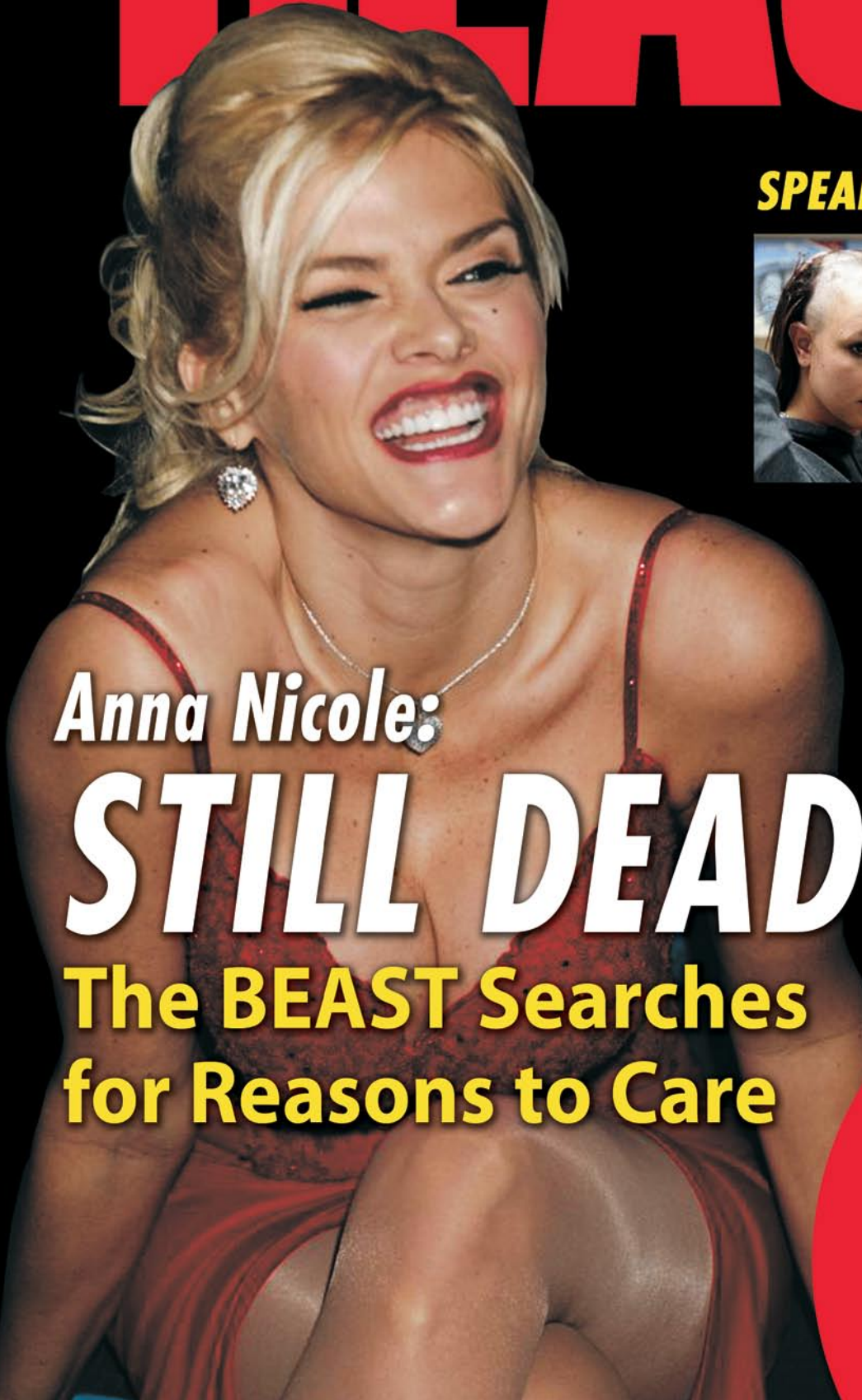


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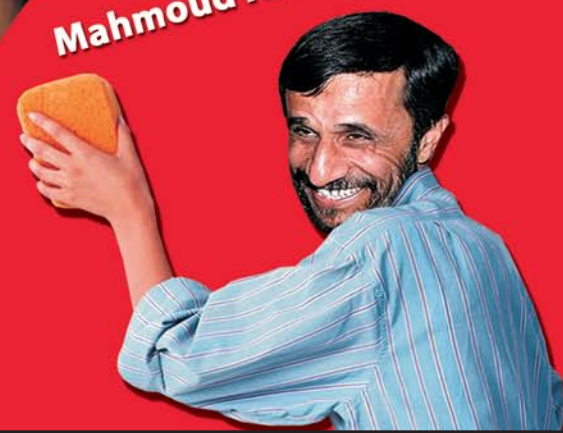
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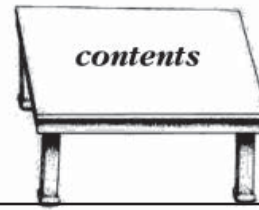
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The Britney Budget



By Matt Taibbi

“Now, after she shaved her head in a bizarre episode that culminates a months-long saga of controversial behavior, it’s the question being asked by her fans, her foes and the general public: What was she thinking?”-- *Bald and Broken: Inside Britney’s Shaved Head*, Sheila Marikar, ABC.com, Feb. 19

What was she thinking? How about *nothing*? How about *who gives a shit*? How’s that for an answer, Sheila Marikar of ABC news, you pinhead?

I’m not one of those curmudgeons who freaks out every time that Bradgelina moves the war off the front page of the *Post*, or Katie Couric decides to usher in a whole new era of network news with photos of the imbecile demon-spawn of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes. I understand that we live in a demand-based economy and that there is far more demand for brainless celebrity bullshit than there is, say, for the fine print of the Health and Human Services budget.

But that was before this week. I awoke this morning in New York City to find Britney Spears plastered all over the cover of two gigantic daily newspapers, simply because she cut her hair off over the weekend. To me, this crosses a line. My definition of a *news story* involves something happening. If *nothing happens*, then you can’t have “news,” because nothing has changed since the day before. Britney Spears was an idiot last Thursday, an idiot on Friday, and an idiot on both Saturday and Sunday. She was, shockingly, also an idiot on Monday. It will be *news* when she stops being an idiot, and we’ll know when that happens, because she’ll have shot herself for the good of the planet. Britney Spears

cutting her hair off is the least-worthy front page news story in the history of humanity.

Apparently, from now on, every time a jackass sticks a pencil in his own eye, we’ll have to wait an extra ten minutes to hear what happened on the battlefield or in Congress or any other place that actually matters.

On the same day that Britney was shaving her head, a guy I know who works in the office of Senator Bernie Sanders sent me an email. He was trying very hard to get news organizations interested in some research his office had done about George Bush’s proposed 2008 budget, which was unveiled two weeks ago and received relatively little press, mainly because of the controversy over the Iraq war resolution. All the same, the Bush budget is an amazing document. It would be hard to imagine a document that more clearly articulates the priorities of our current political elite.

Not only does it make many of Bush’s tax cuts permanent, but it envisions a complete repeal of the Estate Tax, which mainly affects only those who are in the top two-tenths of the top one percent of the richest people in this country. The proposed savings from the cuts over the next decade are about \$442 billion, or just slightly less than the amount of the annual defense budget (minus Iraq war expenses). But what’s interesting about these cuts are how Bush plans to pay for them.

Sanders’s office came up with some interesting numbers here. If



Britney's New Beau?

the Estate Tax were to be repealed completely, the estimated savings to just one family -- the Walton family, the heirs to the Wal-Mart fortune -- would be about \$32.7 billion dollars over the next ten years.

The proposed reductions to Medicaid over the same time frame? \$28 billion.

Or how about this: if the Estate Tax goes, the heirs to the Mars candy corporation -- some of the world's vilest scumbags, incidentally, routinely ripped by human rights organizations for trafficking in child labor to work cocoa farms in places like Cote D'Ivoire -- if the estate tax goes, those assholes will receive about \$11.7 billion in tax breaks. That's more than three times the amount Bush wants to cut from the VA budget (\$3.4 billion) over the same time period.

Some other notable estimate estate tax breaks, versus corresponding cuts:

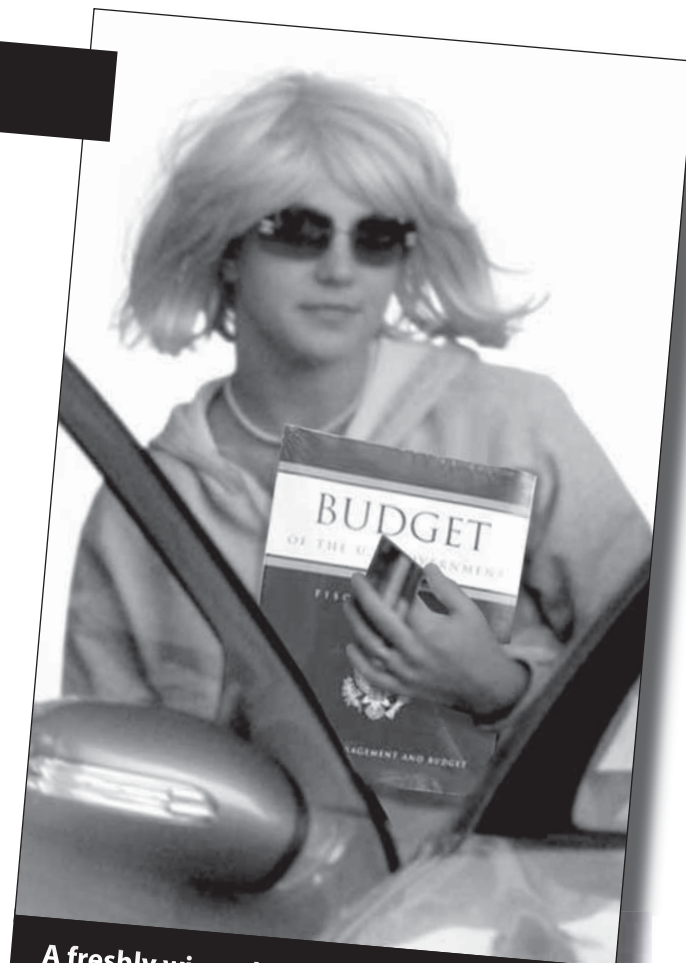
- Cox family (Cox cable TV) receives \$9.7 billion tax break while education would get \$1.5 billion in cuts
- Nordstrom family (Nordstrom dept. stores) receives \$826.5 million tax break while Community Service Block Grants would be eliminated, a \$630 million cut
- Ernest Gallo family (shitty wines) receives a \$468.4 million cut while LIHEAP (heating oil to poor) would get a \$420 million cut

And so on and so on. Sanders additionally pointed out that the family of former Exxon/Mobil CEO Lee Raymond, who received a \$400 million retirement package, would receive about \$164 million in tax breaks.

Compare that to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which Bush proposes be completely eliminated, at a savings of \$108 million over ten years. The program sent one bag of groceries per month to 480,000 seniors, mothers and newborn children.

Somehow, to me, that's the worst one on the list. Here you have the former CEO of a company that scored record profits even as it gouged consumers, with gas prices rising more than 70 percent since January of 2001. There is a direct correlation between the avarice of oil company executives and the increased demand for federal aid for heating oil programs like LIHEAP, and yet the federal government wants to reward these same executives for raising prices on the backs of consumers.

Even if you're a traditional, Barry Goldwater conservative, the kinds of budgets that Bush has sent to the hill not only this year but this whole century are the worst-case scenario; they *increase* spending generally while cutting taxes and social programming. They commit taxpayers to giant subsidies of already Croseus-rich



A freshly wigged Spears seen here canoeing with the 2008 Federal Budget. Many close to the pop diva say it could be serious. Will the romance lead to wedding bells – or just more tax cuts for the super rich?

energy corporations, pharmaceutical companies and defense manufacturers while simultaneously cutting taxes on those who most directly benefit from those subsidies. Thus you're not cutting spending -- you're just cutting spending on people who actually need the money. (According to the *Washington Times*, which in a supremely ironic twist of fate did one of the better analyses of the budget, spending will be 1.6 percent of GDP higher in the 2008 budget than in was in 2000, while revenues will be 2.6 percent of GDP lower). This is something different from traditional conservatism and something different from big-government liberalism; this is a new kind of politics that transforms the state into a huge, ever-expanding instrument for converting private savings into corporate profit.

That's not only bad government, it's bad capitalism. It makes legalized bribery and political connections more important factors than performance and competition in the corporate marketplace. Beyond that, it's just plain fucking offensive to ordinary people. It's one thing to complain about paying taxes when those taxes are buying a bag of groceries once a month for

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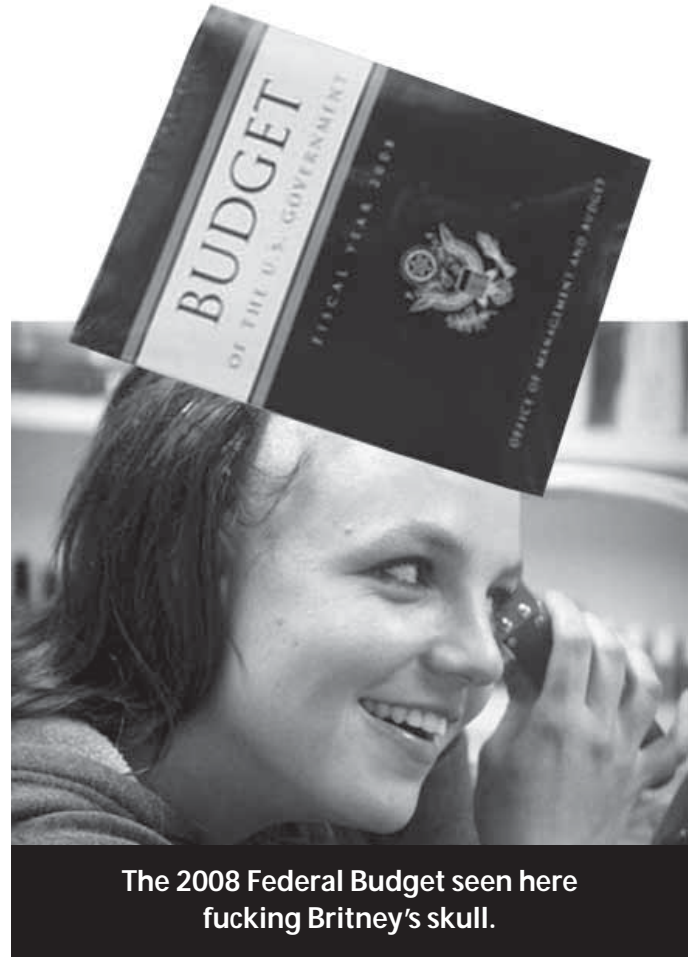
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The 2008 Federal Budget seen here
fucking Britney's skull.

some struggling single mom in eastern Kentucky. But when your taxes are buying a yacht for some asshole who hires African eight year-olds to pick cocoa beans for two cents an hour ... I sure don't remember reading an excuse for that anywhere in the *Federalist Papers*.

I also don't remember reading much about this year's budget. It was a story for about half a minute when it came out two weeks ago. It barely made TV newscasts, and even when it did, only the broad strokes made it on air. There was some fuss about the Alternative Minimum Tax and a mild uproar over the fact that the 2008 budget failed to account for estimates of the costs for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But overall, the budget was a non-starter as a news story. As it does every year, it takes a back seat to hot-button issues like gay marriage, the latest election scandal, etc. Already, the 2008 election presidential campaign has gotten far more ink than the 2008 budget. As entertainment, bullshit politics always triumphs over real politics.

Here's the thing about the system of news coverage we have today. If the Walton family, or Lee Raymond, or the heirs to the Mars fortune actually needed the news media to work better than it does now, believe me, it would work better. But they have no such need, because the system is working just fine for them as is. The people it's failing are the rest of us, and most of the rest of us, apparently, would rather sniff Anna Nicole Smith's corpse or watch Britney Spears hump a fire hydrant than find out what our tax dollars are actually paying for.

Shit, when you think about it that way, why *not* steal from us? People that dumb don't deserve to have money. ■



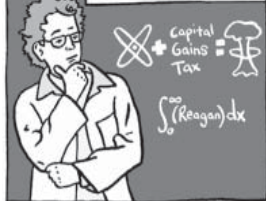
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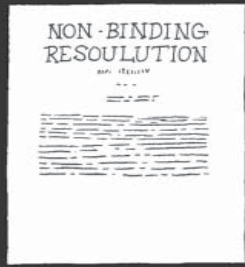
WHILE ITS SPECIFIC ORIGIN IS UNKNOWN, THE PIECE OF PAPER THAT DID NOTHING BEGAN AS A TREE BEFORE BEING TURNED INTO A BLANK SHEET. AT THIS POINT A PIECE OF PAPER CAN BECOME ANYTHING.



IT TRAVELED WITH MANY OTHER SHEETS TO AN OFFICE. OTHER PIECES OF PAPER WOULD BECOME LAWS, SPEECHES, MEMOS AND DOODLES. THIS PIECE OF PAPER WOULD BECOME FAR LESS.



EVENTUALLY, WORDS WERE PUT ON IT AND WHAT THOSE WORDS MEANT WAS NOTHING.



MUCH PONTIFICATION AND DEBATE SURROUNDED THE PAPER. MILLIONS OF WORDS WERE PUT ON MILLIONS OF OTHER PIECES OF PAPER DISCUSSING IT. POLITICIANS TRUMPETED AND CONDEMNED IT.



IT WAS THEN GIVEN TO THE MAN IT WAS INTENDED FOR. AS I'VE EXPLAINED, IT MEANT NOTHING AND THERE IS NO REASON TO PAY ATTENTION TO A PIECE OF PAPER LIKE THAT.



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Celebrity Buttholes Will be the End of US

Is our culture rotting at the same rate in all of its facets? Does Anna Nicole Smith's pills overdose among the slot machines at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood, Florida equate to Marilyn Monroe's pills overdose in 1962 in the same way that George Bush's visibly defective attempts at presidency are sad echoes of JFK's run of the White House?



By A. Monkey

Yep. This thing is falling apart across the board at exactly the same speed. In the '90s, thirty years after Monroe died, the demands on our white blonde archetype matched our own decadence—instead of asking her to act, we were happy to appreciate Anna Nicole through the medium of advertising. Monroe partied at real clubs with live acts that the Hard Rock Cafe & Casino has commodified: It is exactly where a Monroe rehash like Anna Nicole was supposed to die.

There's a flip side to this line of argument—that of course Grace Kelly went on vomiting sprees at clubs after breaking up with her lovers just like Britney or Lindsay Lohan do, and that it's the decorum in the gossip media that kept stories like that at bay: Marilyn Monroe's death was no less inelegant.

But that's easy to refute—it's that decorum in the media that has also changed. The rules of accruing celebrity put an ever-growing premium on access to our real selves, and there's something in that process that matches the change from vomiting at a night club with leather booths, tuxes and fancy dresses, 20-piece live bands and ballroom dancing to alcopops, DJs, cell phone photos and sweaty grinding in tank tops.

The inertia of all this is slowly pulling us toward the realization

that, like that recurring Us Weekly feature says, celebrities are Just Like Us. The middle of this wave is currently satisfied in seeing celebs get a parking ticket, shop in their sweatpants, or decorate their "Cribs." At its margins are the stories of rehab and domestic abuse. Where the wave is heading—and ends—is only an inch or so away from Britney's bald eagle: her shit-stained asshole.

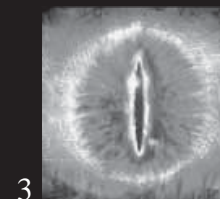
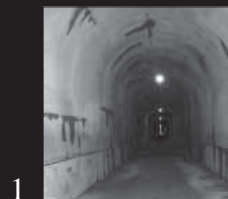
Once mass society gets its dose of snapshot pictures of that, or hear stories about what Britney's shit looked like—then that's the end of our living idols as we know it. Then

we'll know for sure that Britney Spears is just like us. This isn't something to mourn, or really have any emotion about. It will simply be one of many of the last gasps in the way our culture has been doing business.

And what's the trajectory with our political culture? The political touchstone we all shared in the '60s made our fantasies come true. We wanted the moon, JFK promised us the moon, and we got it. In this era we didn't know we wanted. Bush couldn't imagine anything new, so he copied JFK and promised us Mars, and we laughed at him.

The end of our political culture won't be seeing Bush's shit-stained asshole. It will be when we see the political culture doesn't work anymore—that one guy speaking for 300 million is fucking crazy. It already doesn't work—but we are still content to complain about "Bush." I'm not sure exactly what the event is that will signal the last gasp, maybe it's the effects of dropping tactical nukes on Iran, or total economic collapse, but it doesn't really matter because the rest of our culture will go simultaneously. Best I can tell, it's only an inch away. ■

Match the celebrity to the poop-chute!



Answers:

A-4, B-3, C-1, D-2

SCHLEP BOYS



by Allan Uthman

[Scene takes place in the interior of an auto repair garage. Charles Krauthammer is seated behind a counter. America walks up and addresses Krauthammer.]

America: Hey, I've got a problem here.

Krauthammer: Welcome to Kristol and Krauthammer Kollision. Can I help you?

America: Uh—yeah I was just in here... I paid you guys to fix my car? It was making a knocking sound?

Krauthammer: Yes?

America: Yeah, it broke down in your driveway right there.

Krauthammer: Oh dear.

America: Yeah, and...uh...

Krauthammer: Let me get the guys. Bill! Tom! Peter!

[William Kristol, Thomas Friedman and Peter Beinart approach. They are well dressed and clean, bearing no signs of having been engaged in auto repair work.]

Krauthammer: This guy says we messed up his car.

Kristol: No way, hehe.

Beinart: Damn, I knew it.

America: Listen, it's not just you didn't fix it. I looked under the hood—

Beinart: Shit.

Kristol: Damn, hehe.

America: [Growing impatient] Yeah, I looked

under the hood, and—I can't believe I'm saying this—I looked under the hood, and my engine's not there. And uh... instead of the engine, there's a... a pig in there, on a treadmill, and a monkey. The monkey's not moving.

Friedman: Yeah, we had to replace the engine.

America: Replace it? There's a pig and a dead monkey in there! What the hell? You guys are supposed to be good at this?

Beinart: Dead? Oh god...

Kristol: Well, hehe, that explains your problem, hehe.

America: Yes, dead. There's a dead monkey with a whip taped to his hand and two wires stuck into his side. And a goddamn pig in a harness on a treadmill!

Krauthammer: [Amused] What's going on here, guys?

Friedman: Well, how else were we going to get the pig to run, besides training a monkey to whip it when electrically shocked?

America: That's completely insane! Why not just fix the damn engine?

Friedman: Look, the problems your engine faced were like a Superbowl halftime show: powerful and flashy, and everywhere. But fixing it would have been costly, difficult and time-consuming, like going to the moon and back. So, actually fixing your engine would have been like eradicating a Superbowl halftime show on the moon. And who wants to do that? I like the Superbowl halftime show.

America: What the hell is this guy talking about?

Beinart: Just humor him.

Friedman: I'm not done. So, you see, the halftime show—so that's too hard, actually fixing your engine. But simply removing and replacing it with a pig and a monkey, now that is inspired, audacious thinking. We are totally, 110% outside of the box here. The box is around the corner behind us. A homeless man has moved into it.

America: But it doesn't work!

Friedman: But just imagine how incredible, how wonderful everything would be if it had! It would be like magic donuts, but cooler! I mean, sure, the results have been disappointing, but what kind of people would we be if we hadn't at least tried? We'd be like uneaten donuts!

[Silence.]

Beinart: Look, it was a mistake to replace your engine with a pig and a monkey, and I can admit it. In fact, looking back, I can see how disingenuous I was really being at the time, and that I might have done things differently if it was my engine. That saddens me. But, at any rate, I am still a fabulous mechanic.

Friedman: The Chinese are going to save the world!

Kristol: Shut up, hehe. I have seen no evidence of any pig or monkey, heh. The engine is fine, hehehe. Obviously, the our maintenance hasn't, heh heh heh, been exactly to your liking, but clearly progress is being made, and anyone arguing against moving forward on this auto repair is only rooting for failure, and undermining the morale of our brave auto technicians, hehe.

America: Why do you keep snickering like that?

Kristol: I can't help it, hehe.

America: Look, you guys are unbelievable. I can't believe you came so highly recommended. You obviously know nothing about fixing cars, and don't give a damn about your customers' well-being. That monkey died because of your irresponsible actions and your lazy thinking. This isn't a game. You should be ashamed. You should close up shop, go home and hang your heads in shame for the rest of your lives.

[Silence.]

Beinart: Yeah... You're right. Sorry.

Friedman: You know, you're really great.

America: Who, me?

Kristol: He's right, you know. You are spectacular and wonderful.

America: [Blushing] Come on...

Beinart: No, really. You're special and you deserve the world.

America: Shucks. You guys are so nice.

Krauthammer: Um, so you need a new engine, huh?

America: Yeah, I guess I do.

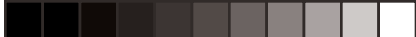
Krauthammer: Can we get that for you?

America: [Perking up]: Well, I don't see why not!

Krauthammer: Okay! We'll need the cash up front again, of course.

America: No problem! You take credit, right?

[End scene.] ■



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Do you think that the Democratic gains in the midterm elections have had a deflating effect on the election integrity movement?

Actually, by and large no, and I'm happy to say that because I was concerned about that. I think it has had a deflating effect only in a very small respect, in that the general public out there—the folks who were terrified, “Oh, are they going to throw another election?” Those people have turned their attention to other things for the moment. But the election integrity movement as a whole is really making as much noise and raising as much hell as ever. And that is good to see, because the entire movement sort of came out of 2000, and then certainly 2004, and you had a lot of progressive folks, folks on the left who made it up. Now, mind you, there are a bunch of Republicans and libertarians and intellectually honest conservatives—when you can find them—that are in the movement as well, but by and large there's a lot of progressives. And I did have those concerns, and it has not come to pass. In fact, in many ways it has made the fight a lot easier, because there was that notion, the sore loser, sour grapes notion that had always been used; “Oh you guys are just mad because you can't win elections.” And now folks like that can say, “We won the election and we are still mad.” I used to hear that a lot: “You're just an angry lefty who is angry that Kerry didn't win,” and I always had to point out, “Well, frankly, I didn't vote for John Kerry.” It has never really been about that for me. So I think that it has actually been good. I also think what happened

in Florida-13 in many ways has been a godsend.

Tell us a little bit about the problems in Florida's 13th.

I'll give you the short version: Essentially, you've got a race decided by just 369 votes, and yet 18,000 votes completely disappeared. That's a problem. And these are on paperless, touch screen voting machines. And when I say disappeared it means that 18,000 voters appear to have not voted only in *that* race, but only in that particular county—I think district 13 makes up about 5 different counties—and only on those touch screen DRE voting machines—DRE is direct recording electronic. So it was a huge undervote rate, some 15%, even higher in some precincts, and in fact, what the bad guys have been saying here is that they just didn't want to vote; they were angry with both Jennings and Buchanan; it was a dirty campaign, whatever. It doesn't bear out, because in fact the other counties in that same race had normal undercount rates in the same race. And even in Sarasota County itself, on the paper ballots, the absentee paper ballots, you had a normal undervote rate. So there really is no explanation for it other than something went wrong with those machines. And even the only expert to be put on the stand by the voting machine company, ES&S [Election Systems and Software], has *admitted* that were it not for problems with the voting machines, Jennings would have won. So, it's pretty extraordinary and in one sense a bullet has been dodged in that the balance of the House was not hanging on that one race.



What kind of legal remedy is there for Jennings at this point?

There are a couple. There are two concurrent lawsuits in the state of Florida, one by Christine Jennings and one by voters that are essentially calling for a revote and they are fighting now to get the source code to those voting machines, and incredibly, the judge down there ruled initially that they could not have the source code because it's the private trade secret of the company, which underscores pretty much everything that is wrong with this idea of private companies counting our vote with secret software so that we can never see what's going on. That is one remedy; the other remedy is up in Congress, the Federal Contested Elections Act, where they can file essentially for a ruling from Congress, which constitutionally has the right to determine if members have been seated properly. They've currently seated Buchanan provisionally; they have the option to keep him seated, to remove him, to seat Jennings instead, or to remove Buchanan and seat nobody, in which case it would trigger a revote down there in Florida, which is probably the fairest way to do it.

Dianne Feinstein has asked the Government Accounting Office to do an investigation of the matter. She's in charge of the Senate Rules Committee. Over in the house, [Juanita] Millender-McDonald is in charge of the House Administration Committee and she has made it clear that she would like an investigation and would like to see the plaintiffs down there in Florida get the source code to see what has happened. The state ran an audit; the audit itself had all kinds of problems. I'm sure you're not surprised; it's Florida, so there are a bunch of partisan Republicans on the committee, as well as the guy sort of overseeing the whole thing is the guy who certified those machines in the first place for the state of Florida. So, you know, he would have a bit of a stake in coming out with those reports saying everything is fine. So, that's what's going on, but it's really good news, even though we dodged a bullet. Had George Allen decided to challenge his election in Virginia, we would have another constitutional crisis on our hands. So that's how close we are with all of this stuff, that's why it is so important that we get it right, and that's why, though it's good news that this is highlighting this issue, the bad news is that folks out there are under the impression that paper trails would have made difference down in Sarasota. Paper trails would have made no difference. We need paper *ballots*, not paper trails on these touch screen machines.

Because the undervoting wouldn't leave a trail at any rate...

That's right. The fact of the matter is that 18,000 voters failed to either notice or be able to change their undervote when it was right there in front of their face on the computer screen, so where these folks get the notion that they are going to notice it on a tiny little piece of paper, checking it a second time—where they get the idea that is going to make any difference is somewhat beyond me. And studies have shown that people don't actually check those so-called voter verified paper audit trails, and remember, with 18,000 votes, all you need is 369 of those people not to have the time or interest to notice that there is a problem in that race for us to have the same result. So it is somewhat maddening, because I even see folks who I consider to be on the good side of this fight, Common Cause and People for the American Way and so forth, out there telling people if we only had a paper trail in Florida this would not have happened. Baloney.

Do you recommend a hand count?

No—well a hand count is fine, but optical scan works well enough if we have the proper audits of those optical scan ballots. But the key here is that you need a paper ballot. No matter how it's counted, you need a paper ballot.

So you can go back and look at it?

Not just so that you can go back and look at it; so you can count it in the first place. I mean, that's what's remarkable, even about this new Rush Holt legislation [HR-811, the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act], which I should mention I worked on with their office, and hopefully was able to improve it quite a bit. That said, I still can't support it at this time, because it will allow for DRE voting machines, which means we will have ballots that are never counted. But it's quite remarkable to ponder the idea that folks like me are actually fighting for people to be able to mark a ballot, and then to have that ballot actually counted, by anyone at any time. I mean, it's like I'm trying to convince the Democrats to invent the wheel or something.

The undervote story in Florida contrasts nicely with one I just read on your site about New Mexico, that minority undervoting there dropped 85% when they started using paper ballots.

You bet, and that's one of the reasons I wanted to highlight that story when I got that information over the weekend. You've got these folks running around saying minorities are better served by touch screen. Well hello, this data tells you quite differently, so I was quite pleased when that came out.

I've read that these glitches nearly always skew Republican. Is that really true?

Well, they do, unfortunately. Not always, but quite frequently they do. I don't call them glitches, by the way; I call them failures, and it's a bit of a bugaboo of mine, because it's always "glitches," "hiccups," "snafus." But the reason these are happening is because we have a system where there is *nobody*, absolutely nobody minding the store. Nobody in America gets to test these machines from top to bottom. Don't let anyone tell you different. Not the USEAC, the Election Assistance Commission, *no one* gets to test these machines that are used in our America elections. It's an absolute scandal. This is secret software that is counting our votes in a public democracy. It an absolutely astounding thing when you look at it.

Now if this is true, why aren't the Democrats putting everything they've got into correcting the situation? Why aren't they bringing their full force to bear on this?

I have been digging and digging on this story and fighting with Democrats on this and fighting with Holt's office on this. I recommend an article I wrote for Alternet.org called "False Choices in the Debate on Voting Technology." It used to be the disabled issue: "Oh, disabled voters need to be able to vote privately and independently." But that doesn't explain why everyone else in the world has to use these DRE machines, and it doesn't even explain why *anybody* has to use DRE machines, because there are also what are called ballot marking devices; these are essentially touch screen systems but all they do is print a ballot and then

Continues on next page

you take that ballot and count it with op scan, by hand, whatever you want. So those work equally well for disabled folks, so [DRE advocates] sort of don't have that anymore. The latest argument, which is rather extraordinary, is this language minority issue, that somehow folks who don't speak English as their first language are better served by touch screen than by op scan. It makes no sense. You can print out a ballot in Chinese or Vietnamese just as easily as anything else. But somehow or another these guys seem to be putting forward a rather disingenuous argument that minorities can read it on a touch screen better than on a piece of paper.

And as you said, the ballot marking software would work just as well for that anyway.

Yea, if you had to do that. But the problem is, when you use any kind of device like that—and this is what we saw week after week in '06, the primaries and the generals—when those machines break down, legally registered voters cannot vote. These systems are disenfranchising—left, right, black, white, I don't care—when they don't work, Americans cannot vote. And this happened, week after week. We saw thousands, if not millions of people that this happened to. And remember, if you've got let's say five touch screen machines in a precinct, if even one of them breaks down, now your line is going to be increased exponentially, and election day is a work day and so forth. So these machines are just disenfranchising, versus a paper ballot system. With an op scan system for example, you can walk in and vote anytime. Doesn't matter. If a machine breaks down, it doesn't matter. They can either bring in another machine or save the votes in a secure box until later. But with these DRE machines, when they break, you can't vote, and that is just a brutal menace to democracy in my opinion, and that's why a lot of the folks who had previously supported the Holt bill in its previous iteration—in the last Congress it was called HR-550—a lot of those folks have said, "Well, given what we have now learned in 2006, I can no longer support a bill that does not ban DRE systems, period."

Why do you think Diebold has always been singled out, at least when this sort of stuff is mentioned in the media? Do you think that Diebold is any worse than ES&S or Sequoia?

No, I do not. I think that all of these companies should be ashamed of themselves, frankly. Their behavior has been atrocious. The amount of money that they are taking from the taxpayer to run our democracy without feeling that they need be open in any way,



frankly, is a crime. And the way that each of them have lied in their own way about what is actually going on with these systems. I think Diebold has gotten most of notice likely for a couple of reasons, beginning with the statement by CEO Wally O'Dell, who is no longer there, the fundraising letter to the Republicans promising to deliver the state of Ohio to George W Bush—mission accomplished. So that certainly got folks to notice Diebold, and as well, they left their source code sitting out on a public Internet site, this great 150-year-old security company. So they were really the first one that folks were able to look at and see the code.

And there were those internal emails too that were alarming, about faking presentations and that sort of thing.

Oh yeah, and instructing Diebold how to lie about what they had done in California, where they were decertified. And of course, when people looked at their code, we saw all sorts of backdoors and holes. And in fact—this was something I broke at Brad Blog back in October 2005, and it was amazing that no one else reported this up until then: I have a source inside Diebold who I refer to as "Dieb Throat," and this source pointed me towards a page, sitting right out there on the web at a Department of Homeland Security site, called the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team. They issued a warning in August of 2004 that there was a backdoor in the Global Election Management System, the central tabulator machine that is used in all Diebold systems, that allows a malicious person to get in there and change anything they want. No one reported that for a full year, before or after the election, in any of the mainstream media. The media coverage on this stuff has just been abominable. It's only slightly better, but it's still pretty bad.

It does seem to be pretty much the most important domestic story there is. It's astonishing because it's not even that I've seen many rebuttals or discrediting of these stories; they just don't address it at all.

Well they used to, and in fact, I think the New York Times are in no small part responsible for the dearth of coverage. They came out with a story just after the 2004 election referring to people who were concerned about what happened in Ohio in '04 as "conspiracy theorists" and "left wing bloggers." I don't hear that a lot anymore. I do a lot of radio interviews and so forth on this. We used to get calls all the time; callers would call me a tin foil hat wearing conspiracy theorist lefty whacko. Interestingly, I think, through the assiduous work of a ragtag band of citizen patriots around the country, I think we have pretty well made our case. I don't get a lot of those calls anymore when I'm on the air from folks saying that I'm a lefty moonbat. You can only get so many studies coming out from Princeton University showing on video that you can hack an entire state election in ten seconds before people start saying, "Oh yeah, maybe there is a problem here."

At the end of the day, if you can't throw the bad guys out, it doesn't matter how much you want to argue about Iraq or health care or anything else. So that's why I've been sticking to this one and I'm amazed that not just the mainstream media, but even the progressive blogosphere haven't been as good on this as I would have expected.

Believe me, I have not made a lot of friends in pointing out the concerns I have with the Holt bill and the fact that it does not ban DREs, dangerously. But I don't think American democracy can well withstand another, third presidential election in a row

that has a questionable result. I don't think we can stand it. And as it stands now with this Holt bill, we are headed straight there. There is nothing in that Holt bill that will ensure that we won't have another Florida 2000 or Ohio 2004. And whether I'll be successful in changing minds there, we will see, but I couldn't rest at night if I didn't stand up and do something about it.

I read an alarming thing about Chuck Hagel, that he was the CEO of ES&S less than a year before his first election, and that ES&S counts all the votes in his state.

That's correct. And he won that seat for the first time in like 20 years or something that a Republican had won that seat.

And it was considered an upset victory, right? He wasn't leading in the polls.

That's my understanding, yeah.

So what do you think the chances are that that's crooked—that basically, Chuck Hagel shouldn't be a senator?

Well, I'll tell you. I've seen a lot of things that have raised my eyebrows, certainly, but unless I can absolutely prove something, I just don't report it. As a matter of fact, I'll go even further, I tell people, 'don't trust me; I'm not to be trusted, but neither is the AP or New York Times.' If people were as cautious with them as they are with me, I think we would be in good shape. So it's a long way to answer your question, which is to say yeah, I've seen a lot of stuff that's really troubling, but if I can't confirm it and prove it than I won't report it. But it is worth mentioning for sure. And it is also worth noting that the Nebraska newspaper out there, [the *Omaha World Herald*], they have a huge ownership in this voting machine company. And questions have come up at various times, whether it's the Hagel thing or anything else in Nebraska about the voting systems, and what the hell is a newspaper doing owning a voting machine company?

Do you think that HAVA [the Help America Vote Act of 2002] was a bad bill?

HAVA was a horrible bill. I did quite a bit of exposé work on that as well, connecting some of the dots. In fact, Bob Ney was the main author of HAVA. He's in jail; he's a felon; he can't vote and we are stuck with his crappy bill. Bob Ney not only was the lead author of HAVA, but most notably, Bob Ney's former chief of staff is and was the main Diebold lobbyist in congress, and he was involved with [Jack] Abramoff. Diebold had given [Abramoff employer] Greenberg Traurig money, so HAVA seems to be quite well tied into that entire filthy network.

Isawthat [former EAC Chairman] Deforest Soaries kind of went AWOL recently.

Well, he went AWOL a while ago, and thank god. He stood up and said something about what a scam this EAC thing is, and we have really learned since then what a scam they are. And I think people went along with it with the best of intentions on that bill, but it was a horrible bill and that's why it's so important with Holt now that we get it right this time. The devil is in the details and I don't want to see it become HAVA 2, and that's where I think it is going to be headed

unless some amendments are going to be made quickly to ban DREs.

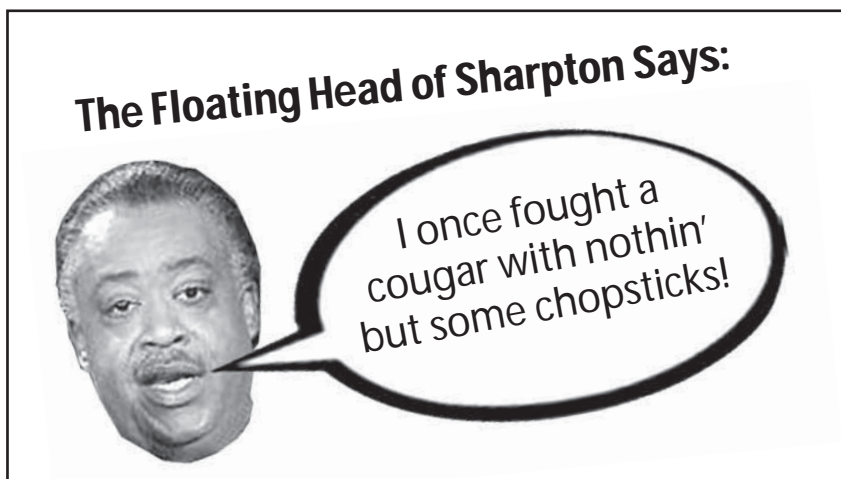
It seems probable to me that these same people are going to try pumping as much money as they can into Democratic campaigns just to keep themselves alive...

Well, you would think. I don't know if they are or aren't in truth, although I will confess to being somewhat confused why Democrats are not just coming out and saying... hell, even Charlie Crist down in Florida, the new governor down there, said we need to get rid of the DREs and replace them with op scans. The fact a Florida Republican governor is ahead of the Democrats on this issue is mind-blowing.

It's really something. To me, it's the most confounding part of the story, now that the Democrats at least have the house, and you know, like you said, this is the story that underscores all other stories.

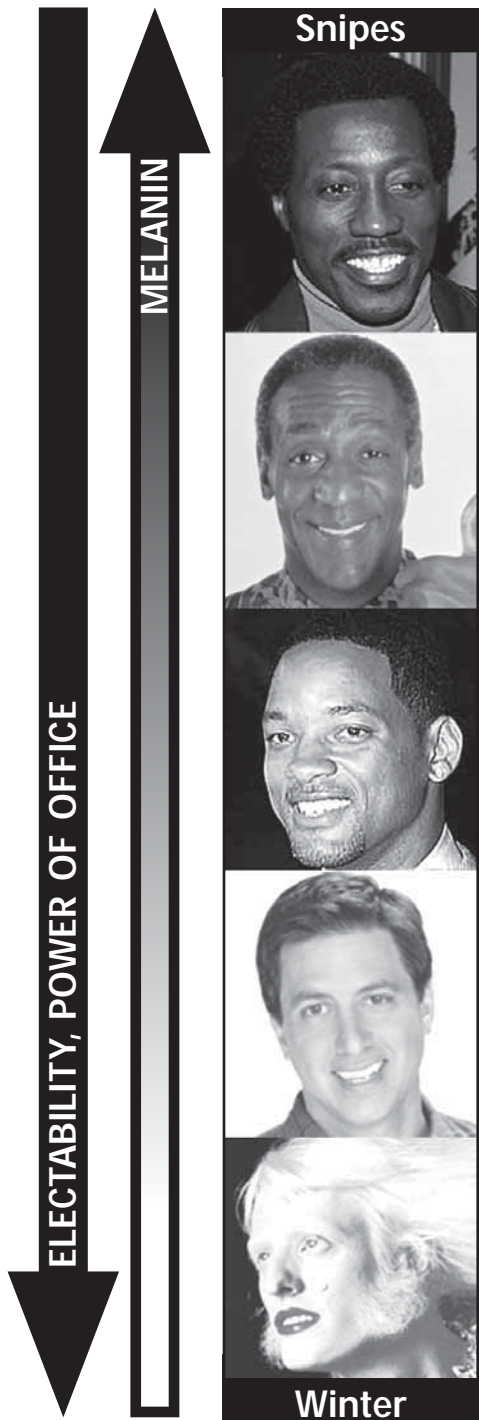
Well, I think they also don't understand it. It is a tricky business; you get into DREs and VVPATs [Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails] and op scans and statistics and all this other stuff that really nobody wants to know about, and I think that most people in Congress don't have any clue. He has 192 cosponsors on this bill, 191 if Maxine [Waters] drops out, as she has announced her intentions to do, but most of them don't really know and they don't know the difference between a DRE and an op scan. And it has allowed the office to run around and say, "Those people that want to ban DREs, they are insisting on hand counting paper ballots!" And that's nonsense. I'm not insisting on hand counting paper ballots. But they're using that to confuse people, and overall they are looking at the bill, they are looking at Rush Holt who has been on this now for several years, and they see that he is quite literally a rocket scientist, which is what he is. And they presume, "Well, this guy knows what he is talking about; if Holt says this is the way to do it, than this is the way we'll take it. He knows his computer stuff; he is a rocket scientist, after all." They are sort of trusting him. Why *he* is not making that step is a different issue, though. So I don't want to imply that the reason that the Democrats are not doing this is because they are in bed with the voting machine companies. I don't know. If they are, I will report it, that's for damn sure, but I haven't seen any evidence of it. ■

Learn more about HR-811 and a host of other political topics at bradblog.com.



The BEAST

Melanin / Electability Index*



Snipes



Winter

The Snipes Limit:
Not even black people trust dudes who are that dark.

CHOCOLATE CITIES



From N'awlins' nougaty Nagin to Buffalo's Byron Brown, the black American Mayor has proven himself to be inept as his white-devil counterparts.

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Ranging from "Whitey" Ford to "Cosby" Kilpatrick, Congress is now easier for blacks to get into than Pebble Beach.

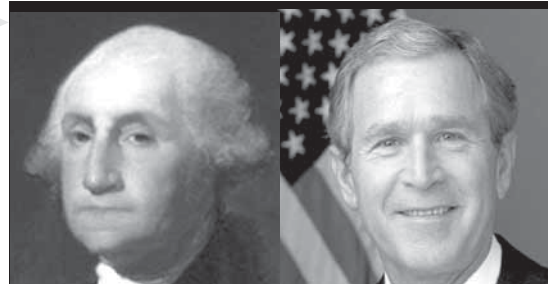


ONE OF THE GREAT ONES!



Hiram Rhodes Revels became the first black Senator in 1870. America was unwilling or unable to break the Will Smith Barrier.

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From George Washington to George W., all 43 Presidents of The United States fall somewhere in the narrow spectrum between Middle Winter to Lower Romano.

The Floating Head of Sharpton Says:



Do you know where I can get a really good ham sandwich?

*This index doesn't really explain anything.

OBAMA

The best BS artist since Slick Willy by Matt Taibbi

Last Friday night a friend called and told me that Barack Obama had posted a sort of pre-announcement of the start of his presidential campaign on his website. I immediately cued it up and within ten minutes was writing a column blasting him for ripping off half of his campaign speech from a smorgasbord of '04 Democratic candidates -- then stopped when I realized that I'd already written exactly that column about Hillary Clinton's kickoff speech a few weeks ago.

So I went back and watched the speech again, and I actually felt chills run up my spine. A few weeks ago, Hillary Clinton's launch speech ripped off John Kerry and the DLC with its "Let's have a conversation" theme; Obama, meanwhile, went the

Only the 5th black-ish Senator in US history, Obama falls within the non-threatening Will Smith level of darkness. The large ears and winning smile may lead some elderly voters to believe they're casting a ballot for the "Fresh Prince" himself.



Howard Dean route, nicking "A campaign to take America back" from Dean and RFK Jr., among others. The fact that Hillary, like Kerry, is set up as the DLC-acolyte candidate while Obama, like Dean, is set up as the antiwar candidate suggests a kind of permanent template for the Democratic primary process. Maybe soon the race for the Democratic primary will be like Everytown USA's annual high school production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where every year they find a new antiwar Blanche and a new pro-corporate Stanley. The faces are different, the lines are the same.

I've been on the fence about Obama for more than two years now, ever since his breakout performance at the Democratic convention in '04. When I saw that speech -- an iconic piece of inspired nonsense/political showmanship, one that set flashbulbs popping like Michael Jordan's virtuoso 1988 dunk contest performance -- I knew right away that he would be the Democratic presidential nominee someday, perhaps even in the next election cycle.

When I mentioned this to my friends, they told me I was crazy. Obama had had absolutely no national experience at that time,

"If Hillary Clinton even dares to open her mouth within a hundred feet of him at any time during the campaign, she's going to come off like a pig digging for truffles. Even Edwards -- the so-called "slick" candidate from '04 -- sounds like a two-bit suburban Buick dealer next to Obama."

he was a political virgin, there was no way he was ready for prime time. My answer to that was, compared to what? Throw a guy who can speak like that against the list of likely Democratic candidates in 2008 -- a sorry collection of human saline drips that included Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, John Kerry, Joe Biden, and Chris Dodd -- and Obama could fucking *walk* to the nomination, even if he chose a page from the Betty Crocker cookbook as his stump speech.

Fast forward two years and that appears to be exactly what Obama has done. The Illinois Senator is the ultimate modern media creature -- he's a good-looking, youthful, smooth-talking, buttery-warm personality with an aw-shucks demeanor who exudes a seemingly impenetrable air of Harvard-crafted moral neutrality. If Hillary Clinton even dares to open her mouth within a hundred feet of him at any time during the campaign, she's going to come off like a pig digging for truffles. Even Edwards -- the so-called "slick" candidate from '04 -- sounds like a two-bit suburban Buick dealer next to Obama. You get past the "issues," and it's a wipeout.

Obama knows this, and so his entire political persona is an ingeniously crafted human cipher, a man without race, ideology, geographic allegiances, or, indeed, sharp edges of any kind. You can't run against him on the issues because you can't even find him on the ideological spectrum. Obama's "Man for all seasons" act is so perfect in its particulars that just about *anyone* can find a bit of himself somewhere in the candidate's background, whether in his genes or his upbringing. You can be white, you can be black, you can be Christian, you can be Muslim, you can be from the American heartland or from Africa... you can even,

Continues on next page

Told you so.

according to his book *The Audacity of Hope*, worship Norse Gods or bury your relatives according to Hawaiian rituals:

In our household the Bible, the Koran, and the Bhagavad Gita sat on the shelf alongside books of Greek and Norse and African mythology. On Easter or Christmas Day my mother might drag me to church, just as she dragged me to the Buddhist temple, the Chinese New Year celebration, the Shinto shrine, and ancient Hawaiian burial sites ...

As far as political positioning goes, his strategy seems to be to appear as a sort of ideological Universalist, one who spends a great deal of rhetorical energy showing that he recognizes the validity of all points of view, and conversely emphasizes that when he does take hard positions on issues, he often does so reluctantly. He is a black man from Chicago who gets away with praising Ronald Reagan, which is not an easy task. His political ideal is basically a rehash of the Blair-Clinton "third way" deal, an amalgam of Kennedy, Reagan, Clinton and the New Deal; he is aiming for the middle of the middle of the middle.

In short, Obama is a creature perfectly in tune with the awesome corporate strivings of Hollywood, Madison avenue and the Beltway -- he tries, and often succeeds, at selling a politics of seeking out the very center of where we already are, to the very couch where we've been sitting all this time, as an exciting, revolutionary journey into the unknown. And while most of what he says and writes is basically some version of the same old tired clichés about family and faith and hope and optimism and "working together" and "getting involved," he adds to those clichés real literary flair, wordsmithing far beyond the range of most politicians. Take this bit about his kids in his book:

... I sat at the dinner table, watching Malia and Sasha as they laughed and bickered and resisted their string beans before their mother chased them up the stairs and to their baths. Alone in the kitchen washing the dishes, I imagined my two girls growing up, and I felt the ache that every parent must feel at one time or another, that desire to snatch up each moment of your child's presence and never let go -- to preserve every gesture, to lock in

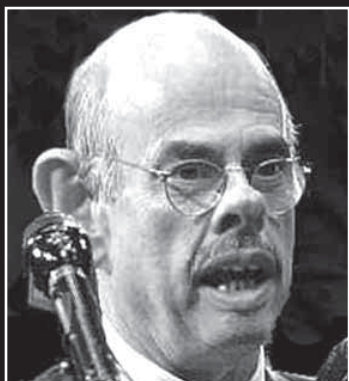
for all eternity the sight of their curls or the feel of their fingers clasped around yours.

Here's the thing about Obama, the reason they call him a "natural" and a "rare talent." When Hillary Clinton spouts a cliché, it's four words long, she's reading it off a teleprompter, and it hits the ear like the fat part of a wooden oar. Even when Hillary announced she was running for president, she sounded like she was ordering coffee. Obama on the other hand can close his eyes and the clichés just pour out of his mouth in huge polysyllabic paragraphs, like Rachmaninoff improvisations. In this sense he's exactly like Bill Clinton, who had the same gift. He is exactly what is meant by the term *bullshit artist*.

My usual instinct when presented with this type of Zelig-esque, Eddie Haskell, non-stick personality is to violently reject it. But over the course of the last few weeks I've found myself increasingly amused by the Obama phenomenon. For one thing, he clearly pisses off Hillary to no end. Same with Biden and all of those other windbag jerk-off assholes in that revolting "national security Democrats" clan in the Senate. There is something subtly racist (in Biden's case, not so subtle) in the way these more entrenched Democrats are riding Obama's lack of credentials and acting like the '08 nomination is their birthright, like he hasn't "waited his turn" or something, paid his dues. As if any of these clowns would wait ten seconds to declare for the White House if they had the same odds that Obama has now.

I have no idea who Obama really is, but he is against the war now (and at least never voted for it) and he seems to infuriate the right people. He has people bitching now that he's not black enough, and there are obviously going to be plenty of people for whom he's *too* black. And both of those groups of people, frankly, deserve whatever's coming to them. So for the time being I'm going to enjoy his rise to the top, the same way I enjoyed reading *The Red and The Black* -- like another great phony, Julien Sorel, Obama is a perfect mirror of the society he was born to conquer, and his journey upward throws everyone he passes into stark, humorous relief. Whether I'll vote for him is another story. But he's certainly helping make it clear who shouldn't get my vote. ■

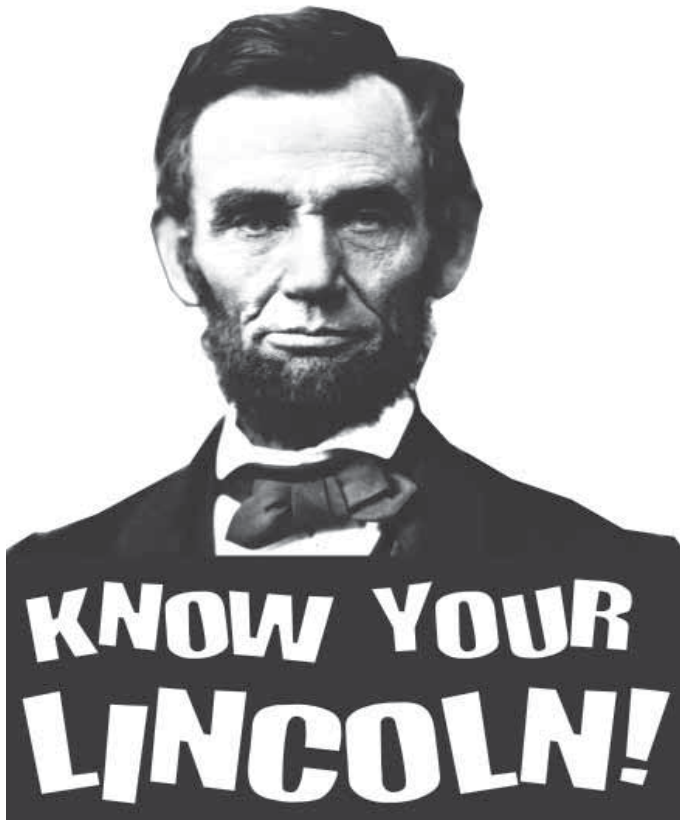
Separated at birth?



Congressman
Henry Waxman...



...and this
vampire bat?



Recently there's been a rash of bunk Lincoln quotes circulating on the web, print and even the hallowed halls of congress – can you tell which on of the following quotes is authentic? **Answer at bottom of page!**

- A** “Congressmen who willfully take action during wartime that damage morale and undermine the military are saboteurs, and should be arrested, exiled or hanged.”
- B** “I don’t care what anybody says – beards and hats give men supernatural abilities! Would I be now where I am today if it weren’t for my dandy face of hair or my stovepipe skull cap? Certainly not. I here and now shall put this matter to rest. It is not up to congress to decide.”
- C** “I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in anyway the social and political equality of the white and black races - that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. I say upon this occasion I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied everything.”
- D** “Get out of my dreams. Get in the back seat, baby, and get into my car.”

The genuine Lincoln quote is C: what a dick, huh?

IT COULD HAPPEN... SCARY PREDICTIONS OF THE FUTURE IN BUFFALO !!

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IMAGINE.. WITH ALL THAT FREE WATER POWER IN OUR BACKYARD, AND GIANT NATURAL GAS RESERVES.. WE GET SHAFTED WITH HIGHEST RATES IN THE COUNTRY...



IT COULD HAPPEN...

2 LOTTERIES AND CASINOS

IMAGINE.. IF GOVERNMENT AND CONGLOMERATES CAN LEGALLY PRETEND TO ENHANCE US... ONLY TO MAKE MILLIONS FOR THEMSELVES & LOSERS OF US...



IT COULD HAPPEN...

WHERE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN YESTERDAY, TODAY, & TOMORROW



WALKER CENTER
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SWEET NOTHINGS

Lies my paper told me ————— by Allan Uthman

For all the complaining I do about deception in the media, I have to admit I get a giddy thrill out of reading it. As with any addiction, I've developed an increasing tolerance and require an ever purer dosage of insidious mendacity and appeals to conformity to get off. Now I have a special appreciation for the most extreme variety of corporate press dishonesty: pieces written solely to impugn reality.

There's a pattern that articles seem to follow when some poor bootlicking journalist is tasked with refuting an objectionably true piece of information, despite having no coherent case against it. Usually, the majority of the piece will assess the offending claim and generally summarize the evolution of the controversy. This first 80% or so of the article will read like a regular, reasonably evenhanded piece of journalism, perhaps even containing sympathetic quotes from the suspect claim's proponents. Then, having nearly filled their word-count and still at a loss for a decent argument, the author will make a wild u-turn and hurry through a brief, entirely subjective, incomplete and patently idiotic dismissal of whatever point they were just explaining, a tacked-on "there, there" to soothe their tender, easily rattled readers. It reeks of editorial interference, but what's really remarkable is how clumsy and transparent the process is.

I recognized this pattern last year, when the *New York Times* addressed the fact that, despite having been quoted as saying "Israel must be wiped off the map" by every man, woman and child in the United States over the past year, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a frequent victim of deliberate mistranslation, never actually said that. A correct translation, according to many native Farsi speakers, goes something like, "The regime occupying Israel must vanish from the pages of history," and was a direct quotation of Ayatollah Khomeini.

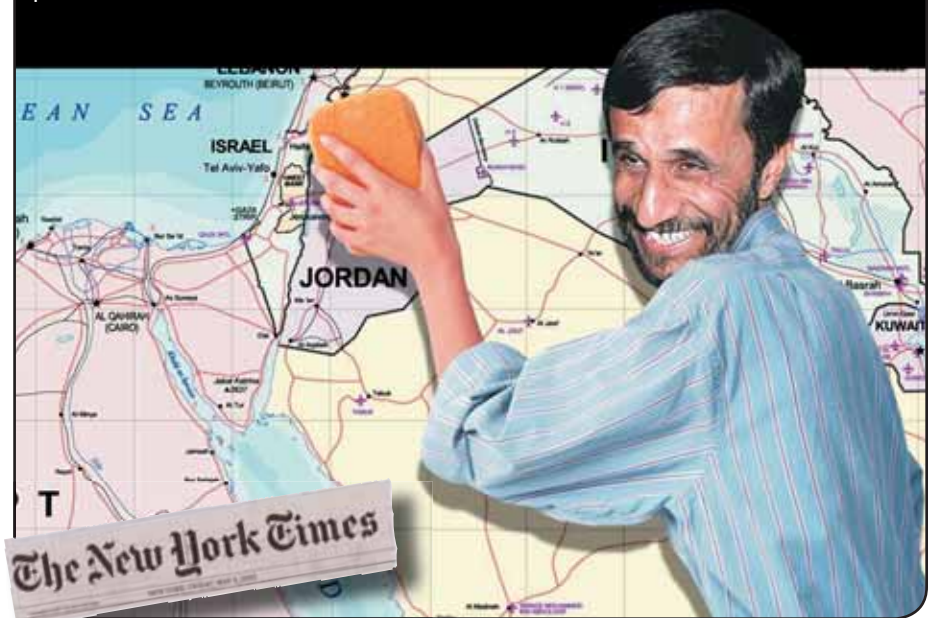
The article, by *Times* deputy foreign editor Ethan Bronner ("Just how far

did they go, those words against Israel," 6/11/06), is really something special. Of course, a regime—that is, a government—vanishing from the page of time doesn't evoke the apocalyptic image that a nation wiped off the map does, and this specific misquotation has done probably more than any other piece of domestic psy-ops to vilify Iran. It's an effective lie, so it must

words "Israel," "wipe" or "map." Bronner sprinkles a generous portion of bullshit throughout the piece, stating that the verb translated as "wipe" is transitive when it is intransitive, and even arguing that the fact that the Iranian president actually said "the regime occupying Jerusalem" instead of "Israel" makes the statement worse, because Ahmadinejad "refuses

Oh no he di-in't! No really, he didn't.

How many times have you heard or read that the president of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said "Israel must be wiped off the map?" A hundred times – a thousand? Well it's pure Meshugass! He never said it. The original statement made in Farsi on October 26, 2005 in a speech entitled "A World Without Zionism" was first published by the *Iranian Students News Agency* and mistranslated by Nazila Fathi of *The New York Times* Tehran bureau in an October 30, 2005 piece and has since taken on the illusion of fact in our media.



be saved, and it's Bronner's job to do it.

Despite Bronner's obvious reluctance to go along, the facts practically drag him kicking and screaming toward the inexorable conclusion that, in fact, Juan Cole and the *Guardian's* Jonathan Steele have it right; that Ahmadinejad didn't even say the

even to utter the name Israel." That is some amazing spin, I have to admit. But Bronner still cannot deny that "map" is wrong and significantly different in tone than "pages of history," even offering weak excuses for the error, and at least acknowledges that Ahmadinejad referred to Israel's government, not the whole of

Neither did he!

Newsweek has the gall to refute the supposed discovery of Jesus' tomb by claiming it's statistically unlikely that someone would have stolen his body and buried it before anyone noticed. However, *Newsweek* has no problem with the far more improbable scenario that a dude woke from the dead and flew into space!

Newsweek

Check out the science of the ascension!

Israel. He really can't avoid decimating the original misquotation, which was and still is so oft-repeated in the media.

But then an amazing, incongruous thing happens: he draws precisely the opposite conclusion flatly contradicting his own analysis. Immediately after admitting that "it is true that he has never specifically threatened war against Israel," Bronner's final paragraph is outrageously illogical and cowardly. Check it out:

"So did Iran's president call for Israel to be wiped off the map? It certainly seems so. Did that amount to a call for war? That remains an open question."

What the fuck? He didn't say "Israel," he didn't say "map," but it "certainly seems" he did? And frankly, drawing solely from the evidence presented in Bronner's own *damn piece*, whether the statement was "a call for war" is decidedly *not* an open question. The reality here is that there was only one possible conclusion to this article from the minute that the *Times* decided to address the subject, and that, at a loss for a reasonable way to support that conclusion, Bronner simply tacked it on at the end, regardless of the fact that it doesn't make the least bit of sense at all.

Continues on next page



Heaven

Once in heaven (some-where near the moon), at the right hand of his father, Jesus would be fit as a fiddle in no time!



Exosphere 10,000 km



Buzz Aldrin's Dentures

By now, Christ's lifeless, frozen corpse would begin to swell like a fleshy balloon due to the difference in pressure between his body and the vacuum of space.

Thermosphere 690 km



Crazy Diaper Wearing Astronauts

Aurora Borealis

Unprotected by the earth's atmosphere, Jesus would be exposed to intense amounts of ultra-violet radiation, getting a nasty sun burn. At this altitude he would experience total respiratory failure and likely cardiac arrest.

Mesosphere 85 km



Meteors

Now totally unconscious and very cold, Christ's limp body would be pelted with hundreds of meteors. That's gotta hurt!

Stratosphere 50 km



Richard Branson

Severe hypothermia and respiratory difficulties. His body entering shock, Christ would experience tunnel vision and eventually black out.

Troposphere 6 - 20 km



Commercial Airliner

Mt. Everest

Even at these relatively low altitudes, the low pressure and lack of oxygen would cause Jesus nausea, headaches, fatigue, hyperventilation, insomnia and erectile dysfunction.



Why bother even writing that nonsense? Because now, in every news source and every individual online or verbal argument on the matter, people can say that the *New York Times* looked into the issue and concluded that the quote is legit. It's piss-poor sophistry, but, apparently, it'll do in a pinch.

You can see the same pattern at work in a recent article in *Newsweek* about the raging faith-based shit storm over a new documentary produced by James Cameron, *The Jesus Family Tomb*, directed by Simcha Jacobovici. As you've no doubt heard, the film tells of a tomb unearthed in Israel in 1980 containing remains which bear names alarmingly reminiscent of the Christ clan, including Mary Magdalene and a son of the Son.

Like the deplorable *Times* piece, this one ("Raiders of the Lost Tomb," 3/5/07) has a necessary, predetermined conclusion—Jacobovici is wrong, Jesus flew up to heaven, and *Newsweek's* predominantly Christian readership are not gullible suckers devoting their lives to an ancient, ludicrous hoax. Again, most of the article is a simple rundown of the evidence and the controversy. And again, this time three paragraphs from the end, there is a 180-degree switch in tone, from reasonably

objective to downright illogical dismissal. After finally coughing up perhaps the most compelling bit of evidence, that a University of Toronto statistician estimated the likelihood of all of the names in the tomb coming from a different family at 600 to 1, the authors (Lisa Miller and Joan Chen) appear to suffer a dramatic drop in IQ:

"Good sense, and the Bible, still the best existing historical record of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, argue against Jacobovici's claims. All four Gospels say that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Sabbath; all four say that the tomb was empty when the disciples woke on Sunday morning.... For Jacobovici's scenario to work, someone would have had to whisk the body away, on the Sabbath, and secretly inter it in a brand-new, paid-for family tomb—all before dawn on Sunday."

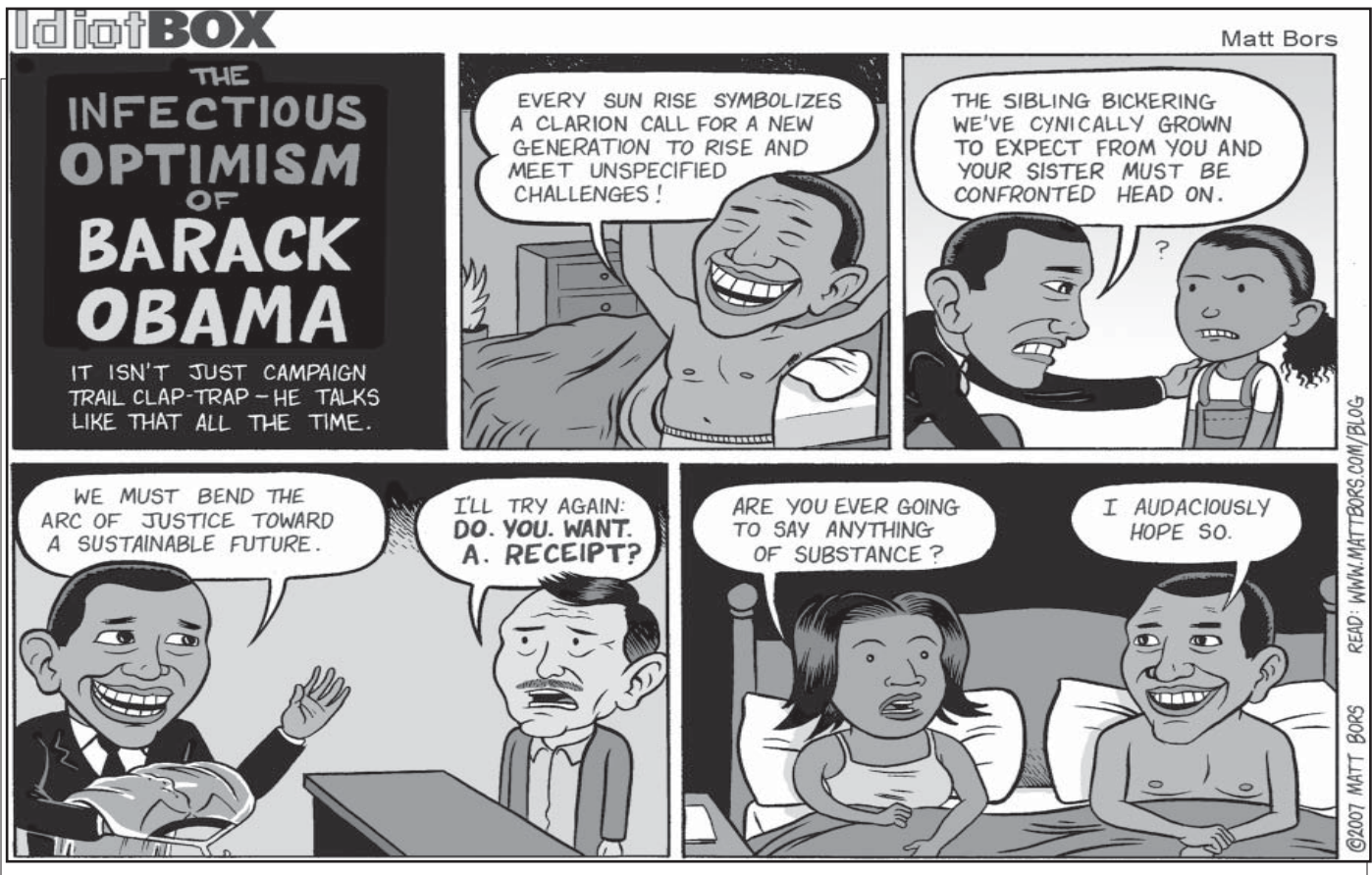
It's unbelievable how often so-called respectable news sources cite the Bible as a historical record when addressing religious issues. It sure is an easy way to support the Biblical narrative, and we saw an awful lot of it when it was deemed necessary to "debunk" *The Da Vinci Code*, a fictional novel. In reality, however, the Bible is no more a historical record than the *Odyssey*, or *Fight Club* for that matter. Beyond that, citing "all four Gospels," as if the fact that

they concur with each other constitutes meaningful corroboration, when three of them were entirely based on the first (which was written at least a lifetime after Christ is supposed to have died), is hilariously, deliriously disingenuous.

But the part of this I just love, the thing that I cannot believe even the psych-blowers at *Newsweek* found printable, is that, after an astoundingly weak attempt to establish the preposterous premise that stories in the Bible equate to impeccable multiple witness testimony, and so we must accept as *fact* that this guy Christ's body disappeared from a tomb overnight because four people said so centuries after the fact, these assholes have the gall to argue that the notion, only necessitated by that false premise, that someone might have snuck in and absconded with the body is *too improbable* to be believed, and it's much more *sensible* to conclude that a dead person *woke up and flew away into the fucking sky*.

That's *Newsweek's* take on the matter. Making sense is obviously less important to them than drawing the conclusions that most Americans simply *want* to be true, by hook or crook.

I'm not saying the Jesus tomb is the real



deal. I'm not even convinced that Jesus Christ the man ever actually existed (*The God Who Wasn't There* makes a strong case that he didn't). Either way, it's not nearly the threat to Christianity that I'd like it to be. After all, Christians manage to retain their faith in the Bible in spite of all sorts of hard evidence against it—that the universe is several billion years old, for example, or that we and all other creatures evolved gradually from single-celled organisms, or that snakes don't talk and people don't fly to heaven. I highly doubt a little thing like Jesus' corpse would have much of an effect on people who think you can fit two of every animal species in the world on a boat. But, regardless of the truth or falsehood of Jacobovici's thesis, it may be enough to pry some away from the religious teat, and that is an objectively good thing in my opinion.

What's thrilling to me is the graceless inevitability of it all. This piece by Miller and Chen carries a palpable sense of the mission at hand: not to illuminate or investigate, simply to diffuse the unpleasantness of difficult facts. What we see here, laid bare, is the fact that, for the people at the very top of the journalistic heap, the proverbial

hill that shit rolls down from, there are issues that are just too *important* to tell the truth about.

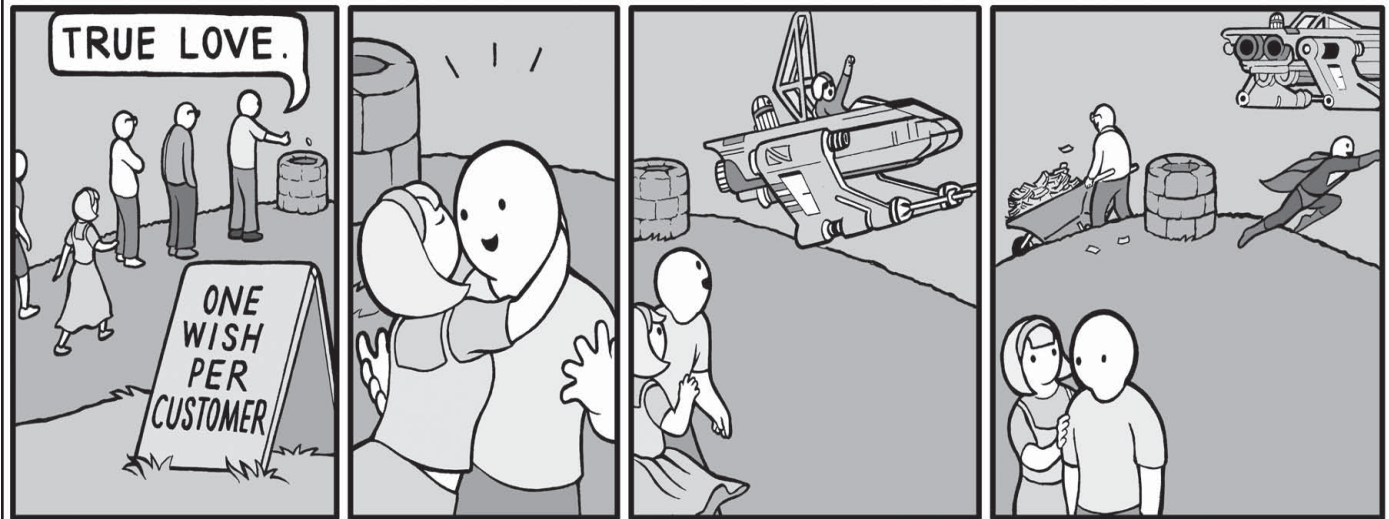
Reassuring people that Santa really exists is one thing; deliberately frightening them about foreigners is another. And there's only really one reason to lie about Ahmadinejad, the last person on earth any American journalist who knows what's good for him would want to be seen as defending. Anybody who doesn't think we're going to attack Iran should ask themselves why so much effort is being made to paint its president, not even a very powerful position in Iranian politics, as the new Hitler. Remember the last new Hitler? That's right; Saddam Hussein. It's hard to say *why* we're going to attack Iran—maybe Israel, maybe oil, or an election strategy, or maybe just executive insanity—but we're clearly planning on it. The "wiped off the map" quote is vital to this process, and has paid off handsomely—the abysmal *Weekly Standard*, for example, ran a cover story on Ahmadinejad last month with the headline "Denying the Holocaust, desiring another one." At the same time, the White House is busily concocting an impending nuclear

threat and accusing Iran of supplying *Sunni* insurgents with bombs, which just doesn't make sense. All of this is happening, of course, while the last bullshit-based war rages still, necessitating an even more intensely alarmist PR campaign to overcome the natural suspicions of a recently conned public.

The *New York Times* played a central role in freaking people out about Iraq, remember. Since then, there has been much hand-wringing on the subject. If they had it to do over... but now they do. Here they are presented with a second opportunity to get it right, to pull no punches, to treat the Bush administration with the scrutiny and skepticism warranted by the nefarious, lying band of blundering super-criminals that they have proven to be. The *Times* could be straight with us; they could tell the truth. If the *New York Times*—or *Newsweek*, or *Time*, or the *Washington Post*, or NBC, or CNN, or any other major corporate news outlet had come out and definitively made the very simple case that the "wiped off the map" quote was simply, objectively wrong, it would have gone a long way toward deflating support for our third and perhaps dumbest invasion since 9/11, and might even have helped foster some healthy public skepticism on the issue. Of course, a lot of people would simply accuse them of treachery, which is one reason for press timidity. But by telling the truth, they could, in fact, have made the world a safer place and perhaps saved thousands of lives.

But that's just not what the press does. What they do is they tell you lies; lies they already know you want to hear. Just as politicians look to polls to determine their policies, letting poorly-informed people lead them on important issues, the press can figure out what its readers or viewers believe, and make a hell of a living pandering to their egos and telling them that they're smart. If they have no rational case, false or otherwise, to support the lies, it doesn't matter much. All they have to do is *say* something is true, and it becomes true, especially when it confirms the central tenets of American epistemology: That we already know everything important, that we are always right, and anybody who disagrees is a dangerous threat to our well-being. They lie and tell you you're right, and you never have to change your mind about anything. And you reward them, lauding them and paying them money to keep telling you those sweet, self-serving lies. So when the war in Iran is on and you're wondering how the hell it happened, remember: The *New York Times* and *Newsweek* are symptoms. You are the disease. ■





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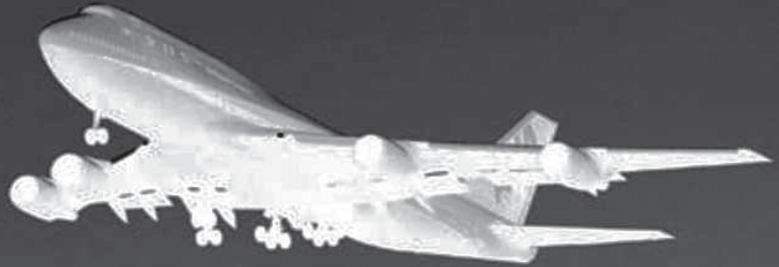


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MENACE IN SEAT 36F

**"They made him take off his shoes
– but the terror was in his heart!
And he had a tiny knife too."**



BASED ON A TRUE STORY

by Michael J. Smith

I walked onto an airplane yesterday, carrying a weapon in my pocket. It wasn't much of a weapon – a Swiss army knife with a three-inch blade, plus the usual assortment of other sharp edges. All in all, though, it probably represented twenty counts of some Federal crime.

I didn't commit these crimes deliberately—just forgot the knife was in my coat pocket. The coat was taken off, as ordered, and sent through the X-ray machine; but perhaps the operator was tired, or distracted, and failed to notice the knife, or perhaps it was lying at the wrong angle to cast a telltale shadow. I put my hand in my pocket as I was walking down the plane's aisle to my seat, and found the deadly thing there. "Shall I hijack the plane?" I asked myself, and answered, "Oh, what's the point."

During the predictably squalid and brutish flight, I found myself gripping the knife in my pocket as if I were an apprentice Jack the Ripper, and contemplating my sharp little friend's implications for national security.

If a mild-mannered middle-aged citizen can carry a deadly weapon undetected onto a plane, without even meaning to, it's likely that a determined individual could find a way to do so with intent – particularly if he didn't care what happened to him. These reflections weren't disquieting – quite the reverse. If it's so easy to blow up a plane, in spite of all the "security" rigmarole at the airport, does it not follow, from the fact that planes seldom are blown up, that very few people really want to blow them up?

In fact, plane-exploders are probably no more likely to affect your life than serial killers. Both classes of people undoubtedly exist, but most of us don't go through our day taking elaborate measures to avoid serial killers, or lose sleep over the prospect of encountering Hannibal Lecter at the produce counter.

Is it too cynical to wonder whether the "security" in question is really job security? In recent years the policing and incarceration complex has become an economic and political force in its own right – like the military-industrial complex, though not on quite such a grand scale. New York state alone spends \$2.7 billion a year just on prisons, not counting police, private security guards, purveyors of surveillance devices, and the like. According to a recent *New York Times* item, "the [New York] state prison system has become, in effect, an economic development program.... [A] powerful alliance of upstate lawmakers and correction officers' unions guard their constituents' and members' state-financed jobs and are likely to resist any effort to downsize the system."

That explanation, by itself, is probably too simple. Dr Freud would remind us that human behavior is "over-determined"—much of what we do has more than one sufficient cause. A darkly suspicious person might conjecture a broader political motive for this theater of surveillance and scrutiny, this gauntlet of barking, hectoring coplets, this petty humiliation and fetishistic pawing through our underwear and toothpaste.

George W. Bush recently reminded us that "The enemies of liberty come from different parts of the world, and they take inspiration from different sources." Our darkly suspicious person might fear that some of those enemies come from right here at home – and their "inspiration" is the hope that their power and wealth will grow if the rest of us are reduced to something more passive and tractable, more fearful and grovelling, than free citizens of a free country.

I'm old enough to remember when flying was a thrill. To step into an airplane was to step into the future – a future of once-unimaginable freedom and almost godlike exaltation, where ordinary Joes and Janes could lean back and sip a Martini

among fabulous Tiepolo clouds, en route to some exotic destination their parents never heard of.

Now we've come full circle: airplanes and airports no longer suggest a gleaming future, or trail any clouds of our Golden Age glory. They look more like outposts of the booming prison sector. The emblems of triumph have become the insignia of degradation.

The story of this reversal can be summed up in one word: blowback. Imperial ambition made us do this to ourselves. We sought to be top dog, and now we have agreed to be treated like dogs.

Among their other over-determined functions, our grotesque airport liturgies are what anthropologists call apotropaic magic—rituals to ward off evils that we can't otherwise control. On the practical level, airport apotropaia is an ineffectual response to a rare threat. But we are not seeking practical answers to practical problems. We are seeking something that's not available in the real world.

We can't acknowledge the fact that the totems of our once-golden way of life are vulnerable, like all things human. If we charge through the world like Lizzie Grubman in her SUV, the world has ways to hit us back – but we're not yet ready to hear that. The imperial mystique still has too strong a grip on our imagination.

It's not enough for us to take reasonable precautions, and reduce our risk to the prosaic, low but non-zero level that we tolerate in daily life when we cross the street or ride in a taxi. Instead, we have to convince ourselves that like Superman, defender of the "American way," we are invulnerable – because otherwise, we would have to reckon up the real costs of empire, and ask ourselves whether it's worth what we're paying for it.

We still don't want to make that reckoning. So instead we make more and more costly sacrifices to the Moloch of security, and prostrate ourselves before a priesthood of cops and security guards, to enter an illusory paradise of perfect safety. Of course these rites don't really reassure us – on some level, we know better— and further exertions are always needed. Now we have to take our shoes off, and stand barefoot like Moses or a Spanish

Neutral?

The Swiss Army denies supplying terrorist hijackers with WMD, but recently released photos speak for themselves, say top US officials.*

Given enough time, a diligent terrorist could open any cockpit door, like so many cans of chick peas.

The smaller blade is perfect for Jihad-themed whittling.

Used to politely aid the crew with the opening of bottled beverages. Sort of sweet of them, really.

The deadly 3 inch blade can be used to slice through fellow passengers, the crew or rubbery inflight meals.

* Unmistakable markings of the Swiss Army.

Molotov Cocktail opener doubles as infidel de-brainer.

This pokey thing is surely also dangerous, one would imagine.



Source: Department of Homeland Stupidity

penitent; what will we take off next?

Personally, I'd rather divest myself of the empire, and hang on to my Swiss army knife – and my privacy, and my dignity, and my shoes. And I'll happily take my chances with all my shiv-packing, or even dynamite-shod, fellow-travellers.

Mumblety peg, anyone? ■

Michael J. Smith lives in New York City, and when he is not carrying deadly weapons on airplanes, he spends his time trying to undermine the Democratic Party on his blog, stopmebeforeivoteagain.org.

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BEAST gets poetic on dat ass!

Saul Williams schools us on Hip Hop and our choice of lunch

Saul Williams

is a poet and musician who rose to fame in the NYC slam poetry scene. He has performed with Allen Ginsberg, KRS-One, and many others. Rick Rubin produced his first album, *Amethyst Rock Star*, and his forthcoming album is being produced by Trent Reznor.

Williams is an outspoken critic of the Bush administration and the so-called War on Terror. His newest collection of poetry is *The Dead Emcee Scrolls*. We sat down with him during his recent spoken word tour.



something at eight or nine years old, were songs. Rap songs. Verse, chorus, verse. The first things I wrote were songs; it took me a minute to remember that. And once I got to writing poetry, that led me back to creating music. For one, with that state of disillusion with the current state of hip hop instead of being a critic I was trying to fill that void in between what I was hearing and what I wished I was hearing. And secondly, I had heard some really inspiring music around that time that made me realize that I could do something different: Portishead, Tricky, Massive Attack, Bjork, drum n bass, Goldie, and that whole world. It opened me up because I saw all of that as hip hop and/or in very close relation to hip hop. Opening my mind up to what was happening here as well as elsewhere gave me a lot of new ideas.

In another interview, you criticized the current state of hip hop as a microcosm of the problems in our society as a whole. What do you see as a positive next step in those spheres?

It's not so much a criticism as an observation – that gangsterism has been running the country at the same time that gangsterism has been running hip hop. We've had misplaced values in how we think we should be run as a nation and the same misplaced values are what we've responded to in music.

Where are we headed? You can look at what's happening in either forum – whether that's Barack Obama and Hillary on the ticket or whether that's MIA or TV on the Radio on a CD. It's evolving because of itself and despite of itself.

Why isn't there a table of contents in your new book?

There's no real reason. I've thought about it, but if I did that I'd have to name the poems, and half the book is journal entries. I like having things that don't have titles remain that way.

You started off as a spoken word artist and poet –

Well I started off rhyming, as a rapper. Poetry was the last thing that I discovered. I started off rhyming, writing songs, and acting. Eventually I stumbled upon poetry.

I meant recording albums. Weren't you approached to make your first album after a poetry reading?

I definitely started recording music after I was writing poetry. But the first things I ever wrote, when I first sat down to write

The first song I recorded was for a compilation called Lyricist Lounge, this track called Ohm. We started playing with the drum beat, speeding it up and slowing it down and I realized that I could do anything if I divorced myself from the idea of doing what was expected to be done in hip hop. I realized that what really moved me in hip hop was when people did the unexpected. Public Enemy was unexpected. A Tribe Called Quest, that second album, *The Low End Theory*, was completely unexpected. So I just started challenging myself to do the unexpected, and I've done a lot of fun stuff as a result.

Your last three books were published by MTV Books, a Viacom subsidiary. What's the deal with that?

We're living in a state of emergency. Poetry is seen as a peripheral art form. When I had my first book of poetry I had to decide between a book company that was credible for poetry and a book company that could reach the demographic of my peers. And ... well, why not? I've got a great lawyer, and here's the thing: With all the sharks that I've dealt with, in music and film and so on, these books that are published by MTV /Viacom – it's not like the head of Viacom is reading my books. I actually dissed him in my book. I have never, ever, ever been told to change a single word. Everything that I've ever wanted to publish on page has come out exactly as I wanted it. *S/he, said the shotgun to the head*, and now *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* are exactly how I wanted them done. I can't say the same for *Amethyst Rock Star*. I can say the same for the second album because I did it independently, but what I did through music channels in the industry, I had people asking me and expecting me to compromise every step of the way. So, I have nothing negative to say about this.

For example, we had it put in the contract that we would do commercials for the book that would run on MTV. I have been

fully supported there, which is not to say that that makes them... whatever. But it does say that the powers that be don't have as much power as the power of being. And big ol' corporations don't mean shit, because they're controlled by individuals. It's just like The Wizard of Oz, or The Wiz, the man behind the curtain... but if you find the courage and the strength to approach that so-called man behind the curtain and look him in his eyes, you do what needs to be done. Bob Dylan hasn't put out any independent albums, and I don't really feel that he's compromised. Do you?

No, not really. [That Victoria's Secret commercial was all class. -Ed.]

Exactly. To me it's important to keep things in perspective. If I were to say, "I'm not dealing with them," it'd almost be like I'm surrendering to some idea of their power over me. They don't have that power over me. I empower them by being frightened of them and of that world, which is not to say that I haven't been burnt.

I was burned by Sony, Columbia, definitely. I definitely had people sitting in offices, listening to my first album, *Amethyst Rock Star*, saying that they wouldn't release it in America because nobody wanted to hear this, as if they could speak for everyone. They'd say, "We're promoting the Fugees, Nas, and Destiny's Child, and this doesn't sound like any of that. What are you doing?" And at that point it became Sony France who was like, "I get it; let us put this out."

In addition to traditional venues, you've performed at anti-war demonstrations and rallies with hundreds of thousands of people present. Resistance is growing, but so is the violence in Iraq (somewhere around 650,000 deaths) and it doesn't show many signs of stopping anytime soon. What can we do to stop the war? Is it possible?

It's possible when we are able to make connections to the ways in which we're fighting against ourselves. We're saying, "Stop the war," as we drive on full tanks of gas to rallies. We have to be aware of our impact, and that means being aware of your power. So when individuals live up to their highest potential and realize that with power comes responsibility, you're forced to reevaluate what you call things. Perhaps one might feel that car-pooling is a sacrifice. But is it really a sacrifice – to commune with other people in your vehicle? Even what we label sacrifice, sacrament, oftentimes is neither sacrifice nor sacrament, it's what the fuck you're supposed to do. We just have to think about what we're doing and how we're doing.

Even here [indicating my lunch] we've enslaved the whole fuckin' world of animals. We don't think anything about the cheese or eggs we eat or the leather in our shoes or anything about where these things come from. Or the diamonds or the gold or the rubber or the coffee or the chocolate or all these things that come from the continent of Africa that serve as a foundation of our economy. We don't think anything about the irony of the richest continent having the poorest people. And once we do, then we empower ourselves to change it.

And it is changing; it's nothing to get depressed or cynical about. For instance, look at what happened with the tsunami. That was the first time where, because of the Internet and what have you, American individuals gave more than America the government. Individuals realized they didn't have to go through some external system; they can just click a mouse button and give. And now, more and more people are realizing they don't have to, for example, look for a record deal. They can just click right there and share and sell. People are feeling empowered.

Thus, the government as we know it is going through a shift. The record industry as we know it is going through a shift. And it's only because people are becoming more and more empowered, and all that means is that they're realizing their impact / power. Things are evolving, but as it happens there are people fighting to hold on to something that won't evolve because they'll lose money. It's like George Bush giving a special benefit to people who drive SUVs.

And lobbyists fighting against... well, the first cars that came about ran on bio-diesel. That ain't new, that's the *first* vehicles. They ran on electricity and bio-diesel fuel. The technology has always been there. In fact, think of Tesla: light bulb technology reached a point early on where people realized they could make light bulbs that run on solar energy and would last forever. And yet companies like GE shut them up because if they make things that run forever, people won't come back and buy another one. They say it's not a good idea. But all of the sudden, good ethics is starting to seem like a good idea.

What's next for you after this tour?

SW: After this, I'm gonna take a little break, and then start mixing my new album, which I'm now finishing up with Trent Reznor. We have a majority of the songs recorded now, so it's just a matter of mixing them. That's going to be in April. To me, that's the most exciting part. My evolution has been – like I said, the first thing I ever wrote was a song. And I just remembered that. And I'm just at the point where it's like, "Wow, all of this acting, schools..." You know, Mick Jagger went to school for economics. I wonder how long he was in the Rolling Stones thinking it was just some side thing for him. Because I studied [acting] officially, I always thought that would be what I would do. Now it's suddenly dawning on me, after working with Rick Rubin and Trent Reznor, I'm like, "Oh, wait. I must be a musician." ■

The Floating Head of Sharpton Says:



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Michael Gildea

The Abandoned



There are two trailers I've seen for *The Abandoned*. The first was an incoherent series of quick cuts featuring oh-so-spooky imagery, shadowy figures suddenly jumping out of nowhere, a house with a greenish hue and a *black pig*. Yes, a *black pig*. While that thirty seconds was alarmingly close to my formula for the perfect porno, it looked like what has become known as the garden variety traditional run of the mill bullshit horror movie. And it is another element in the widespread conspiracy to further decrease the attention span of the public at large. What I saw was everything that is and continues to be wrong with the modern horror movie. It was some garbled mishmash that was one part horror movie and two parts used car commercial.

But then I saw the actual theatrical trailer for *The Abandoned*. This offered more

promise because some of the shots lasted longer than 0.434387997 seconds and it came off as *vaguely* interesting. What I can only assume is a woman returns to her childhood home to discover she has a twin brother. Oh, and the house is haunted and if you see yourself you die. Don't see yourself. Things get scary and that pig, that *black pig* looks pissed off. I don't know about you, but I'm kind of interested as to what the hell the deal with the *black pig* is. Is it a harbinger of doom? A talisman of friendship? Does he or she like to be scratched behind the ears? Will it chortle and snort if you sing to it? Only what I'm sure will be a waste of about ten bucks will say for sure.

Wild Hogs

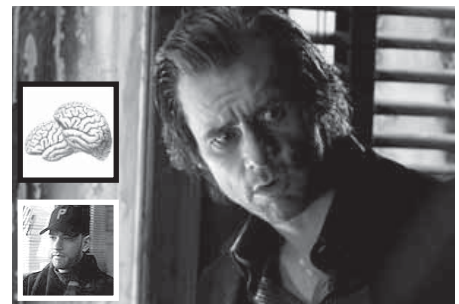


John Travolta, Tim Allen, Martin Lawrence and William H. Macy prove that their careers are dying/dead or

that they've got some serious gambling debts/drug habits/lapses in judgment with *Wild Hogs*, the story of four hopeless douchebags who go on a motorcycle road trip in hopes of... don't make me say it... please... getting their groove back. Jesus, I've never been so embarrassed for someone in my life, and I've seen every episode of every version of *The Office*.

So they're all whiter than Antarctica and trying to pass themselves off as bikers, trying to live life or let some collective mid-life crisis play out. They piss off some real bikers in the trailer and I honestly can't talk about this anymore. I would much rather talk about the time when I almost UNKNOWINGLY had sex with my second cousin. I won't talk about either, but you're going to get me to talk about the latter before I talk about *Wild Hogs*.

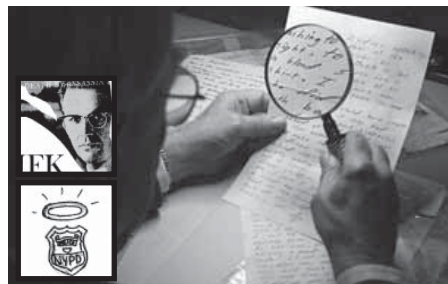
The Number 23



If it wasn't bad enough watching Robin Williams go from playing hyperactive asshats to reinventing himself as a mediocre dramatic actor, you can now tighten those stomach muscles and go to that happy place again because Jim Carrey's doing it. He's starring in *The Number 23*, a story about what I'm guessing is supposed to be a seemingly normal guy who starts reading a book about the number 23. All of these trivial occurrences throughout history and he goes batshit. Selena was 23 when she died, so The Man is out to get Jim Carrey. Johnny Carson was born and died on the 23rd day of the month, so Carrey's wife is a slut. Julius Caesar was stabbed 23 times so Carrey's kids aren't his. Oh, and Dr. Pepper is supposedly a blend of 23 flavors so Armageddon is coming soon. I'm sure some kind of contrived alternate reality comes into play because I saw some really shitty tribal tattoos on Carrey and the inescapable Virginia Madsen went from being a blonde to a brunette with chop shop bangs at one point in the trailer.

All I know is that I want to punch Jim Carrey 23 times in the face for that stupid haircut and I want to kick director Joel Schumacher in the balls 529 (23 squared) times for still making horrible, horrible movies. What!?! Some grad student with OCD who can't decide if he wants to be a math geek or a screenwriter loads up on Red Bull and skunk weed and we've got to sit through this crap? Oh, and we're so fucking clever putting it out on February 23rd! Ooooooh!

Zodiac



It's fun being biased when I write a review because... well, it's just more fun. I don't have to try to hide any disdain or subdue any excitement for a particular movie. Take *Zodiac*. It's directed by David Fincher, one of the greatest living American directors. This guy could be making *any* movie reviewed in this issue and there'd be some amazing element or an incredible spin on it. Look at his resume and you'll see the man's a genius. Then you've got him telling the story of one of the most notorious serial killers in American history on top of it.

The cops and newspapermen try to foil the killer, but a cartoonist and puzzle freak played by Jake Gyllenhaal seems to be coming the closest to figuring the whole thing out. The scenes where the unsuspecting victims are about to get killed are eerie even though Fincher seems to be going for the more cold and finished look he honed in *Panic Room* as opposed to the gritty look of a colostomy bag explosion from such classics as *Fight Club* and *Seven*. Since it takes place in the '70s, everyone looks ridiculous. Porn star ridiculous. From Robert Downey, Jr.'s wardrobe to Anthony Edwards' toupee. But it just might be Mark Ruffalo, who stars as the perfect cross between Ron Jeremy and David Berkowitz all rolled into a police detective, who takes the cake. I mean if it wasn't for the generally creepy tone of the trailer I'd swear to God I was watching a remake of *Caddyshack*,

looking at Ruffalo.

Because it's done by David Fincher, *Zodiac* is going to kick ass. Sealing the deal is the great cast and the fact that Chloe Sevigny looks like a librarian from the '70s. And that excites me in a really odd way I expect no one to understand.

Reno 911!: Miami



Every time I'd see *Reno:911!* on Comedy Central I'd always get a kick out of the level of stupidity displayed by the Reno Sheriff's Department. It always kept the bare minimum of story to keep the gags going and you could pretty much get the gist of the whole show even if you only caught a few episodes. And like most good shows it knows to pull the rip cord

before you get bored.

And that's the problem with bringing a TV show to the big screen. You're trying to make a meal out of pork rinds, flat pop, one of those school lunch-sized servings of apple sauce and the last serving from a box of cereal. You know what I'm talking about—the cereal dust composed mostly of sugar and decimated grains that is more suitable for snorting than mixing with milk and attempting to eat. *Reno:911!* is a car ride that, if it lasts longer than about 20 minutes, begins to make you feel antsy and want to start throwing shit at the driver's head.

But this is not to say you won't see some great things along the way. The preview shows the Reno Sheriff's Department patrolling Miami after a biological agent gets released at a police convention and they're the only ones left to keep Miami safe. The trailer shows them attempting to dispose of a beached whale and breaking up a party at Suge Knight's place and it looks damn funny. But every time I've seen a half-hour TV show turned into a 90-minute movie I've lost a fraction of my will to live. Like bowel movements, the longer they are, the less enjoyable they become. But then again, *Borat* was based on a 5-minute segment from *Da Ali G Show* and that worked so we'll have to see.

Continues on page 32

KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Rampant Xenophobia



Comedian Reinvents Self



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Super Models Grapple with Moral Ambiguities



Ordinary Person Pushed too Far



Impossible Science



Glorification of Law Enforcement Bodies



Chick Flick



Special Effects Circle Jerk



Washed up Hero gets Second Chance at Glory



Stockholm Syndrome Romance



Vampirism/Wizardry as Gay/AIDS Metaphor



Gratuitous Christ Imagery



Betrayed By Those Who Trained Him



Simplistic Epiphany



Dramatic Embellishment



Likable Thug

Amazing Grace



Okay--Black History Month! In case you're not keeping score that means shitty weather flecked with obscure trivia about historic black figures you've never heard of unless you've taken a college course on the subject. It also means a movie about an important yet murky blip in the timeline of African-American history. Or just black history, depending on how much research some screenwriter felt like doing. Take your pick.

So this year we've got *Amazing Grace*, which is definitely about some upstart trying to get slavery abolished in 18th century England. I'm guessing it also has to do with the song "Amazing Grace." I don't know. The guy that played Reed Richards in *Fantastic Four* is trying to take on Parliament and a very round Albert Finney thinks it's a good idea.

Don't get me wrong, I'm glad there's no slavery in England or anywhere else for that matter, unless you count Thailand and the entire former Soviet Union, and probably a ton of other places. And I'm also glad that my paycheck ends up in my checking account through direct deposit. But this doesn't mean I necessarily want to know how it happened. Watching the trailer for *Amazing Grace* made me feel like I was living in a Sunday that went on for 3 years. And for reasons too numerous to count I *truly* hate Sundays. I can't remember anything I've been less excited about in my entire life. There was a trip to the free clinic I was more excited about and that involved a shank up my urethra. The prospect of having to wake up at 8AM because the guy from the phone company *might* be coming by is more invigorating than this trailer.

Black Snake Moan



Wha--? I think that's the only response that anyone can have to seeing a country-ass Samuel L. Jackson going to get his mail and walking back up his driveway only to find a beat up white trash Christina Ricci crackwhore unconscious in his driveway. He makes some calls to find out who the hell she is and probably to see if he can get away with cornholing her before selling her badly tattooed and half-naked ass to the local snuff filmmaker. So here was one of those completely irrational *What Would Jesus Do* moments and that's where things get really fucked up. Because Jesus apparently would wrap a chain around her waist until she's free of The Demon.

I think I will one day see *Black Snake Moan* out of nothing more than morbid curiosity. I'll probably spend most of the movie's running time trying to figure out if I still find Christina Ricci attractive. If you see the trailer for *Black Snake Moan*, you'll notice that the playing field isn't exactly level. Bad hair and a half shirt with a confederate flag on it aren't exactly Miracle Gro for erections after all. Plus she's skinny as shit now. Part of her charm was that her physique looked like it'd fight back. Now it looks like it would just curl up into a fetal position and cry. Seriously, where have all the good times gone? I'm sure I'll also spend a good portion of the time wondering if those tattoos are real. Or maybe *Black Snake Moan* will actually be good and I'll pay attention to the story. I don't know. At least Virginia Madsen isn't in it.

Shooter



So Mark Wahlberg is living in the backwoods of wherever with his old lady and dog who can fetch them beers with no slobber. He's also growing The Worst Beard Ever and he used to be a Marine sniper. Not just a *Marine sniper*, but one of the *best Marine snipers in the world!* Someone wants to grease the president, but IT'S A SET UP! And they give Marky Mark the hucklebuck!

So Wahlberg has 2 slugs in him and says *fuck this shit! I left my dog that fetches beers and secluded cabin in the woods to get a screw job from Danny Glover!?! Oh, hell no! I'd probably take this shit lying down from Morgan Freeman and I MIGHT take this from Christopher Plummer, but there's no way in hell I'm taking this crap from Mel Gibson's sidekick!* So with the help of his oddly attractive girlfriend, Wahlberg goes after the top levels of government in ways that might make Matt Damon weep. All I know is if you don't eat at least 3 pounds of raw red meat before or after you see this movie you're a pussy. And Jesus hates pussies. He hates them dead.

The Astronaut Farmer



Um, I don't get it. I get that some wackadoo wants to build a spacecraft and launch it off his farm. So we're looking at another unfeasibly inspirational tale that's meant to let its audience know that the only limitations we face are the ones we impose on ourselves. For as

much as I *truly* no longer care and would gladly choose defecating in my pants instead of watching this trailer let alone the entirety of *The Astronaut Farmer*, I've still got to ask---is this a drama or a comedy?

So we've got the decent-when-he-wants-to-be Billy Bob Thornton as a stark-raving dumpfutz with some kind of aeronautic know-how and Virginia Madsen (whom you still can't bring yourself to give a shit about) as his impossibly supportive wife and their hopelessly well-adjusted children who all live on a Texas farm. (And no Mexicans anywhere!) The Man is closing in because Thornton represents competition. In the trailer it kind of plays out like *E.T.* except with Thornton, who kind of looks like an alien.

***** ACTUAL REVIEW *****

Inland Empire



I haven't figured out if Man is truly a big, dumb animal that no level of intervention is capable of saving yet. I see and hear things every day that all point to the mammoth stupidity that Man exudes and I see far more drooling, dingleberries and knuckle-dragging than moments of wisdom or brilliance. I am in no way claiming to be the exception to the rule here because I like picking my nose in traffic way too much and it took me 13 years to quit smoking. That should say it all right there. But despite all the monosyllabic communication, clearly bad choices and popularity of Jessica Simpson, I fight a little each day. For as much as I look around and wait for Armageddon there's that tiny little part of me that is willing to trudge through and fight the stupidity I encounter daily, even with one small gesture.

And one of these instances happened recently when I went to see David Lynch's new film, *Inland Empire*. And it being my first time seeing it, let alone my first

time in New York City, stimulated beyond all belief, I made No Effort Whatsoever to comprehend, understand or make sense of the film. Because trying to do so would be really, really stupid and I actually am capable of learning from my mistakes. Lynch smooth-talked me a few times before. He throws all this incredible imagery in your face, knowing damn well that you're going to try to make immediate sense out of it. Once was in 1997 when I saw *Lost Highway*. The weirdness escalated to a point where all I could do is sit back and watch everything fall down around me like a game of Tetris you can't possibly hope to win or solve. All I could do was go see it again and take another crack at putting the pieces back together. A few years later the same thing happened with *Mulholland Drive*. It was completely out there in the last 45 minutes to the point where not even a topless and masturbating Naomi Watts could placate me because I didn't know what was happening and couldn't overcome my flagrant rage. It was at this point when I realized that trying to figure out a David Lynch film at this point in his career was like trying to survive basic training at this point in mine. Then I passed out.

Yeah, so, *Inland Empire*. David Lynch says he gets a lot of his ideas from his dreams and I'm pretty sure that's all *Inland Empire* is. It starts off in traditional *what the fuck* David Lynch fashion after a series of haunting images and the patented bizarre Lynch encounter. Then a story about a remake of a doomed Polish movie starts, then what can be construed as passive-aggressive Hollywood bashing carries us off to about two of the most fucked up hours you will ever spend in your life. An acquaintance of mine described it as a long and incoherent fever dream. We see Laura Dern balance roles of actress, whore, wife and southern trash magnificently. We see the action move from a rabbit family sitcom to a Polish apartment then move on to Los Angeles and what I can only assume is hell and beyond.

If you ask Lynch what it's about he'll tell you it's about a woman in trouble and it's a mystery. If you're going to stand even the slightest chance of enjoying *Inland Empire* you've got to completely forget about making any attempts to understand it. If you can appreciate beauty, take the film as 3 hours of moving images and get past the worst possible digital photography that will do said

images no justice whatsoever you've got a shot. The longer the madness goes on, the scarier it gets. Between having no tangible story and scenes you can't get your head around, it was like sitting in the most comfortable theater chair ever so far underwater that I couldn't see sunlight. Compound that with Lynch throwing random frightening imagery at you and that fever dream comment will make a lot of sense real quick.

Before the feature presentation, Justin Theroux, one of the film's stars, reads a note from Lynch saying that he wishes the viewer a wonderful experience. *Inland Empire* indeed provides this as it takes its viewer through a carousel of emotions and leaves them with a feeling of pleasant disorientation. But if you're not a David Lynch fan you just might feel like you've been raped for the last three hours. It could go either way. ■

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"The first rule of Sports Blotter is you do not talk about Sports Blotter" edition

His name was Robert Paulson



A bunch of former high-school football players from Murrieta, California, are in serious trouble after being booked on a variety of bizarre charges for their involvement with a "fight club" created in honor of the surprisingly good eponymous Brad Pitt vehicle.

At least seven young men were arrested on suspicion of assault, burglary and making terror threats, among other things. The group wore caps with an "FC" emblem and initially fought each other in parks in Riverside County; they also beat up other students who bad-mouthed their members.

"Eventually, the gang began fighting at house parties where adults were not present, intimidating and beating guests, then returning later to burglarize the homes," a local police official said. The members were also charged with possession of firearms and anabolic steroids.

Apparently the kids missed the point of *Fight Club*, which upheld fight clubs as a heroic fictional escape from consumerism and the bourgeois ennui of corporate

middle-management cubicle slaves. Fight clubs in the movie were for people who were, in reality, too meek and too powerless to fight against the soullessness of modern existence. They were not for a bunch of beered-up, over-aggressive football-playing douche bags on steroids.

But hey, high-school football is not for kids with brains. Neither is prison, where these idiots will hopefully learn how fun fighting is in real life. I'm giving these swine a 75 on the crime scale for being vicious, classless, charmless bullies; let's hope they get serious time.

Yankee went home — drunk



Steve Swindal, son-in-law to George Steinbrenner and the probable heir to the Yankee throne, was busted for a DUI in St. Petersburg, Florida, after police caught him doing 61 in a 35 zone. I'm giving him 98 points on the crime scale, the highest possible score for a non-murder, because Swindal 1) is a Yankee official 2) is a Yankee official, and 3) voluntarily married into the family of George Steinbrenner. Also, he drove drunk.

The arrest affidavit credited Swindal with "slurred, mumbled speech," "bloodshot, watery eyes," and "swaying, stumbling, staggering motor control." After his arrest, Swindal tried, like the lying Yankee scum

that he is, to list his employer as "Marine Towing." He is chairman of that company, but his main job is with the Yankees, where he is General Partner. Police had to deduce this by going through his wallet. Otherwise, we might never have found out. The fact that we almost didn't get to make a big deal out of this tempts me to bump Swindal up to a 99.

Police caught the 52 year-old husband of "Jennifer" Steinbrenner (it appalls me that Steinbrenner's children have regular human names) after he made a sharp left turn in front of a police cruiser, causing the police to take evasive action. "Mr. Swindal apologizes profusely for this distraction during Spring Training," said Yankee spokesman Howard Rubenstein.

No word yet on whether Florida officials will seek the death penalty. We'll keep you posted.

Minot where?



Ronnie Fields, a player from the Minot (North Dakota) Skyrockets, has been arrested on a sexual-assault charge, putting the CBA on the national media map for the first time since the Isaiah Thomas era.

Police responded to a sexual-assault report at a north Minot hotel Friday night,



and eventually booked Fields for abusing a 24-year-old woman. Fields has been in trouble before. In 1996, he was booked on a sexual-abuse charge in Wheaton, Illinois, in an incident that involved two other men. He was convicted of a misdemeanor in that case and got two years' probation.

Fields was removed from the roster after the arrest and, in fact, has not played since he sprained an ankle on February 8. It is not yet known if anyone has noticed his absence, or, indeed, if anyone in the country is even aware that the CBA still exists.

I'm giving Fields a 50 for the sex-abuse rap, minus ten points for the indignity of playing pro basketball against teams with names like the Patroons.

Oops, I forgot



Weird, weird story out in California, and no surprise that Ron Artest is involved. The onetime Bull and Indiana Pacer, who along with the NFL's Chad Johnson helped bring the Mohawk back to professional sports this year, was visited on his \$1.85 million-dollar estate last week by Animal Services, which accused the crazed hoops star of starving his Great Dane. According to news reports, neighbors complained to authorities that the dog — who goes by the weirdly Clintonian moniker "Socks" — was starving inside the gates of the Artest mansion.

Artest lives in a town called Loomis, in Placer County, outside Sacramento. Now that his dog has been taken away, he has 10 days to request a hearing on the merits of the case.

According to various newspaper reports, neighbors of Artest's in the Loomis gated community where he lives were so upset by his treatment of Socks that they plan on drawing up an ordinance requiring residents to take good care of their pets.

Artest's publicist declined comment on the incident.

This isn't the first incident of animal abuse connected with the NBA. Celtic-for-a-second Qyntel Woods was busted on animal-abuse charges while a member of the famed Jail Blazers squad a few years back. Police suspected Woods of entering his pit bull, Hollywood, in dog fights.

I'm giving Artest 35 points for this incident, and it goes up to 50 if he ends up losing his grievance. We expect NBA players to wave guns at people in the parking lots of strip clubs, but starving a dog just goes too far. David Stern must be nursing a nice healthy aneurysm right now.

Keeping pace



Meanwhile, Artest's former teammates on the Indiana Pacers suffered yet another nighttime scandal last week, as point guard Jamaal Tinsley, mini-dredded two-guard Marquis Daniels, and recently acquired journeyman Keith McLeod were involved in a mysterious bar fight that reportedly left a bar manager with a fractured jaw and a severed earlobe.

According to reports out of Indianapolis, the trio was relaxing at a tavern called 8 Seconds when a dispute broke out over a customer who had allegedly stolen some

coats from the bar. The thief somehow escaped, but in the wake of the incident the hoopsters got into a heated discussion with the bar manager that led to a scuffle. The manager told police he believed that Tinsley was "trying to kill him."

Tinsley, for his part, denied any involvement in the incident. "I had nothing to do with this," he said. Daniels concurred: "I am totally innocent." Pacer coach Rick Carlisle, meanwhile, went for the time-tested "let's let the judicial system run its course" strategy.

"I know those guys have all issued statements denying the kind of involvement that's been alleged, and there's a legal process that we've got to respect," Carlisle said. "That's kind of where we are."

The incident occurred, ironically, after a loss to Golden State, the team from whence McLeod came in an eight-player trade that was mainly designed to get Pacer team cancer Stephen Jackson out of town. Jackson and Tinsley had been involved in a classic strip club/parking lot/gunplay incident in October that angered Pacer management. Jackson still faces criminal recklessness charges; Tinsley was not charged in that incident.

There is no word yet on what charges, if any, the three Pacer players may face. Pending that news, I'm giving them each 15 points on the eternal crime scale for being out late and not running from a fight. If it turns out that Tinsley really did sever the guy's earlobe, he gets an instant nomination for the 2007 Mike Tyson award for criminal perversity, while everyone else will get the usual 30 points for a Jumbo Elliott/bar fight offense. ■

Sports Blotter Legend

Exotic Dancer/ Hooker	X-treme DUI	Performance enhancing "vitamins"	Open container of alcohol
Cloying/ Agent-drafted public apology	"Disagreement" in parking lot	Subdued via taser	Rape/Sexual assault
Unregistered handgun	Those drugs belong to my brother/cousin/someguy	Frantic spousal 911 call	Stats cheerily recited after AP report
Big-ass SUV	Incident involving "baby momma"	Burglary/theft	No contest plea

Hi, I'm NBA star Ron Artest

"When I'm not starving my dog... I only feed him the very best!"

FAX (716)362-0619

[sic]

sic@buffalobeast.com

THE PUSTULE SERVICE

a brilliant list filled with delicious tasting bile, but Ben Gibbard? For one thing, you clearly don't know the origin of the name Death Cab For Cutie. Google it. Secondly, he's actually pretty good. We need someone like him to counter the Tom an Jerry world of television commercials. Why mar a genius list with a soft target like Gibbard?

- Michael Fremer

Dear Michael,

Because douchebags like you thinks he's cool.

GIBBARDISH

Ben Gibbard? Loathsome?

Of course, I respect your opinion, but Ben Gibbard? It is true that it seems impossible for them to recreate the music live in concert (thats why I don't care to see them) but the stuff he writes is so... entertaining. There are so many different ways to see the writing. I don't know how to explain it but you can get lost in it. I love the stuff. and i would love to know who you think is a respectable musician/songwriter. So please do tell.

Alex

Dear Alex,

Entertaining? We haven't listened to Plans in months and we're still waiting for the drums to kick in. We're not going to run off a list of our favorite tunesters, but just to give you the gist, Justin Timberlake edges out Gibbard in our book. And we hate him.

ALIENS ATE MY EVIDENCE

Dear sirs,

I wish to express my dismay at your choice of Alex Jones for your Loathsome list. Not his inclusion in it, he brings ridicule upon himself and it is perfectly valid and funny to include him, but shouldn't he at least be less loathsome than Ryan Seacrest or Gerald Ford? I mean fuck!!! Seacrest!!! FORD!!!!

If he's really a schizo paranoid moron can you really blame a guy for that? Also, he isn't exactly a leftist. He worked for Pat Buchanan's Presidential campaign at one time. And the left needs no assistance to make it appear foolish in the eyes of others... same goes for the right wing. As penence for this infraction you must remove the pinky fingers of all white males in your office and feed them to the reanimated corpse of Bill Hicks who will appear in three days with a thirst only thumbs can quench. God help you should you deny him that release.

Sincerely,

Henry Krinkle
Austin, Tx

Dear Henry,

Only if Hicks does ten minutes or so on the drug war. He kills on that issue.

NOT ENTIRELY UNLIKE A VIRGIN

I hated this article. Then I liked it. But leave Madonna alone. She is as harmless as they come.

Joe

Dear Joe,

That's true, if by "they" you mean super-narcissists who spend their days pretending to be somebody else, paying exorbitant sums of money for religious charlatans to tell them they're perfect, and using children as publicity devices. Tom Cruise is much worse.

UNDERFOXED

So where's Bill O'Reilly? Where's Sean Hannity? Where's Roger Ailes? Any of these shameless skull-fuckers emits more loathsomeness before they've quaffed their morning cup o' than poor Madonna has in her entire addled life. You guys be whacked. Peter Dierauf

Dear Peter,

What's with the Madonna defense brigade, darling? Did she rock your world on the

Truth or Dare tour? Did you fall for her in Desperately Seeking Susan? Or is it just her marketing strategy of plundering gay culture like Elvis at a barbecue.

ACTUAL EXAMPLE OF LIBERAL BIAS

Yank Pelosi off the list and replace her with David Addington, who can best be described as the White House's Evil Fake Genius' Evil Real Genius. Also, where's Rove? (I'd add Alberto Gonzales, Schwarzenegger and Tom Cruise, but we musn't get greedy...) Bruce Moomaw

Dear Bruce,

The only thing we'd be inclined to yank Pelosi off is a high diving board over an empty pool. Rove is under your bed.

EMPTY GLASS FULL OF AIR

Remember when Bush said there are no war plans "on my desk"?

I think Pelosi was sly to phrase (impeachment is off the table) that way.

The fact is, she knows she's got to paralyze Dick Cheney - screw Bush, on his own he's harmless. Let him sit in the Oval Office, a crippled, inarticulate embarrassment, hung around the necks of Americans who voted for him like a chicken carcass around the neck of a chicken-killing dog (that last part's a nod to Molly Ivins). - Maezeppa

Dear Maezeppa,

So what you're saying here is that Pelosi was making some obscure furniture-related pun. And she's going to "paralyze" Cheney. And Bush is "harmless." We've heard the Democrats were pessimists, but it turns out they're just retarded.

THE PUSSY OF THE CHRIST

I think you were out of line when you type words like "Jesus is a pussy." I'm liberal but I'm also a Christian and I was deeply offended that you would say that, (even in a sarcastic manner) You crossed the line with that. I would never say anything that sinister about any religious figurehead whether Christian or not. That was in very poor taste. Please remember to retain some semblance of respect for other's beliefs. There is a fine line between joking and disrespecting. Jesus is a big part of my life, and I joke all the time about my religion and poke fun at it, but what you said was too much and was very disrespectful. Maybe you guys were intending to be disrespectful in order to get feedback but I would just ask you be considerate of other's beliefs and devotions.. Thats all Sean Windle

Dear Sean,

What about our beliefs, Sean; specifically our belief that you are a mental toddler who can't give up the nipple. Why should we respect your beliefs when they're so patently stupid? If we believed that Zoot the saxophone-playing Muppet was the one true god, or the ambassador to Uzbekistan for that matter, you wouldn't respect that; you'd laugh. Well, ha ha Jesus and ha ha you, Sean. Hail Zoot!

CIVIL DISCOURSE

I was so impressed by your nihilistic musings that I am prepared to offer you the opportunity eat the dogshit in my yard! For a small fee I'll even let you photograph your staff gobbling the rotting feces so that you can post the fun here at Beast.

Fucking kill yourselves before you replicate your DNA.
lugh lampfhota

Too late, lugh! Your mom's pregnant with our nihilistic seed! It's remarkable, really; considering how greedily she slurped our baby gravy out of her own crotch, that any was left over to join your family! Oh, the irony! So, to recap: Your mother is a filthy whore.

GLARING OMISSION

I really love your list and have been laughing OUT LOUD while reading it! Very crude and clever.....but hey-- where is one of my favorites BILL O'REILLY!!!! He is such a spouge!
Tracey Cunningham

Dear Tracey,

What can we say? Calling O'Reilly loathsome is like calling water wet. Alas, we had to bump him to make room for Ben Gibbard.

HOW GREAT WE ART

Good stuff all around, immeasurably enhanced by Murphy's bang-on caricatures. His Coulter...! His Haggard...! his Carville! but mainly his Snow! Perfection. Thank you thank you one and all.
- Scott Freutel
Seattle

Dear Scott,

Murphy is indeed a great artist, and to prove it he will send part of his own ear to a lucky subscriber. Just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Murphy's Ear c/o The Beast, 712 Main Street, Buffalo, NY, and be the lucky one to receive his bloody, gangrenous evidence of artistic merit! Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. Offer void in New York State, or anywhere else. Okay, the truth is he's 30% squid and he can just imagine a picture and reproduce it precisely in seconds by squirting ink from a special gland under his testicles. It's kind of gross.

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Sorry to be a trouble but you forgot some people on your list of 50 most loathsome people on earth...YOU DOUCHE BAGS

You ass wipes should be on the top of the list for trying to clown any and everybody for accomplishing something in their lives, unlike you losers.

What the heck is wrong with you people? Get a freakin life, man. Do you really have that much time on your hands to bad mouth 50 (probably selected randomly) people who have done nothing to you. Have your opinion about someone. But do you just have to resort to this?

How about this: Instead of being repeatedly unsuccessful in life losers and resorting to try and build your careers (and lives) on other people and demote people who are already successful, try to grow some balls and dignity and try to make it in this world on your own.

Im doing this because I wouldn't want anybody who didn't know me bad mouthing me and stuff like that. And I know you wouldn't either.

And BTW, Im not even gonna get on that ignorant, false, and indenial Jesus comment. That was just pitiful.
TOTAL OWNAGE,
doncorleone301

"Total ownage," Don? Seriously? Your inarticulate gruntings only reveal that you did not, in fact, read our list. Otherwise, you would know that we did indeed put ourselves on the list. You may not want to be badmouthed, but guess what? You're a fucking idiot. You couldn't "own" a lemur. Thanks for playing.

THINKER THAN YOU DRUNK

Hello,
I'm drunk, and yet I am still pissed at Bush. Momma told me alcohol never helps, and she was right. Damn it.

I was just informed of the best new descriptive word ever. 'Twunt,' coined by a Scotsman, when you just can't decide.....

Bush is a Twunt. haha.. ooh it hurts. Did

Cheney snort a line?

Hoping you're drunker than I am,
Kate in Kingston

Dearest Kate,
We'd come over, but you're probably all sobered up and unmoolestable now.

DUMB SHIT, PhD

I guess by slamming all of these people you think it makes you better. Classic case. Wow you have a website...
Marshall

Dear Marshall,
Actually, it is our well-founded feeling of superiority which enables us to criticize people with such dead on accuracy and fearlessness, not the other way around.

HILLARY-OUS

I was surprised to see the absence of Hillary Clinton on your Top 50 fuck-heads list. Come on guys, the carpetbagger deserves her time to shine. At least validate this in your reply by giving her a good zing. (Yeah, I said "a good zing," and I'm not ashamed at all.)
- Chris

Dear Chris,
Q: How many Hillary Clintons does it take to screw America? A: Just the one! Oh yeah, baby! That's right!

HOW ORIGINAL

You guys

Charges: failing to put OPRAH on the list, a billionaire whose sole purpose in life is to get everyone to kiss her ass, a beast who has never had an original thought or utterance in her life.

Exhibit A: also failing to put Katy at CBS on the list

Sentence: must stay up late tonight and work on expanded list of 52 Most Loathsome
- Lewis Chapp

Dear Lewis,
We already did Oprah. It was traumatic; we don't like to talk about it.

Continues on next page, idiot.

WE'RE FLAMING

You guys are on fire! Give us more or this. I haven't read anything so bone-shaving since Hunter S.
Holy crap,
Diana Grove

Dear Diana,
We're on fire? WHERE? GET IT OFF!! GET IT—AAAAHHHH! OH MY GOD! PLEASE GOD WHY? WHYYYY? PUT IT OUT! OH GOD!!! HOLY... Oh, okay, you mean figuratively. Thanks, Diana! You can shave our bone anytime.

INSIDE "JOB"

I'm not going to rant on about 9/11, And I think Dick Cheney should have been #1 But for someone like yourself if you don't trust the government like I don't trust the government

why do you believe their lies about 9/11? WTC 7 says it all, and Larry Silverstein said it all too. And if they knew planes were hijacked, then why not warn others in the second tower to evacuate? As the story goes, employers told them to get back to work. I could go on and on.
Thank You,
Mary Roache

Dear Mary,
No, we don't trust the government, but we trust you even less. Perhaps we could establish a more intimate bond with some holding exercises.

LOVES GUYS

I fucking love you guys (and girls)! I just discovered you on reddit.com. I will visit every day. Thanks also for the Chomsky interview. Hit him up more often.
Best,
-Craig

Dear Craig,
We understand some people dislike Chomsky, but we really don't think it's appropriate to "hit him up." He seems a bit frail.

ALL YOU NEED IS LOATHE

50 Most Loathsome

you are all idiots, must be miserable waking up daily only to get off by putting down people that have accomplished more than your family trees combined
Don

You would think so, Don, but actually it's quite invigorating. Quite "loathsome" of us, to be sure.

FREEDOM SPREADER

i'm not one to complain but as an army reservist your i found your picture of a dead reservist very distasteful, and i take great offense to article of the sort, the very thought that i might one day die for the liberties that you so eagerly abuse almost sickens me, all i ask is think of how an article may degrade one's personal sacrifice, not just the comedic value, thank you and i look forward to hearing back from you in the near future
- Efrain J Hudnell

Dear Efrain,
If you jumped into a wood chipper, we'd make fun of you too.

HAD US GOING THERE

Dear Beast,
fuck you, and the commie, lefty, pinko, slimes that read this disgraceful excuse of a rag; you should be ashamed of your selves. Peddling reliable varifiable information to your benighted readers is fucking un-American. Thank sweet JESUS I can get my mind spanked simply by typing www.anncoulter.com. This rancorous quaffered old sow shits on you, and do you know why?- because she hasn't got a fucking clue what she's talking about, but she talks none the less.

Those 3000 soldiers who died so you can right this drivel must be rotating in their holes in the ground- oh yeah and a few hundred odd thousand rag heads.

Stop telling the truth, fuck you!
- Rob.

P.S. Love the film revues.

Imagine that, Robert: so many soldiers signing up to fight for the rights of pinko leftists. How counterintuitive. ■



BEAST-O-SCOPES

As divined by
Andrew Gullerstein

Pisces (Feb 19-March 20)

Pisces, nice craigslist ad in "casual encounters." I really like how you cropped your wife and son out of the photo you uploaded you asshole.

Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, just a word of advice. When filling out a job application, "Crack Whore" should not be listed under previous employment. Especially with a multi-year span.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, please stop referring to your daughter as "my little tax deduction."

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, put the pen down right now. Look down and realize you are creating an "American Idol" pool for your office. Look up and realize you're watching "American Idol." Now calm down, it's going to be ok. Let's start with a good hot shower.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you know that little nagging voice you've been hearing in the back of your head, warning you about the people you hang out with? Well it's called schizophrenia, and you had better see a doctor before you start stabbing those you love.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Leo, take a little dating advice from the stars: The next time you get a chance to go on a date, don't wear the "Beaver Patrol" t-shirt and ask how she likes her eggs before you even get to the restaurant. If you can even call Arby's a restaurant.

Virgo (Aug 23-Sept 22)

Virgo, it wasn't hemorrhoids you woke up with this morning, and yes you're wearing lipstick.

Libra (Sept 23-Oct 22)

Libra, you will make medical history during your chest scan when doctors find an entire sausage from your Denny's Mega Meat Lovers breakfast jammed in your aorta.

Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21)

Scorpio, throw your hat into the ring and announce you might be the father of Anna Nicole's baby. Hell, you've got just as much chance of winning as the other three bottom-feeders, in addition to a two-page spread in Star Magazine.

Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21)

Sagittarius, I don't know what is worse; you having sex with the dog piñata or your blaming it on the dog piñata.



Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19)

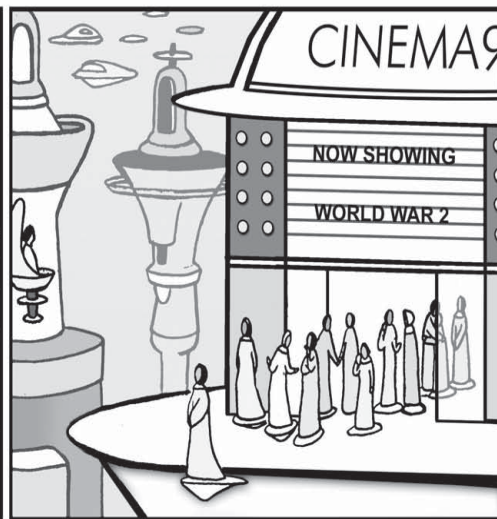
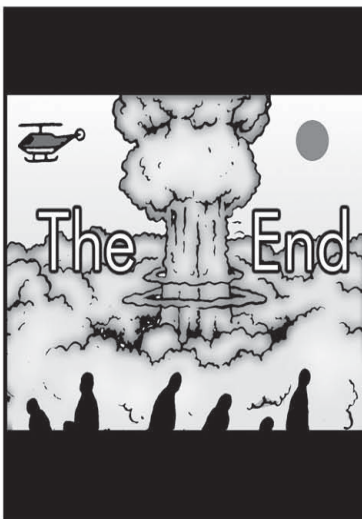
Capricorn, the next time you come from lunch break with a bag of tacos your cubemate is going to kill you with a tape dispenser.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18)

Aquarius, stop pretending you're my friend just so you can smoke my pot. It's okay; I don't like you either. Just give me ten bucks and I'll break you off something, and then we can both go back to masturbating in peace.

THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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