters by Moore Information.

Moreover, Proposition 187 was immediately gutted by the federal judiciary. It is now ancient history, with little impact on today's political attitudes. Jim Tolle, pastor of one of the largest Hispanic churches in Southern California, La Iglesia En El Camino, in formerly Republican Van Nuys, says that his congregation knows nothing about the initiative.

Sacramento's Latino Caucus is now the biggest force in California politics pushing for racial and ethnic quotas. It puts continuous pressure on the state's public universities to admit students by skin color, despite Proposition 209, a 1996 voter initiative banning race and gender preferences in government.

Hispanics' support for the Democratic economic agenda, both in California and nationally, stems in part from their receipt of government assistance. Nationally, non-immigrant Hispanic households (i.e., households headed by a U.S.-born Hispanic) are enrolled in welfare programs at over twice the rate of U.S.-born white households (42 percent vs. 19 percent), according to an analysis of March 2012 census data by the Center for Immigration

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## The Most Practical Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

### Can the two current proposed solutions bring peace to the region?

A persistent mantra maintains that only two possible solutions exist to the seemingly intractable, centuries-old conflict between Arabs and Jews in the Holy Land. But is that really true . . . or is there a more sensible alternative?

#### What are the facts?

**The “One-State Solution.”** Some commentators advocate a one-state solution, in which Jews and Arabs would be joined in one state, with all inhabitants having the same citizenship – call it Israeli or Palestinian. But such a “solution,” as most observers know, is totally unacceptable to the Jewish population. Given the murderous hate expressed daily in state-controlled Palestinian media toward Jews, this would be a recipe for a second Holocaust. Within one generation, Arabs, with their high birth rate and inevitable immigration from abroad, would be a majority. They would unleash a civil war that would make the Lebanese and the Syrian wars seem like child’s play. With more than half the world’s Jews now living in Israel, Adolf Hitler’s most fervent genocidal wish would finally be fulfilled.

**The “Two-State Solution.”** This second solution is favored by much of the world, including the U. S. government. But this solution is not much better than one state and almost as unacceptable to those who support the welfare and future of the Jewish state. The example of Gaza is instructive. In order to advance peace and appease world opinion, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon abandoned Gaza with no reciprocal agreement from the Palestinians. All Jewish inhabitants, most living there for generations, were expelled from their homes by Israel and resettled in “Israel proper.” What reward, what thanks did Israel get for its generous gesture? Today, almost daily bombardments by deadly Hamas rockets force up to one million Israel civilians into bomb shelters. Israel’s forbearance to these affronts is almost unimaginable. One can imagine how our country would respond if Mexico were to launch hundreds of rockets on San Diego. Thus it’s easy to foresee what would happen if, under a “two-state solution,” Israel were to abandon Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”). Israel would surely suffer daily rocket assaults on its population centers—Tel Aviv, its international airport, its industrial heartland and its military installations. Life would become impossible.

The surrounding Arab states and Muslim countries beyond (such

as Iran) would certainly join the fray and assist in the final destruction of the beleaguered and helpless Jewish state.

Which Solution Should Israel Choose? It’s clear that neither the one-state solution nor the vaunted two-state solution would resolve the region’s issues. How then should Israelis respond to the demand that they choose either of these “solutions”? In fact they need choose *neither*. Those who insist that they choose between those two “solutions” either don’t fully understand the problem . . . or they oppose Israel’s continued existence.

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“How then should Israelis respond to the demand that they choose either of these ‘solutions’? In fact they need choose *neither*.”

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The reality is that, according to virtually every Palestinian leader, including President Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinians are not interested in a resolution of the conflict or even in the

creation of a twenty-third Arab state. Their unrelenting, stated mission is destruction of the Jewish state and extermination of its inhabitants. Neither does the conflict have to do with territory. The Arab states occupy territory larger than the United States including Alaska. Israel is the size of New Jersey. Would the seething Arab-Muslim world finally lapse into peace and contentment if they were to acquire this tiny piece of land?

**A Practical Solution to Resolve the Conflict.** Clearly, Israel cannot agree to a “solution” that would eventually lead to the end of the Jewish state and the slaughter of its citizens. Because the Palestinian leadership refuses to negotiate peace and continues to advocate conquest of the entire Holy Land, like it or not, Israel must for security reasons remain in control of the “West Bank.” However, there’s no reason that even under today’s current impasse the Palestinians should not have full autonomy—which they almost have today—as an “unincorporated territory.” While the situation is not ideal, until the Palestinians agree to full peace with Israel, providing they do not resume terrorism, they could be welcomed as partners in the Israeli economic system and should be able to fully participate in Israel’s commercial and creative life. Even without statehood, in less than a generation the Palestinians could become the most advanced and prosperous people in the entire Arab world.

Obviously the prospect of the Arabs having to wait longer for the launch of a Palestinian state will be painful for them. But this is a price that must be paid if Palestinian leaders refuse to negotiate peace and cling to the futile dream of conquering Israel. Israel has given its land in Gaza to the Palestinians in the name of peace and receives rockets in return. Israel has offered 97% of the West Bank and a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem in the name of peace and received rejection. It’s time the Arabs acclimate to a status quo of their own making and take advantage of living next to one of the most successful countries in the world. In any case they must accept that their dream of Israel’s annihilation will never be fulfilled.

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Studies. That welfare use is driven by Hispanics' higher poverty rate—over twice that of whites. Lagging educational attainment and out-of-wedlock child-rearing in turn lie behind those poverty numbers. Hispanics have the highest dropout rate in the country. Over 53 percent of all Hispanic births are to unwed mothers, notwithstanding their “social conservatism,” in Krauthammer’s parlance, compared with 29 percent of white births. Hispanics’ teen-pregnancy rates are the highest of any American racial or ethnic group.

Hispanics’ welfare consumption—and their affinity for the Democratic message—will decline over time as they climb the economic ladder. In the short term, however, Hispanic economic progress is moving too slowly to matter politically. The share of Hispanic households using at least one major welfare program is actually larger in the third generation compared with the second (41 vs. 38 percent), as is the share living below the official poverty line (19 vs. 17 percent), according to the Center for Immigration Studies.

Moreover, Hispanics’ sympathy for big government represents a cultural predilection as well as an economic one. “We are a very compassionate people. We care about other people and understand that government has a role to play in helping people,” John Echeveste, founder of the oldest Latino marketing firm in Southern California, told me, in explaining why Republicans don’t do well among Hispanics.

Is an amnesty nevertheless worth it—a relatively costless way to add to the Republican rolls? (Forget any atavistic and abstract concerns you may have about upholding the rule of law; that battle is lost. Merely raising the issue—or noting that an amnesty would mock the millions of immigrants who *did* respect our laws—is a cringe-inducing faux pas.)

Well, besides a hypothetical uptick in Republican forces, what will the country get with an amnesty? It will almost certainly get an increase in illegal immigration, if historical precedent in the U.S. and Europe holds. It will most certainly *not* get stricter immigration enforcement against illegal aliens who enter after the amnesty. The ideological campaign against penalizing immigration law-breaking is by now unstopplable, and is

exemplified by the remarkable vilification of the Secure Communities initiative. Secure Communities merely notifies federal immigration agents when an illegal alien is arrested and booked into a local jail. But according to the increasingly successful argument against the program, to even *think* of deporting an illegal-alien criminal is unfair and heartless unless he has committed the most heinous of felonies. If it is no longer acceptable in the elite worldview to deport illegal-alien criminals, we’re certainly not going to penalize a job-seeker at a slaughterhouse who presents a fake ID. Even were Republicans to extract an E-Verify program (by which employers electronically check Social Security numbers) in exchange for amnesty, in other words, it would not be backed up by government action.

Ironically, an amnesty may worsen Republicans’ alleged problems with the Hispanic vote in the long term, for it will attract more of the low-skilled, low-educated illegal aliens whose households disproportionately consume government services. Republican open-borders pundits have spent little time in classrooms such as those in Los Angeles’s Pico Rivera district, a low-income barrio southeast of downtown. Were they to do so, they would see the ever-swelling ranks of mostly unionized social-service workers—the anti-gang counselors, the dropout-prevention teams, the English as a Second Language specialists remediating U.S.-born students—who cater to the children of Hispanic single mothers and who themselves increasingly come from Los Angeles’s Hispanic communities, providing yet more electoral support for higher taxes and a larger government sector.

If, however, an amnesty we must have, ideally it would be limited to a DREAM Act-type plan, since the non-complicitous children of lawbreakers have an indisputable moral claim on an exemption from the law. All current DREAM Act proposals allow youthful illegal immigrants with criminal records to qualify for amnesty; any law that is actually passed should require a spotless record and a decent GPA. The no-criminal-history rule applies a fortiori to the broader-based amnesty that undoubtedly will follow. No convictions—even better, no arrests—for shoplifting, assault, drunk driving, graffiti, drug possession or

sales, vandalism, littering, burglary, illegal vending, robbery—nothing.

The open-borders Right regularly insists that immigrants and their children are assimilating at a brisk clip. It would be nice to see them advocating as well, then, an English-only practice in all government communications. No more Tower of Babel ballots; leaving aside the critical question of whether a citizen should muster enough English to be able to read a ballot, once we offer multilingual voting, why shouldn’t *every* foreign language in a locality, no matter how few its speakers, be included? To be sure, learning at least one foreign language should be a cultural imperative for all students. But doing so should not be necessary to communicate with one’s fellow citizens. Any U.S. citizen who moved to a foreign country and expected its companies, residents, and public institutions to start using English with him would rightly be labeled an ugly American.

But the most important quid pro quo for an amnesty would be an overhaul of legal-immigration policy. The status quo privileges immigrants with family members already in the country; the better policy would favor immigrants with skills, education, and the ability to speak English. Democrats will fight such a change tooth and nail because they see the current family-reunification/chain-migration system as favoring their political interests, which they should be presumed to understand rightly.

Millions of Hispanic immigrants and their children have brought an admirable work ethic and respect for authority to this country. They have revitalized sullen ghettos with small businesses. Leaving aside amnesty, what should Republicans do to woo them? Nothing different from what they should already be doing with any other group of citizens: explaining the beauty of free enterprise and the creative power of markets; and stressing the essential role of personal responsibility, self-discipline, and learning in getting ahead. The Republican message should not be tailored to ethnic or gender groups. Nor should race or gender play a role in selecting political nominees. Ideas, achievement, and eloquence should be the only criteria for political advancement, a rule that will allow plenty of minority candidates—Marco Rubio comes most immediately to mind—to flourish. **NR**



# Obama's Coddled Elites

*An overlooked piece of the election jigsaw puzzle*

BY MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

**P**ITY Mitt Romney. He couldn't get even the 1 percent. Not only did President Obama carry eight of the nation's ten richest counties as measured by average annual household income; he carried them by a margin greater, CNBC reported, than that in the overall vote.

Things have changed since the days when swells in evening clothes went down to the Trans-Lux to hiss Roosevelt.

I should have had an inkling of this when, on the Monday before the election, I was hanging out with a dozen guys in my town in northern Westchester County, N.Y., which the Census Bureau identifies as the poorest of the country's ten priciest counties. Like Fairfield County, Conn., and Morris County, N.J., Westchester was once a Republican redoubt, home to people who'd done well under free enterprise and could be

expected to resist Washington's efforts to tamper with it. But when, that Monday, a quantity of Bushmills had been consumed and talk turned to the election, a show of hands revealed an 8-3 majority for Obama.

What happened?

It's not news that the Republican party puts off a lot of people in places like Westchester. In an interview with Bob Woodward, President Obama dismissed House speaker John Boehner as "a golf-playing, cigarette-smoking, country-club Republican." Such rare birds may still be extant in the Ohio Valley, but they are virtually extinct east of the Alleghenies, where the Thurston Howellses of today's yacht clubs and golf clubs associate the GOP with Bible-thumping yokels in the sticks.

Coastal elites have, as a rule, little firsthand knowledge of the flyover counties where such strength as the Republican party retains is concentrated; they imagine it a sinister, hick world of tattoo parlors and trailer parks, part *Deliverance*, part *Children of the Corn*, where, to the muezzin music of

the rebel yell, Evangelical hillbillies clinging to guns and religion interbreed with the spawn of banjo-strumming red-necks formed on the model of G. W. Harris's Sut Lovingood, the backcountry cracker who says that if "ever yu dus enything to eny body wifout cause, yu hates em allers arterwards, an' sorter wants tu hurt em agin."

It was just possible, before the election, to imagine that the broken economy would incite the white-collar coastal squirearchy to put down the glass of Merlot and join forces with toothless Appalachia itself to restore fiscal sanity in Washington. But cultural style trumped economic substance in counties like Westchester, where well-heeled voters affected to take President Obama at his word when he said that he was a free-enterprise man who believed in "self-reliance and individual initiative and risk-takers" being rewarded.

Naïveté in higher suburbia? To be sure. But before casting judgment on a man, drive a mile in his Range Rover. If, in your 25,000-square-foot McMansion with a carbon footprint the size of Liechtenstein's, your leisure is absorbed in anxiety about subsidized contraceptives for the masses and the integrity of the ecosystem, you have little time to keep track of the various trillions being promiscuously squandered in Washington. And why *should* you keep track of them, when the most respectable oracles of the coastal suburbs—the *New York Times*, PBS, Diane Sawyer, Andrea Mitchell, David Letterman, *et alia*—readily assure you that under President Obama "it's all good"?

Of course, voting for a politician on account of free condoms for the proletariat or the well-being of the stubfoot toad is a luxury if you are having a hard time keeping your family fed. Counties like Westchester, however, have been insulated from the worst effects of the underperforming economy. The unemployment rate here was 7.3 percent in September (the national rate was supposedly 7.9 percent), and in suburban Westchester the rate was almost certainly lower still. (Yonkers, the most populous city in the county, has an unemployment rate of 9 percent and drives up the county's numbers.) Wrapped in the protective membrane

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DARREN GYGI

nurtured by President Obama's policies—the placenta of the privileged—the Westchester and Fairfield and Morris counties of America are splendidly isolated from the reality of President Obama's America. Herein lies a clue to the mystery of the president's reelection.

Few or no politicians on either side of the aisle are innocent of the art of using pork to coddle favored constituencies. But today's Democrats have simultaneously degraded the art into a trade and elevated it into a science. For four consecutive years the president has run up trillion-dollar deficits to succor voting blocs essential to his reelection. Public-sector unions rejoice in policies that promise to nurse thousands of new tax gatherers and health-care clerks at

money," "going Weimar," and "fantasy dollars" are not as verbally attractive as that vague but comforting formulation, "quantitative easing." Who in this fallen world would not be eased? Actually, the Fed itself calls quantitative easing by an even more opaque name—"policy accommodation," the effort to promote growth through purchases of securities from banks to the tune of \$85 billion a month. (The fiat cash is electronic now, so you don't need wheelbarrows to cart it around.)

Anthony Randazzo, writing in *Reason*, points out that quantitative easing is "a regressive redistribution program" that boosts "wealth for those already engaged in the financial sector or those who already own homes." It passes "little along to the

lawyers in the age of Obama.

The very people who used to provide the Republican party with crucial electoral support are being corrupted by the president, who is turning them into wards of the state. He steadily resists letting them do the one thing they are really good at: enlarging the economy through investment. The one perk the president doesn't want the well-off to have, a low capital-gains tax, is precisely the one that encourages those who have capital to share it with the rest of us by bankrolling new enterprise.

The Democrats have long had a lock on the votes of the poor, the unions, the public-sector workers, and the academic-media clerisy. But the prosperous suburbs, although they have been trending

## For four consecutive years the president has run up trillion-dollar deficits to succor voting blocs essential to his reelection.

the public teat. The president bailed out Chrysler and General Motors on the taxpayers' dime; women are promised free birth control as part of Obamacare, which also spares the plaintiffs' bar fee-killing tort reform.

In like spirit, the administration took care to ensure that its economic incompetence would not drive America's prosperous, blue-leaning suburbs into the red camp of Republicanism. Three initiatives go far to explain how the president has kept not only Range Rover moms but also BMW dads in the Democratic fold:

1. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act makes Washington's tacit policy of "too big to fail" the law of the land, freeing money mavens from the fear that once tempered their avarice—that of losing their shirts. In prosperous suburbs that depend on the big banks for the weekly caviar klatsch, voters are pleased that, thanks to Washington's promise to continue subsidizing failed risk-taking, the good times will go on . . . and on, until the American Republic goes the way of the Roman one.

2. Like the functionaries in Dickens's Circumlocution Office, Washington's potentates are all but incapable of calling things by straightforward names. Considered merely as slogans, "printing

rest of the economy" and is a "primary driver" of income inequality and crony capitalism. Mitt Romney's promise to get rid of Ben Bernanke, whose policies are driven by the president's own, probably hurt Republican chances in Richtopian America as much as anything else.

3. The American Action Forum recently found that the Obama administration has added "more than \$488 billion in regulatory costs since January 20, 2009—\$70 billion in 2012 alone." The AAF observes that \$488 billion is only the cost *floor*, not the ceiling, and that it is "a tremendous burden on private entities and local governments," amounting to "more than U.S. GDP growth from the past three quarters (\$442 billion)."

Regulatory compliance is a drag on the economy, but it's good for lawyers, who are disproportionately represented in upper suburbia. They were hit harder in this recession than previous ones, in part because law schools have graduated too many of them. President Obama promises to correct the problem. The Roman lawyers in the age of Constantine, Gibbon said, had "an inexhaustible supply of business in a great empire already corrupted by the multiplicity of laws, of arts, and of vices." The same will soon be true of American

blue for years, did not seem a lost cause to the Republicans. Until now. The gender gap once offered the GOP a ray of light in these jurisdictions—surely the most successful white-collar *men* would break for the Republican nominee in a year when the Democratic incumbent had badly botched things. But men themselves are changing. Their sense of liberty, as Gibbon wrote in a similar context, has become "less exquisite." The Left has a monopoly of the nation's schools, and its program of "socializing" the individual—that is, reducing him, in Hannah Arendt's words, to "the level of a conditioned and behaving animal"—has succeeded in taming even the recalcitrant male of the species, and has gotten him, if not to love, by no means altogether to hate Big Brother.

Gibbon said that the Romans in their last decay "were incapable of discerning the decline of genius and manly virtue, which so far degraded them below the dignity of their ancestors; but they could feel and lament the rage of tyranny, the relaxation of discipline, and the increase of taxes." If only our brightest suburbs *could* feel the relaxation of fiscal discipline and the increase of taxes. The cunning prodigality of the president has (temporarily) preserved them from the reality.

NR

# Against the Tide

*Notes on the culture and what's possible*

BY JAY NORDLINGER

RESIDENT OBAMA ran an ad saying, “Mitt Romney. Not one of us.” That’s putting it pretty bluntly. Nixon used to talk that way, but only privately. “Is he one of us?” I’m not exactly sure who Obama’s us is. But Romney is not one of them. Neither am I, and neither, possibly, are you. In 2004, the Democrats’ vice-presidential nominee, John Edwards, went around saying there were “two Americas.” He meant rich and poor. Are there two Americas when it comes to culture and morality? (Scary word, that last one.) It would seem so, yes. And it’s clear which America is on top.

Romney was a man out of his time, in a way. Out of time and out of step. He was a throwback—a conservative businessman who believed in free enterprise, loved his church, gave a ton to charity. He didn’t even drink, poor devil. “The Sixties left no mark on him,” people observed. Some thought this was great, others bad.

Toward the end of the campaign, the *New York Times* ran a very good article that marveled at Romney’s language. The headline was, “Gosh, Who Talks Like That Now? Romney Does.” For some, the GOP candidate was too square for words. On a morning show, David Axelrod, Obama’s political strategist, said of Romney, “He’s just in a time warp.” After the election, the *Washington Post* ran a column headed “The Republicans’ 1950s campaign.”

One of Obama’s ads featured an actress named Lena Dunham. It was pitched to young women, and to the hook-up culture they inhabit, and almost everybody inhabits. “Your first time shouldn’t be with just anybody,” said the actress. “You want to do it with a great guy.” She was not talking about a husband. (Don’t mean to shock you.) In a country where this ad succeeds, rather than backfiring, can someone like Mitt Romney be elected?

“The culture is a sewer,” I once heard Mark Helprin say. This very morning, I saw an ad on a cab that was frankly, unblushingly pornographic. T. S. Eliot wrote, “Paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space.” He hadn’t seen anything.

Obviously, this question of two Americas—a cultural divide—has been around for years. In 1999, Gertrude Himmelfarb published a book called *One Nation, Two Cultures*. There is the dominant culture, she said, and a more conservative culture—a “dissident culture,” in her words. The book came out in the wake of the Lewinsky affair, which pitted Bill Clinton versus Ken Starr. There could hardly be two more different Americans. Which one is the nation’s sweetheart? And which one was resoundingly demonized?

“It takes a village,” said Hillary Clinton. “It takes a village to raise a child.” In an important sense, it does. The child is shaped by everything around him, in the home and out. In the mid-1980s, Tipper Gore wrote a book called *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*. Gore and her husband were dabbling in a kind of social conservatism at the time. Frank Zappa and other cool cats mocked and reviled them. The Gores quickly got with the program, dropping the stodgy stuff and rising in the Democratic party.

Who runs the village? What are the forces that shape men and women? Well, we could name education, K through graduate school. The movies. Popular music. Entertainment television. The news media. In all of these areas, the Left holds sway. Where does the Right hold sway? Country music, talk radio, NASCAR—it’s hard to go on.

One brief word about education: The Apgar Foundation is devoted to supporting Western civilization on college campuses. I serve on its board. Often, we’re involved in efforts to establish Great Books programs, or Great Works programs. We want students to have the opportunity to know Locke, Beethoven, and other such folk. You might be shocked at the resistance we get from administrators and faculty. They think it’s all a right-wing plot (which, perversely, it is, in a way). In a speech a few years ago, Bernard Lewis reflected on his own field, Middle East studies, and academia in general. He said we are seeing “a

degree of thought control and limitations of freedom of expression without parallel in the Western world since the 18th century, and in some areas longer than that.”

Now and then, young editors and writers at NATIONAL REVIEW will say to me, “Lighten up—it’s no big deal. Yes, the Left dominates, but *we* turned out all right. Plus, it’s fun to be embattled. It’s fun to swim against the tide.” The answer is, it’s fun for some—but inconceivable, or at least unattractive, for others. Most people go with the flow. It has probably always been this way, in every time and place. It’s unnatural to come out from the world and be separate. People like to think of themselves as rebels, with or without a cause. Very few are.

One brief word about Hollywood: For as long as most of us can remember, businessmen in movies have been villains. Heroes have been such people as environmental activists. During the recent campaign, the Left used “Bain” as a scare word, a bogey word: “Bain!” (Bain Capital, of course, is the business that Mitt Romney co-founded.) In late December, a new Matt Damon movie will come out. According to reports, it will portray hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, as evil. The movie is bankrolled by Gulf Arabs. Fracking would be a boon to American energy, without harm to the environment. But can you fight City Hall? Can you fight Hollywood? Many more people watch Matt Damon movies than bother to learn anything about oil production.

Since Election Day, conservatives have been morose, understandably. Morose and defeatist. “We’ve done our best,” some say. “Let’s just give up—quit politics, and tend to private life, such as it is. Let’s look after our families, our places of worship, our friends. The culture is lost to us. Politics follows culture. We’ll cling to our guns and religion, just as Obama said we do.” These conservatives are resigned (for the moment) to being a Remnant. Or to living in a kind of dhimmitude, whereby we’re tolerated by the majority culture, but know our place.

Back in 1999, Paul Weyrich wrote a letter that prompted an interesting conservative debate. He said, “We need to drop out of this culture, and find places, even if it is where we physically are right now, where we can live godly, righteous and sober lives.” The temptation to drop out—a phrase Weyrich borrowed from

Timothy Leary and the gang—may be strong. But for those who want to resist, there are options.

Conservatives can do two things, as far as I can tell: They can make as many inroads as possible into Left bastions; and they can build their own bastions. The day after Election Day, my colleague Mona Charen went on National Public Radio. The other guests on the program were “exultant liberals,” as she put it. Her job was to be the token—the dhimmi, if you will. Was she right to participate, or should she have left the field to the Left? She was right. By what she said, she may have made an inroad—may have reached someone.

The Witherspoon Institute is an inroad. It’s an elegant little conservative speck on the Princeton University campus. It is tolerated, apparently, as a dhimmi. Let us have more Witherspoon Institutes, if we can. Incidentally, public records tell us that 157 Princeton faculty and staff contributed to the presidential nominees this year. One hundred fifty-five contributed to Obama, two to Romney. The two were a visiting lecturer in engineering and a janitor. (The janitor, interviewed by the

student newspaper, said he made his donation out of pro-life convictions.)

Then there is building your own—your own institutions, your own bastions. Not just your own Witherspoon Institutes, valuable as they are, but your own Princetons (much harder). In 1986, Sidney Blumenthal wrote a book called *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*—meaning our establishment, the conservative establishment: our think tanks, magazines, etc. Blumenthal hated that establishment. Anyway, let’s make it bigger. Let’s have more publications, more TV stations, more charter schools, maybe a movie studio or two. More of everything, more “counter.”

Another colleague of mine, David Pryce-Jones, was talking the other day about the need to press on. The need to resist defeatism, and to counter. He mentioned that he was recently contacted by a man from the BBC. This came out of the blue. The man said, “I want to talk to you. You’re the only person I’ve ever come across who has the same ideas I do. I dare not open my mouth, where I work.” Well, there’s one BBC man. Maybe there will be others, and maybe, with numbers, they will feel bolder. Many of us have had people from “mainstream” organizations “come out” to us. A nice experience.

Pryce-Jones also spoke about the little magazines that sprouted after the war, when Communism was making strides in the democratic world. These were humane, anti-Communist magazines: *Encounter* in Britain; *Preuves* in France; *Der Monat* in West Germany; *Quadrant* down in Australia. They made a difference. They were eventually damned as CIA creations, but they still made a difference—they told the truth. And “think of George Orwell,” said Pryce-Jones: He was dying of tuberculosis, but he used the very last of his strength to write *1984*. That made a difference. It struck a blow, a blow from which Communism and the Left reeled for a long time.

We don’t all have the talent of Orwell (or Pryce-Jones). But we can do what we can, in our myriad ways. Here a little, there a little, chipping away, defending, advancing where possible. Setting an example. Providing an alternative. Reminding people of the better angels of their nature. Standing for what we regard as true, whether it’s popular or not. **NR**

# Who Cares?

*That’s what voters want to know*

BY JOHN O’SULLIVAN

**A**LMOST anyone who has studied the Declaration of Independence has been told at some point that, in reality, it offers Americans the sober promise of life, liberty, and property rather than the heady but qualified utopianism of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. “Pursuit” is a general get-out clause, of course. “Happiness” would have been understood by a gentleman farmer of the late 18th century as meaning a state of life that makes contentment possible, i.e., the secure possession of property. And the most liberal of Whigs would have known that no kind of political regime could guarantee its citizens a psychological state of well-being. No government official can compensate Jack for the fact that Jill loves someone else.

That said, the full committee drafting the Declaration crossed out “property” and inserted “the pursuit of happiness.” At the very least they intended to convey a nuance. And as the age of scarcity recedes into history, the voters seem more and more disposed to agree that the U.S. government should offer more to them than the opportunity to accumulate property and the right to its secure enjoyment.

There are many explanations of why President Obama won the election just completed: His GOTV organization was better; he effectively demonized his opponent by an early negative-campaigning blitz; the ethnic balance of the electorate had shifted in his favor; the white working-class voters who might have compensated for this shift stayed at home; Mitt Romney was ill suited to win their votes; etc., etc. But one factor seems to have been present in most of these explanations—namely, that the Republican party was seen as a cold, aloof, mercenary, and self-interested



Where the power is

party with no interest in promoting the happiness of the people, however defined, and that Romney was all too representative of his party. In short: The GOP didn't care about ordinary Americans. The Democrats fixed on this image, reinforced it, and were able to play on it in relation to every item of political controversy.

The American Enterprise Institute's polling expert recently cited a very revealing exploitation of this trend from Canadian politics. When Michael Ignatieff, a policy academic much respected by the United Nations and other bodies, returned to Canada to head the Liberal party, his Conservative opponents ran a series of ads lampooning his personal aloofness, his transnational sympathies, and his long absence with the slogan: "He didn't come back for you." Ignatieff was the leader of the "caring" party and he had a long and creditable record of support for human rights. But these things did not insulate him. The charge that Ignatieff was a remote, ambitious intellectual with no interest in ordinary Canadians struck home; the Tories won; the Liberals slipped to third place.

In the U.S. election, the Democrats' exploitation of this same theme had its most surprising impact in relation to contraception and abortion. Considered as single issues, neither made any sense (even when aggravated by occasional clumsy comments on rape from individual candidates). Republican candidates don't oppose easy access to contraception; the GOP's maximalist position on abortion is to return it to the states for decision. And though most Americans oppose most abortions, more women than men do so. One opinion expert was thus puzzled to discover that the Democrats' charge of a war on women, though implausible on its face, had seemingly won over even some conservative women like herself. She concluded tentatively that women thought of it as an expression of concern for them at a time of widespread economic and emotional insecurity.

It is an odd expression of concern, but the election results seem to bear out this view. Married women (who presumably enjoy more of both sorts of security than their unmarried sisters) voted heavily for the GOP. Single women, with or

without children, went strongly Democratic. But they outnumbered their married sisters; and, in this election, women voters as a whole outnumbered their male counterparts by a substantial 54 to 46 percent. If family breakdown and marital instability continue to rise, therefore, both political parties will be faced with a large and growing constituency of voters who look to government not only for support but even for signs of concern. What goes for single women is equally true for other blocs of voters, such as the elderly retired who are dependent on government. And at least some other electoral blocs, not directly wanting state aid, nonetheless judge political parties by the degree to which they show such concern for others.

Three points should be made about this. The first is that governments, unfortunately, cannot solve the deep social problems that lie at the root of the unhappiness of these large groups. They can alleviate their distress in practical ways, such as providing the right kind of income support; they can avoid making their problems worse through perverse incentives, such as, e.g., preferring welfare over work; and they can shape law and social policy to encourage more responsible behavior, for instance, holding men responsible for their children.

There will need to be a change in the social attitudes of ordinary Americans, and of elites as well. The campaign against smoking succeeded largely because it was a campaign conducted by almost all respectable people (with the exception of a few principled libertarians) against a minority that felt guilty about its habit. Indeed, the campaign went farther than it should have in bullying people. Its tactics needed, in my view, a stronger cause to justify them. But it does show what a social campaign can achieve once elites put their shoulders behind it—as Victorian elites put their shoulders behind the cause of stabilizing family life and reducing crime.

The second point follows from this: It is that concern for others cannot be reduced to expressing sympathy for them. Concern will often, indeed usually, require straight-talking to those whose problems are self-generated. They know their own situation well and will see

uncritical "caring" as glossing over their real problems and likely to run into the sand. Republicans are in fact better equipped than Democrats to offer this "tough love" to suffering groups because they are widely seen to be more practical and realistic in their overall approach.

Third, talk is cheap. And "compassionate conservatism"—which my Hudson Institute colleague Michael Horowitz defines as offering half of whatever financial benefits the Democrats offer—is cheaper still. Voters have been exposed to self-interested political boasting about compassion for so long that they increasingly react like Emerson: "The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted the spoons."

The hunger in the electorate is less for a specific welfare policy than for evidence that a political party has got an authentic interest in ameliorating people's distress. That can be provided in this case only by the Republicans' actually doing things—especially things that run counter to the caricature of Republicans in popular culture. Horowitz has developed a range of such practical policies under the general rubric of the Wilberforce Agenda, and he has constructed a series of coalitions to push them through. It's a heterogeneous collection of reforms that includes a campaign against sex trafficking (the equivalent of slavery in our time), measures to assist Christians threatened by persecution worldwide, and the funding of techniques to circumvent the Internet firewalls erected by dictatorial regimes to prevent millions of their citizens from accessing news independently. The most interesting idea from the standpoint of getting the Republicans reconsidered by the American people is the prevention of prison rape. This is a widespread and horrible crime, but it is treated in the popular culture merely as a dirty joke. Laws have been passed against it, but they are hardly enforced. The assumption of most people would be that this is the kind of social evil that the Right would never care about. It is the kind of social evil that the nation and the administration seem not to care about.

It is therefore the kind of social evil that the GOP should tackle as soon as possible as a down payment on its future reputation. **NR**

# The Activism to Come

*Obama could shift the Supreme Court far to the left*

BY EDWARD WHELAN

**P**RESENTED the gift of two Supreme Court seats to fill in his first 15 months in office, Barack Obama appointed liberals Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. Given their relative youth—Sotomayor was 55 when appointed, and Kagan only 50—Obama likely cemented their seats on the left for the next two or three decades.

In his second term, President Obama could, depending on which vacancies arise, push the Court further leftward and engender a new era of aggressive liberal judicial activism. At the very least, he is likely to entrench another seat on the left.

As a backdrop for assessing the damage that Obama might inflict, let's consider the current state of the Court along two dimensions: ideology and age.

In rough ideological terms, the Court currently consists of four judicial conservatives (John Roberts, the chief justice—in my judgment, the Obama-care ruling provides no basis for reclassifying his general position on the ideological spectrum—along with Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito) and four liberals (Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan). Then there's the swing justice, Anthony Kennedy, who has swung with the liberals in some huge cases and with the conservatives in others. For example, Kennedy provided the critical fifth vote in 1992 to retain *Roe v. Wade* and in 2003 to invent a constitutional right to homosexual activity, yet he also joined (and presumably authored) the majority opinion in *Bush v. Gore* and wrote the *Citizens United* ruling against campaign-finance restrictions.

As for age, the nine justices can be

grouped into two cohorts. In the older cohort are Ginsburg (79), Scalia (76), Kennedy (76), and Breyer (74)—two liberals, a conservative, and Kennedy. In the younger cohort, the conservatives—Thomas (64), Alito (62), and Roberts (57)—currently have a three-to-two edge over the liberals—Sotomayor, now 58, and Kagan, the youngster at 52. (It's striking that Thomas, who has been on the Court for more than two decades, is only two years older than Alito.)

Combining these dimensions, we see that if Obama is able, say, to replace both Ginsburg and either Scalia or Kennedy with liberals in their 50s, he will establish a liberal majority on the so-called Roberts Court and create a four-to-three edge for liberals among the younger justices. If he is somehow able to replace Ginsburg, Scalia, and Kennedy with young liberals, he will likely ensure two or three decades of liberal dominance of the Court.

Which departures from the Court might occur over the next four years? In the realm of involuntary departures, it is hazardous and unpleasant to anticipate who might be struck by death or disabling illness, though as a statistical

matter, any such departures would of course more likely come from justices in the older age cohort.

As for retirements in the ordinary course: Ginsburg has repeatedly stated her goal of at least equaling the nearly 23-year tenure of Justice Louis Brandeis (a favorite predecessor of Ginsburg's). To do that, she would need to remain on the Court until at least April 2016 (and she'd surely aim to stay through the June completion of any Court term she starts). The prospect that Ginsburg might defer her retirement until the year of the next presidential election will fill progressives with dread.

Back in 2011, Harvard law professor Randall Kennedy called Ginsburg and Breyer irresponsible for not enabling Obama to replace them in his first term. Already some voices are suggesting that Ginsburg should instead stay on the Court until she matches the age (82 years and three months) at which Brandeis retired—which she would do in June 2015. Look for the pressure on Ginsburg to step down no later than then to intensify sharply, and look for Ginsburg to give in to it.

None of the other justices in the older



Supreme Court Building, Washington, D.C.

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cohort has given any signal of intending to retire. Scalia has stated the obvious proposition that he “would not like to be replaced by someone who immediately sets about undoing everything that [he has] tried to do.” He, Kennedy, and Breyer all appear to be in good health, and, absent a debilitating illness, it is difficult to see why any of them would have an incentive to leave the bench.

So the most likely scenario during Obama’s second term is that the only vacancy he will have to fill is Ginsburg’s seat. But conservatives shouldn’t take much solace from this forecast. If Obama succeeds in replacing Ginsburg, he will lock up her seat on the left for another generation. Plus, there is still a substantial chance that the less favorable scenarios could arise.

The parlor game of identifying Supreme Court candidates is already under way, and the roster of names being flung about is a resounding testament to how thin the Democratic bench is and to how much the Left elevates considerations of diversity over those of quality. For starters, it’s remarkable that, even after Obama’s appointments of Sotomayor and Kagan, savvy folks such as SCOTUSblog’s Tom Goldstein take it as a given that Obama’s replacement of Ginsburg would have to be another woman. It’s even more striking that the “ideal nominee” that Goldstein comes up with (and a name that others are now echoing) is California attorney general Kamala Harris, who has zero judicial experience and offers no evidence of being an intellectual heavy-weight. Goldstein may well be right to perceive that what matters most to progressives is that Harris is one of them (quite far left, in fact) and that she would be the first black woman on the Court.

One big question is whether Obama, now that he no longer is constrained by the desire to win reelection, will seek to nominate the “liberal lions” that progressives have been clamoring for.

If so, Seventh Circuit judge Diane Wood, who was a runner-up to both Sotomayor and Kagan, might well be a short-lister again if a vacancy arises soon. But she’s already 62, and her aggressive record on an array of culture-war issues might well lead the White House to pass over her again. Stanford law professor

Pam Karlan, 53, would excite the Left but likely alienate everyone else. The names of some Hispanic women are also being floated, but, under the unwritten rules of the diversity game, there is no way that Obama will nominate a second Hispanic before he nominates his first African American.

My own judgment is that Obama might instead replace Ginsburg with a man, especially if he were achieving another diversity first, such as the first Asian nominee. State Department legal adviser and former Yale Law School dean Harold Koh, who turns 58 soon, has long been a favorite of the Left (even if some now regard him as a war criminal for defending drone strikes), but his fervent support for progressive transnationalism would make his nomination intensely controversial. Plus, in the course of fighting internal administration battles, he has made some influential enemies.

And then there’s Goodwin Liu, now 42, the former Berkeley law professor whose Ninth Circuit nomination was blocked last year by a Senate filibuster, with one Democrat joining Senate Republicans. Now that he has spent an uneventful year on the California supreme court, Liu’s supporters are trying to rehabilitate him. But while Liu’s boundless ambition will lead him to lie low for a few years, nothing can erase the aggressive left-wing ideology that he manifested in his previous writings and speeches, his apparent efforts to conceal many of the most incendiary of them from the Senate, and his wildly implausible confirmation testimony. No nominee should arouse more determined opposition than Liu.

Unless the composition of the Senate changes dramatically in two years, Senate Republicans will have little prospect of defeating an Obama nominee to the Supreme Court in an up-or-down vote. That fact shouldn’t deter Republicans from fighting the nominee vigorously on grounds of judicial philosophy, just as they effectively made the case against Sotomayor and Kagan (even winning one Democratic vote against Kagan). And, depending on how aggressive Obama gets and on whom he is replacing, we may well see a high-stakes filibuster battle.

# Redeeming Obamacare

*How to introduce the Affordable Care Act to free markets*

BY AVIK ROY

SOMETIMES it is hard to accept defeat. On December 18, 1974, Teruo Nakamura, the last known holdout from the Imperial Japanese Army, finally surrendered to Indonesian authorities. It may take three decades, too, for some conservatives to accept the defeat of the movement to repeal Obamacare. But just as Japan reinvented itself after World War II to become one of the wealthiest countries in the world, there is an opportunity in this moment: for conservatives to coalesce around a long-term strategy for reforming our entitlements and liberating our health-care system.

The first thing to understand about Obamacare is that its existence stems directly from a blind spot in the post-war conservative movement. The coalition forged by Bill Buckley and others in the 1950s—famously, a fusion of anti-Communists, free-marketeers, and cultural conservatives—focused, in practice, on lowering taxes and defeating the Soviets. Health-care policy rarely appeared on conservatives’ radar.

Progressives, by contrast, from the Truman administration on, have had one public-policy goal above all others: universal, single-payer health care. And they have been spectacularly successful at sneaking health-care half-loaves into their policy agenda. Even LBJ, with historically large Democratic majorities, couldn’t push single-payer through Congress. Instead, he created health-care programs for the very poor (Medicaid) and the elderly (Medicare), leaving everyone else, in theory, in the private system.

In 1967, Congress projected that Medicare would cost a modest \$12 billion in 1990, inclusive of inflation. Actual Medicare spending in 1990 was not \$12

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NR

billion, however, but \$110 billion. This year, we spent \$550 billion on Medicare. Ten years from now, the Congressional Budget Office projects that we will spend \$1.1 trillion on the program. When it comes to health care, liberals' half-loaves always seem to grow into industrial bakeries. Another example: the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or S-CHIP, created in 1997 by a Republican Congress at the behest of Ted Kennedy. A decade and a half later, one in four American children are enrolled in this Medicaid-like program.

Conservatives, by contrast, have never coalesced around a vision of what a free-market health-care system would look like. As a result, Republicans' compromises have been myopically tactical, and have tended to move health care in a liberal, rather than a conservative, direction.

Republicans criticized LBJ's original Medicare bill as *too modest*, because it didn't cover physician services, a flaw that Democrats were quite happy to correct in the final product. In 1974, as a conservative alternative to single-payer, Richard Nixon proposed a "Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan" that would have forced all employers to provide costly, government-defined coverage to their workers. In 1993, as an alternative to Hillarycare, Republicans rallied around a bill sponsored by Senator John Chafee (R., R.I.) that proposed an individual mandate.

From 2001 to 2006, when Republicans occupied the White House and controlled most of Congress, they did not push for large-scale, free-market health-care reform. Their most significant health-care legislation, the 2003 Medicare prescription-drug law, contained some salutary reforms but left the broader health-care system largely unchanged. Instead, Republicans focused on lowering taxes, prosecuting the War on Terror, and funneling taxpayer dollars to their constituencies.

This is not to say that no Republican has ever proposed far-reaching reforms. Some have. But lack of interest among the broader conservative movement meant that good market-based proposals went nowhere. Republican politicians never faced pressure from the conservative base to reform health care in a conservative direction. Contrast that to the 2008 Democratic primaries, in which universal

coverage was a main focus for candidates and activists alike.

It is often said, by both liberals and conservatives, that Obamacare moves America in a European direction. But this is a flawed conception. For one thing, per capita government health-care spending in the United States was the third-highest in the world in 2009, prior to the passage of Obamacare. In that year, federal and state governments spent \$3,795 per person on health care in the U.S. The French, by contrast, spent only \$3,100. Canada spent \$3,081, Sweden \$3,033, Belgium \$2,964. And the most socialized system in the developed world—the British National Health Service—spent a mere \$2,935 per person. In other words, if we measure health-care statism by the amount our government spends on the category, the U.S. is already more statist than our "European" peers.

The other big misconception is that the U.S. has a "free-market" health-care system, whereas the rest of the developed world suffers (or benefits) from single-payer welfarism. One can make the case that, in certain ways, the French health-care system is more market-oriented than America's. The U.S. system is far more statist than those of the two world leaders: Singapore and Switzerland. The Swiss model, in particular, provides American conservatives with a strategic road map for achieving a fiscally sustainable, market-oriented, private-sector health-care system.

In Switzerland, government spending on health care is less than 3 percent of gross domestic product. By contrast, U.S. government health-care spending approaches 8 percent of GDP. Despite spending far less than we do, the Swiss have achieved universal health coverage, in a system composed entirely of private insurers. Because Swiss citizens purchase insurance for themselves on a government-regulated market, instead of having it chosen for them, Swiss insurers are focused on reducing cost and improving quality.

The strengths of the American system are also those of Switzerland's. The Swiss enjoy nearly complete freedom to choose their own doctor, and have access to all the latest medical technologies. Waiting times for doctors' appointments are similar to those in the U.S.

The Swiss system is no libertarian

utopia. It includes an individual mandate. It requires that insurers provide a specified set of minimum benefits, but also requires that beneficiaries pick up a meaningful portion of the costs of their own care, so as to incentivize frugality. Indeed, in 2003, 42 percent of Swiss citizens opted for high-deductible health plans of the kind advocated by American conservatives. Swiss citizens who seek additional coverage are free to purchase it, and the Swiss cover the poor by offering low-income citizens a means-tested premium subsidy with which to purchase insurance for themselves.

If this approach sounds vaguely familiar, it should. Paul Ryan's proposals for Medicare reform borrow heavily from the Swiss model. And so does a key portion of Obamacare: the law's subsidized, state-based exchanges for certain low- to middle-income Americans. Both the Ryan reforms and Obamacare provide means-tested premium subsidies for certain Americans to shop for insurance on a regulated market. And this commonality sows the seeds of what could be, in the long term, a strategic victory for free-market health care.

Obamacare, of course, has many destructive features. The law dramatically expands Medicaid, America's worst health-care program, and makes matters worse by cutting payments to health-care providers, which will drive hospitals and doctors out of business. The law raises taxes by \$1.2 trillion over the next ten years. It significantly increases the cost of health insurance, through burdensome mandates and regulations. Above all, it deeply injures our already damaged constitutional tradition of individual and local autonomy.

But Obamacare's one Swiss-like component—its state-based insurance exchanges—provides a ray of hope. Imagine an alternative universe in which Obamacare's exchanges had entirely replaced Medicare and Medicaid, instead of being used to expand coverage. Such an outcome would have been justly viewed as a conservative triumph.

The Obamacare subsidies apply only, on a sliding scale, to those below 400 percent of the federal poverty level: \$60,520 for a two-person household. Ryan's plan, by contrast, subsidizes every retiree, regardless of income, though his proposals do apply modest means-

# HANSON ON OBAMA

*The heralded historian separates the Dream from the Reality, as only he can, in this rivetting new collection of his acclaimed National Review Online columns*

No writer in America has delivered a more consistent, intelligent, and stark critique of Barack Obama than has Victor Davis Hanson, the esteemed historian of things ancient and modern, in his weekly column and writings for *National Review Online*. We've assembled his very best columns and articles—126 in all, written with Hanson's renowned perception and perspective, taking readers from the throes of the 2008 presidential election, through the tumult of Obamacare's imposition on America, and to the consequential liberal setbacks of the 2010 election races—in this big (over 500 pages) new collection that you must have.

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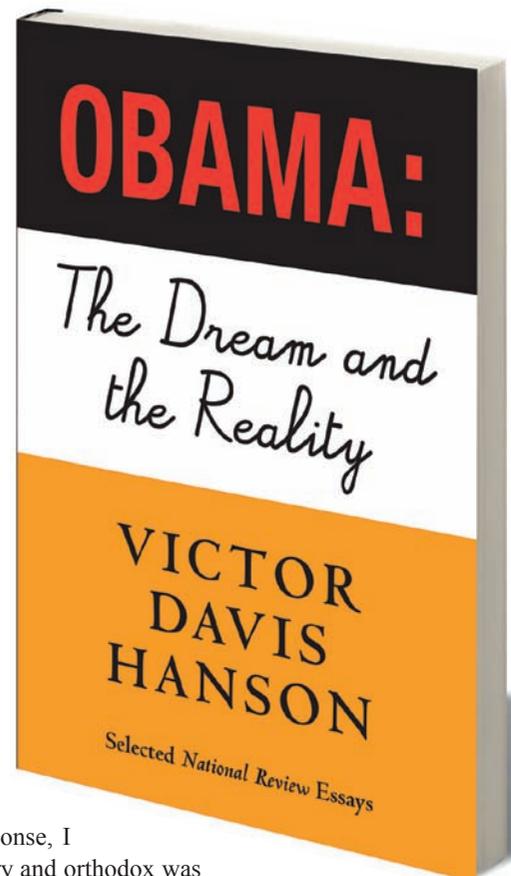
Writing with unflinching wisdom about Obama, Hanson's collected thought, in this brilliant new NRO "best of," truly separates the Dream of the Community Organizer from the Reality of a President. From the book's Preface:

First, as I watched the rise of Barack Obama, I was struck by just how little we knew of his past or present life, his political agendas—and how even less we were going to know, given the media effort neither to report nor analyze fully any matters perceived to be injurious to the Obama cause. In response, I tried, as many did during the Obama ascendancy, to point out how contradictory and orthodox was the reality of his hope and change agenda, an assessment more than borne out by the record of his first-term in office.

Second, I confess to a certain naiveté. While I accurately predicted that the Rev. Wright matter, inconsistency in both Obama's campaign and governance, his often clumsy proclamations, and a certain petulance with critics and boredom with the mechanics of governance would all conspire to end the 2008 Obama hysteria and later send his presidential polls plummeting, I underestimated the resiliency of Obama, the candidate and the president—and in particular his iconic value.

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testing. So Obamacare's exchanges, if applied to Medicare, would result in significantly less spending than the Ryan plan would, while still providing comprehensive insurance to those who can't afford it on their own.

In this way, we begin to conceive of a strategy for gradually converting the broken U.S. health-care and entitlement system into one of Swiss-like efficiency and fiscal sustainability.

Step One of this new strategy would be to improve the market orientation of Obamacare's insurance exchanges. The exchanges are larded with excessive mandates and regulations that will drive up the cost of their insurance products. Republicans in Congress should require the Department of Health and Human Services to reduce this regulatory burden. The centerpiece of their message ought to be: "Democrats want to raise the cost of your health insurance. We want to lower it."

And red states shouldn't feel obligated to hew to Obamacare's restrictions. Last summer's Supreme Court decision gave states significant leverage in their health-care dealings with Washington. Utah, for example, has set up a health-care exchange that is far more market-oriented than Obamacare's. Utah could agree to accept Obamacare's subsidies in return for a contractual assurance that HHS will not interfere in the operation and structure of its exchange.

Step Two would be to move Medicare patients into Obamacare's exchanges. For example, Congress could agree to raise Medicare's eligibility age by three months every year for the foreseeable future. In effect, over time, this would gradually introduce premium-support-style reforms into the retiree population, without requiring Congress to get bogged down in complicated reform legislation.

Congress could also transfer the "dual eligible" population—seniors who are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid—onto the exchanges. Because this high-risk population consumes health care through two different programs, its care is usually uncoordinated and costly. The exchanges might help address this problem.

Step Three would be to accept that many employers will move their workers onto the exchanges. It is reasonable to be concerned that this migration will drive

up Obamacare's subsidy spending, but the Congressional Budget Office makes a plausible case that the new spending would be offset by a reduction in the \$300 billion-per-year federal subsidy for employer-sponsored insurance that is granted through the tax code. Over time, this migration could actually help reduce the deficit. Congress could consider reforms of Obamacare's employer mandate—for example, exempting businesses with fewer than 200 employees, or eliminating it entirely—so as to stimulate economic growth while improving the market for individually purchased health insurance.

Step Four would be to move the Medicaid population into the exchanges, starting with higher incomes and working down to lower ones. This change would have the important effect of lifting the disincentive that Medicaid recipients have to find work, because they would now enjoy a reasonable continuity in their health coverage even as their incomes rose. Such a reform would significantly reduce state-based health-care spending, at the cost of higher federal health-care spending. Congress would need to offset this change by reducing federal spending elsewhere. Senator Lamar Alexander (R., Tenn.) has proposed a "Grand Swap" in which Washington takes over Medicaid spending in exchange for abandoning its role in funding K–12 education.

After these four relatively simple steps, we would be left with a health-care system that would look a lot like Switzerland's. Rises in premium subsidies could be held to a sustainable growth rate to ensure their long-term fiscal stability. And Americans might finally have the opportunity to purchase insurance for themselves, gain control of their own health-care dollars, and enjoy a wide range of low-cost, high-quality coverage options.

The movement to repeal Obamacare may lie in ashes. But all hope is not lost. Indeed, the great irony of Obamacare's victory at the ballot box is that there remains a path for the most desired conservative outcome of all: a fiscally sustainable, fully reformed set of health-care entitlements. It's an outcome that is far from assured, but one that is eminently achievable. It would be the most significant policy victory of our generation. So let's get back to work. **NR**

# What Would Jindal Do?

*Louisiana's governor can be a guide on health care and education*

BY REIHAN SALAM

ON Tuesday, November 13, just one week after a dispiriting presidential election for the GOP, reporter Jonathan Martin of *Politico* published an interview with Bobby Jindal, the Republican governor of Louisiana. Having spent most of his career in public life as a wunderkind, Jindal now finds himself an elder statesman among Republican elected officials. Shortly after his first gubernatorial victory in 2007, he was taken seriously as a potential vice-presidential nominee. And though Mitt Romney eventually chose Paul Ryan as his running mate, Jindal was seen by many on the right as a candidate who could give the former Massachusetts governor a boost among committed conservatives. Despite having been overlooked not once but twice, Jindal is seen as a likely 2016 presidential contender, which is why his interview with Martin was so interesting and telling.

Jindal, who gives few interviews to reporters not based in Louisiana, was very frank with the D.C.-based Martin, telling him that "we cannot be, we must not be, the party that simply protects the rich so they get to keep their toys." More broadly, he insisted that "we need to stop being simplistic, we need to trust the intelligence of the American people, and we need to stop insulting the intelligence of the voters." Jindal warned against defining the GOP against President Obama, and he expressed the importance of framing a positive agenda. Yet Jindal shied away from making explicit policy pledges—he chose not to wade deeply into the immigration-reform debate, and avoided specifics when he talked about tax reform, school choice, energy policy, and creating a "bottom-up government for the digital age." To Martin, Jindal's most noteworthy policy suggestion was that Republicans should embrace financial reform.

So what should we make of Jindal's

remarks? Are they an indication that one of the brightest lights of the conservative movement has embraced moderation? Or is Jindal merely calling for cosmetic changes to the case that conservative Republicans make? When Jindal says that “we’re a populist party and we’ve got to make that clear going forward,” one could be forgiven for thinking that he sees a need not for fundamental change but simply for a clearer message.

Another interpretation, and a more plausible one, is that Jindal recognizes that the debate over where Republicans should go next has focused too narrowly on immigration and abortion. As Ramesh Ponnuru observes elsewhere in this issue, many on the right have reacted to President Obama’s success among Hispanic voters by calling for comprehensive immigration reform. In a similar vein, moderates and a not-inconsiderable number of conservatives have pointed to the Republican platform’s embrace of the Human Life Amendment as a political liability to be jettisoned posthaste. What these interpretations miss, however, is that Hispanics and unmarried women, the constituencies critics often have in mind when they call for a shift to the left on immigration and abortion, tend to be anxious about their prospects for upward mobility.

Jindal, in contrast, maintained that the Republican party should keep its pro-life stance while softening its tone. Moreover, his caution on immigration reform suggests that he continues to be somewhat skeptical of a comprehensive approach that includes a sweeping amnesty for unauthorized immigrants. Instead, he seems to want to move the conversation about Republican reinvention to the issues most relevant to middle-income households of all ethnic backgrounds, including access to high-quality education, a fairer tax code, and preventing yet another financial crisis.

For a number of reasons, Jindal is well placed to make this argument. As a committed social conservative, he does not need to demonstrate his anti-abortion bona fides by employing strident language. Indeed, his devotion to the pro-life cause might give him greater moral authority when criticizing candidates who employ polarizing rhetoric on the issue.

And Jindal has been one of the more creative Republican governors on critical

policy questions such as health-care reform. As executive director of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, he was one of the architects of the premium-support model for Medicare reform that Paul Ryan advocated. Jindal served as head of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and as a senior official in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services while still in his 20s. As governor, he has sought to overhaul the state’s approach to providing medical care to the poor, focusing primarily on reforming Louisiana’s extensive but antiquated network of publicly operated charity hospitals to improve the cost-effectiveness and the quality of care.

But creativity is a double-edged sword. By choosing to tackle Medicaid reform head-on, Jindal has made many enemies. His push to shift Medicaid from being a fee-for-service program to being a more integrated model of care delivery has been met with fierce resistance. Now that federal support for Louisiana’s Medicaid program is expected to decline sharply, Jindal has been forced to take drastic steps to contain spending. He is also on the front lines of the debate over President Obama’s health-care law, having explicitly rejected federal funds for a large expansion of Medicaid eligibility planned for 2014. The debate over health-care reform in Louisiana is fraught with danger for Jindal, yet his long experience uniquely qualifies him for it. His handling of the next few months will have a great impact on his ability to shape the national health-care-reform conversation and, by extension, his political prospects.

Jindal has also overseen a dramatic overhaul of education policy in Louisiana, in partnership with John White, Louisiana’s state superintendent of education. One of White’s most promising initiatives is course-level instructional choice, a concept that aims to introduce the principle of choice *within* existing public schools. Having previously served as superintendent of New Orleans’s innovative Recovery School District, the nation’s first district to consist primarily of charter schools, White recognizes the power of school choice—yet his approach also recognizes its limitations.

Essentially, school choice as it is com-

monly understood depends on the emergence of leaders who can build entirely new schools. This is possible in dense urban areas with a large supply of talented teachers and administrators, but far less so in rural areas or urban areas suffering from a dearth of talent. Course-level instructional choice effectively shrinks the unit that needs to be developed from an entire school to something as simple as a class. Rather than ask parents and students to leap from one school to another, this approach gives them a choice between, say, a Spanish class taught by a local teacher and a Mandarin class taught online. The chief virtue of course-level instructional choice is that it allows students to benefit from the many other institutions—colleges and universities,



*Bobby Jindal, Republican governor of Louisiana*

private firms, the military—that can provide developmental experiences as valuable as those offered by K–12 schools. The most successful providers of instruction can scale up by offering their courses across a wide array of existing schools, and not just by building new schools from scratch.

There is much more that Jindal will have to do before he can become the GOP’s champion of the middle class. Most important, he needs to think deeply about how conservatives can address wage stagnation and the widening opportunity gap between those who are raised in stable two-parent households and those who are not. But his opening salvo is encouraging, and one hopes that other conservatives will follow his lead. **NR**

PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP



# The Long View

BY ROB LONG

## NATIONAL REVIEW Post-Election Cruise 2012

*Special Program Note: Some events have been adjusted or replaced since Election Day.*

### Monday, November 12: San Juan, Puerto Rico

**3 P.M.:** Main Auditorium (Lower Promenade Deck), “What Went Wrong.” NATIONAL REVIEW editors and contributors in a roundtable discussion about Election Day. Jonah Goldberg moderates. Participants include Rich Lowry, Jay Nordlinger, and Robert Costa.

**7:30 P.M.:** Cocktail Reception, Queen’s Lounge Promenade Deck. All registered guests are invited to the Queen’s Lounge for informal drinks and conversation.

**8 P.M.:** The Viking Culinary Arts and Education Centre (Navigation Deck), Pre-dinner event: “The Torture and Dismemberment of Todd Akin.”

All registered guests are invited to join NATIONAL REVIEW editors and contributors in the ritual torture and dismemberment of failed U.S. Senate candidate from Missouri Todd Akin. Participation is first-come-first-served. Smocks and protective goggles are available for purchase at the Help Desk beginning two hours before the event. Tools will be provided. Please note: Mr. Akin will NOT be sedated or restrained during this event. He will be held down by Campaign Spot blogger Jim Geraghty. All participants MUST sign a release waiver BEFORE participating in the event. *Dress: Smart casual.*

### Tuesday, November 13: At Sea

**3:30 P.M.:** Main Auditorium (Lower Promenade Deck), “Winning His-

panics and Asians.” Syndicated columnist Mona Charen leads a discussion with UC-Berkeley law professor John Yoo on conservative outreach in minority communities.

**5:45 P.M.:** Main Auditorium (Lower Promenade Deck), “Learning From Our Mistakes.” Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus discusses the key takeaways from the election. How does the party learn from its mistakes, how does it reform its message and voter outreach, and how do conservatives win again?

**6:30 P.M.:** Upper Promenade Deck, Reince Priebus executed by firing squad. *Dress: Formal.*

### Wednesday, November 14: Turks & Caicos Islands

**All Day Event:** During all planned afternoon presentations, Republican strategist Karl Rove will be onstage in leg irons and a ball gag, arms tied behind his back. He will be available for taunting and prodding by registered participants throughout the program. All taunters and prodders MUST wear their official NR cruise name badge. NO ONE will be allowed to approach Mr. Rove without having signed up in advance. Please see NATIONAL REVIEW publisher Jack Fowler to sign up for a five-minute window. Please avoid bruising or wounding Mr. Rove or in any way rendering him inedible. (See Saturday’s program: “Farewell Luau” for further information.)

### Thursday, November 15: Grand Cayman

**10 A.M.:** Main Auditorium (Lower Promenade Deck), “What Went Wrong II.” NATIONAL REVIEW editor Jay Nordlinger interviews former Romney campaign adviser Stuart Stevens on the campaign strategy, its media efforts, and its overall tactical perspective. Mr. Stevens has graciously agreed to answer questions from registered attendees.

**11:30 A.M.:** Outside Observation Deck, “Stu Stevens Takes a Swim.” Former Romney campaign adviser Stuart Stevens will be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, which will be duct-taped shut by NATIONAL REVIEW contributors Jim Geraghty and Robert Costa, after which Mr. Stevens will be thrown overboard. PLEASE NOTE: Space is limited on the Outside Observation Deck. Participants who wish to witness this fun event will be chosen by lottery. Please see NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE editor-at-large Kathryn Lopez for details.

**4-5 P.M.:** Lower Promenade Deck. Chained and gagged Karl Rove available for taunting and prodding. Sign-ups available at the Help Desk.

### Friday, November 16: Half Moon Cay, Bahamas

**4-5 P.M.:** Lower Promenade Deck. Chained and gagged Karl Rove available for taunting and prodding. Sign-ups available at the Help Desk.

### Saturday, November 17: At Sea

**4-5 P.M.:** Lower Promenade Deck. Chained and gagged Karl Rove available for taunting and prodding. Sign-ups available at the Help Desk.

**6:30 P.M.:** Lido Deck Aft, Farewell Luau. Participants gather for the gala farewell dinner. Drinks and passed appetizers will be available on the outside deck, to the rear of the ship. Enjoy our final sunset together in a convivial and fun atmosphere.

**7 P.M.:** Lido Deck Aft, “Run, Karl, Run.” Mr. Rove will be released and allowed to run for his life. All registered participants are encouraged to chase after him with pointed sticks until he is cornered in some godforsaken part of the Holland America Line’s flagship *Nieuw Amsterdam*. Mr. Rove will then be dragged throughout the ship and roasted alive. PLEASE NOTE: This will be “family” service, with vegetables and sides served buffet-style. *Dress: Athletic wear, good running shoes.*

## A Message of Compromisers

It's only a matter of time before Chris Matthews announces that the amendment limiting presidents to two terms is, in fact, racist. There will be a great lusty national clamor for a bill that gives Obama the chance to have as many terms as the white guy who presided over a sustained economic crisis. Before this happens, the conservative movement has to figure out how to attract all the people who hate them.

Who are these people? Why, they're a zesty coalition of economic illiterates, young people whose grasp of history is so feeble they think Bill Clinton freed the slaves by winning WWII, and a vast number who don't like conservatives, don't believe their ideas, and think "GOP" might as well stand for "Gouty Oligarchical Plutocrats." That's whom we need to win over. It brings to mind a scene in *Independence Day*, when a scientist asks a captured alien what they want humans to do.

"Die," it croaks.

Okay, well, everything's on the table, but let's talk about some options. First step towards winning back the country: conspicuous empathy. Big sloshing wet buckets of the stuff. As Peggy Noonan wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, the Democrats have the emotional advantage: People think that the liberals Care. No doubt they do, in the abstract. But the end result of Official State Caring was seen after Hurricane Sandy, when untold numbers of citizens stuffed into Vertical Poor-Person Storage Buildings were left without power, food, and sanitation. The stairwells stunk of offal; the streets were piled with rotting trash. News crews interviewed frightened tenants, and in each case there was evidence of the strange Rapture of the Males that removed all the menfolk from the family structure. The government was the father, of course—and just as absent as the ones who dropped off some DNA and melted into the wind.

If this is the result of Caring, you shudder to contemplate the results of indifference.

For now, accept the fact that the country changed while we were out making money and children. Archie Bunker is dead; Meathead got tenure. Forty years of cultural liberalism rewrote the concept of American exceptionalism to mean that we're uniquely bad. The iconoclastic skepticism that once defined both boomers and their spawn has settled into the slack-spined posture of the supplicant. "Question Authority," their self-satisfied college motto, has turned into a plaintive whine: What *else* can you give me today?

So it's all lost? *No!* you say. *Buck up!* you say. We're a can-do people. If we can put a man on the moon, perhaps we can put 60 million Democratic voters on the moon, and figure a way so their absentee ballots get "lost" somewhere

between Tranquility Base and here.

But that's not right. That's their way. Besides, if you put 60 million Obama voters on the moon, they'd still find a way to call *us* out of touch.

No, we're told that the party has to retune and refine, adjust its message, reach out, and find a way to turn all those upraised middle fingers into a game of horseshoes.

This requires compromise, which is called "caving" when the Democrats back off from nationalizing an industry and "evolution" when conservatives abandon their defining principles.

But what's the compromise on gay marriage? GOP offer: Okay, two men can be called a married couple, but it has to be a traditional marriage. Fifties-style. One has to wear pearls and a dress around the house while vacuuming. Liberal response: That just reinforces heteronormative gender concepts. And pearls are gauche. GOP accommodation: Okay, you can get married, but you have to promise not to demand that James Bond go gay in a future movie. Liberal counteroffer: We'll promise not to complain if he just comes out as bi. GOP: Deal!

What's the compromise on immigration? Okay, okay, everyone's a citizen. You can vote and hold office. You can replace the Constitution displayed in the National



Archives with a version written in Spanish, but you have to make the original available for viewing if someone requests it 24 hours ahead of time. The border fence will be replaced by a one-way pedestrian conveyor, like they have at airports. Question from illegal-alien lobby: When it is shut down for repairs, will there be buses to bring in relatives? GOP: Well, okay, but you have to pay the fare. Illegals: Sorry, the Democrats provide free buses, and they show movies. GOP response: Okay, movies, but PG only. Illegals: Sorry, no deal. The kids love those *Fast and Furious* movies. The kids who weren't killed by *Fast and Furious*, that is.

Perhaps the solution rests with untapped identity groups no one's exploited yet. How about nudists? According to one study, almost 30 million people would consider vacationing at a clothing-optional resort. Peel off 10 percent, and you have Obama's margin of victory. It needn't be obvious; don't have to pander. Just have the next presidential candidate proclaim, during his acceptance speech, that "sometimes I find pants . . . confining" and ask employers to cover sunscreen. No: *Require* sunscreen coverage under penalty of fines and license revocation.

'Cause that's how we do freedom now, dawg.

On the other hand, you wonder why they should take any deals conservatives offer. When everything is paid for by someone else or conjured from Bernanke's Magic Cornucopia of Dollars, you'd be an idiot to vote for the party of restraint.

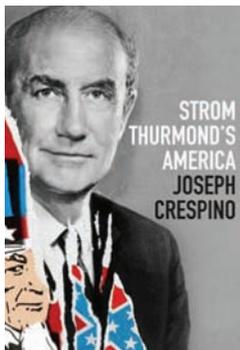
NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at [www.lileks.com](http://www.lileks.com).

# Books, Arts & Manners

## Blast from The Past

HELEN RITTELMAYER



*Strom Thurmond's America*, by Joseph Crespino  
(Hill and Wang, 416 pp., \$30)

THE black comedian Dick Gregory said in 1971 that race relations in America were easy to understand: “In the North they don’t care how big I get, long as I don’t get too close. Down South, they don’t care how close I get, long as I don’t get too big.” Since his death, Strom Thurmond has been reduced to proof of this joke, if not a joke himself: the arch-segregationist with a black daughter who obviously didn’t mind if “they” got quite close indeed. He was a joke for many years before that, too—the doddering nonagenarian, the notorious flirt who fathered his last child at the age of 74, the southern throwback who patronized female congressional witnesses by saying things like “These are the prettiest witnesses we have had in a long time. I imagine you are all married.” In the world of politics, ancient history is anything that happened more than 25 years ago, and we have to look back much further than that to find a time when Strom Thurmond was not a punchline.

This is what Joseph Crespino has done, with considerable success. The four great landmarks of Thurmond’s

career are laid out neatly—the 1948 presidential run, the 1957 filibuster, the 1964 party switch, and the 1968 Republican convention—and, by filling in neglected details and putting each moment in its proper context, Crespino transforms his subject into something much more than a caricature. He also answers the difficult question of how a man could get elected again and again, well into the Nineties, despite having been the most fervent supporter of a social system now universally considered to have been a national disgrace.

The answer to that question begins with the fact that Strom Thurmond was *not* the most fervent segregationist in America, despite appearances to the contrary. Consider his filibuster against the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which looks like a singular display of intransigent racism. At 24 hours and 18 minutes it still holds the record for longest one-man filibuster in the history of the Senate; the text ran for 96 pages in the *Congressional Record*, at a printing cost of \$7,776. When he claimed, around hour 23, to be “speaking for the future citizens of South Carolina,” a colleague piped up, “Well, brother, if you speak much longer, they will soon be here, too.” No other southern senator joined his effort, which has led most people to assume that his abhorrence for civil rights must have been fiercer and more visceral than that of any of his colleagues—an easy thing to believe about a man whose grandfather was present at Appomattox and who hailed from the same hometown in South Carolina as the congressman who beat abolitionist Charles Sumner with a cane on the floor of the Senate in 1856.

Thurmond did not have any interest in correcting this false impression at the time, but today’s historian does. As Crespino shows, Thurmond’s filibuster had more to do with circumstances than with conviction. It wasn’t just that his office had been inundated with messages from constituents imploring him to take a stand or else face the electoral consequences. His 1948 presidential run on the “Dixiecrat” ticket had alienated Democratic power brokers, both in Washington and in South Carolina. (In

his first election to the Senate, Thurmond was forced to run as a write-in candidate against his own party’s nominee, so low was his stock with the Columbia establishment.) He was ambitious for power, but he knew he could not expect favorable committee assignments or publicity boosts from a leadership still bitter over the 1.2 million votes he had taken from Harry Truman. He might have relied on personal charisma, as Huey Long had, but unfortunately he did not have any. Far from the backslapping, joke-cracking stereotype of a southern pol, Thurmond was a humorless health nut who drank a glass of prune juice every morning and never produced a bon mot in his life.

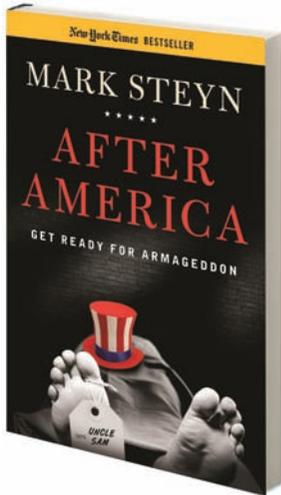
Neither party nor personality was going to bring him political capital, so he had to earn some on his own by playing the maverick. He was certainly a racist, but he was hardly the most passionate racist in a Senate that also included James Eastland and John Stennis of Mississippi and Richard Russell of Georgia—whose reason for not filibustering the bill was, incidentally, to preserve segregation. Thurmond’s fellow southern hardliners had made a deal with moderate northern and western Democrats (John F. Kennedy among them) to water down the bill; according to an internal Southern Caucus memo, a filibuster would cause these moderates to “feel that the South has betrayed them after they acted in good faith,” which would drive them to embrace “every ‘civil rights’ scheme of the past 20 years.”

The second great question about Thurmond is why he switched parties. This is not an idle point of trivia. Today’s Democratic party would dearly like to paint the breakup of the “Solid South” as a straightforward migration of racists from one party to another, and the closer they can put Strom Thurmond to the center of that story, the better they can obscure figures such as George Wallace. It is indeed embarrassing for them that Wallace could sweep every county in their Florida presidential primary as late as 1972, by which point Strom Thurmond, as a Republican, had already become the first southerner in Congress

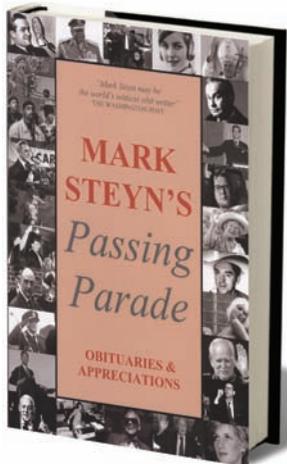
*Helen Rittelmeyer is a former associate editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.*

# STEYN CLASSICS

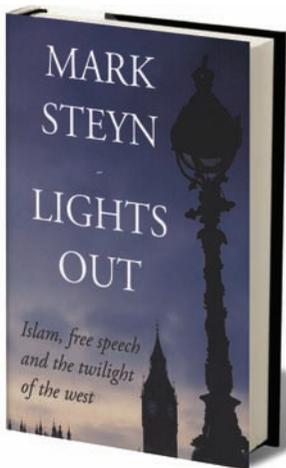
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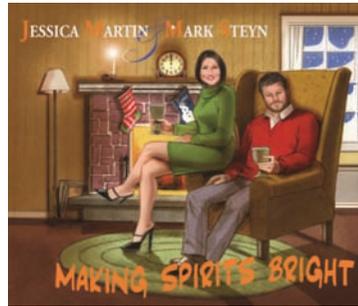
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to hire a black man onto his staff. Thurmond did cosponsor an anti-busing bill in 1975, but the author of that bill was a Democratic wunderkind from Delaware named Joe Biden. If desegregation had been Thurmond's primary concern, a party switch would not have been required.

The truth is that the GOP appealed to Thurmond for many reasons having nothing to do with race. Of all the ideological mantles he wore in his decades of politics, "Sunbelt Conservatism" may have been the one that fit him the best: anti-Communist, pro-business, strict about constitutional interpretation, skeptical of unions, and even more skeptical of big government. It is noteworthy that, in his September 1964 party-switch

## Strom Thurmond was *not* the most fervent segregationist in America, despite appearances to the contrary.

announcement, Thurmond proclaimed himself not just a Republican, but a "Goldwater Republican."

His economic conservatism was not just deeply felt—though certainly it was that; he had been anti-union since his political infancy—it was also popular back home. And with good reason. Crespino gives the numbers: By the 1970s, South Carolina "enjoyed the highest level of foreign investment per capita of any state in the nation. Manufacturing had grown at three times the national average over the past three decades." In the broader South, "per capita income grew 14 percent faster than in any other region." For the first time since the days of the carpetbaggers, more people were moving into the South than out of it. The South's main advantage was that it refused to let free enterprise be strangled by regulation, taxation, or Big Labor. The Republican party was the natural home for anyone who wanted this advantage preserved.

After his party conversion, Thurmond embraced the cause of the "New Right" with gusto. His influence within the party might have peaked in 1968, when he was able to literally hand Richard Nixon a list of vice-presidential candidates from which to choose, but he continued to operate behind the scenes long after this high point of power-brokering.

He was an early supporter of Young Americans for Freedom and a popular speaker on their lecture circuit. Conservative grandee Lee Edwards, as a young man, ghostwrote the only book published under Thurmond's name, *The Faith We Have Not Kept*. Lee Atwater got his start as a Thurmond intern. The business plan that would one day become the Heritage Foundation was written by Fritz Rensch in Thurmond's Capitol Hill office.

It is not exactly pleasant to read about the many unexpected occasions when Strom Thurmond was central to the growth of the Right, because his early career is such a source of justified shame—as Trent Lott found out the hard way. Crespino points out two little-

known facts about the remarks Lott made at Thurmond's 100th-birthday party and his subsequent resignation as Senate minority leader. First, Lott was forced to speak extempore only because Bob Dole, who spoke before him, delivered all the anecdotes he had prepared. Second, Lott had made the same statement almost verbatim in 1980—"You know, if we had elected this man 30 years ago, we wouldn't be in the mess we are today"—and no one raised an eyebrow, on the assumption he was talking about big government, not civil rights.

But the person who has most cause to speak ill of Thurmond—Essie Mae Washington-Williams, the daughter he financially supported but never acknowledged—has also been the one most willing to forgive him. Chalk it up to family loyalty, Christian charity, or sheer classiness, there's no doubt that she has been kinder to him in her public statements than he deserved. Thurmond was written off as out of date again and again in his Senate career. In a world where Essie Mae Washington-Williams is a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and a black man named Tim Scott defeated Thurmond's son in a Republican congressional primary, this country may finally have earned the right to call Thurmond and his brand of politics well and truly obsolete. **NR**

# The Best of Marines

DAVID FRENCH



*Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War*, by Dakota Meyer and Bing West (Random House, 256 pp., \$27)

CHARLES DICKENS famously began his classic *A Tale of Two Cities* with the phrase "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." It is that best/worst dichotomy that dominates Dakota Meyer and Bing West's new book. It's a story of men at their best and at their worst, of a military at its best and its worst, and of technology at its best, but mostly at its worst. The result leaves you gaping in admiration at Medal of Honor winner Dakota Meyer's courage but ultimately sharing in his frustration at the shocking incompetence and timidity of others that made his courage necessary.

At its heart, the book is one man's story of the Battle of Ganjigal—a horrifying American loss in which a group of American advisers walked into an expected ambush and were ruthlessly cut down, while soldiers far from the fighting dithered, equivocated, and imposed absurd rules of engagement to prevent their pinned-down comrades from receiving the help they needed, when they needed it.

In other words, the world's most lethal military can always defeat itself.

By now, readers of books about America's long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are familiar with stories of courage.

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Legions of books about special operators and Marine and Army units engaged in thousands of small battles up and down Iraq and Afghanistan have somehow made extraordinary courage seem ordinary. In other words, we're used to hearing that soldiers are brave, that they endure danger civilians can't comprehend, and that they live by a code of honor that demands they lay down their lives for their friends.

But Dakota Meyer's story of courage shocks even the most jaded and cynical reader. The crisply written book wastes very little time on boot-camp stories or descriptions of prior engagements. It provides just enough information to set the stage: Meyer is part of a team of advisers assisting and training Afghan infantry—one of the least glamorous and most dangerous combat assignments. He's the only "grunt" (infantryman) on his small team and as such assumes a role well beyond his rank of corporal. The team—wary of one another at first—grows ever closer through shared hardship. It's a classic (and classically true) soldier's story.

But then it all goes awry. Through haphazard planning and truly puzzling passivity (this reviewer's unit in Iraq would never have simply watched as armed insurgents filtered into a village, much less sent under-gunned and outmanned adviser teams into that same village without strong combined-arms support), Meyer's adviser team walked straight into a Taliban ambush—with Meyer separated from his brothers, waiting some distance behind.

The general contours of the resulting story are well known from the Medal of Honor ceremony and the accompanying news stories: Defying direct orders, Meyer—with the help of Army captain Will Swenson and a select few additional Americans and Afghans—led a one-vehicle rescue mission into the village of Ganjgal, saving dozens of Afghans and engaging in a shockingly intense and up-close battle with Taliban insurgents. At one point, Meyer kills a Taliban in hand-to-hand combat—with a rock.

It's the details, however, that stay with you. Meyer chose his co-author well. Bing West is himself a combat veteran, an accomplished and influential scholar of American military history and strategy, and a bestselling author in his own right. (His book *The Strongest Tribe* is perhaps

the best contemporary history of the American victory in the Surge in Iraq.) If anyone knows combat—and knows how to write about combat—it's Bing West. He gives the reader the right amount of detail without getting bogged down in military jargon, and the conversational prose and multiple maps give the reader a relatively clear sense of a confusing battle. Most important, Meyer and West communicate not just the intensity of Meyer's efforts to save his team, but also the intensity of his feelings throughout the fight. Nothing—and no one (American or Taliban)—was going to keep him from his team.

By the time the book reaches its tragic climax, the reality of his team's fate has an impact like a punch in the gut. You feel their loss.

And this brings us to the book's utterly unflinching honesty. Meyer and West do not hesitate to outline in excruciating detail the incompetence and timidity that cost American lives. There's much talk stateside of the military's amazing technology—of the astonishing ability to watch battles unfold in real time and bring ordnance precisely on target to save American lives, kill the enemy, and spare civilians. But this technology has a dark side: The ability to see things in real time can bring an odd sort of paralysis, as decisions once left to on-scene commanders are pushed up to ever-higher headquarters, whose officers watch—sipping coffee—while their fellow soldiers fight for

their lives sometimes hundreds of kilometers away.

These decisions are then mired in the bureaucracy of the rules of engagement, rules that in this case seem almost perfectly drafted to give the ambusher an advantage. As a small team of Americans fought and died against an enemy located not just in the high hills around them but also in the house down the street, "the directive from the high command was clear: do not employ 'air-to-ground or indirect fires against residential compounds defined as any structure or building known or likely to contain civilians, unless the ground force commander has verified that no civilians are present.'"

Such a rule goes far beyond the requirements of the Law of Armed Conflict, far beyond the rules in place in virtually any previous American war, and far beyond the bounds of common sense. In fact, the rule directly incentivizes enemy use of civilian structures and human shields. And in this case, the rule had a deadly impact.

Meyer and his embattled American comrades saw their requests for artillery support denied again and again, and F-15 Eagles roared over the village in a completely impotent show of "force," unable to drop their bombs. Meyer's air support through most of the fight was two Kiowas, small and light helicopters with a fraction of the firepower of a true attack helicopter. Their pilots did not lack for courage (and in fact displayed near-



Medal of Honor winner Dakota Meyer

reckless bravery), but they simply didn't have the weapons to turn the tide.

Perhaps most appalling of all, an American quick-reaction force—an entire infantry platoon—appeared to shrink from the fight, seeking (and obtaining) permission from higher headquarters not to move into the village to engage the enemy and rescue Americans under fire. It was only after word of missing Americans “reached a three-star general hundreds of miles away” that a declaration of DUSTWUN (duty status whereabouts unknown) was made, a declaration that implies that Americans may have been captured and mandates an immediate and decisive response. There are few more attention-grabbing declarations in any current theater of war. At that point, Special Operations Command reacted.

But it wasn't Special Operations Command that recovered the lost Americans. It was Meyer.

The final brief chapters of the book detail Meyer's attempt to grapple with the loss of his fellow Marines, his brothers-in-arms. His feelings of grief and despair are familiar to all who've seen friends zipped into body bags and launched on their “hero flight” home. His friends die, and—despite all his heroism—he feels responsible. In interviews, Meyer famously said that he was being honored for his worst day, and he repeats that sentiment in this book. He made that statement because he feels like *he* failed, like *he* let down his team. But Dakota Meyer didn't fail; many others failed him.

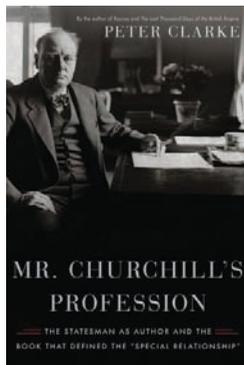
While true and fair accounts of battles are notoriously difficult (the “fog of war” sometimes never truly clears), at the end of the day one is reminded of an ancient legal principle: *Res ipsa loquitur*, “the thing speaks for itself.” An American adviser team and its Afghan allies walked into an ambush, and as the world's most lethal arsenal stood largely idle, that team's rescue was left to a corporal, a few courageous comrades, and a single Humvee.

In other words, Meyer was the best of Marines, Ganjigal was the worst of battles, it was a day of courage, it was a day of foolishness, it was the epoch of honor, and it was the epoch of timidity. And for the reader? It is the season of gratitude, and it is the season of anger.

Dakota Meyer earned his Medal of Honor. And it's a shame that he had to. **NR**

# Churchill's Anglosphere

TRACY LEE SIMMONS



*Mr. Churchill's Profession: The Statesman as Author and the Book That Defined the “Special Relationship,”*

by Peter Clarke (Bloomsbury, 368 pp., \$30)

**S**IR WINSTON CHURCHILL'S four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* may not be on many lists of must-read books anymore, but those of us who spent rainy afternoons and quiet evenings making our way through that formidable work were led to it, often as adolescents, entirely by the author's fame as one of the saviors of those very peoples during the darker days of World War II. To us, he was the bulldog wartime prime minister who, along with all his gritty rhetoric and never-say-die fortitude, also had an impressive talent for writing. After we waded through some of the bland, turgid history textbooks forced on us at school, reading him felt like a treat, like auditing a course the grand old man had agreed to teach off the top of his head. His words marched along easily, the style seemed conversational, the asides were instructive and often edifying. Churchill had a sense of the pageantry of history, populated with the noble as well as the base, and he could tell the story imposingly, pointing out the mountains rising above the foothills. In all, this made for a friendly

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yet heady way to take in one's history lessons on the sly.

That sense of impromptu prose emerging from a feisty savant, though, was a carefully manicured illusion. For Churchill's sideline was politics, not writing; his profession, his chief means of income, had been that of journalist and author ever since his twenties. Before World War II, in fact, that's how most Americans knew him, if at all: as a famous author and lecturer. If they read the international pages of the newspaper, they also knew he served as a member of Parliament, was saddled with a spotty political record, and popped up once in a while in the cabinet. Time had not yet unveiled the war hero. This Churchill wrote books and wrote them exceedingly well. When Kipling had written to Churchill in 1934 to compliment him on the first volume of his feverishly packed history of an ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, he did so “as from craftsman to craftsman,” from one member of the fraternity to another.

Peter Clarke has confined his illuminating book simply to this man, to Churchill the Writer, a man “continually in the throes of authorship.” But Clarke's aim is even more precise—to tell the story of how Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* came to be written and suggest what that book reveals about its author and its subject alike, describing while doing so how Churchill lived and worked during the stormy, interrupted years of its composition. This isn't a biography, but it reads like one.

Churchill liked to paint history with a wide brush, but the brush had to have fine bristles. Not for him the merely inspiring yarns with guns and glory; he had a historian's bent, and he would be satisfied in his studies of events and characters with nothing short of a mass of detail that could tax his most devoted readers. Back in 1906 he had published a biography of his politician father (who hadn't thought much of his son) and this labor of loyalty had to take, in proper Victorian fashion, two volumes. By the early 1930s, he was best known for two works: *The World Crisis*, a five-volume account of World War I replete with the map-weighted arcana of strategies, campaigns, and cabled messages that could tire a military historian, and,

in contrast, *My Early Life*, a brisk, digestible memoir that enjoyed surprising sales. He would release his four-volume *Marlborough: His Life and Times* to steady acclaim between 1933 and 1938, but even while deeply enmeshed in the first book of this project, he had already taken on another one that was just as ambitious.

That other project, originally contracted in 1932 to be a three-volume work of around 400,000 words, was to be a survey not of all Western or “free” peoples, but of “English-speaking peoples”—a label that had existed for at least a couple of generations and been batted about liberally after the Great War to mark the affinities peculiar to the U.K. and the U.S.—in other words, the basis for the “special relationship” between the two nations. So during his time in the political wilderness, seven years before Germany invaded Poland and nine years before America, too, took up arms, Churchill had already set himself to telling our story as two peoples united by more than a common language.

Much of Clarke’s account involves descriptions of Churchill’s finances, a fatiguing exercise in esoterica for anybody not conversant with British tax law and publishing practices of the day (and perhaps even for those who are). More invigorating is his portrayal of Churchill’s work habits, which were both extravagantly admirable and—for most of us—utterly unthinkable. Despite sporadic trips abroad for lecturing or painting that might have made his life look more leisurely than it was, Churchill had to keep an unfor- giving schedule when home at Chartwell just to meet his minimum pledges to produce. A typical day of this period would mean rising at 8 or so, break- fasting in bed over newspapers and page proofs, then going off to London to fulfill his obligations as a member of Parliament; home in the evenings, when he and any guests would dine at 8 and linger long over brandy and cigars; after which he would retreat to his study with secretaries and any research assistants hanging about and manufacture prose from around 11 or midnight until 2 or 3 in the morning (he called Chartwell his “word factory”). Not the worst way to work, though not, we’re tempted to add, the best. Still, the work got done and the pages accumulated.

Talk of assistants also reminds us that Churchill did not work alone, nor could he have produced so much without expert help. His aides made an impressive roll of academic notables that included, over the years, Maurice Ashley, Keith Feiling, William Deakin, G. M. Young, J. H. Plumb, A. L. Rowse, and Denis Brogan. Clarke tells us how Churchill rashly took on the English-speaking-peoples project just as he was in the thick of the first volume of *Marlborough*. His native optimism convinced him that he could meet both contracts easily enough and, oddly, concurrently, but he soon found otherwise, and the dark clouds gathering over Europe in the 1930s did not make his literary work smoother. He gave priority to *Marlborough*, which each new volume made ever more successful, but his accepting a bulky advance from his publishers for the other project focused his resolve. When *Marlborough* was finished in 1938, Churchill launched zealously into the *History* without missing a beat.

There wasn’t much time left, but Churchill used what he had capially. After a thrusting start on volume one—and maybe seeing the tea leaves after Neville Chamberlain’s return from Munich—he picked up the pace. During most of 1938–39, as Europe moved inexorably toward war, Churchill was dashing down an average of 1,500 words per day, a staggering clip for a

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## WITH MY PARENTS AT TWENTY-ONE

They face the hotel ceiling sky  
Like restful fresh sarcophagi.

His snores are gulls that dart and skim  
Along her ear’s marina rim.

I used to have the pluck and size  
To crawl between their lidded eyes.

To give me life, their young selves died.  
My young self stares with scared eyes wide.

Rebellion calls, the zeitgeist frets—  
But I will cling to all my debts.

—BRYCE TAYLOR

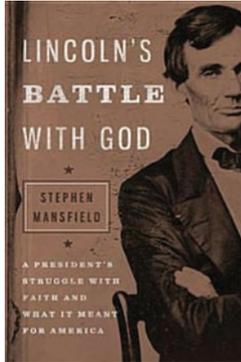
man with so many other irons in the fire. Pressure to complete the work often generated bloated, undisciplined prose because, as Clarke puts it succinctly, “there was simply no time to make the *History* shorter.” And Churchill had a few good-natured jostles with his more scholarly advisers; “I parted rather ruefully with some of my tidbits, but I bow to knowledge,” he wrote to one as he conceded a point of fact. Yet the writing seemed to calm and steady the author. “It has been a comfort to me in these anxious days,” Churchill said in 1938, “to put a thousand years between my thoughts and the twentieth century.” We find the pages still stacking after September 1939; he was determined to finish, even after returning to the cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty.

But time and tide caught up with Churchill and the project got shelved as events carried him to May 1940, when he became prime minister on the eve of the Battle of Britain. Indeed the *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* would not be published until the mid and late 1950s—well after he had published the last installment of his six-volume memoir narrative, *The Second World War*, which incidentally earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. The *History* might never have seen daylight, but, perhaps knowing this to be his last work, Churchill drove through to the end.

The result is still in print. But is it still worth reading? Is it a mere curiosity, or does it retain a value beyond its illustrious authorship? Every reader makes a separate judgment, of course, and Clarke believes it is and does, but for my money the writing alone pays its freight, for it was written at a time when works of history were produced to be read, and history stood as a branch of literature, rather than a second-class province within social studies, and thus was composed with imagination and care. Few better examples of History as Story could be found. Yet it won respectful praise from the quarters of professional historians, one of whom summed up its delicate balance between “the historian telling us what happened and the moralist distilling the lessons.” For some of us, the best history requires both, and here we get it, still, and abundantly. **NR**

# Tried in The Fire

JAMES E. PERSON JR.



*Lincoln's Battle with God: A President's Struggle with Faith and What It Meant for America*, by Stephen Mansfield (Thomas Nelson, 241 pp., \$22.99)

“It is difficult, and in some quarters thought to be almost tasteless, to talk sense about Lincoln,” observed commentator Alistair Cooke. “But we must try.”

Try though we might, few topics of discussion bring men and women of the Right to sword’s point faster than the significance of Abraham Lincoln in American history. He has been decried by some as the first significant champion of creeping statism, the author of confusion on matters related to America’s founding, a law unto himself, a ruthless suppressor of dissent, an inciter of servile insurrection, and much else. “The monster Lincoln,” he is recurrently called on one website.

In other quarters, he has been praised as perhaps the nation’s preeminent president, the Great Emancipator, an inspiration to generations of schoolchildren, a secular Christ figure, and a symbol of all that is great and good about the American Republic. As Lincoln breathed his last, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton murmured, “Now

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he belongs to the ages,” initiating nearly a century and a half of the ongoing beatification of Father Abraham.

Both sides tend to transform Lincoln from a man, with all the failings and glory to which human flesh is heir, to either a villain with no redeeming qualities or a latter-day demigod—but these clichés are of little help in understanding the inner man and his motivations. And thus the need for this book, which examines the spiritual Lincoln.

“Every American president employs the phrases of Christian piety; yet few presidents have been conspicuously devout,” Russell Kirk observed almost 60 years ago. “Lincoln began as a naïve skeptic; he received next to no religious instruction of any sort; solitary reading of the Bible gave majesty to his mind and his style, but never brought to him any faith less cloudy and austere than a solemn theism.” Others have claimed that Lincoln was nothing more than a typical opportunistic politician who used the *language* of faith to sway the more gullible members of the public—akin to the smirking Bill Clinton’s conspicuously carrying a large black Bible to Sunday services during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

But Lincoln’s faith was more interesting than either of these claims would suggest, according to historian Stephen Mansfield, author of several other respected works on the religious views of notable persons: His faith exceeded “a solemn theism.” Mansfield understands from the outset of his book that he faces a tough challenge, for, just as Lincoln’s historical significance has been quarreled over, the question of whether he was a Christian has been hotly debated since the day of his death.

As Mansfield notes, there are legions of historical commentators—many of them eyewitnesses to Lincoln’s life—who have had axes to grind. Mansfield delves into the numerous accounts of Lincoln, and focuses on his letters. He finds a huge clue in the story of Lincoln’s mother, Nancy Hanks, who was dogged throughout her short life by the knowledge of her illegitimacy and her unending struggle with deep inner sadness and depression. Nancy’s son inherited this troubled disposition, mixed with the trait of pronounced melancholy that ran in the

heritage of his father, Thomas Lincoln. It seemed that God, if He existed, doled out happiness and a soft life to some of His children and hopeless misery to others—and yet the words of the Authorized Version held such beauty and power and promise of something better. Here, to Lincoln, was mystery wrapped up inextricably with tragedy.

The frontier religion of Abraham’s youth was also a factor, with its mixture of high-octane revivalist fervor and fleeing hypocrisy: At camp meetings, some of the same people who shouted the loudest about Jesus in one breath could in the next be found knife-fighting or fornicating in the bushes nearby. Lincoln thought long and hard on what he observed, and as a young man in New Salem, Ill., he became known as the village atheist, a skeptic who reveled in scandalizing the pious through his growing verbal gifts married to extensive reading in the rationalistic works of Tom Paine and the comte de Volney, author of the Enlightenment work *The Ruins of Empires*.

But in time Lincoln’s reading came to include the works of intelligent men of faith, notably James D. Smith, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Springfield and author of a formidable work of Christian apologetics titled *The Christian’s Defence*. A married man by now, Lincoln was much taken with this work, and he spent a great deal of time attending services at First Presbyterian and discussing issues of faith with Smith. Over time, Lincoln became convinced that God exists, and that the central tenets of Christianity might be true.

Mansfield details how, during the years of Lincoln’s political life, this faith grew—not through having his prayers answered in a direct manner, but through suffering. He steadily and convincingly builds the case that, by 1862, with the death of his beloved eleven-year-old son, Willie, and with the Civil War at a low point in terms of Union successes in the East, Lincoln had reached a place at which his spiritual groping had entered the realm of orthodoxy. Basing his view on Lincoln’s writings, and records of his conversations by reliable witnesses, Mansfield concludes that Lincoln had come to believe

in God as Creator, as ruler of the world, Judge, Comforter, the author of justice, the author also of much if not all of the Bible, and increasingly, as benevolent guide. He believed in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus Christ as teacher, Savior of the world, and model for mankind. He believed in heaven, in the resurrection of the dead, and in what Christians call eternal life. He believed in the value of Christian ministry, in the duty of generosity, in fasting and prayer as a means of urging God to change human affairs, in repentance from sins, in observing the Sabbath, in reading Scripture, and in the religious training of the young. And, yes, he also believed in the citizens of the United States being a “Christian people,” in her military forces being “Christian soldiers and sailors,” in American history as the carefully woven tapestry of a sovereign God, and in the nation possessing a divine destiny yet to fulfill.

“He had once been the village atheist in New Salem and Springfield,” adds Mansfield, “but he had grown beyond those days and become the kind of man who could valiantly declare his Second Inaugural Address—what must surely be the greatest American political sermon—to a wounded, angry, self-righteous nation. That he died a prophetic figure, determined to show his countrymen the difference between ‘the Almighty’s’ purposes and their own, is perhaps all the statement of Lincoln’s religion we need.”

If Lincoln was indeed a believing Christian, and the evidence seems to show he was, his was not the beaming, everything’s-fine-with-Jesus-and-me brand of Christianity popular in some segments of America today: It was a spiritually ravaged, tried-in-the-fire faith reminiscent of that of another son of the soil, Johnny Cash. It was a faith won through struggle and longtime, deep inner pain—in Lincoln’s case, through the suffering and death of his children, his sorely trying marriage to the shrewish and possibly bipolar Mary Todd, and the agony of America’s Civil War, with its early years of bloody military reverses for the Northern forces. In the end, it seems Lincoln found a faith of mercy and hope, more than capable of outlasting the darkness. **NR**

Film

## A Dawn of Awareness

JOHN J. MILLER

A HIGH-SCHOOL history teacher looks out the window of his Colorado classroom and sees camouflaged paratroopers drop onto an open field beneath a clear blue sky. “I would say they are way off course,” stammers Mr. Teasdale, as students flock around him for a view. “Very unusual.” He walks outside to investigate. The soldiers scramble around, unloading weapons from canisters and shouting in a foreign language. “What’s going on here, my friend?” asks Teasdale. A paratrooper raises his gun, opens fire, and kills the teacher in a hail of bullets. Moments later, his comrades shoot up the school and fire rocket-propelled grenades down its hallways.

The Soviet invasion of the United States has begun.

Or at least it has in the 1984 film *Red Dawn*, one of the most hotly debated movies ever made. On November 21, a rebooted version of *Red Dawn* will reach theaters, but the new interpretation almost certainly won’t repeat the astonishing success of the original. Among conservatives who grew up in the Reagan years, *Red Dawn* is a cult classic, full of fighting spirit against the Evil Empire. Its one-word catchphrase—“Wolverines!”—has become an in-group allusion to a set of enduring American principles: live free or die, don’t tread on me, and so on. *Red Dawn* may not be a masterpiece of the cinematic arts, but as an iconic piece of conservative pop culture, it has enjoyed an outsized influence on American life.

*Red Dawn* was a summertime success, kicking *Ghostbusters* from the No. 1 spot at the box office and going on to gross more than \$35 million. Its youthful cast seems familiar today, but back then its members were virtual unknowns: Patrick Swayze had top billing, joined by Jennifer Grey, Charlie Sheen, and Lea Thompson. They played teenagers who head to the hills following the Soviet attack, forming a resistance group that wages guerrilla warfare against Communist aggressors.

The characters call themselves the Wolverines, taking the name from their high school’s football team—or, as one of the Soviet officers puts it, “the local sports collective.”

The movie begins with a series of headlines that establish the geopolitical situation: The wheat harvest fails in the Soviet Union; Poland riots and Moscow invades; Cuba and Nicaragua build up their armies; El Salvador and Honduras fall; Greens gain control of the West German government; revolution comes to Mexico; NATO dissolves. And then: “United States Stands Alone.” Writing in *The Nation*, a left-wing magazine, Andrew Kopkind summed it up this way: “In other words, *The Nation*’s political project is being put into practice on a global scale.” The movie’s stark prologue caters to the worst fears of Cold Warriors—and however improbable the idea of a Soviet invasion of the United States in the 1980s, it sets up a gripping scenario for an action movie about ordinary people who battle the Commies on American soil.

The driving force behind the film was John Milius, the director. Prior to *Red Dawn*, he was best known as a screenwriter for *Apocalypse Now*. Afterward, he made more movies and created the television series *Rome*, which appeared on HBO. “I was the only person in Hollywood who would dare do this movie,” said Milius in an interview that appears on the Collector’s Edition DVD of *Red Dawn*, released in 2007. “I knew that Hollywood would condemn me for it.”

He was right about that—and the newspaper critics were quick to pounce on the film’s right-of-center sensibilities. “Better dead than *Red Dawn*,” sneered the *Washington Post*’s Rita Kempley, who called the film “sick and silly.” Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* labeled it “rabidly inflammatory,” “incorrigibly gung-ho,” and “a virulently alarmist fable.” Bob Thomas of the Associated Press condemned its “bathos” as “unrelenting.” Perhaps these were the honest assessments of dispassionate reviewers. Even the most fervent fans of *Red Dawn* would hesitate to claim that it belongs on the American Film Institute’s list of greatest movies. Yet it was impossible not to detect the media’s biases at work: The makers of *Red Dawn*, complained Kevin Thomas of the *Los Angeles Times*, “spent too much time playing to the rabid anti-Commies.” You know: The movie must



The cast of *Red Dawn* (2012)

be awful because those icky conservatives approve of it. Even today, many liberals resort to knee-jerk denunciations: “Its guiding ideology is actually fascism,” wrote David Plotz of *Slate* in 2008.

In reality, the ideology most clearly on display in the movie is Communism, a threat that many liberals refused to take seriously when it mattered most. Much of the story occurs in the fictional town of Calumet, Colo.—*Red Dawn* in fact was filmed in New Mexico—and the Soviets crack down on residents who find themselves trapped behind enemy lines. The invaders plaster buildings with colorful posters of Lenin, show the Stalin-era film *Alexander Nevsky* at the local movie house, and herd potential troublemakers into concentration camps and before firing squads. *Red Dawn* rejects moral equivalency: The Soviets are the bad guys, and the Americans who fight them are the heroes.

At least that’s the general rule. The details can get complicated. Despite its moments of rah-rah patriotism, *Red Dawn* is also a study in brutality that poses difficult questions rather than pushes easy answers. At one point, the Wolverines unmask a traitor in their midst, a boy who has secretly collaborated with their foes. On a snowy mountaintop, Jed Eckert, the leader played by Swayze, struggles with whether to shoot the turncoat or show mercy. As he wavers, one of his companions spontaneously chooses death. Is this a righteous execution or a cold-blooded murder? In another scene, a girl delivers a package to a “Soviet-American Friendship Center.”

She leaves, and it blows up. Is she a freedom fighter or a terrorist? *Red Dawn* doesn’t say.

*Red Dawn* was the first movie to receive a rating of PG-13, that incremental step between PG and R. A month after its release, the National Coalition on Television Violence dubbed it the most violent movie ever made. The 2007 DVD includes a tongue-in-cheek “Carnage Counter” that tracks explosions (112) as well as casualties among the Soviet forces (81), civilians (22), and Wolverines (7). By 21st-century standards, the movie is pretty tame: “It contains considerable violence, most of it not very explicit,” wrote Maslin of the *Times* in her 1984 review. Today, it would hardly raise an eyebrow.

The violence of *Red Dawn* serves a grander purpose than cheap thrills: It means to show that the Second Amendment is in the Constitution for a good reason. Early in the film, the camera lingers on a Chevy truck’s bumper sticker: “They can have my gun when they pry it from my cold dead fingers.” Then the image tilts to the ground, where a Soviet pries a pistol from the cold, dead fingers of a fallen American. It may feel like an ad for the National Rifle Association—recall the late Charlton Heston’s rallying cry at the 2000 NRA convention, “From my cold, dead hands!” In this case, the slogan works as an ironic epitaph. As the story of *Red Dawn* plays out, however, America’s gun culture allows the Wolverines to fight back.

*Red Dawn* also fights forward. In 2003, the movie made the news when U.S. forces captured Saddam Hussein.

The deposed Iraqi dictator was discovered in a location known as “Wolverine Two” in a raid called “Operation Red Dawn.” The code name was the brainchild of Army captain Geoffrey McMurray, then 29 years old. “I think all of us in the military have seen *Red Dawn*,” he told *USA Today*. “Operation Red Dawn was so fitting because it was a patriotic, pro-American movie.” Milius applauded the effort, telling the *Los Angeles Times* that the soldiers who found Hussein “are Wolverines who have grown up and gone to Iraq.” A handful of liberals uttered dutiful harrumphs, noting that in Iraq, Americans were the oppressing invaders and the Iraqi insurgents were the scrappy rebels.

They just refuse to let go—and they’re already mobilizing against the new *Red Dawn*. In September, Joe Leydon of *Variety* mocked “a premise arguably even sillier than the original *Red Dawn*.” He may have a valid point. In the 2012 release, the Soviets are gone, tossed upon the ash heap of history. Their replacements are the North Koreans, whose attempted conquest of the United States requires not just an old-fashioned suspension of disbelief but an indulgence of gobsmacking ignorance.

Yet the first *Red Dawn* makes it easy to root for the second one, and to hope that the new version dusts off a few hoary chestnuts of the Reagan era for a rising generation of moviegoers: Freedom isn’t free, peace comes through strength, and when the vast left-wing conspiracy appears ready to deliver its knockout blow, think of one word: “Wolverines!”

NR

Film

# Flesh and Blood

ROSS DOUTHAT

**F**EW Hollywood career turns have been more disappointing than Robert Zemeckis's. The director who once gave the world *Back to the Future* has spent most of the last decade exploring the uncanny valley of motion-capture animation, in pursuit of a cinematic mastery even more absolute than the world-building made possible by normal special effects. His breakthroughs, alas, have all been technological rather than artistic: In the last decade, he's given us *The Polar Express*, *Beowulf*, and *A Christmas Carol*, reimagining all three classic stories inside a computer, and producing a trio of films populated by characters at once glossy, creepy, and emotionally inert.

*Flight*, his first movie in a dozen years to feature flesh-and-blood performances, no doubt benefited from its director's hard-earned special-effects savvy. The central sequence in the film is a plane crash, vertiginous and almost awe-inspiring, that could not exist without digital wizardry: It's a virtual composition whose impact is visceral, harrowing, and real.

But *Flight* is also an extended rebuke to the idea that some Hollywood version of Deep Blue will someday make the reality-based work of human actors obsolete, or turn them into glorified puppets ready for directorial manipulation. That's mostly because the movie stars Denzel Washington, a special effect unto himself, who swaggers and staggers through one of the great performances of his career. Indeed, there's more life in one of his scenes in *Flight*—in one of his expressions, for that matter—than in all the motion-captured characters who glide through Zemeckis's last three films put together.

Washington plays Whip Whitaker, a mid-career airline pilot with a broken marriage, a drug-and-alcohol problem, and enough charm and charisma to keep his friends and co-workers from acknowledging just how bad that problem really is. We first meet him in a dawn-washed hotel room, waking from a night of booze

and sex to admire the stewardess he just slept with, bicker with his ex-wife on the phone, and then prepare for the morning's flight—looming in just hours, we realize—by doing a pick-me-up snort of cocaine from the table beside his bed.

Thus fortified, he cruises into the cockpit, downs a pair of airline vodka bottles with orange juice, and horrifies his straight-arrow co-pilot by taking the plane off autopilot to battle his way through an early patch of turbulence. That hurdle overcome, he proceeds to doze off comfortably at 30,000 feet, waking only when the plane, about to begin its descent, is jolted by a mechanical failure and goes into a dive.

Across the next few minutes, it becomes clear that the hung-over and kite-high Whitaker's extraordinary piloting skills are the only thing between his passengers and certain death. He executes a landing that's Sully Sullenberger on steroids: an impossible descent that ends with the plane shearing off a church steeple, scattering white-robed worshipers from around their baptismal pool, and then somehow landing intact in the deep green of a Georgia field. (We watch it happen, and then we watch it again and again on the inevitable smartphone video that becomes the defining recording of the crash.) By the time Whitaker awakens in the hospital, he's achieved a rare combination: a Sullenberger level of celebrity for the lives he's saved, and a potential criminal investigation for the chemicals that blood testers found swirling in his system.

The rest of the movie can't quite live up to the standard set by this sequence. The plot runs down the well-worn grooves of the addict's drama, with Whitaker executing an extended personal and moral descent as his friends and

allies try to keep his public halo untarnished and intact. He cleans out his liquor cabinet and fills it up again, woos a fellow addict and potential love interest (Kelly Reilly) and then loses her with his drunk's cruelty, staggers into his ex-wife's house and gets screamed at by his teenage son, makes promises to his union representative (Bruce Greenwood) and his lawyer (Don Cheadle) and then fails miserably to keep them . . . if you've seen an alcoholism-themed movie, then the path of *Flight* will be familiar, and you'll see some of the bends and curves and drop-offs coming far ahead.

But the script, from a screenwriter named John Gatins who had his own romance with alcohol, makes the familiar vivid again, breathing the necessary life into addiction's ugly clichés. The religious element in the story is powerful without being too obtrusive, the soundtrack is a little on-the-nose (*lots* of classic rock) but still effective, and the fine supporting cast is highlighted by John Goodman's turn as Whitaker's jovial dealer, who gives his drug habit the enabler it deserves.

The movie's success, though, is ultimately all about Washington, and the ease with which he puts his movie star's bag of tricks—that magnetic physicality, that wide smile and easy sex appeal, that hint of threat beneath the charm—in service of a character whose whole life is one long performance. He's an actor playing an actor, in effect—essentially impersonating his own movie-star persona, and then gradually exposing the ugly, wounded reality beneath his character's drug-enabled take on the Denzelesque alpha male.

Eventually, computer animation will get the human surface right. But I don't think it will ever reach these depths. **NR**



Denzel Washington in *Flight*

## Bond in Bankruptcy

**F**OR some reason, the quadrennial humiliation of the Republican presidential candidate now coincides with the release of the new Bond movie. Don't ask me why; probably a constitutional amendment I missed along the way. Last time round, Kevin Sessums interviewed Daniel Craig and, as a final question, asked which presidential nominee would make the better 007:

Craig doesn't hesitate. "Obama would be the better Bond because—if he's true to his word—he'd be willing to quite literally look the enemy in the eye and go toe to toe with them. McCain, because of his long service and experience, would probably be a better M," he adds, mentioning Bond's boss, played by Dame Judi Dench. "There is, come to think of it, a kind of Judi Dench quality to McCain."

A few readers may recall my response in this very space four years ago:

Oh, great. John McCain has survived plane crashes, just like Roger Moore in *Octopussy*. He has escaped death in ship-board infernos, just like Sean Connery in *Thunderball*. He has endured torture day after day, month after month, without end, just like Pierce Brosnan in the title sequence of *Die Another Day*. He has done everything 007 has done except get lowered into a shark tank and (as far as we know) bed Britt Ekland and Jill St. John.

And yet Daniel Craig gives him the desk job.

McCain is what an action hero looks like—unkempt, scarred, maimed, unable (thanks to the Vietnamese) to raise his hands above his head to brush his hair. But Obama is what an action hero looks like to a movie producer—cool, fashionable, neither shaken nor stirred, a man who looks as if he's never broken a sweat in his life. In Daniel Craig's world, Obama's glamour trumped McCain's scar tissue—as it did for the electorate.

I thought it might go differently this time. In 2008, Craig was promoting *Quantum of Solace*, which seemed about right: Yeah, it was a grim night for Republicans, but Bush was unpopular and Americans were war-weary and the global economy had nosedived off the cliff. Four years on, Craig's back promoting *Skyfall*, and, alas, that seems about right, too. There's no solace: The sky fell in. Mitt did bad, and the Republican party did worse. And worse is to come, if the reactions of the "experts" are any indication: On the one hand, the GOP needs to junk all that uptight social-conservative stuff. On the other, they need to reach out to demographically surging Hispanics because they're natural social conservatives. Whatever. Meanwhile, Barack Obama gets another four years to "quite literally look the enemy in the eye and go toe to toe with them," which is not how surviving consulate staff in Benghazi would recall it.

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

To state the obvious: The whole Republican election campaign—the primaries, the debates, the genius consultants, the billion dollars on robocalls and attack ads—was a complete waste of time. I doubt the final tally in the Electoral College would have been any different had the entire GOP gone to the Bahamas for the last 18 months and sent a billion-dollar check to some favored Third World charity. And in the long run they might have done rather better had they used the dough to start a movie studio or buy a TV network.

Republican "strategists" remind me of those scientists and detectives who stand around looking baffled in the mysterious indentation of ground at the start of a Godzilla movie. Then the camera pulls back and you realize the shallow trench is really a giant footprint. The GOP slogged out the election in the little toe of politics unaware that they were about to be stomped by the Democrat monster of the broader culture. For much of the electorate, politics is now tribal. I don't just mean the 93 percent of blacks and 71 percent of Hispanics who voted for Obama, but various other demographic niches, from impoverished single women to upscale gays. If you know whether someone's black or lesbian or a college professor, you can guess how they vote and be right nine times out of ten. They are beyond questions of economic or foreign policy: Their self-identification trumps politics. Sociocultural identifiers count for more than the failure of the stimulus or a cover-up in Benghazi. Just as Obama fits Daniel Craig's idea of an action hero, so he fits these voters' idea of a president, and Mitt Romney doesn't.

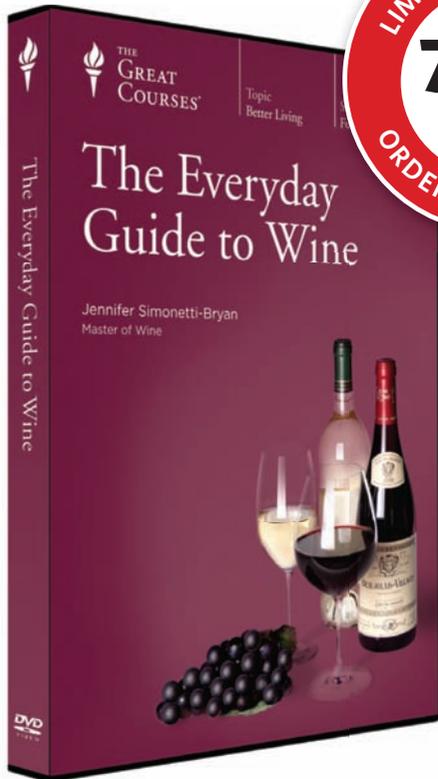
Are you so sure it'll go differently next time with Ryan or Rubio? Republicans have spent the last half-century surrendering all the cultural space in which Americans actually live in the 729 days between elections. Yes, yes, I know; I said exactly the same thing here four years ago:

If Hollywood's liberal, if the newspapers are liberal, if the pop stars are liberal, if the grade schools are liberal, if the very language is liberal to the point where all the nice words have been co-opted as a painless liberal sedative, a Republican legislature isn't going to be a shining city on a hill so much as one of those atolls in the Maldives being incrementally swallowed by Al Gore's rising sea levels.

Which is why the 2010 GOP House made so little difference. "We have to get back in the game in all the arenas we've ceded to liberalism," I wrote in 2008. "Otherwise, as in Daniel Craig's improvised casting call, we'll be lucky to wind up with a cameo in the national narrative."

Contemplating the enacting of Obamacare, the next two or three Supreme Court appointments, the "flexibility" promised to Putin re the post-American order, the remorseless expansion of debt and dependency, that's kind of the way it feels, doesn't it? Like I said, get back in the game—or 2016 will just be the umpteenth GOP remake of *Die Another Day*.

NR



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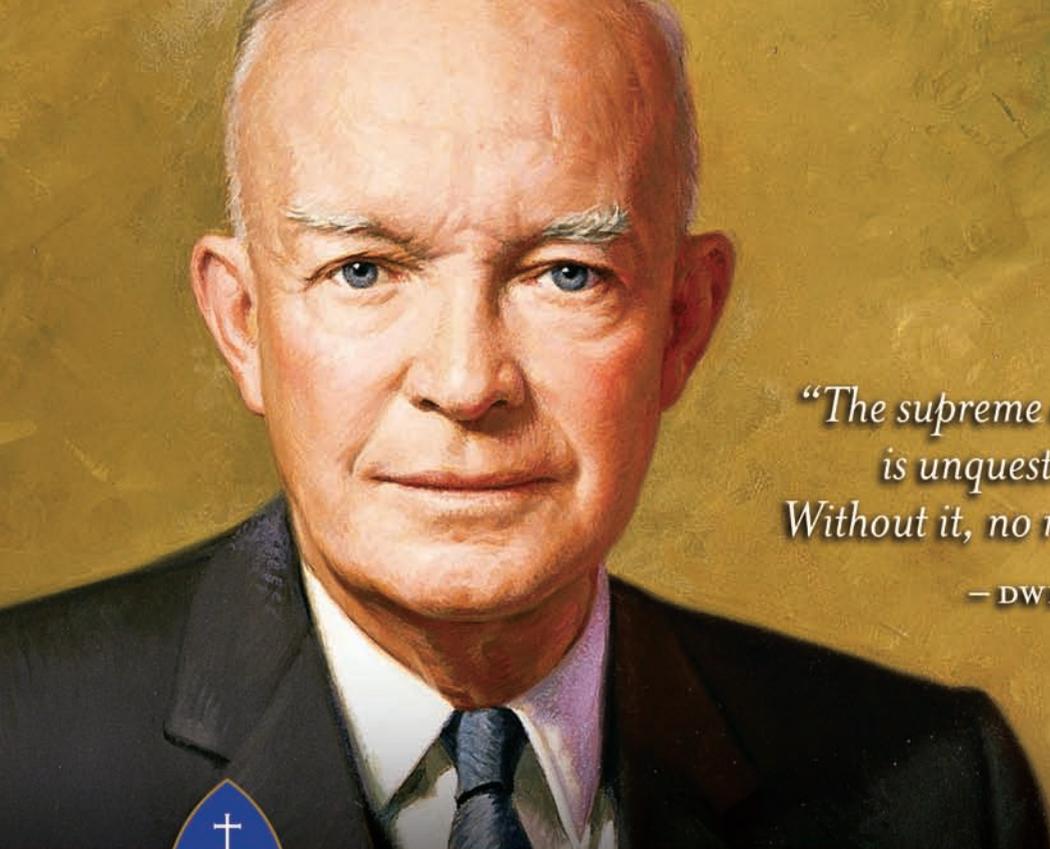
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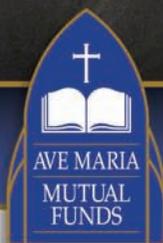
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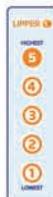
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