

# THE BEAST



ISSUE #125 ~ APRIL, 2008

[www.buffalobeast.com](http://www.buffalobeast.com)

the ultimate trip

## 2008: A RACE ODDITY

A PAT BUCHANAN JOINT



# Separated at birth?



**Matthew Perry...**

**...and Rachael Maddow?**



## Evil Publisher

Paul Fallon  
(pfallon@buffalobeast.com)

## Evil Editor in Chief

Allan Uthman  
(aluthman@buffalobeast.com)

## Evil Editor/Art Director

Ian Murphy  
(ian@buffalobeast.com)

## Evil Associate Editor

Paul Jones

## Evil Movie Guy

Michael Gildea  
(Michael@buffalobeast.com)

## Evil Contributors

Matt Taibbi, Stan Goff,  
Steve Gordon, Michael J. Smith,  
Allison Kilkenney, Joe Bageant

## Evil Comics

Matt Bors, Nicholas Gurewitch,  
Brian McFadden, others

## Definitely Not An Intern

Andrew Blake



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712 Main St. Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: (716) 856-4355  
Fax: (716) 362-0619

Letters to the Editors should be addressed to: sic@buffalobeast.com

# From the desks of Alan Schwartz, CEO of Bear Sterns and James Dimon, Chief Executive of JP Morgan

Salutations, investors, citizens of America and readers of The BEAST. We're honored to welcome you to this exciting April edition. March was certainly a whirlwind month for us and we're even more excited looking ahead to what this month has in store. It's just really, terribly exciting. And we're excited. Really.

For one thing, we're eager to catch up on old times. We haven't seen each other regularly in quite a while, but we used to be tight back when we were fraternity brothers at Duke University. That's right, folks, two of the wealthiest, most powerful people in high finance—whose cavernous, opulent offices are separated by a New York street—pledged the same social society as students at the "Harvard of the South."

You see, that's where captains of industry are forged. What were you going to say—economics class? Business school? Only an American prole would think that. No, the fundamental lessons of capitalism are inculcated in the dimly-lit subterranean of porticoed houses, where semi-naked boys "assume the position" and



submit to various thin pretexts for frottage. Under the banner of "Greek brotherhood," they mutually agree to maintain the illusion of heterosexuality. The conditions essential to guarantee future success—deindividuation, bestiality, alcohol poisoning—can only be achieved in this cruelly stupid, beer-drenched crucible.

Don't act so surprised. Admit it, you don't really believe all that Obama claptrap about America being a country in which everyone has an equal opportunity for success. Your daughter, Jenny, with her C's in long division...Or little Billy, your son, with his lazy eye—you can't possibly imagine he'll be president one day? No, the truth is, little Billy will have his cockeyed ambitions physically stomped out of him as a child by his sturdier peers. Thus primed for a life of anonymous misery, he will quietly take

*Continues on page 6, you poor bastard*

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## THIS ISSUE'S INSPIRATION



**"It's Abu GREAT!"**

# Last Tangle in Persia

## This time, it's demented

**By Allan Uthman**

*"Just as Fallon took over Centcom last spring, the White House was putting itself on a war footing with Iran. Almost instantly, Fallon began to calmly push back against what he saw as an ill-advised action. Over the course of 2007, Fallon's statements in the press grew increasingly dismissive of the possibility of war, creating serious friction with the White House.*

*"Last December, when the National Intelligence Estimate downgraded the immediate nuclear threat from Iran, it seemed as if Fallon's caution was justified. But still, well-placed observers now say that it will come as no surprise if Fallon is relieved of his command before his time is up next spring, maybe as early as this summer, in favor of a commander the White House considers to be more pliable. If that were to happen, it may well mean that the president and vice-president intend to take military action against Iran before the end of this year and don't want a commander standing in their way.*

*-Thomas P.M. Barnett, Esquire*

One day after these words appeared in *Esquire*, Admiral William "Fox" Fallon, head of U.S. Central Command for only a year since Defense Secretary Robert Gates appointed him, resigned suddenly. In other words, he was fired. There's a case to be made that he was fired for being so free with his opinions, the *Esquire* piece being the last straw. But if his opinions had jibed with those of George Bush and Dick Cheney, he probably could have been as vocal as he liked. The real crux of the problem with Fallon, as detailed by Barnett, was a stark difference of opinion on the advisability of war with Iran.

A lot of people dismiss out of hand the idea that Bush will do something as dumb as

invade Iran in the remaining few months of his seemingly interminable reign. It would, after all, be a colossally stupid move, indicating that the administration has learned nothing from the disaster in Iraq—which Cheney just now called a "success." That word is all you need to hear to understand just how little they've learned.

Fallon wasn't ousted because of his words—both the Defense Secretary and the president have spoken of a need for diplomacy to avert war with Iran. The difference is that Fallon actually means it. He stood between Bush and another insane invasion, and he was removed. There's much talk of how it is inappropriate for a military commander to inhibit civilian rule, but history shows there are moments when "I was following orders" just won't do. And Fallon is only the last in a long list of high level Bush appointees, no angels themselves, who have resigned in protest, or due to protest, many of whom have gone on to publicly criticize the administration, to little avail. Bush's actions shock the consciences of people who are long-inured to the moral vagaries of modern American empire—Paul O'Neill, Christie Todd Whitman, Colin Powell, even the cowardly Gerald Ford, among many others.

Their complaints go unheeded, though, and the commentariat go right on presuming that Bush and Cheney are not consequence-damning psychopaths. Scandal piles upon scandal, and it seems no one—no one *important*, anyway—is willing to speak what most can see: The president just doesn't give a damn about public opinion or expert advice. Iran is next, period, and if they squeeze it in on their way out the door, there will be no consequences, not for them. Congress has endured innumerable impeachable offenses without even threatening censure. They certainly wouldn't bother to hold Bush accountable after he's gone.

Will the administration attack Iran before

its departure? Why not? What's to stop them? It's become obvious over the past year or two that they'd very much like to. A PR campaign as robust as the one we've seen launched against Mahmoud Ahmedinejad doesn't just spring from nowhere. The White House that, only a few years ago, hoodwinked this country into a war of aggression with fake intel and false threats, was clearly in the process of repeating the scam, invoking World War III and the Holocaust. That's some aggressive marketing. They even managed to cajole congress into calling for the classification of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—part of that nation's military—as a terrorist agency, and obvious pretext to attack Iran. It would be easy enough to provoke an Iranian retaliation, prompting legal justification and public support for escalation.

But then the National Intelligence Estimate leaked, despite Bush's best efforts. The jig was up. Despite their weak protestations about centrifuges, the White House ramped down its rhetoric, lessened its swagger, and what seemed an inevitable Persian blunder appeared to be averted. Surely, after Iran's supposedly imminent nuclear bombs were collectively judged a mirage by the myriad intelligence organs of America, they would cease and desist.

It's amazing to me that, after all this time, the Bush administration still enjoys the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their sanity. People believed Saddam was a real threat in part because the administration was so adamant about it. They wouldn't squander their credibility or incur the public wrath of a mistaken invasion, would they? And even now, after we've already seen time and again just how carelessly manipulative, how callously deceitful they can be, people still don't believe they would do it again. But that's exactly why they can.

And they will. They will attack Iran, and



leave it to the next president to handle the aftermath. Anyone who thinks they're too election-conscious to do it isn't seeing the situation clearly. Being thrust into a new frightening international conflict during the election doesn't help the Democrats; it helps McCain. If people are afraid—and an aggrieved Iran, unlike Iraq, is actually something to be afraid of—they will vote for the war hero in droves. If nothing else, attacking Iran is a great election strategy for the GOP. Sure, when the dust has settled and, once again, it slowly dawns on Americans that they've been conned, just like they were so many times before, there'll be the usual "hell" to pay—vaguely critical punditry, low approval ratings, the occasional lecture from Henry Waxman—

but it will be the Republicans in power yet again, planning the next invasion, but waiting to debut the PR campaign in the fall, when the public is most receptive.

Fear of crazy, violent Muslims is the tool Republicans win with now. They can rattle about taxes, but it won't be enough to make up for the abysmal failures of the past seven years. The only issue they have is terror. And if the nation is tired of Iraq, then it's time for a sequel. *Gulf War III: Holy Shit These Guys Have F-14s!* More oil-rich land to privatize, more casualties to piss us off, more nationalism, more flag pins and bumper magnets. And once it's started, it's somebody else's problem.



## Top 10 Signs US Economy is Collapsing



10. Bush administration reluctantly reverses abstinence-only policy, permits corporate sponsor Trojan Condoms to cover Washington Monument with giant rubber.

9. Major film studios void contracts of major stars, casting all roles with surplus pigs discounted from factory hog farms.

8. Jim Cramer squirts blood from his eyes.

7. Presidential candidates keep asking for change.


6. Rising price of Champagne forces hip-hop artists to adopt the McShake as the preferred ho-dousing beverage.

5. Government accepts offer from Toho Company, Ltd. to purchase Lincoln Memorial, agrees to sandblast President into Godzilla.

4. Monster.com flooded with postings for sharecroppers.

3. Illegal immigrants bypassing Rio Grande, opting to swim Pacific Ocean directly to Canada.

2. USDA releases revised Food Pyramid, extolling the benefits of a diet "rich in hallucinogens."

1. Asian tourists to America now vacationing in U-Hauls. 

## THE BEAST PAGE 5

### *Disturbing Senatorial Neck Bulge*

**Name:** Bill Bradley's neck

**Turn-ons:** Bullfrogs, tight-fitting collars, basketball-playing presidential candidates, reruns of "The White Shadow"

**Turn-offs:** Superdelegates, neck snobs, plastic surgeons, people who stare

**How I got to be the BEAST Page 5 Disturbing Senatorial Neck Bulge:**

I'm not really sure—what am I, a goiter or something? Maybe I'm just natural excess of skin? A consequence of the pituitary anomalies that create men of NBA height? Whatever I am, my unmentionably off-putting appearance may have been enough to tip the balance for Gore to win the nomination in 2000, and I'm certainly not doing much to help Obama now. Seriously, how can this guy walk around with me hanging off his head, and expect everyone not to mention it? If a neck stands out among the wizened, drooping wattles of "Meet the Press," it's time to call a medic.



**Future plans:** For the immediate future, I'll be haunting the dreams of an 8-year-old child in Erie, PA, who imagines me to be brimming with neuroparasitic insectoid aliens, waiting to be vomited forth at Obama's inauguration. Beyond that, I plan to continue my work distracting people from whatever former senator Bradley may actually be talking about.

**How I'd like to be remembered:** As the inspiration for the "neck sleeve," a fashion trend that will become de rigeur among aging public figures over the next few years.




his place—which, not coincidentally, used to be your place—among the numberless pillars propping up my children in their life of carefree luxury. Just as you will have done in our generation.

Which brings us to some delicate business. Gee, how do we put this tactfully? See, Schwartz here and his company made some pretty poor decisions in the name of untrammelled greed over the last few years. Now, the Federal Reserve has gone and done something they haven't done since the—it almost hurts just to say it—the Great Depression. There, whew. Anywhoo, they've agreed to let all Wall Street banks borrow from the Reserve. What that means for us is Dimo's company now has \$30 billion for them to purchase my company. We don't want to bore you with the technical aspects, but basically you—the workaday jerks—are on the hook for this \$30 billion, if Schwartz's company's assets tank (a strong possibility, incidentally).

You say that's impossible, you didn't have anything to do with all of this? Why don't all us guys in suits just line up at our office windows and swan dive onto Park Avenue? Once upon a time, some of our trepid forebears—oh, did you hear that, Dimo? Bear Sterns, forebears? I made a pun! As I was saying, some of our forebears made that hasty decision. These days, we're a savvier and much calmer bunch. For one thing, we've realized the game is so stacked that there's virtually no way us to suffer any meaningful reversals—we live essentially consequence-free lives; and, in the rare instance we have a figurative fall, we've learned how to cushion the impact by landing on you.

Look, we don't want you to fret about any of this. You're screwed and there's nothing you can do about it. So, just relax. Okay?

Good. Now, strap on little Billy's eye patch, take a seat on the couch and let him enjoy this new issue of The BEAST together with you.

Act like you don't have any idea what's happening on Wall Street. It shouldn't be much of a stretch. 

# THE WRIGHT STUFF



## The true story behind Obama's pastor problem

**By Allan Uthman**

Reverend Jeremiah Wright: Hello?

Barack Obama: Hi Rev.

Wright: Barack, my man! What's going on?

Obama: Well, you know how it is. Listen Rev, we gotta talk.

Wright: Oh, I know what this is about. I seen it on the TV.

Obama: Yeah, well...

Wright: Look, man, if you've got to, you know, distance yourself from me—

Obama: Just for the duration of the campaign, you understand.

Wright: No, no, I get it, Barack, I get it. You go ahead and say whatever you got to, son.

Obama: Thanks for being so understanding. Hey listen, while I've got you...

Wright: Yes?





Obama: Nah, never mind.

Wright: No, come on now, you tell me what's on your mind, son.

Obama: Well... do you really think AIDS was created by the U.S. Government?

Wright: Absolutely. Why?

Obama: Really. AIDS was created by the—

Wright: To kill black people. Yes indeed.

Obama: Seriously.

Wright: Mmm-hmm.

Obama: No kidding.

Wright: I wouldn't kid about something like that.

Obama: And what do you base that belief on?

Wright: Well, AIDS kills more blacks than whites, don't it?

Obama: Well... yeah, but it's not like sickle-cell. I mean, white people get AIDS all the time.

Wright: So?

Obama: So, don't you think that if the CIA or whoever were going to design a disease specifically to kill black people, it would work better than AIDS?

Wright: Work better?

Obama: You know, it'd kill only blacks, and it would be more easily communicable, and would probably take less than a decade to kill someone. I mean, look at Magic Johnson. Magic Johnson can beat a CIA super-virus? He couldn't even beat Larry Bird!

Wright: He beat the Celtics!

Obama: That was Kareem all the way and you know it. I mean, come on, man, you know you have no evidence. AIDS was a fucked up mutant retrovirus that Africans got from monkeys.

Wright: I'm disappointed in you my brother. Believing the white man's lies about savage niggers having sex with monkeys.

Obama: Having sex? I never said—

Wright: Oh, you don't have to say it brother, the meaning is implied.

Obama: I really can't believe this shit. All this bullshit just because an atheist can't get elected to so much as a fucking school board in this country.

Wright: Atheist?

Obama: You're damn right I'm an atheist, you dumb motherfucker. But oh, I gotta go into politics, so I gotta go to some stupid church, pretend I'm a goddamn simpleton for the stupid voters. So hell, what church do I go to, right? The big one! The one all my constituents go to. After all, they're all bullshit, what possible difference could it make? Shit. It's bad enough people are calling me a Muslim—now I gotta deal with this Professor Griff bullshit?

Wright: I cannot believe what I'm hearing.

Obama: Can't believe it, huh? Think about it, Rev—what makes me so different from all your other members? I'll tell you what: I'm smart. I can speak English, for one, and I didn't get my sense of the world from watching "The Jeffersons."

Wright: Oh shit!

Obama: You heard me. My parents were both atheists, so I guess I'm just chip off the old block.

Wright: That's where you're getting this—your white devil mama!

Obama: Don't you talk about my mother, now.

Wright: Son, I can see

now that I've failed you.

Obama: You sure have. What do you think you're doing anyway? How do you think you're helping people by filling their heads with this bullshit? Yeah, that's really going to fill the community with hope, telling them the government is inventing new diseases to kill them. And "god damn America"—good one there, Rev.

Wright: Have you forgotten what they did to us? Brought us here in chains?

Obama: Well, then why the fuck aren't you in Africa, rev? I'll tell you why: Africa's a shit hole. You ever been? Believe me, Chicago's a damn paradise compared to that.

Wright: Look, I don't know what to tell you, man. You should have run as an atheist.

Obama: Now you're talking. I guess this really is my own fault.

Wright: It's good to take responsibility for you own—

Obama: Shut up, dumb-ass. I've got to go. I have a feeling Michelle's about to say some shit about how she's ashamed to be American again. Fuck, I can't catch a break with you people.

Barack, I hope in time you'll come to see—

(click)

(Reverend Wright dials out.)

Hillary Clinton: Hillary here.


Wright: He just told me he's an atheist.

Clinton: Oh. Oh, that's good. That's very good.

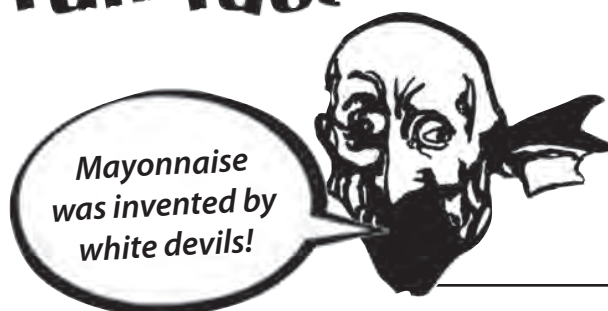
Wright: Wait, now you're an atheist too?

Clinton: No—well, yes, but what I mean is it's a good tip. You're really helping the campaign a lot here, Reverend. I won't forget this.

Wright: See that you don't.

Clinton: Don't you worry, Reverend. We'll take care of you. 

## Fun Fact







# The BEAST Field Guide to Endangered Voters

## **Mesh-Capped Hickadee**

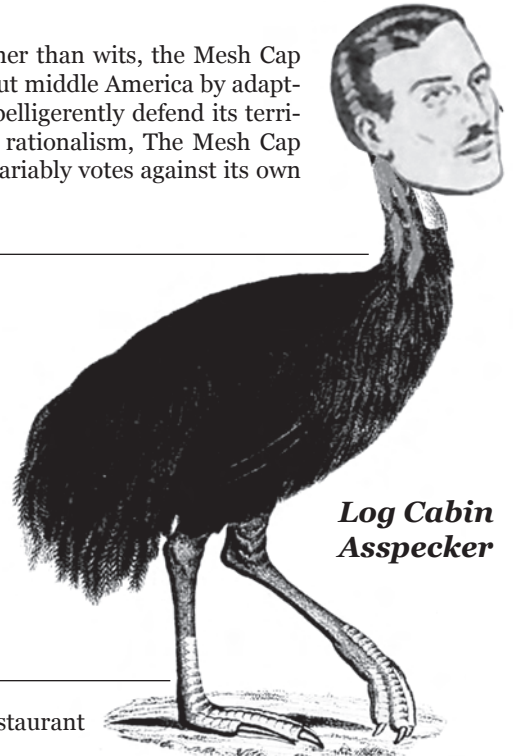


Habitat: Double-wides, truck stops, family court  
Diet: Skoal, methamphetamines, Coors light  
Distinguishing features: Fertility, blank stare, wide screen TV, fire-arms

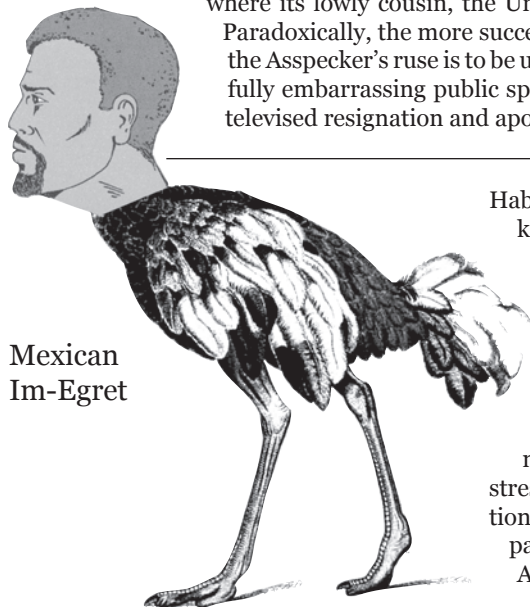
A survivor that depends on numbers rather than wits, the Mesh Cap has become a dominant species throughout middle America by adapting to its flat, arid monotony. Known to belligerently defend its territory from foreign races and encroaching rationalism, The Mesh Cap is to be approached with caution, and invariably votes against its own economic interests.

Habitat: Fire Island, unstable nuclear families, seminaries  
Diet: White wine, panini, showtunes, penises  
Distinguishing Features: Immaculate attire, contempt for the poor, self-denial

The Asspecker is a strange bird indeed. Remarkable for its strident denunciation of its own mating habits, in what naturalists speculate is a confusing attempt to throw its predators off its scent, the Asspecker thrives where its lowly cousin, the Unabashed Homo, dare not tread. Paradoxically, the more successful it becomes, the more likely the Asspecker's ruse is to be undone, in a grotesque and dreadfully embarrassing public spectacle, resulting in an awkward televised resignation and apology to its aggrieved spouse.



## **Log Cabin Asspecker**



## **Mexican Im-Egret**

Habitat: Sweatshops, yachts, restaurant kitchens, Mitt Romney's lawn  
Diet: Pesticides, hostility, grass clippings  
Distinguishing Features: Self-destructive work ethic, illiteracy, lack of proper ID

The Im-Egret spends its days toiling anonymously for less than half what the Hickabee requires. After a backbreaking day picking berries in the sun, this beleaguered species retreats to its nest in the shadows of American commerce, remaining hidden from its natural predator, the the Ruby-Throated Dobbs. Due to its stressful routine and lack of rudimentary education, the Im-Egret exhibits no discernible voting pattern, but has displayed an aversion to the African-American Warbler.

Habitat: Low-income housing, prisons, morgues  
Diet: Malt liquor, menthol cigarettes, manganese  
Distinguishing features: Systemic oppression, unemployment, powerlessness

Thought by many to be a long-extinct species or perhaps a native legend, the Floridian Black is still rumored to exist in areas of Jacksonville and Tallahassee. Sadly, unconfirmed sightings indicate the Black to be malnourished and in a state of near total disenfranchisement.



## **Mythical Floridian Black**

# THIS JUST IN:

# You're a Jackass




**By Stone Rockman**

We apologize for this interruption, but we have breaking news at this hour. Corroborating reports have surfaced over the past few minutes, all of which indicate that you are, in fact, a jackass.

Your status as a jackass has been independently confirmed by family members, coworkers, childhood friends, former spouses, and the Congressional Office of Budget Management. The White House has officially declined comment on the matter, but sources inside the Pentagon say that it is a matter of general consensus that your level of jackassery is severe.

Theories vary widely on the reasons for your status as a jackass, but perhaps the most popular is your shitty attitude, which has been described as "worse than getting bugsprayed in the face" by an officemate. Other reasons given include your stupid clothes, the way you drive, and the acrid, tear-inducing cologne you apply excessively. "He must have gallons of that filth at home," commented someone you think of as a friend. "God, I hate that guy."

Your habitual drinking has also been shown to contribute to your jackass credentials. Statistics show that your capacity for jackass-like behavior increases exponentially as your blood-alcohol level rises. "Don't get me wrong," an ex-girlfriend of yours cautions, "He's always a jackass. But when he gets drunk, he is the biggest jackass in the world." Others report witnessing several incidents of serious jackassery, including wobbly, flailing dancing, forcible groping of women, belligerence toward total strangers, pool table tantrums, the careless breaking of glassware, attempting to "jam" with professional musicians on stage, and a total absence of bartender-tipping. "Oh he's a jackass all right," says one stiffed bartender about you. "You look up 'jackass' in the dictionary, there's a picture of that jerk." 

**STUDY:**  
**14 OUT OF 15**  
**BLACK MEN**  
**REMAIN FREE**  
**FROM PRISON**

DESPITE GENERATIONS OF AN OPPRESSIVE, DISCRIMINATORY JUSTICE SYSTEM, MOST BLACK MEN HAVE YET TO BE INCARCERATED.

THESE KINDS OF NUMBERS SHOULD GIVE THE MEDIA PAUSE. HAVE WE DONE ENOUGH TO DEMONIZE BLACK MEN?

DANGER!

IT'S A SOBERING STATISTIC FOR THE MANY AMERICANS SUFFERING FROM ACUTE AFRI-PHOBIA.

I DON'T FEEL SAFE WITH SO MANY ON THE LOOSE! THOSE PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS UP TO NO GOOD.

HAS NO PROBLEM WITH "THE GOOD ONES."

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BORS

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NEXT

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: HALF AS DARK, TWICE AS DEADLY!

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# Castle of the DARNED

By Michael J. Smith

I was delighted by Sara Robinson's ruminations at the Campaign for America's Future website on how pwoggies ought to emulate what she calls "conservatives":

*... more and more of us are becoming aware of the ways that conservatives have quietly moved in to take over almost every public and private institution in America. From churches to university faculties to public broadcasting to the Boy Scouts, the vast network of institutions that once taught people how to live in a liberal democracy and reinforced those values across society has been shredded to the point where it no longer functions. In its place is a new network of institutions—some of them operating within the co-opted shells of the old ones, others brand new—that reinforce the conservative worldview at every turn.*

—"Learning From the Cultural Conservatives, Part III: Taking It to the Street," at [ourfuture.org](http://ourfuture.org)

What caught my eye about this was its wistful picture of benign "institutions"—one imagines thick stone walls, heavy oaken gates, and of course sleepless high-minded liberal gatekeepers to tend them.

Within the walls is light and comfort. The peasants sing their simple lullabies, enjoying the fruits of "liberal democracy" without ever having heard the phrase or knowing what it means, and certainly without acknowledging or understanding their debt to the gatekeepers.

But it's too good to last. Do the gatekeepers get tired? Or are they just too few, or their burden too great? By ones and twos, and

then by scores and centuries, dark loathsome orc-like figures—conservatives!—creep in the shadows over the battlements and ultimately "take over" the institutions that Sara admires so much.

The core image here is one of dispossession. We pwoggies used to control the institutions, but then somehow those crafty conservatives stole a march on us, scaled the institutional wall, and "took over." How exactly did that happen? They must be fiendishly smart!

The element that's missing in this picture is what Anthony Trollope would have



Many Orcs agree, "Who the hell is Sara Robinson?"

called the "Castle influence." Up there in the Castle, what is Lord Gormenghast doing? Does he play no role in this little drama?

Is it not possible that he wants the conservatives to take over? Perhaps... he has even paid them to scale the walls! Provided them with the ladders! And slipped the liberals a Mickey, on the crucial night, in the dark of the moon.

Forty years or so ago—back in the reign of

old Lord Gormenghast, who sleeps now in the halls of his fathers—the peasants got a little restless. They stopped singing their lullabies and went out into the streets and stopped traffic. Old Lord Gormenghast was alarmed. His counselors at the time, a crafty and subtle crew, spoke with one voice: "Summon the liberals! Let them devise... programs! Let them reform our institutions—from churches to the Boy Scouts!"

It worked. It smelt like progress, and the peasants went back to their lullabies. Then when the Castle decided the crisis had passed, and it was time to restore the status quo, the peasants looked at the liberals who were now managing the retrenchment—and they blamed the liberals. And Lord Gormenghast, who never liked the liberals all that much anyway, was well pleased, and gave a well-received speech from the Castle battlements, admonishing the liberals for their failures.

I know, I know. Parables, when they go on too long, become tedious. So let's say it explicitly, if a little abstractly, and less picturesquely:

Sara's picture is one of institutions that are, you might say, ontologically prior to politics. The walls and gates have, as it were, existed from of old—the work of Weland or nameless ettins from the dark backward and abysm of time. Somehow these perdurable "institutions" got "taken over"—and so Sara's job is to take 'em back, naturally.

Sara has got it backwards. Politics are ontologically prior to institutions—though Sara, with her liberal institution-worship, will almost certainly never be able to understand that fact, and indeed will resist the insight, I bet, to her dying day.

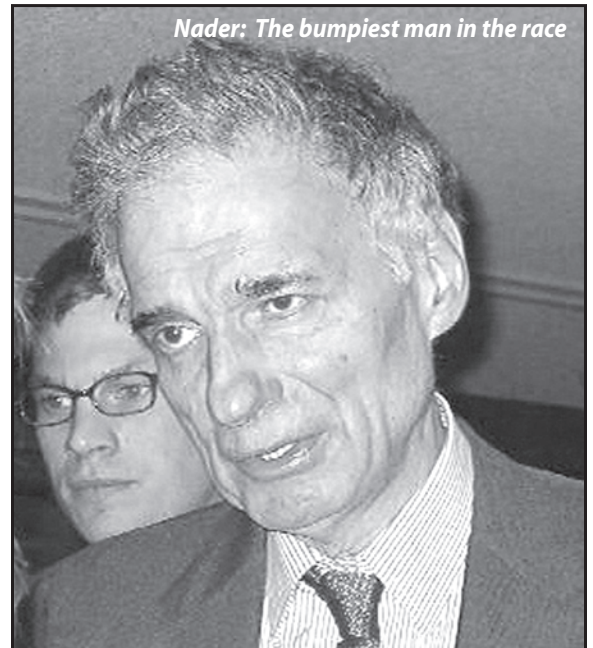
Sara's wistful hope is to do what the orcs did: scale the walls, slip over the battlements, retake the "institutions." But she has, alas, forgotten about the Castle, or never understood it—perhaps never wanted to understand it.

So when she gets at length to the top of her ladder, we can depend upon it that there will be an Orc to meet her, with an ax to chop off her aspiring head.

Not a minute too soon.



# Stop Blaming Ralph



## *The Nadir of the Democratic Credibility*

**By Allison Kilkenney**

The Democrats like to cast blame for their lost elections. Karl Rove's dream of a permanent Republican majority, while eventually thwarted because of Bush fatigue, was only possible because the Democrats failed to form a compelling ideology for a globalized economy.

Definition through negation works in some preliminary stump speeches, but eventually voters want answers. It's not enough to be Not-Republicans. How, exactly, are Democrats different than Republicans? The New Deal and social welfare worked for a country teetering on the brink of Socialism during FDR's reign, but what now? How are the fat cats in the Democratic party different than the fat cats in the Republican wing?

And universal health care hardly seems like revolutionary thinking when the very insurance companies who have been exploiting sick Americans are invited to the negotiation table. Well, to be fair, they paid for their seats at the table, since they have donated millions to the presidential candidates.

The fact that it is 2008 and we're still debating whether all people should be given health care, fair trials, or shelter (even if they accepted outrageous mortgage loans from predatory banks),

and whether we should or shouldn't parade around the globe like some kind of colonizing juggernaut should alert readers to the state of the union.

Democrats are in trouble. They're so in trouble that the Democratic party—the “liberal” voice of reason—would be unrecognizable to the lefties of yesterday. Why are issues of nuclear disarmament, alternative sources of fuel, a department of peace, immediate Iraqi troop withdrawal, and media diversification constantly forced into the margins of debate?

Instead, politicians wade through a swamp of semantics, where they bicker over 30 or 60 or 90-day moratoriums on home foreclosures, negotiating with the banks instead of defending the American citizens. They talk about building permanent military bases in Iraq and a gradual withdrawal of troops, as if our continued presence in that land will bring anything expect death and destruction for more Iraqis and U.S. troops—as if a multilateral peace-keeping mission could be worse than the corruption and ineptitude that has already leveled the country.

Yet, many are quick to crucify Ralph Nader when he speaks for real change. Many Americans blame him for Al Gore's defeat in 2000, though, curiously, no Republican ever accuses Pat Buchanan of stealing votes from Bush in Florida. Pat

even took some of Bush's votes in Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon, and Wisconsin, but because Bush squeaked ahead in the polls, people fail to reflect upon that.

Bush won (historically, not technically), and so the Republicans don't obsessively analyze Florida's hanging chads like Democrats do. Democrats see themselves as an oppressed minority, and so they wander around the political landscape like poor Midwesterners after a tornado tears through their trailer park. They just keep looking around, saying, “What HAPPENED?”

We live in a democracy, which operates under the theory that ANYONE can run for president. Unfortunately, that usually means anyone who is rich, but if a candidate can qualify, then he or she can come to the dance. If we don't have competition in politics, if we attach exceptions to the rule of democracy, then we might as well live under a monarchy, plutocracy, or totalitarian system of government.

Thankfully, this is America. Anyone can run for president, even the most unpopular beast of the animal kingdom—an environmentalist.

It's easy to blame Ralph because, well, he possesses the stubbornness of the last sane man in a world of screaming lunatics. He has spent his life working to protect

the repressed and exploited, even though they never thank him. In fact, they frequently mock him like dumb bullies do the smart kid in class, who always raises his hand when he knows the answer instead of remaining mute so people will like him.

It's harder to blame Al Gore for Al Gore's defeat. It's difficult to examine the party as a whole and realize the Democrats have yet to offer the American people a compelling argument for the next decade, and maybe that's why Al couldn't sway more independents to his side and lower the hammer in Florida.

The election wouldn't have come down to a few hundred votes if Al had blown through the rest of the states with a compelling mission statement; if he had wowed voters with exciting ideas to address a globalized marketplace. Or perhaps a shiny new business model for how the United States can compete with a country supporting itself on slave labor, like China.

Al didn't deal with specifics. He simply bet that voters could see that he was smarter and more experienced than Bush. Well, we know how that worked out.

None of this is Ralph's fault. He's always had specific plans, and his vision never falters. People hate Ralph because, much like an asshole teacher who won't let you skate by, he challenges us. He pushes the country left when the pendulum forever swings right. In a world of free trade and winner-take-all attitudes, Ralph fights for the environment, workers, and victims everywhere.

And yes, he will get votes, but he steals nothing from politicians who don't willingly surrender their campaigns to mediocrity, or voters who cast ballots true to their consciences. A truly compelling Democratic nominee will win blue votes, and some reds and independents. However, if the Democratic nominee offers Americans more of the same centrist-right rhetoric brought to us during the Clinton years, if they cater to Big Business and Wall Street, then we may see a repeat of the 2000 election.

And it won't be Ralph's fault. It will be our own. 

## The BEAST Campaign Cliché Top 20

1. Do-over ▲ 17
2. Cauterize ▲ 134
3. Dog-whistle ▲ 47
4. Surge ▼ 3
5. Kitchen sink ▲ 29
6. It's the [blank], stupid ▲ 56
7. Wheelhouse ▲ 87
8. Real change ▼ 1
9. Firewall ▼ 2
10. Maverick ▲ 22
11. Smoke-filled room ▲ 44
12. Valedictorian ▼ 11
13. Kennedyesque ▼ 6
14. Messiah ▼ 9
15. Moving the goalposts ▲ 31
16. [blank] in a pantsuit ▼ 5
17. Post-racial ▼ 12
18. Chardonnay ▼ 11
19. Knockout Blow ▼ 3
20. Hucka-[blank] ▼ 5





# THE ICEWOMAN COMETH



## AN ACTUAL BEAST REPORT

**By Paul Jones & Ian Murphy**

*"The foulest stench is in the air,  
The funk of 40,000 years.  
And grizzly ghouls from every tomb  
Are closing in to seal your doom.  
And, though, you fight to stay alive,  
Your body starts to shiver,  
For no mere mortal can resist  
The evil of the thriller."*

-Vincent Price, from Michael Jackson's  
"Thriller"

**F**ay's Psychic boutique is locked. Murphy reels from a wet gale, shielding his phone. His slight mass angled defiantly into the biting torrent, Jones contemplates where they might procure a reliable ark—in Cleveland, at this unholy hour.

St. Clair Avenue is queerly serene, unmarred by the bustle of human industry.

It's 1 PM in post-NAFTA America.

The two journalists had stormed Ohio—heedless of ominous forecasts and 193 enticing miles of sheds & firework billboards—for answers. And they'd get them by phone if necessary. They were on the cusp of an elusive and perplexing story rife with disturbing existential undertones and dire geophysiological ramifications.

"Is this Fay?" Murphy asks. "I'm from, um, the uh... *The New York Post*, Ma'am." And I need to know who's going to win the Ohio primary..."

*Jones is bearded and robed, poised over the prow of a majestic, "recently refurbished" ship. He chortles as a silvery deluge consumes thousands of campaign supporters. The deck beneath his feet teems with rats—Cleveland's true*

*aristocracy—rescued providentially from the city's inundated catacombs. Their teacup ears pricked to the din of gurgling deaths overboard, the rats squeal a chorus of approval.*

"You like Hillary—and so do the stars," Murphy repeats, smacking Jones, who is quietly squeaking and gnawing his lower lip. "OK, thanks for your time."

"The stars have spoken," Murphy says, perturbed. "Let's get out of this... place."

"No. It won't do," Jones demurs. "The stars are mindless nuclear reactors with notoriously little political insight. Those fissile conservatives are likely following the latest poll numbers. No, they're not a reliable source—we have to maintain some sort of journalistic standard here!"

They creep silently north. Folded within the gusts, one can hear the ghosts of outsourced jobs moaning softly, rattling chains and begging for change. Sandwich boards on street corners reassure pedestrians that “it’s OK to say no” to panhandlers, and warns that many beggars are drug-fiends in disguise.

“Damn!” Murphy grumbles. “They’re on to us.”

The two will spend primary day, fittingly, in a state of simulated vagrancy. Shuttling from the temporary shelter of one business to another, heads bowed against the withering inclemency; rationing their meager allowance fecklessly in surrender to their bibulous appetites. Booze only amplified the irreality, anesthetizing them to the cold and bleakness of their surroundings.

Passing a Starbucks—signs of life. Jones scoops a wrapper by an exiting patron. Glancing back over her shoulder, the litterbug catches Jones’s intervention.

“You’ll make the world a better place!” she spits caustically. Jones blinks at her, nonplussed.

**A** Michael Jackson “Thriller” anniversary marathon echoes through the empty Metropolitan Café at W. 6th. The décor is purgatory-chic. Murphy pages through a copy of Cleveland’s *Employment News*—a lurid prospectus, garishly colorized and prettified with pharmaceutically upbeat inducements like “No Selling! No Explaining! No Convincing!”

“B’der der der der der derm,” Jones hums along to Quincy Jones’s classic bass-line. “B’der der der der der derm. B’der der der-.”

“Here you are, sir,” the waiter arrives with his second tonic. “I’ll be right back with your food, gentlemen.”

“B’der der der der der derm...” Jones resumes humming and absently sips.

Murphy cringes behind the employment broadsheet.

“B’der der der der der derm—’ncha!”

He throws down the paper as Jones breaks quietly into song.

“It’s close to midnight, somethin’ evil’s

lurkin’ in the dahahark,” Jones croaks tunelessly. “Under the moonlight you see a sight that almost stops your hawaheart...”

Murphy closes his eyes and rubs his temples.

“You try to scream... but terror takes the sound before you make it,” his partner continues. “You start to freeze... as horror looks you right between the eyes—you’re paralyzed...”

“Here you are gen—” The waiter breaks off in a gasp. Murphy looks up.

“Cause this is thrillaaah! Thrillaah niyght!” Jones belts uninhibitedly in a breathy falsetto, revealing a fresh and quickly bloodying gash across the length of his lower lip. “And no one’s gonna save y—”

Murphy quickly seizes Jones’s chipped, jagged glass and shakes it accusingly at the mortified waiter.

“I’m terribly sorry, gentleman, I—”

shoving the want ads across the table.

ZLB Plasma’s advertisement is surrounded by dubious offers for piecework and other contingency labor. The pitch is blunt: “Earn \$40 Today,” underscored by two \$20 notes protruding in razor-sharp relief from a denim pocket. Here was genuine blood money. ZLB, with a ghoulis presence in 25 other states, had snapped a tourniquet around this dying metropolis to squeeze from its desperate, etiolated people their very last and most precious resource.

The waiter, panting, slides an empty soup bowl before the wounded reporter. Rivulets forming on his chin, the unflappably punctilious Jones fingers his silverware—unsure into which spoon he is expected to empty his potentially lucrative blood.

“They probably give you cookies, too,” Murphy says, snatching the paper. “That looks good on a resume.”

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“Sorry like hell!” Murphy breaks in. “Get this man a receptacle—STAT! There’s red gold in them thar lips!”

Jones, awakened finally to his lethal neglect by the commotion, lifts a napkin to his mouth.

“Don’t be a fool!” Murphy barks, slapping the napkin out of his hand. Jones follows the napkin to the floor, noting the small red stains with terror. “Look, we have what you’d call a ‘General Business Opportunity’ here,” Murphy calmly urges,

**T**he rain turns to hail, stinging their faces. They drive aimlessly uptown and get back on the slick interstate.

“Jesus fucking Christ!” Murphy shrieks as a silver Dodge pickup nearly clips his front bumper. The decal covering the rear window depicts a bald eagle soaring in front of wind-swept Old Glory. 100% hick. The truck peels right and decelerates to exit. The reporters drift by, extending the obligatory highway salute.

“This isn’t good,” Jones murmurs as the



heavily flannelled local squeals rubber across the exit divide back into traffic.

“No,” Murphy affirms, spying the gaining madman in the rear-view. “No it’s not.”

“Give it some gas,” orders Jones, swiveling in his seat. “He’s right on our ass. I can’t get the plate number—someone should know who killed us.”

The car tops off at 90, and he’s right back on them. “You get it?” Before Jones can answer, Murphy takes his foot off the pedal. The Dodge falls back and lurches forward at ramming speed.

“You don’t have the balls, son!” Murphy screams, slowing his roll to 50, 40, 30...

“Oh, Christ,” Jones manages as the truck swerves left, speeding beside them. “Does he have a gun?”

The hick shoots a steely glance. The two men smile politely, waiting for a bullet to smash the driver’s side window and rip through their brains.

“I’m hit!” Jones squeals. Murphy strokes the intact window and inspects his own body. Nothing.

“What the hell are you talking—” Murphy halts. Jones’s blood-filled doggy bag, he sees now, has leaked all over him. “Great, now how are we supposed to afford a hotel room?”

The hick speeds away.

**T**he phone rings at Jake’s Lounge in downtown Cleveland’s Key Center Marriott hotel. “Uh, how’s the election going, Bob?” the tender asks his elder counterpart. “Too early to tell,” he parrots into the receiver.

Murphy is draining a Guinness; Jones sips bourbon. To their right, a TV tuned to Fox is running a story about the Clinton campaign darkening Obama’s face in an ad. To their left, Howard Dean is yapping about something on CNN. A third television, behind them, replays NFL quarterback Brett Favre’s seemingly interminable retirement press conference. This isn’t a bar—it’s Best Buy with a liquor license. A fourth screen, ahead of them, flashes a commercial for a new video game, “Army of Two,” whose cooperative-play characters are mercenaries for hire by private security firms—one of which is



*Typical Ohio voters head to the polls*

called “Black Mountain Industries.”

A well-dressed group of businessmen order another round of “Heinie lights” and posture themselves as the dominant pack.

The bartender, Bob, is a smallish fellow with a sunken, John Waters face and a grizzled mustache.

“Did you vote?” Jones asks him.

“Yeah,” he says solemnly, fixing his convex eyes and nodding with slow emphasis. “This is an important one.”

Jones drops his gaze into his glass and

puzzles wordlessly over this distasteful truism, swishing it around with the antiseptic sting of bourbon. *This* is an important election? It’s a common enough sentiment these days. But it’s worth noting that implicit in this newfound awareness is the damning corollary torpor that has so devastated the nation. Ohioans, for their part, have suffered not only disproportionate unemployment, but also a high number of military casualties in recent years.

“What do you mean, exactly? Is it because of the economy? The war?”

“All of it,” Bob says, his voice quickening with Jones’s coaxing. “People are

hurting.”

“How long has it been like this?” Jones asks.

“About eight years—since 2000,” he replies tightly, as if Jones were now frisking his inseam. Bob is either cagily signaling liberal sympathies, or squirming to avoid self-incrimination for his baneful conservatism. His lipless glare indicates further probing is useless.

Eight years. How many arms had ZLB’s bloodletters pockmarked during George W. Bush’s hemorrhagic tenure? Their glasses dry, Jones and Murphy find themselves distressingly sober. Beyond the window at their backs, against the soft blueness of evening, sleet glows like tracer fire under the streetlamps. Earth’s assault no longer daunts them.

They stride through the lobby. Murphy



*Despite the claims of some, Cleveland decidedly does not “rock”*

approaches the front desk. Jones orbits the foyer.

“Can I help you?” the desk clerk asks.

“Yeah, how much for a room for one night?”

“The rate is \$200.”

Murphy winces. He leers across the room at Jones, who is sniffing the scentless potted fernery.

“Do you accept plasma?” he asks the clerk, still fixating on his unsuspecting companion. Jones, ever innocent, meets

his malicious gaze with a smile.

“Excuse me?”

“Plasma,” Murphy repeats. The desk clerk furrows his brow. “You know, blood!” Concerned guests turn their heads and stare.

“I’m sorry, sir, our policy here at The Marrio—”

“Damn your policy!” Murphy scoffs, turning to collect Jones. “We’ll go to a hotel where they appreciate the spirit of human sacrifice!”

The two journo’s push through the revolving door.

“What was that all about?” Jones asks, clueless.

“Nothing. Forget it.”

Outside, a valet is discussing the incoming poll numbers with his coworker. Once again, there had been news reports of voting problems in Ohio. These initial rumors, later verified by the networks, came to the valet from his “cousin in Virginia,” who also told him Obama was trailing in Ohio at the moment, but leading in Texas.

“People can’t even vote right!” he declaims, smiling wryly and shaking his head. “You don’t have to be a rocket scientist—it’s 2008!”

“You used an optical scan machine?”

“Nah.”

“Touch screens?” Jones asks knowingly, jabbing his finger stupidly at an imaginary console.

“Yeah.”

The valet had a point about the public’s collective ineptitude. But Cuyahoga County, of which Cleveland was a part, had been directed to eliminate the sinisterly inscrutable touch screens at its polling places back in December. This was the first of several conflicting accounts about balloting Murphy and Jones would hear over the next few hours.

Softened by their repeated indulgences and hastening waywardly according to the wind’s caprices, it only takes a block or so for their courage to wane. They take

refuge inside the Old Stone Church, a designated polling place. Slumped beside the registration table, a rotund policeman offers a captivating demonstration in strength of materials: He is compressing an undersized chair of unfathomable endurance. He sits placidly, his morbid geometry consuming the seat and inflicting a cruel warp on its four legs.

“How’s the voting been?” Jones inquires.

“Good,” the cop replies flatly. “Pretty steady, actually.”

“No problems?”

The cop shakes his head, as if winded by the exchange. It’s a provocative question and his reaction might simply be an effort of self-preserving tranquility. He appears as though the slightest excitement could kill him.

Jones waits defiantly for something explicit.

The cop turns away from him with a labored rotation of his pink, ruminant head. “They said on the radio as soon as the ice breaks up to head out to the lakes,” he reveals to the campaign volunteer behind him. “There’s a lot of walleye around.”

Summarily ostracized, Murphy and Jones head back down the stairs, but pause to talk to a woman huddled in the vestibule, as she waits for her husband to pull the car around. She just cast her ballot, she says. She’s been voting at the church “since the ’04 midterms.”

“I’ve never had a problem here,” she says. “But the ballots always look different.”

Again, Jones asks about touch screens.

“No, it was a paper ballot.”

“Oh. You just fill it out and run it through the machine, right?”

“No, it was just a plain paper ballot. I just handed it in. No machine.”

She was brown—in Ohio. One can only presume her votes were counted.

**P**erched on a barstool, Jones’s mood is leavening again with his renewed intoxication. By now, the image of Favre, the outgoing Packers QB, is ubiquitous. Jones half-suspects the



cartoonish Uber-rube—who once piously decried the ills of “fancy toothpaste” in a Sensodyne promo—of colluding with McCain to distract people from the Democratic contest. But he no longer cares. Exuberant and emboldened, he taps a middle-aged man in a windbreaker convivially on the shoulder.

“What’s the bigger story,” he asks, “the election, or Brett Favre’s retirement?”

The man strokes his mustache pensively, but stares straight ahead.

“Probably the election,” he concedes reluctantly.

The Chop House is buzzing politics and weather.

“It’s Tweedledee versus Tweedledumb,” a man to their left describes the congressional primary between Dennis Kucinich and his rival.

“Last week it was, like, 80 degrees one day, and tornados and cold the next,” boasts the barkeep. Jones is back on his ark. The end is nigh. The end of something.

Two waiters, a dumpy woman and a bald, skeletal man, lean against the bar’s end, discussing their votes.

“The thing was barbaric,” he says, alluding to an optical scan form. “It was just a folding cardboard sheet—and none of the lines matched up...I felt like an idiot.”

Like a pair of slapstick upstarts, Murphy and Jones have graduated to Scotch—the expensive stuff. Their low breeding is shamefully apparent as they order their single malts. “We’ll try the, uh, *Lagavelin*.”

“You mean *Lahg-a-voolin*?” the bartender snaps remedially, impatient with their clumsy pretense.

The pair is doubly graceless, recoiling visibly at their accumulated tab. The sun is down. The sky is now disgorging a cannonade of concussive hail. Restaurant valets are dashing precariously back and forth to the lot across the icy street, shielding their heads with their arms.

“They’re crazy, running like that!” the dumpy chick exclaims. “They’re gonna fall!” In her insouciance, she can’t appreciate the necessity of their rash

swiftness. If she had her druthers, they’d work at a deliberate pace; shelled by ice until facedown in the snowdrifts, bleeding from their ears.

“Are you drunk enough to drive?” Jones queries Murphy. “If we’re going to make the Clinton rally in Columbus, we should leave now.”

**M**urphy breaks his ice-scraper chipping away at a windshield glacier, and they fishtail onto St. Clair. Traffic lights are out all over town. Cars slide slowly south down Route 71. Nine miles, three wrecks and an hour later, the two reporters give up on Columbus. Marooned near the airport, they settle for Howard Johnson’s.

Murphy swallows his last Vicodin and packs his paltry amount of marijuana. He’ll need it to endure. They may have escaped the perils of one storm, but the hotel would provide no respite. Election night television coverage would drench them in a filth far more sinister than nature’s cold indifference.

9:30pm: Huckabee concedes, quotes bible repeatedly, affirms America’s enemies are many and dangerous, the challenges great and that American theocracy is imminent. Or something.

On MSNBC, David Gregory’s verbal treacheries continue unchecked. He uses “misnomer” as a synonym for “misconception” and distorts “imprimatur” into “im-PRIMIT-er.” Jones takes cover beneath a flimsy blanket.

9:45pm: Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell spouts nonsense about Clinton having a better shot against McCain in the general because she’s faired well in the big contests and swing states. Chris Matthews threatens Pennsylvania with “seven weeks of thunder!”

11:00pm: This is the end. Rhode Island, Texas and now, Ohio, are being flattened under 5 feet 6 inches of snow-white Hillary.

3:00am: A phone is ringing in the White House. Something is happening in the world. And the Clinton campaign has successfully shifted the campaign focus to national security experience and fear.

3:01am: Senator John McCain weeps tears of joy, sends box of monogrammed

chocolates to one “Mark Penn.” The card reads: “I love you.”

5:00am: Murphy excretes more microorganisms than there are people on earth, casually flushes toilet.

Approximately 2050 AD: Billions die as temperatures and sea levels rise, and violent weather increases. Large swaths of Europe, Asia and the Americas resemble the Sahara. It’s your basic planetary shit storm. It happens all the time. Mother Nature’s one regular bitch.

**S**hafts of light penetrate breaches between the skimpy drapes, stirring the reporters to grudging wakefulness.

“We could head back into Cleveland, get some more quotes and—”

“No!” Murphy wails, thrashing about in his bed sheets, his eyes dilated with fear—PTSD from the previous night’s drive.

“We’ll just get breakfast next door,” Jones says evenly. They rise and prepare to trudge across the unstained tundra.

“Hmm...says here that Bob Evans decided to marry his wife when he first tasted her ‘fluffy stacks,’” Murphy ventures, perusing the menu. “You think that’s a euphemism?”

The front of the restaurant is staffed entirely by white women. Men and the darker races occupy the kitchen. Micki, their waitress, is an aging but robust amazon with a Thatcherite coiffure and clenched-teeth reticence. She thunders sternly from booth to booth on her powerful haunches as though management has fitted her puckered thigh with a cilice.

“What did you think of the primary?” Jones asks Micki, as she serves juice and coffee.

“What can I say?” she shrugs. “I’m happy. I voted for Hillary.”

She starts back toward the kitchen and Jones, believing she’s finished, raises a glass of OJ to his lips. Micki pauses halfway to the galley and turns.

“She’s the lesser of two evils, right?” she continues. Jones nods politely and

*Continues on page 22*

# THE MIND OF A SUPER-GENIUS



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**G**reetings, dear reader, from the caliginous and forbidding confines of my new home. I decline advisedly to employ the term “resting place,” because such squalor defies any meaningful concept of placidity. Forget all those biblical clichés—Hell is a place of enforced and unendurable cohabitation; it truly is “other people.” My current “roomies” include P.W. Botha, several Italians, one of Jane Goodall’s chimpanzees—who admittedly surpasses the Italians in cleanliness and conversation; and a fellow whose entire anatomy—head, torso and limbs—consists of syphilitic penises. (It is rumored he used to be Roy Cohn until, during dinner one evening, he poached the end piece of brisket from the table without Satan’s permission and was thus permanently transfigured.)

You must forgive me, hereafter, any peevish outbursts: I am doing my utmost to maintain a longanimous disposition under what I am sure you will grant are uniquely adverse circumstances. This is not the dignified quietus I had envisioned: sunning myself in Elysium, while a Japanese girl defecates on my chest and sings, in her elided tongue, the “Happy Days” theme with Bach’s accompaniment. The mere thought makes my loins sizzle. Although this is alternately attributable to the hot sulfur from the showerheads, as well as a dose of gonorrhea I contracted during my first few weeks here, before I learned to sleep with one eye open.

I will concede my current vantage affords an unexceeded inspection of Michelle Obama’s undergarments. And I seriously doubt it is within the powers of the Secret Service to do anything about *that*. Goldwater and I have been feverishly swapping our voyeuristic cell phone snapshots from the campaign trail. He has a flawlessly lascivious eye, though I must say I find his enduring fixation with his former devotee, Hillary Clinton, more than objectionable. (Protest if you will, I have never found “cankles” at all becoming on any creature save the Apatosaurus.) I know they’ve been exchanging text messages, too. Who do you think gave her that “ringing phone” idea?

Oh, how far from I am now from the briny, sparkling and inspiriting thalassic paradise of my salad days where, beyond international maritime boundaries and the

moralizing invigilation of the Coast Guard, a young man could explore his insatiable passion for cats without inhibition. How differently things might have turned out for Eliot Spitzer if he’d had my sea legs—and shared my predilection for a species whose testimony, if it could be got, would scarcely be admissible in any court. I’ve always said cats are the Mann Act’s best friend.

## A Final Farewell



**By The Late  
William F. Buckley Jr.**

You can imagine my youthful chagrin when, entering a “cathouse” for the first time as a Yalie, I discovered all the options for debauchment to be irremediably human! Or, my impetuous submission to *Cat Fancy* magazine, recounting, in a miscalculation of that publication’s tenor and audience, a sweat-soaked tryst with “Siamese twins.” It required a considerable effort of verbal dexterity—not to mention a substantial sum of money, extorted by the editors in the form of 5,000 subscriptions—to disentangle myself and avoid any further or more public humiliation.

Regardless of *National Review*’s success and esteem, I will forever rue my decision not to utilize its pages to petition the public vigorously for a thoughtful reconsideration of interspecies love.

It’s almost noon here. The calefaction is crippling and, what’s worse, the heat has a detoxifying effect on all the booze. I’ve swilled oceans of martinis since I’ve been

down here and, apart from protracted stints in the john, it’s all been for naught. I’m soberer than a Muslim at Ramadan.


Would that this were the totality of damnation’s disappointments.

Satan is not at all a habitable host. His cooking is endlessly reproachable and uniformly insipid. One is almost tempted, at first, to grant him latitude on the point. In this climate, it’s nearly impossible not to boil something beyond edibility. But

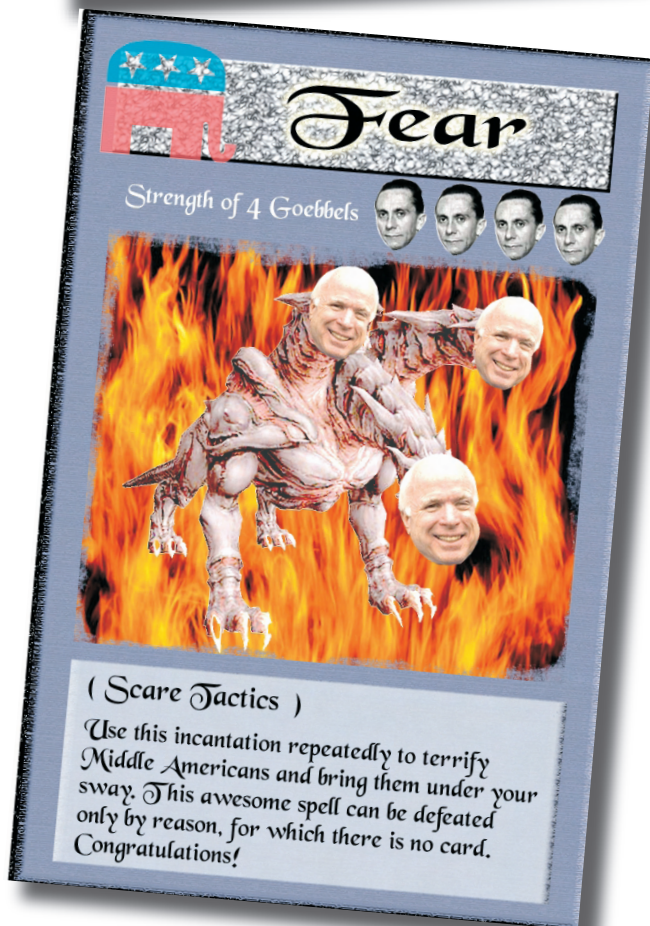
he steadfastly refuses to agree to any temporary abatement of the heat. He remains undaunted by rising gas prices and never tires of reciting the names of his “dear friends” in the oil business.

Moreover, had I any inclination that my ungulate host was such an intemperate consumer of beans—and a boorishly prodigious recycler of its gassy byproducts—I might have undertaken a more thorough plan of contraception. In short, I would have fitted a condom permanently on the end of my nose, rendering it impenetrable by all such offending sensations. Indeed, what could be more quintessentially life affirming—“pro life,” to belabor the point—than sealing one’s most refined orifice against the encroachments of such malodorous sustenance. No upstanding Catholic could expostulate about that!

And his personal hygiene far exceeds the bounds of any brookable negligence. He is positively jumentous—redolent of Reagan who, dear to me though he will forever be, was in his later years explosively, unapproachably incontinent. I was only slightly surprised to learn Mr. President had been denied official entrée to Hades Proper for that very reason. There he sits, beyond the gates, mindlessly uttering his denials about Iran-Contra, a perpetual stream of urine blotting his pants, pooling at his feet and trickling down into the River Styx.

Well, I won’t bore you any longer with the vicissitudes of my perpetuity. Besides, I must prepare for lunch. Rich Lowry is stopping by—I hadn’t realized he and the Dark Lord were so close, though I probably should have expected. Lowry’s coming to collect my excrement, to examine in it for material for his next column. No, that’s not a figure of speech. 





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continues sipping. Micki steps closer and, looming with growing menace over the booth, snarls: "Because, to be honest, Barack scares the shit out of me!"

Murphy and Jones swap glances. Jones, normally a gourmet of profanity, is astonished at this unseemliness. Who curses at breakfast?

After eating, Jones pulls Micki aside to inquire what precisely "scares" her about the Illinois senator. He already has a pretty good idea what she's going to say. Just days earlier, "60 Minutes" had broadcast an interview with a cross-section of Ohio voters. Kenny—a drawling, gelatinous and imminently jobless peon from Chillicothe—expressed tentative support for Barack without elaborating. But he fretted over a rumor that Obama is covertly a Muslim who "doesn't even know the national anthem," and "wouldn't use the holy bible" as his spiritual guide in office. Kenny's jowls quaked and his eyes welled with tears as he pondered his grim future: no prospects for reemployment, no healthcare and a wife suffering from multiple sclerosis. He looked like a man who could no longer afford the luxury of his religious fantasies, or the dubious innuendos reinforcing them.

Sure enough, Micki is privy to the same scurrilities. Curiously, she claims Snopes.com had confirmed the Islam rumor and several others. Snopes had indeed listed these rumors on its Obama page—and categorically debunked them.

"He was a Muslim, but he won't admit it. They have whole list on there."

She's on a roll. Jones doesn't wish to interrupt.

"If he'd just come out and said, 'I was [a Muslim], but now I'm not,' that would have been okay. But, he didn't. He said, 'I'm not and I've never been.' Well, that's a lie...I know [he'd be] the first black president. That's fine: I don't care what color they are. But with him being a Muslim, and everything else—it's just too much."

Jones steps outside into the winter blankness. He throws back his head and laughs. Over the past few months, Obama has subjected America to his zombie-like gyrations on "The Ellen Degeneres Show."

He has solemnly affirmed his Christian faith—from which it may be inferred that his sexual activity is exclusively and dully procreative (though he's already begun disavowing his pastor's less expedient preaching). And he's sloughed off the impoverished subjects of Israeli apartheid in Gaza, intoning the obligatory and superfluous nonsense about the colonialists' "right to exist." No radical Islamic fifth columnist could likely endure these degradations; nor, for that matter, share a stage with Degeneres without detonating a suicide bomb. Besides, these odious exertions haven't placated the nation's staunchly bigoted constituencies. Obama has been wasting his time—and ours.

He has exuded a cautious and amorphous persona, encouraging voters to invest him with their discrepant aspirations. Consequently, the exultation of his supporters—from congressmen to pop stars—is a largely incoherent excitement. His lilting enchantments about "hope" substitute for genuine political courage, belittling the urgency for resolute leadership. Aggrandized by twelve straight primary and caucus victories, he arrived in Ohio a ponderously cultish figure. There, Obama bestrode the rubble of NAFTA like a dickless Colossus: moderating his attack on free trade, eschewing populist rhetoric in a sop to his corporate underwriters.

A piece in the March 5 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* cited AP exit polls indicating 20% of Ohio's voters had considered race an important factor in their decisions. "In no other primary in this campaign have such a high percentage of voters cited race as a critical factor," the article stated. Analysts chalked this up not only to hardcore racists, but also to Republican men opting to vote for Hillary Clinton in the Democratic contest, viewing her as the weaker general election opponent. Obama lost Ohio 54% to 44%. His defeat, they argued, was mostly about his inability to counter the Clinton juggernaut. Ohioans, according to pollsters, "wondered who Obama was."

The cretinous and masochistic masses in Ohio, then, voted for a reprise of the Clinton years. Nostalgic for the economic vampirism of Bill Clinton, workers and unions turned their cheeks on his NAFTA

betrayal and offered up their throats to Hillary for a matching set of fang marks. As *CounterPunch* noted, Obama failed to make the "full case" on what the Clintons' policies have done to working people. He fell back on narcotizing incantations and Ohio's walking dead went for the candidate with ice in her veins.

The chilling events of election night mark the last meaningful contest of the 2008 Democratic primary. It's now a mathematical impossibility for either candidate to secure the nomination without the backing of the superdelegates. This was the winter of our disenfranchisement. And other clichés.

By 2040, some scientists estimate that 80% of earth's species will be gone. There's too much carbon in the atmosphere. Erratic and extreme weather will kill billions of people. And there's not a damn thing we can do about it. There are no arks that large.

During these reporters' stint in Cleveland, one driver was killed and four more succumbed while shoveling snow. It's a start.

Elitist maggots colonize democracy's bloated corpse. The politics of prejudice and fear precipitate the end of reason. The dusk of human civilization is at hand. A bold, new breed of citizen will evolve in this hopeless environment. Ones with new abilities; ones sufficiently ignorant to maintain the brutal folly of life.

Paying the tab, Murphy glimpses this grim future: "I don't know enough to vote," admits the plump, blonde cashier. "I don't want to put someone in office just because I like their name or face."

"That doesn't stop anyone else."

"Um, are you sure?" she blushes.

"More now than ever." 

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# APATHY VICTORIOUS IN IRAQ!

## Millions of Americans Indifferent

By Steve Gordon

“There is another philosophy that is better suited for political action, that takes its cue, adapts itself to the drama in hand, and acts its part neatly and well. This is the philosophy for you to use. When a comedy of Plautus is being played, and the households of slaves are cracking trivial jokes together, you propose to come on stage in the garb of a philosopher, and repeat Seneca’s speech to Nero from the Octavia. Wouldn’t it be better to take a silent role than to say something wholly inappropriate, and thus turn the play into a tragicomedy? You pervert and ruin a play when you add irrelevant speeches, even if they are better than the original. So go through with the drama in hand as best you can, and don’t spoil it all simply because you happen to think another one to be better.”

—Saint Sir Thomas More, 1516, tr. R.M. Adams

### War Programming

If you haven’t already recycled it, I’m going to ask you to get out your copy of *Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 46(4), and check out the Atheide & Grimes article one more time. I understand if you’ve recycled it—it’d gotten a few years old, and if you’re anything like me, you’ve already reprinted 90% of the material in your own essays anyway.

In the article, “War Programming: The Propaganda Project and the Iraq War,” Atheide & Grimes make an exceptional case that a compliant American news media facilitated the rush to war in Iraq. There were, according to the authors, a number of reasons for this.

First, two decades of corporate deregulation and rapid media conglomeration force-evolved news rooms into lean, action-grabbing loss-leaders for their new commercial owners. Newspapers and stations cut expenses drastically, fired lots of reporters, and swayed away from being investigative (and costly) democratic power-checks to being painless narrators of a culture that has softly dissociated itself from distressing information. Editors and reporters were encouraged to follow generalized story themes rather than in-depth analysis. As a result, it was just good business sense to spend the time between September 11<sup>th</sup> and the Iraq invasion embedding reporters with the military and designing flashy “Blow ‘Em The Fuck Up” graphics for the newscast. The war was inevitable, after all, and no one wanted to be left out in the rain once the shit storm started.

Secondly, and concurrently, the media was able to garner support for the war—which it had invested time, interest and money into—by taking the administration’s cue in redefining the term “terrorism.” Terrorism had for decades referred to a political tactic used on airplanes and in ass-kicking movies. Now, it was shifting towards referring to a “condition” or “global affliction” that an altruistic United States would have to cure.

Finally, the news media marginalized dissent. Raise your hand if you knew at the time that the administration was full of shit when it came to Iraq’s WMDs. Well, you were right, and you knew it at the time, so what you did was you and 100,000 friends went to Washington, D.C. and did this big protest thingie. It made it on the news—in the bottom corner, underneath a

huge story on how sweet our new missiles were going to be. And it wasn’t until well after the war was underway that news organizations came to terms with some kind of obligatory, vacuous admission that they “had been misled” like “everyone else.” But look, Britney’s fat now, can you fucking believe it?

### Utopia

Though it is a thorough and much-needed critique of the new news media, there is something missing in Atheide & Grimes.

In Thomas More’s 16<sup>th</sup> century book *Utopia*, a traveler returns from the New World and recounts to the narrator his observations of the cooperative and functioning society he encountered across the sea. Upon hearing of the ingenious methods employed by the Utopians to achieve a, well, utopian society, the narrator urges the traveler to enter the world of politics. After all, it seems the traveler has enough insight to solve even the most absurd and institutionalized maladies of Europe at the time. The traveler declines, knowing that there is no place for idealism in practical politics.

That was in a book. In real life, we really did go to the New World, and it turned out that most of the societies there were somewhat utopian. But that wasn’t going to work for us, so we got the fuck rid of them and opened a few European franchises. After a while, this one place, the United States, had really good things for you to buy, and since they shipped slaves over to make the things, ordinary customers didn’t have to worry about how much sweat it took to turn dirt into food and clothes.

After a while, the United States developed ways to travel and communicate over vast

distances, so they didn't need to have slaves shipped there anymore. They could just slave away from their own homes in Asia and Africa. And so the people in the United States got used to having nice things that were cheap, and they got really good at not knowing—or caring—how much sweat it took to turn dirt into HD TVs.

Here is what the Atheide & Grimes article seems to miss: in condemning the news media for not fulfilling its obligation to inform the public, the authors fail to notice that this obligation has dissolved. The news has no purpose anymore than to don the tired garb of Upton Sinclair and say, straight-faced, “man, Britney one crazy bitch!” The new news is there to assuage, not to inform, and here come Atheide & Grimes, reciting ‘Seneca’s speech to Nero,’ to no one in particular.

Dissent is a pain in the ass; of course it would be marginalized. When 100,000 dissenters met up in Washington on a cold January morning in 2003 to tell the president they knew he was full of shit, you saw it on television for a split second. Changing the channel, you said to yourself, “Outdoors. That’s so last century.” You didn’t need a bunch of smart-asses telling you ugly-feeling things, turning your play into a tragedy.

Because, with enough trivial jokes here and there, it wasn’t one to begin with. Right? ~~YES~~

## Happy Fucking Birthday, Iraq War

A BEAST READER OPINION

By Susan Garibaldi

So, what are you five or six, or something? Big fucking deal. I’m like fifty! And nobody did anything for my birthday. I mean, my stupid kid didn’t even remember.

Tell you what, war, get back to me when you grow the fuck up.

And I *might* give a shit.



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# “We win again!”



## TRIUMPH OF THE WHITE MAN

**By Stan Goff**

*We don't know who will carry the Democrats' banner onto the political battlefield this fall. But we do know the kind of attack the Dems will face. The McCain campaign has little in its arsenal beyond two words: "No Surrender"—nosurrenderanywhere, but especially in Iraq. Its strategy is merely to hurl that phrase over and over again, in every form imaginable.*  
-Ira Chernus, Alternet

In 2003, I wrote my own somewhat speculative account of the Jessica Lynch saga. The Pentagon PR machine was on mandatory overtime, storyboarding their own bullshit version of events, and in this version there was a clear taxonomy of human value. Dirty Arabs were below Americanwhitewomanhood, and American white womanhood was dependent on American military masculinity. There was a fake fight-to-the-death scenario constructed for Jessica Lynch, wherein she fought the Dirty Arabs [DA] until she was overwhelmed (demonstrating her morally superior American White Womanhood [AWW] position over the swarthy beasts), followed by a fake rescue, wherein United States Special Operations commandos snatched her from the enemy hospital where she was being held captive (demonstrating the necessity at the end of the day for American Military Masculinity [AMM]).

Now Hillary Clinton has deployed her own narrative of black incompetence (the 3 AM phone call). Anyone who doesn't believe this is race-baiting coded as "inexperience" is smoking some good stuff. In this cynical display of unbridled ambition, she has

become King Pyrrhus. The trump card of the Republican Party is irrevocably fear of the Dark Other, and once the issue of "black inability to govern" is played, the only step left is to mount the final stair in the taxonomy of fear: gender.

John McCain was in the military, and the fact that he was shot down and imprisoned when he was dropping explosives on Vietnamese lends him almost mythical "credibility" in the militarized American mindset. He is AMM. So once Senator Clinton accomplishes (if she does) the categorical destruction of Obama as a DA (or its domestic equivalent... a "dark one"), she stands alone in a field where she shall be utterly defenseless.

It's irony writ large when the person to first bring this taxonomy to the fore this election season is the female candidate, Senator Hillary Clinton, with her three-AM ad designed to conjure up white America's deepest, darkest (pun intended) fears of the swarthy menace lurking outside North American Mythville. On time and on target, Clinton's method for asserting her standpoint as a woman is to show she can assert the standpoint of the American male imaginary — our fantasy of perpetual embattlement, the world a testing ground for performative masculinity against imagined enemies just beyond our gates.

The Clintons, for all the fawning of black boozie celebs, will innegroate an election in a half a heartbeat to stay ahead — from Sister Soulja to locking up black people faster than anyone in history to emmisarial leaks about Obama's middle name, his turban photo, and cocaine, cocaine, cocaine. Bill and Hillary know how the black taint meme works in white America and they are mashing the buttons like a free vending machine. They know that most white people in the US are so steeped in white supremacy that they can never, ever fully let go of the nagging white idea

that darkness equals incompetence.

The tricky part is that people — many women included (internalized oppression affects women just as much as black folk) — are likewise nagged by the suspicion that women can't "do the job" either.

Once Obama is knocked off (if that is successful with superdelegates), more and more white folk will turn to the masculinity-as-redemptive-violence trope; and they'll cast their votes for the hot-headed nitwit from Arizona because he has successfully cultivated his phony "maverick" image and overlaid it on his militarism credentials. Mark my words.

And if Wall Street Obama wins the nod from the Democratic Leadership Council, it will be gender again... and again... and again. Clinton has handed McCain a playbook he won't even have to read. It's already inscribed on the psyche of white America. All McCain needs to do is holler "sissy" at Obama on the question of Iraq, and Obama will tack right and try to outman McCain... to no avail: McCain is blooded in combat, which counts more than having enough sense to pour piss out of a boot.

Clinton and Obama (and the Democratic Party leadership) believed that gender and race could be taken off the table for the election. More foolish still, they believed they could be separated.

They knew not where they lived.

I love elections. 

*Stan Goff is a US Army vet and the author of several books. His website is [feralscholar.org](http://feralscholar.org)*

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## Must be the genes



You don't often see sports-crime legacies. While there may be genetic reasons for both Eli and Peyton Manning having made the NFL, genes have less pull in effecting similar rap sheets among brothers or father/son duos.

Few of the notable sports-crime stars of our day have had relatives in similar boats. We don't, for instance, see a middleweight boxer Fred Tyson, younger brother of Mike, punching out casino cocktail waitresses in Vegas. Ricky Williams doesn't have a pot-smoking baseball-player dad, and Lawrence Phillips didn't pave the way for a heptathlete sister who got caught carrying an unregistered Glock into the Olympic village.

About the closest things we've had along those lines lately have been the busts of the sons of Dwight Gooden and Riddick Bowe a few years back — but in neither of those cases were the offspring themselves athletes. Hell, even Darryl Strawberry's kid, a guard for the Phoenix Suns, has been an upstanding citizen. In fact, the junior Strawberry wanted so badly not to be like his dad that he changed his name from Darryl Jr. to D.J.

This past week, however, one Mikhail Marinovich — a freshman football player at Syracuse — was arrested, along with teammate Paul Chiara, for breaking into a sports-equipment room on campus.

Mikhail is the younger brother of 38-year-old former USC legend Todd Marinovich, an immensely talented quarterback who became one of the all-time NFL busts before succumbing to an even darker fate as an oft-arrested street-living drug addict. At last count, the elder Marinovich brother has been arrested six times since the end of his football-playing days. Some of his arrests have resulted in true innovations for the sports-crime-reporting genre — while most black athletes end up victimized by the profiling that goes on following routine traffic stops, popped for possession after bogus searches, Marinovich, the prototypical white Californian, was victimized by a routine skateboard stop. Once caught skating in a no-skateboarding zone, police found syringes and drugs in his guitar case and hauled him away.

Another time, Marinovich walked away from a halfway house and into fugitive status. He's been busted for sex assault, for meth, even for possession of child pornography in a public restroom. In college, Marinovich was busted on a rape charge that went away, but was sufficiently unimpressed by the charges to brag upon graduation that he was the

"Trojan who used the most Trojans." Echoing the police-report witticisms of Bob "The Bad One" Probert, Marinovich has variously listed his occupation as "unemployed artist" and "anarchist." His last legal case involved a guilty plea this past October for meth possession, misdemeanor syringe possession, and resisting arrest.

A sad case for sure. Now his brother might be jammed up before his career even starts. The charges so far are minor — misdemeanor criminal mischief for both players — but internal discipline may be on the way. "We are gathering all the information and we will handle the matter appropriately internally," Syracuse head coach Greg Robinson said ominously.

Give Mikhail 10 points for the break-in. We'll keep you posted on his progress.

## Bad recruit



Speaking of USC . . . the Trojans had a tough week, as incoming highly touted linebacker recruit Maurice Simmons was busted for what looks to be an armed street-mugging. According to police, Simmons, who played linebacker

for Dominguez High in Compton, was pulled over by cops shortly after a pedestrian was robbed on the streets. "We were flagged down by the victim," a police spokesman said. Simmons was allegedly found in possession of the victim's belongings, and there was a gun in the car he was driving. It is believed he was the wheel man while another man, a Lamont Hall, may have committed the actual robbery.

Simmons comes from a football family. His older brother Melvin played for the Trojans in 2002 and 2003. His other older brother, Marvin, committed to USC but ended up at Kansas State after a Pac-10 investigation into the entrance test he passed.

Pete Carroll hasn't said yet exactly how pumped and jacked he is about this arrest. A school official said Carroll is "monitoring the situation." Meaning, if Simmons gets off, he gets in. Fifty points for any armed robbery, but let's all reserve judgment while Maurice is still courtside. No word yet on when this thing goes to trial.

## Frog rocker



Weird news from the St. Louis Cardinals, a team that always has more than its fair share of extracurricular oddities. It seems the club has released infielder Scott Spiezio (he of the two World Series rings, with Anaheim in 2002 and the Cards in '06) after details surfaced about an incident

that took place on December 30.

Spiezio was in California when he plunged headlong into a doubleheader of sports-crime clichés: a one-car crash, followed by a leaving-the-scene beef. After exiting a Newport Beach bar, Spiezio drove his 2004 BMW into a fence, then jumped out and headed to a friend's nearby condo. According to reports, the friend attempted to clean Spiezio up, but the ballplayer threw up in the guy's room. When the guy commented on the mess, Spiezio allegedly went apeshit, assaulting the man and causing "significant injuries." The whole incident was kept under wraps for some time, and it wasn't until the beginning of spring training that the Cards found out about an arrest warrant and took action.

Spiezio sat out a month this past year to deal with a substance-abuse problem. The Cards were probably somewhat quicker to cut ties with him in the wake of the alcohol-related death of pitcher Josh Hancock in 2007. The DUI arrest of manager Tony LaRussa and the HGH scandal involving famed Yips sufferer/inspirational-comeback story Rick Ankiel probably didn't help.

## Pace yourself




Poor Larry Bird. Every time he wakes up in the morning, he must turn on his Bearcat to see which of his players ended up in bracelets the night before.

The Pacers have had innumerable scandals in recent years, including charges involving Stephen Jackson firing his gun five times into the air (after a parking lot fracas outside a strip club), a weed bust involving Shawne Williams, bar-brawl arrests of Jamaal Tinsley and Marquis Daniels (in which Tinsley allegedly threatened to kill a club manager after braining him on the side of the head) . . . the list goes on and on.

Now there is perhaps the worst of them all — Williams was held out of a game this past week after police arrested Gary Bohanon, a/k/a Roosevelt Rollins, when he exited Williams's house. Bohanon, who had been with Williams when the latter was busted for his weed rap this past September, was wanted by the US Marshals as a fugitive from a first-degree murder-arrest warrant, issued after one Ronald Moore was gunned down on October 17, 2007, in Tennessee. Information reached authorities that Bohanon might be at Williams's house, so they kept the hoopster under surveillance and finally caught their man.

Yikes, harboring a murder fugitive. The exasperated Bird commented: "We've got to be very clear about this — we don't want our players hanging around with murderers."

There are no charges against Williams as of yet, but stay tuned. In the meantime, give him 50 points, and give our old friend from French Lick your sympathies. 

## Sports Blotter Legend



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Those drugs  
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Frantic spousal  
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Stats cheerily  
recited after  
AP report



Supernatural  
quantities of  
pot



Incident involving  
"baby momma"



Burglary/theft



Gambling

## 2008 LEADER BOARD

JIM LEYRITZ (EX-YANKEES) | DUI manslaughter | 90  
JEROME MATHIS (TEXANS) | choking pregnant baby-momma | 75  
FABIAN WASHINGTON (RAIDERS) | red marks on girlfriend's neck | 70  
JEREMY ELDER (ALABAMA) | late-night stickup | 55  
ADAM "PACMAN" JONES (TITANS) | being a menace to peaceful strip-club patrons everywhere | 50  
SHAWNE WILLIAMS (PACERS) | harboring an accused first-degree murderer | 50  
JOHN STEPHENS (EX-PATRIOTS) | sex-assault fugitive | 48  
DAVID CORNACCHIA (FLA. EVERBLADES) | mid-flight assault, head-butting bystanders, exposing wine-shrunk wiener | 46  
BRANDON PETTIGREW (OKLAHOMA STATE) | elbowing Stillwater's finest | 42  
SCOTT SPIEZIO (CARDINALS) | flipping a car in the OC, staggering away from the scene, going mental at some random citizen | 31  
CHANNING CROWDER (DOLPHINS) | leaving the scene, making good early impression on Bill Parcells | 30  
DANIEL GRAHAM (BRONCOS) | ambiguous domestic-violence beef; hit a bedpost | 30



# Thank Heaven for 7-Eleven

*Democracy rots from the inside out as a nation of telemarketers and war criminals parties on amid the stench*

**By Joe Bageant**

A spring Sunday morning and I am at the politically incorrect 7-Eleven buying my cholesterol loaded half-and-half for my peasant slave labor grown coffee. In the parking lot, car speakers blare out Bob Marley from a grungy 1987 Olds Cutlass (the last year GM made 'em), while the owner, a Haitian guy, sits on the curb eating his Smokey Big Bite hot dog, sunshine pouring over the whole world sweet as that quart of chocolate milk he is going to wash it all down with. Bob Marley is singing "One Love" and that Smokey smells so damned good I order one for myself and settle in next to that Haitian dude. And I think, "Is this a great fucking country or what? Yessiree, the world's best hope."

And it is. Or was. Or something. Ask any poor suffering bastard in the garbage dumps of Mumbai or Caracas to name the best place in the world to live and most will answer "The United States." Maybe it's for all the wrong reasons. And surely the image is driven by the global hype and bullshit of an America that cannot get over itself—cannot pause from its huckstering long enough to see that the America of both John Wayne and FDR quit circling the drain thirty years ago. It has since been pulled asunder by spectacular greed and the learned helplessness of the consumer state. And denial. The kind that allows us to sanctify the young men starring in that horrific snuff flick over in Iraq as "heroes." But we were talking about the third world weren't we? Where if you are eating spoiled cat meat and getting raped nightly in a Bangkok slum, things like a Cutlass gunboat with busted springs and a Smokey Big Bite on a Sunday morning look good. Damned good. There is not much that cannot be explained by population geography and proximity to basic goods and services. This is not wasted upon the predatory few among us concerned with capturing, holding and blackmailing others for access to them under our free market system. It's a brutal process, one we can only coexist with through ironclad denial. Did free people make your clothes?

Mine neither.

My Dutch friend Bram is mystified at our denial, which he says "is spooky." "How can anyone sustain such a thing?" Well, it's easy when you are born numb. Most of us born under American extremist capitalism are inured to its sheer brutality. To Americans, it's just the way things are. The world is a tough place. We agree that god has blessed us; we deserve what we have and let it go at that. Citizens born under the Third Reich felt the same way about their consensual reality. Not many of us can grasp the national hubris involved, thanks to the heady patriot-religious mythology of American exceptionalism in which we were spawned and educated in preparation for adulthood as citizens of the consumer state. Collectively, we feel exempt from human folly because our particular god, the Christian God, the Jewish God, The Mormon God, the Seventh Day Adventist God, Muslim God or whatever one's cult deems divine, has chosen us. Whatever we think we are as liberals, your nation and mine, the government we are responsible for has always acted on these beliefs, destroying whole nations, peoples and the planet under that exceptionalist banner. At some point, liberals and neocons and the apolitical alike, are going to have to own all of America's history, not just the parts we prefer. For instance, it was FDR who packed off all those decent Japanese families to internment camps. Abraham Lincoln loved his nigger jokes. Bram remains mystified.

Mercifully enough, the same predatory American capitalism that generates so much of the world's misery renders its own citizens irrelevant save for their purchasing power, to the entire process and therefore guiltless—in their own minds at least—of the empire's crimes. Such is the unburdened material happiness granted us. It is not hard for Americans to conclude that we are outside of, and therefore irrelevant to global events or changes. We are waaaaay over here on this vast continent with only a media generated holograph to tell us who we are

as a people and as individuals. And it tells us we foremost are citizens of a state which suffers no diversion from profitability. The vast majority of Americans don't even know there is a global reality, except in the sense that the price of gasoline is affected by some swarthy peoples living in a sandy place full of terrorists somewhere else on the globe. We know the price of gas and we know what we are going to rent at the video store on Friday. We know what we will eat at the restaurant on Saturday and when the game is televised on Sunday. Personally, I also know that four blocks from where I sit writing this an old man named Virgil pulled one of his own teeth last week because he cannot afford a dentist. Rather than kick out a little dough Virgil's way, I poured a shot of Woodford Reserve and was grateful I have dental insurance. Being "grateful for what we have" is the time honored American mantra used to mask denial.

Thus we express gratitude for what the corpocracy bestows us, convinced that we are flourishing in those big box store isles of Kansas or in the soft leather booths of the martini bar off Central Park, depending upon one's class. It only took a couple of generations to accept and then enjoy the reduced humanity but increased flood of material stuff as a bona fide life experience. Beat off to internet porn and NFL football while the wife sleeps alone. The state generated hologram IS reality. Reality IS the image, not the flesh. It's true of all of us. I have done it and still do it. I know. And you more than likely do too. Let's not kid ourselves here.

Even as the empire is coming down around us all, very few can possibly believe it. Why should they? Nothing seems to have changed their particular religious or political camps. Literate and thoughtful liberals can still watch Brit-coms and send their kids to Shakespeare camp. Less than literate Fox Network watching worker bee Republicans can still sup on the easy piety of cross and flag... ogle Anne Coulter's bony ass. And Joe Six-pack still scratches his belly in irrelevance as the elites of two political

priesthoods struggle, one to get their mitts deeper into the national treasury, the other to convince us that Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden actually have blood in their veins. The next elections, both parties tell us, will determine the fate of our nation. Really? Regardless of who wins, Joe Six-pack will lose. Virgil will lose. The rest of us will continue being carried along by the media hologram of political lies and profitable illusions that hold it all together. Today I read a news story about how the massacre of Iraqi families in Hidatha “traumatized” our heroes. What do you call a republic that dishes up such shit up to its citizens? What do you call the citizens who mindlessly swallow it? What do you call people who do not march in the streets and start fires in protest of a horrific regime that guts small democracies, slaughters whole families and villages abroad and rigs the ballot boxes at home? What do you call such deniers of the obvious? Of course we can safely call the latter modern Democrats, but that is another story.

In any case, most liberals/leftists/progressives, or whatever the hell one calls such an ineffectual bunch of twits, refuse to even consider open resistance. They exist in the same prison of learned helplessness and planet devouring gluttony as conservatives, but with New Age or pseudo-leftist wallpaper. I have an awful suspicion they will never be brave again in their lives, assuming they ever were.

There seems to be no warning people of the lie they have swallowed, the black thing they have eaten and which now devours them from within. The “American lifestyle,” the “good life,” was such a comfortable lie to swallow. And because the material world trumps the mind and therefore trumps less quantifiable stuff such as freedom and insight quite easily, the black thing is now chewing at the Constitution which, being essentially a property document, was never all that strong to begin with. But it’s all we have. As resident bully of human consciousness, the reptilian brain so easily slashes and chaws through the

limbic one, announcing the supremacy of the fist and the gullet over the higher self. “I can eat these tortilla chips (or perhaps nine dollar a pound organically pastured chicken breast, or whatever it is that socially responsible rich people eat) and watch plasma TV right now. But I would have to go to the library to get *On Walden Pond*, which I’ve never heard of anyway. Take to the streets? What for? Pass me the salsa, honey.” I do this myself almost nightly. There may be no saving me or the world, or mankind in the world from itself. Realization will come the hard way, which is how humanity learns: Too late and at a terrible cost.

Meanwhile, we remain obedient, not disturbing of our comfort, save maybe once a year for a rote “demonstration” downtown for or against something or other, the school bond or the war in Iraq, during which we are flushed with joy at the site of so many of our own kind, but having demonstrated only that such displays are just that—displays; toothless displays in a predatory system that respects only the fang and the claw. The newspapers print a photo next day, we dispute their estimated number of demonstrators, and then we settle back into obedience.

Americans have always been an obedient people, proud to be answerable and obedient to the nation’s law and god, with one reinforcing the other somehow in the national mind. Obedient people do not look up from their assigned cubicles; do not ask if their work is meaningful or contributory to mankind. Never question the way things are. Not in church, nor in daily life. And if the air reeks of a republic rotting from the inside out, you just hold your nose.

Consequently, we are forced to acknowledge the fiction of self governance, though voting power never gets in the way of elite agendas such as tax breaks and war profits (though it may slow them down at times, giving the illusion of voting power to a nation with no memory whatsoever). The pretense reaches its most absurd levels during national elections, where self-governance is put to the test. For instance, no matter who won in the 2004 presidential elections, this country would still have been lead by a member of the Skull and Bones Society. What are the odds of that happening? In a nation

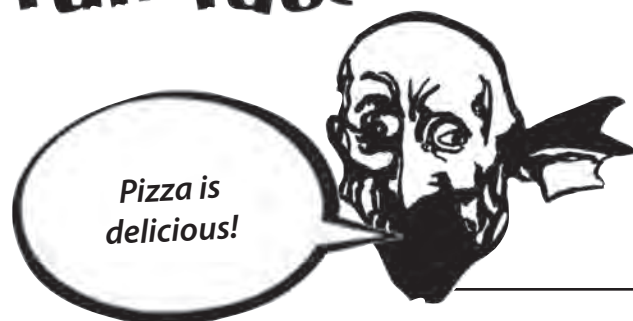
of 295 million people, our choice came down to two members of one of the most exclusive and secretive clubs on the planet. Do you really believe in coincidences like that? I don’t. Nobody does. But we pretend to, because the truth is just too awful for anyone with more than an inch of forehead to contemplate.

Yet, unimaginable as it may seem, there are even worse things afoot to contemplate. Forces such as the emerging Christian militia, the Joshua generation, and a runaway military establishment, to name a few, working fanatically to make our obedience ever more lethal. Yesterday I saw a photo of 25,000 young fundamentalist Americans marching in Philadelphia and San Francisco in support of a theocratic state. I can honestly say I was completely unnerved by it. Those little electrical nerve waves went through my entire body, the kind that happen when you see a car wreck take place. I live around fundamentalist Christians, my whole family is fundamentalist Christian and I know what they are capable of and indeed are planning to do given the chance. They are being led by the same types who formed the old white militia movements in the Seventies and Eighties before Timothy McVeigh rendered their public position untenable. I couldn’t shut up about it to friends. But even the most “informed” ones looked at me like I was crazy, or at the very least, weirdly obsessive. These are not stupid people. They are simply Americans. And because we are friends, we moved on to another topic. This is the sort of strange national disconnect that has so many folks like myself silently screaming inside our heads.

And that is when we must do something something to stop the screaming, something utterly mundane and completely oblivious to break free of the hysterical grimness of it all. Like sit in the sun with a Smokey Big Bite and let Bob Marley “Stir it Up” right there in the parking lot. Grin along with some Haitian dude and watch a white trash mama in ridiculously tight shorts step around you, inches from your face on that curb by the 7-Eleven door, an ankle tattooed, cheap perfumed angel of god sent to remind us that, “Politics ain’t everything Buster, and the world ain’t all bad. Not by a long shot! Now finish chowing down that dog, get off your ass and go do the right thing.”

Yo mama! 

## Fun Fact







ANYTHING but Renee Zellweger. Casting Zellweger as a woman to be fought over is like sticking Amy Winehouse in a D.A.R.E commercial.

Obvious eyesore aside, it looks like Clooney might be trying to get back to the quick, sharp and witty style of slapstick comedy from the Golden Age of Hollywood with *Leatherheads*. And that's cool, but the last time Clooney was in a movie that attempted to hearken back to yesteryear we ended up with *The Good German*. If it was called *The Mediocre German* or even *The Lackluster German* I wouldn't have been so disappointed.

## Nim's Island



*Child falls victim to gay agenda*

## Leatherheads



*"Dude, these helmets suck!"*

old guard football legend and Jim from "The Office" is the new blood brought in to shake things up.

But the upper decker gets left in the toilet known as *Leatherheads* when Renee Zellweger's mangy face shows up as a fledgling journalist that Clooney and Jim from "The Office" fight over. Zellweger always looks like she got shot in the ass with a .22 right before she ate a lemon and got punched in the face by a Truman Capote impersonator. She married Kenny Chesney for crissakes! A grown man named Kenny! A country music star who doesn't believe in sleeves. And she's from Texas and not even Austin. I could get past it if she was from Austin,

but she's not.

How and why the hell could two guys fight over Renee Zellweger? I could see fighting another guy over the last Mountain Dew, leftover pizza, the remote control before "American Idol," jury duty, a set of bald tires, Karl Malden's nose, lavender gum, black licorice, generic absinthe,

Let's see—George Clooney starring and directing in a period piece comedy about the game of football in the 1920s, right before it became legitimate. In other words, a comedy about the death of football. Nice, nice. I'm with you so far. Clooney's had a spotless record in the director's chair, and in general I like his style. Jim from "The Office" is also in it and he's pretty likable too. Clooney's the

Every month, when I sit down to write the trailer reviews for the upcoming issue I always do so under strained circumstances. I've got 2 other jobs, get no sleep and am usually in the process of some form of damage control or bullet dodging. And these reviews are *always* written under the influence of something, ranging from cheap beer and the last of the dog painkillers to paint thinner and pictures of celebrities with no makeup. This issue it's Guinness and coming off a 12-hour *Hell's Kitchen Marathon* with a

side of Superchunk for good measure.

The effects of these generally random and usually puzzling regimens are sometimes imagined, but they mostly just fuel my anger and ulcers. This time I found an unexpected treat while watching what the movie studios have to offer. I found something that looks remotely decent or just silly enough to be enjoyable and may actually get a kick out of if I can achieve the same state of delirium I am currently experiencing.

Olive from *Little Miss Sunshine* plays a little girl who lives on an isolated tropical island with her father. Pa goes missing at sea and some pirates are about to invade. Her hero is a fictitious character out of some adventure novel series so she writes a deluded letter to him for help. Jodie Foster is the neurotic shut-in author of the books who's convinced by the imaginary character from the books to go and help.

I liked this trailer for the same reason I like that video clip of the waterskiing squirrel, the dramatic chipmunk—they all caught me at the right time. Will I go to the theater to see *Nim's Island*? Hell, no! But I won't throw up in my mouth when I overhear someone talking about it. And sometimes that's all you can ask for.

## Prom Night



You throw in a shitty remake of a Cyndi Lauper song that made you cringe to begin with. Some sensitive emo band whose second ball never dropped should do wonders for that. Those high notes will be a real treat.

You toss in some skanky bitches/fledglingactresses who clearly aren't meant for close-ups. Make sure one of them's black, but make sure her boyfriend's black too. Send said hookers to the beauty parlor (beauty parlor? What am I, 58? Who wants a Werther's Original?) talking about how they're going to give up their respective

lady flowers to Billy, Chad or Troy.

Get some shots of the prom pictures. Make sure the creepy goth kids are in there. You know, because the goth kids *always* go to prom—they want so much to fit in. They would never hang out in the graveyard instead! Get drunk on stolen cheap booze from one of their single mothers' closets? Never! Holding some kind of séance or casting some goofy spell on that cheerleader cow while listening to Dead Can Dance? Bah! And while we're at it, let's dismiss the notion of these pasty, misunderstood creatures of the night fucking their boyfriend or girlfriend on a grave while they cut each other and drink their blood after leaving several repugnant hickeys. You can cast that idea right out of your sick, judgmental mind!

But you must not, I repeat *must not* forget the escaped psycho killer stalking these kids in the unrealistically lavish hotel conveniently located upstairs from where the prom is being held. You do that and we might as well add *you* to that body count! Somehow the attractive teenagers get locked in the hotel and get picked off one by one. It's all very nice and next thing you know, you've got the theater manager in a headlock until you get your money back.

## KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Betrayed by Those Who Trained Him



Mind Fuck



Crappy Remake



Evil Genius



Vampires/Wizards as Gay/AIDS Metaphor



Gratuitous Christ Imagery



Nauseatingly Cute Children



Glorification of Law Enforcement Bodies



Enchanted Object



Special Effects Circle Jerk



Washed up Hero Gets Second Chance at Glory



Chick Flick



Simplistic Epiphany



Ordinary Person Pushed Too Far



Rampant Xenophobia



Embattled Loser Overcomes Obstacles



Stockholm Syndrome Romance



Likable Thug

Turn page at the sound of the beep.



## 88 Minutes



**"It's Al Pacino! Run!"**

Oh Jesus. How many times have you seen this one before? Some lunatic serial killer is thrown in jail based on the testimony of a forensic psychiatrist and somehow said wackadoo is playing some drawn out and banal cat and mouse game—from his prison cell! And in an effort to make things less... shitty and boring, that psychiatrist is also a college professor with plenty of eager young students who seem all too willing to get sucked into a less than mediocre script. The kind of script that will only leave you on the edge of your seat if your ass falls asleep.

Al Pacino plays the leathery psychiatrist/professor, and the nutjob sets up some kind of elaborate screw-job, framing Pacino for the murder of some girl he was diddling. Oh, and some disguised voice that might be the killer from *Scream 1, 2, or 3* keeps telling him he's got so many minutes to live. It starts with 88 for some reason, then down to 79, then, well, you get the idea. And the lunatic's guy on the outside might be one of Pacino's students who was on *The OC*.

Yeah, so the whole thing's really trite

and getting through the preview for *88 Minutes* in itself was a chore. It's trite in that way that hanging out with an ex is trite. You know, when you break up and you make that obligatory *I hope we can still be friends* remark. Then they say you don't mean it and the only reason you hang out with them is so you don't look like a dick. And you'd rather be trying to get with someone else instead of hearing about how hard it is for your ex to be alone and how much they miss being with you and *can it get any worse than this?* By the way, if you really want to see yet another faux-suspenseful "real time thriller" after suffering through that crap *Phone Booth* movie and "24," keep in mind this movie isn't exactly new. It saw a limited release in 2006, is available on DVD in Europe and can easily be downloaded on the internet for free.

## The Forbidden Kingdom



**"When do I break my ankle?"**

Jackie Chan and Jet Li—together for the first time! You'll buy the whole seat but you'll only need the edge!!!

Here's how this one's going to go down for me: I'll admit *The Forbidden Kingdom* looks good. The trailer's got Chan in some nappy dreads and Jet Li speaking the best English I've heard come out of his mouth in my life. It's got all the pizzazz of the series of eloquent Asian drama/martial arts movies started by *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon* and none of the subtitles.

I don't mind subtitles, but when 75% of your movie viewing takes place after midnight all that extra reading seriously decreases your chances of making it to the credits. Chan and Li seem to play well off each other in the trailer, blending the former's more slapstick style of martial arts and the latter's "don't you even fucking look at me or I'll straight-up murder you" style.

*The Forbidden Kingdom* throws in what looks like is going to be a shitload of computer-generated effects, ensuring a visual smorgasbord, but there's also a dumb white kid who doesn't know his dick from a skin tag to somehow *culturally ground* (a term some shitbag studio exec in all likelihood used) the movie. Kind of like anti-comic relief. Let's go with *quality* relief, or *ethnic* relief. I've got my own vernacular. I'm guessing the plot will flagellate dust and asbestos and the only two standing will be Chan and Li in a duel to the death.

You take the good, you take the bad, you take 'em both and there you have me recording *The Forbidden Kingdom* on my DVR this time next year. It looks good, but not good enough to get my ass off the couch and out in public to see it. Based on this trailer I'll probably watch it within a week, but *Hollywoodland's* been on my DVR since October and I was vaguely excited when I saw that one was on.

## Forgetting Sarah Marshall



**"I can't believe America isn't tired of me yet."**

Way ahead of you.

## Baby Mama



**"Is it normal for me to poop  
a giant rubber ball?"**

If *Baby Mama* had any other title and starred anyone else other than *SNL* alumni Tina Fey and Amy Poehler I'd have turned off the trailer and thrown a brick through my neighbor's window. And I've got no beef with my neighbor.

Consider the plot: A workaholic professional with broken junk (Fey) wants a baby and her only option is to hire the female equivalent (Poehler) of pretty much every character Adam Sandler's ever played to be the surrogate mother. The two women are apparently opposites and I'm sure along the way they'll discover they've got a lot more in common than they thought they had and blah blah blah blah. It looks like a Judd Apatow movie that underwent hormone therapy and started working for Lifetime.

You know, the more I think about it, the less I like it. Sure, that clip in the trailer, where Fey has the apartment baby-proofed and Poehler can't figure out the lock on the toilet so she squats in the sink, looks like gold. And the black dude from *40 Year-Old Virgin* as the doorman might be funny but I just don't care as much as I should given how big a fan I am of both these ladies. I can see the

disappointment from a mile off.

I guess there's always the hope that this is one of those rare cases where the trailer paints a completely inaccurate picture of what the movie actually is. Maybe Poehler will miscarry and the two of them will become bounty hunters. Maybe the Chunk from *The Goonies* will show up to do the truffle shuffle. Maybe Lorne Michaels will be the sperm donor for the baby. Maybe I should stay home and watch *SNL* reruns instead. Maybe I'll have to show up to the theater loaded as usual. Or maybe I'll just wait for cable.

## Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay



**The BEAST's IT department**

I've only seen a teaser trailer that lasted less than a minute for *Harold and Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay* so I've basically got shit to go on. Harold and Kumar are apparently picking up where they left off at the end of the first one—going to Amsterdam to find that chick that Harold was into and smoke some sweet, sweet cheeba.

Plans get thwarted when their questionable heritage freaks out some uppity Republican and gets the "let's roll" scene from *United 93* recreated without the plane crash. Judging by the title they end up in Guantanamo Bay, and going by the end of the trailer, Neil Patrick Harris is going to rescue them.

Since the makers of this movie didn't strike while the iron was hot and I'm already sick of *Harold and Kumar Go To*

*White Castle*, I'll start asking around the office if someone downloaded it already. I'm sure Neil Patrick Harris will get loaded on ecstasy again, but he'll probably have a carload of naked guys in it this time.

## Street Kings



**"We've apprehended another negro, sir."**

Have you ever wondered what *Training Day* would've been like if Denzel Washington's character was white? Neither have I, but the very question that never entered your mind for a second is about to be answered!

The trailer for *Street Kings* gives us a mish-mash of LA gang culture featuring really tough cops (how do I know they're tough? Because Keanu Reeves is one of them, motherfucker! And he moves and jumps over a refrigerator to take down a dude!) taking on some really bad gang members (how do I know they're bad? Because they're played by rappers and they've got facial tattoos, motherfucker!) by any muthafuckin' means necessary, bitch!

Oooh. Listen to me. This trailer for *Street Kings* is infectious!

If that's not enough street cred for you, Forrest Whitaker, his lazy eye, the guy that plays *House*, Common, *The Game*, and Cedric The Not So Much of an Entertainer also star. And it's directed by the guy who wrote *Training Day*. Oh wait, I see why this movie looks so much like *Training Day*. Duh. I can only presume there's some kind of a plot if *House* is in it.







## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

### United Way Campaign -- Evil Questions

You know those billboards, "Which one will be abused?" "Who will live in poverty?" "Who will be neglected?"

Where can we vote, and when will they announce the winners?

Johnn D. Craik

*Dear Johnn,  
That all depends on the superdelegates.*

## TARDBALL

As someone living in Pittsburgh and hating it, I can actually see this kind of meeting taking place [Ian Murphy, "Hardballin' with Chris Matthews," issue 124]... only with an actual local, not Chris Matthews in disguise... Will

*Dear Will,  
But how would you know? HOW WOULD YOU KNOW, WILL?*

## FALSE DICHOTOMY

So, are all the editors actually angry gay men or potential serial killers? The "women's history" bit was a little much you stupid pricks.

Ulrike

*Dear Ulrike,  
Why force us to choose?*

## DULLULATIONS

..."from HERE on out...the Shrub...MAY SHOULD BE KNOWN AS SCRUB'...i LEAVE IT TO YOUR LIT'URARY device's to bring back 'Molly's Model'...updated, lookin' for a place to ...Rock and Roll!  
I met her and shared thoughts...1st in the

young years of the 70' as a G.I., stuck-down-in-'Ft.Hood at the end of my X2 year in the last of the "Better Dead than Red"...wars of the 20th century AD...I will not belabor that point...mostly because I I was a GI...did that & all that...but "that & all that just don't desire a 'fuck and Fig)...her Writing make her both timely and pointedly', UP THERE IN COMMUNITY with...alive and still 'throwing SOCIAL Thought...down the "by-ways...in this...a 'Country I no longer know...Ok...I have lost IT to 57' Chevy Nomads...(my dream-wheels), up for sale @ 5 thousand american...ohh my...!

lg...send unedit

*Dear lg,  
Really, why send anything at all?*

## UNINTENDED CON[sic]QUENCES

Your article was WONDERFUL! I'd begun to think that this country only had unquestioning, mindless little SHEEP! You've restored a sense of hope in me. THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!  
Steve

*Dear Steve,  
Why do e-mails like this seem so depressing?*

## INQUI[sic]IVE

How does one become a contributor to the Beast?  
Joseph Marhee

*Dear Joseph,  
One contributes.*

## GREAT EXPECTORATIONS

Haven't even finished reading it yet [Ian Murphy, "Let There be Retards," issue 117]. Just getting over this flu/cold that has filled everyone's lungs with crud, and which makes every third breath end in a cough. Why tell you this? Because you just can't slip captions under pictures like that first one, with

the velociraptor and "Ken Ham, at right." I am torn now between ignoring it for a few days, or showing it to my humor-handicapped wife, and again collapsing (and I mean that literally) in a prodigious coughing fit from the laughter this one caption causes... Is it subtle, or is it a bludgeon? BTFOOM, but I will steal it, for future use, and always with attribution.  
Keep it up.  
...and take that anyway you'd like.  
-k-

*Dear K,  
Caption this! Us kicking the crap out of your feeble, phlegmatic frame for using a stupid acronym like BTFOOM. Is it really that hard for you to just type "beats the fuck out of me?" Did you really have to force us to look this stupidity up at urbandictionary.com? Well, maybe we should be so uptight. AA, INL TEL WW&D IWADTS. Don't understand? Too fucking bad.*

## THE ANSWER

Having waded all the way through this dreadfully overwritten piece [Allan Uthman, "Immune to Reality," issue 124] I have the answer.  
It's short.  
Without telecom immunity, the American public will soon learn that Bush started illegally spying on American citizens BEFORE 9/11. That's it.  
AntiSpin

*Dear AntiSpin,  
Whoah, that would be a real mind-blower, huh? It's not as though that story has ever been reported before—like, say, in the Washington Post on October 15, 2007, or Bloomberg News on June 30, 2006—because knowledge like that would, like, cause a revolution or something. Right? Bye now.*

## DAMAGE INCORPORATED

### The Tip of the Corporate Culpability Iceberg

Somehow Democrats stumbled onto the

biggest issue since Edison's light bulb. I think they sense, as the author implies, that the strangely stubborn resistance by the Bush Reich and their Congressional gauleiters simply does not match the perceived importance of the immunity section:

"There's more than pedestrian corruption at work here."

And much more than federal corruption and/or illegal acts, too.

Democrats somehow, against all previous records of past performance, have correctly sensed that they are onto something much bigger than what originally bargained for. And, for once, they are right. Now, will they stupidly cave or will they hang onto to this and ride it out no matter what like they should?

What they have stumbled onto is corporate spying completely separate from that associated with government complicity. The NSA merely utilized a system already in existence. What corporation would build separate rooms and electronic systems merely in anticipation of possible government (illegal) need? No, what we have here is corporate spying on U.S. citizens on a massive and illegal scale (there are a variety of privacy laws violated, even though a private entity cannot violate constitutional rights against unwarranted search and seizure).

The feds can be nailed for acquiring information they shouldn't have w/o probable cause, so the immunity does not protect them. This opens the Pandora Box of corporations acting as private tyrants, and where this could lead, no one knows. Repubs are nothing more than corporate agents. They are merely following orders like good lackeys do, and good Germans did.

PS Dems should never tire of asking surveillance goosesteppers to name one instance where a terrorist avoided detection because FISA refused to issue a warrant. Failures before 9/11 were due to stupidity and complicity, never FISA.

It wouldn't hurt to point out that Repukes are putting the telecom bottom line ahead of citizen safety, AGAIN as always, since that is the ONLY reason Bush is threatening Veto. SnoopDopeyDogg

Dear Snoop,

*"InfraGard is an information sharing and analysis effort serving the interests and combining the knowledge base of a wide range of members. At its most basic level, InfraGard is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the private sector. InfraGard is an association of businesses, academic institutions, state and local law enforcement agencies, and other participants dedicated to sharing information and intelligence to prevent hostile acts against the United States. InfraGard Chapters are geographically linked with FBI Field Office territories."* -infragard.net

*Corporations spying on Americans? Don't be silly.*

## REACH OUT AND TAP SOMEONE

The short story is, the telecom companies, who are big political donors across the spectrum, have realized that they've opened themselves to massive liability, and are putting pressure on the administration to fix things.

Working backwards (since the facts are hidden behind state secrets walls for now), we can put together a decent picture. In 2003, the NSA paid Telecom companies to install special rooms, as detailed in the case of AT&T by Mark Klein's documents. These rooms probably scan the "headers" (by which I mean destination info - receiving phone number, or destination isp, or what have you) of all the data.

This information, which may not exactly be wiretapping (because they're not listening to the conversation/reading the email itself, just where it's going), is then used by the NSA or other agency to identify candidates for FISA warrants. This would explain the surge in FISA applications in 2003. In 2007, realizing that this was at best questionably legal stuff, the Administration got nervous and had the Protect America Act passed, explicitly allowing that behavior on nothing more than the AG's authorization.

However, the PAA has expired now, so they can't continue on the AG's sole authorization (or at least the Telecos aren't buying), so the new push is to make the PAA's amendments to FISA permanent. Oh, and throw Telecom immunity in there as well.

Oregon 2L

Dear Oregon 2L,

*No, not "throw it in;" more like "throw a screaming fit if anyone takes it out." It's not just pressure from the telecom lobby—immunity is obviously very important to the administration itself, as well as the Republican Party. But hey, thanks for the rudimentary summary of the story so far, which we'd have to be total idiots not to know before writing anything about it. You've been a real help.*

## REALITY IS FOR SISSIES

### Get some balls America ...

Allan, something astonishing happened the other day in America!

Your country forgot, or chose to ignore, the overwhelming need for a meticulous and truly transparent high-level investigation into the Bush administration's obvious master-minding of nine eleven.

Do you think Americans have the balls for that? They look pretty tough pushing Iraqi civilians around.

Okay, that's a little brash. Americans have demonstrated remarkable sacrifice and tenacity in defending our world from the true terrors of radical fascism. The entire free world

is indebted to America, no argument.

As a nation, you are self-assured and extremely capable. So, why should anyone believe Mr. and Mrs. America would collapse like frightened children in the face of some serious introspection?

Why don't the citizens of your powerful and fascinating country demand the truth about nine eleven? Why don't they expose the inconceivable greed of Dick Cheney and prosecute the entire Bush administration like the murderous criminals they are?

I just don't get it!

Are the American news media really so pathetic as to actually believe the official nine eleven commission report? Are devoted Republicans really so mindless as to swallow the insipid banality of these fear-mongering regurgitants?

I really hope not!

But if they are, I have another question. What the hell is wrong with you people? Get some balls, look in the fucking mirror, and put at least a shred of dignity back into your national government.

A public lynching of Dick and George would do nicely!

Cobman

Dear Cobman,

*The Bush administration couldn't mastermind a tee-ball game successfully. Fuckhead.*

## WHAT WE SAID

Andrea Mitchell let slip that a journalist was being wiretapped. What if many journalists were being wiretapped? Would we know if wire tapping was used against the Democrats in the 2004 races? Did Carl Rove get to use the wire tapping apparatus, he was after all granted deep security clearance. And finally, what the Democrats in Congress really want know, were they wire tapped, are they being wire tapped to this very day in their day to day operations?

These questions must be answered. Even the yellow belly Dems need to know exactly what information Bush has on 'em. mmckinl

Dear mmckinl,

*We have a feeling they've already seen that evidence, delivered to them each in a blank envelope with a note that read, "you don't want to find out what will happen if you fuck with us." Looks like Spitzer found out.*

## BONKER BUSTER

Put that in your pipe and smoke it. I did, but I called it genocide.

I did that too, called it genocide. This week I spoke on and off the record Monday and Tuesday down at the county offices. I told my public officials marijuana prohibition is genocide to my people based on religious



discrimination. I gave them personal examples of business and police abuses I have suffered over the issue BECAUSE of my race and religion. The hearing gets broadcasted locally on TV.

ATT and COMCAST have a business relationship with me. I knew COMCAST was cooperating with the terrorism Bush was laying on the people. This is one reason I call them so much to complain about it.

Naturally I called my phone company, ATT, to complain when someone attempted to assist my suicide by screwing around with my phone service. Both of these companies have a collection of recorded phone messages to them from me complaining about instances of the government spying on me. I also post about them here so the dates are in the public record. Those messages can be, or perhaps already have been, subpoenaed.

So their crime isn't just eaves dropping with me, but someone is actively interfering in my free speech to the point of torture and genocide. My statements about it are recorded, destroying them would be another crime.

I feel like Anne Frank. You know how you are being treated is wrong, but what can you do? Hide and hope they don't catch you.

Lauren

*Dear Lauren,*  
We find it troubling how often our work seems to draw the interest of seriously crazy people, but not troubling to the point of torture and genocide. Do you understand what the word "genocide" actually means? Anne Frank did. So, just to fill you in: Anne Frank was hiding from real people who really would have killed her; you are just another paranoid maniac, hallucinating powerful enemies to stave off the terrible truth of your total insignificance. Can we try some of your pot?

## CROOKY MONSTER

It is essential to keep immunity off the table. It is part of the evidence trail that might put impeachment back on the table. I am, though, suspicious as to the source and motive of the spine that the House suddenly acquired when they stood up and offered up their "Protect America" bill absent the "protect the telecoms and W's ass" version. It is no longer possible to look at a positive event without suspecting a crooky somewhere lurking.

Jeanne

*Dear Jeanne,*  
Your suspicion impresses us. While there can be no doubt that the House majority leadership doesn't give a crap about our rights, it's probable that their pollsters told them telecom immunity is a good wedge issue,

*or their lawyers told them this is how to drag out a major legal embarrassment for the GOP in an election year. No doubt they will cave in short order come December.*

## FOLLOWING ORDERS

This issue makes no sense and stamps the democrats, the house anyway, as weak on security.

Why on earth would anyone in their right mind want to hold a company liable for agreeing to work with the government on security issues. Congress should be held liable - they all are the government.

The senate seemed to see the light. Pelosi is playing politics - and not very smart. Now she wakes up and it's on this issue?? carbon-based

*Dear Carbon-based,*  
Ah yes, we were waiting for this gem—congress is responsible for the secret actions of the president, because they are all The Government. You know, come to think of it, shouldn't the New York State legislature all be arrested for soliciting prostitutes? Or, barring that, being prostitutes?

## BOY WHO CIRED WOLFOWITZ

To the Editors,


Your defamation of one Jeff Chism in the last issue of your magazine constitutes libel. Period.

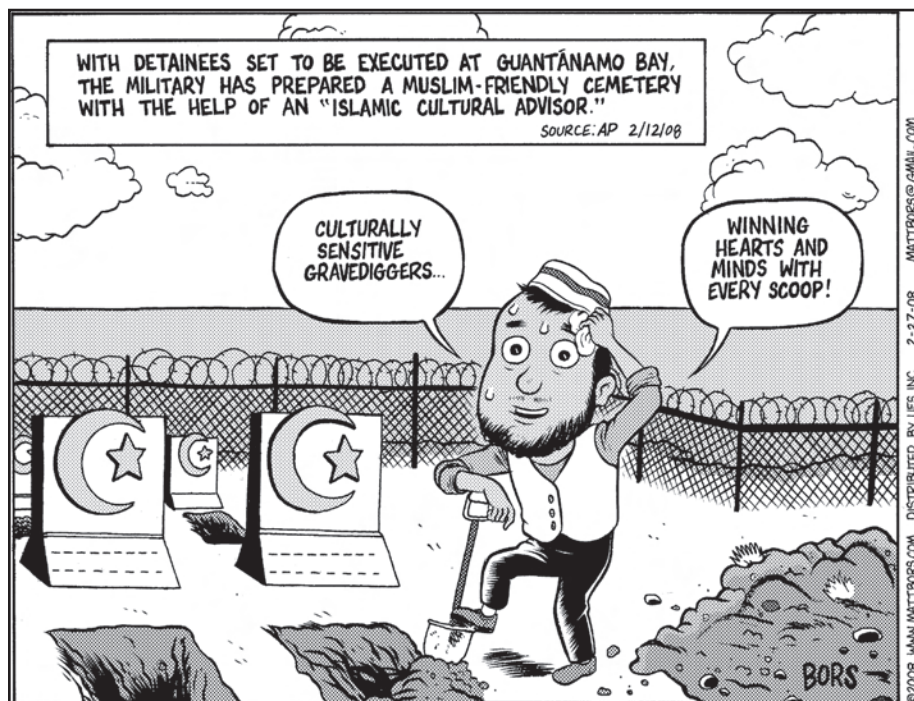
I have contacted Mr. Chism personally to make sure my Jewish eyes were not deceiving me in what I read. He is a religious man and would never denigrate the proud Jewish tradition and peoples. Accepting an anti-Semitic e-mail and putting a fake address on it is not only unethical but it is revolting and quite illegal.

I have not contacted the Anti-Defamation League—yet. But if you do not print a retraction and an apology for smearing the Jewish race and an innocent man, I will be forced to do so.

Free speech has its boundaries, Sirs. And you have crossed the line.

Good day,  
Noah Goldman

*Dear Noah,*  
We didn't "fake" Chism's e-mail, although it's possible someone else did—someone who hates Jeff Chism for some reason. Maybe they paid sticker price for their Maxima. But this has really got to be the flimsiest pretext yet for calling us antisemitic. Keep flinging those meshuga accusations, Noah, because we have a feeling that eventually, if everyone in America is labeled a Nazi every time they eat a ham and swiss sandwich for a few more years, the spell will break, and people will feel free to speak their minds about Israel. You're doing God's work, ironically enough. But please, Noah, do not spare us the attention of the Anti-Defamation League. No retraction, so—you promised! 



# BEAST-O-SCOPES

## Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

You know what Hillary Clinton does to relax, Aries? Organize her closets. Seriously. You're voting for a maniac, Aries.

## Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

The reason you find yourself yearning for your spouse's inferior friend is simple unavailability, Taurus. There's nothing quite as lackluster as that we already possess.

## Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

You're wrong to call the President a dictator, Gemini. It's really more of a monarchical situation.

## Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

What motivated Elliot Spitzer to risk his career and reputation for high priced hookers? I've psychically linked with him, Cancer, and I have the answer: He was horny.

## Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

I know you think you're brightening your friends, family members, associates, and brief acquaintances by forwarding them every stupid joke, urban legend, "inspirational" story, and cute cat photo you come across in your routine and pointless perusals of the internet, Leo, but you're actually a minor burden to them all.



By Andrew Gullerstein

## Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Virgo, I'm disappointed in your performance as headline editor at a major tabloid. I mean, "Ho No?" Come on, Virgo. How about "Elliot Phone Ho?" I mean, it's funny, and it refers to a primary element of the case against him. You could even work E.T. into the cover graphic. "Ho No?" You're a hack, Virgo.

## Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Stop shaving your head, Libra. We all know you're bald, but now you look like a salamander.

## Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

So let me get this straight, Scorpio: You see a beautiful, classy woman, have a stimulating conversation with her, and you want to hump her shoes? I mean, whatever floats your boat, but you have

to admit that is pretty weird.

## Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

"In the end, Spitzer's own actions may have taken himself down." That's what a reporter just said on CNN, Sagittarius. "May have?" The moral of the story is that you rise in your profession when you master the art of never saying anything concrete.

## Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Did you know they dye the Chicago river green for St. Patrick's Day, Capricorn? Well, they do. Most of the fish are against it, but hey, if they can't organize a decent lobby, they have no right to complain.

## Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

This subprime mortgage crisis is pretty rough, Aquarius, but don't you worry: The banks will be fine. Our benevolent government is bailing them out, so they'll manage to keep their heads above water. And hey, a lot of people would love to live in such a roomy refrigerator box. Get a job, Aquarius.

## Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

It's not that he doesn't think it's sexy to lick food off of you, Pisces. You just shouldn't have used Vegemite. Australians are weird, Pisces.

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