

THE

BEAST



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Tim Russert:
Better Than Jesus?

Separated at birth?



**Pockmarked planet
Mercury...**

**...and pockmarked star
Edward James Olmos?**



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Always Prepared For Interviews
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Joe Bageant, Allison Kilkenny,
Russ Wellen, Eric Lingenfelter

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Matt Bors, Nicholas Gurewitch,
Brian McFadden,

Loves His Dad
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From the Ditch of a Blue Collar Guy from South Buffalo

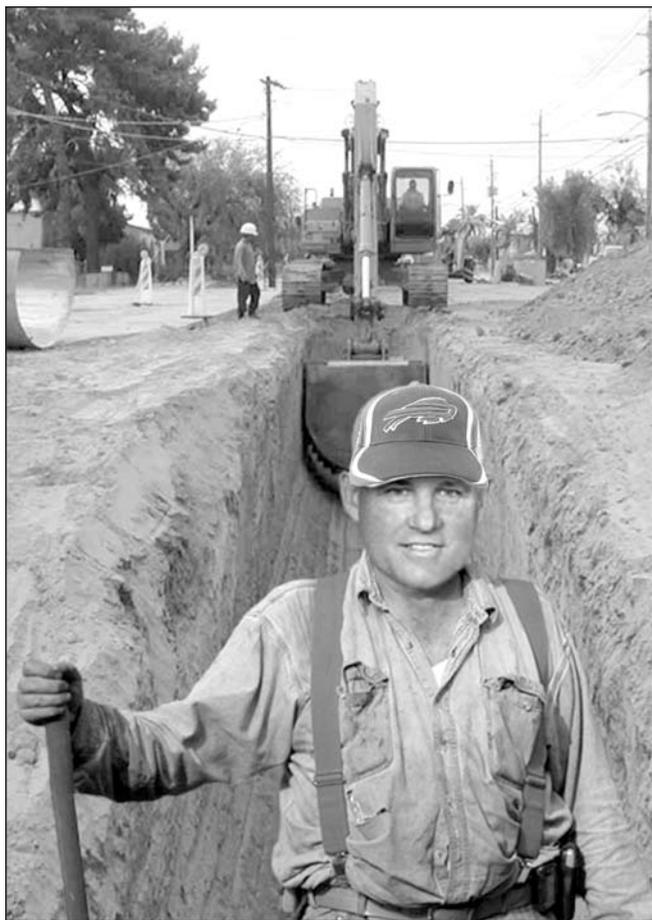
Tim Russert was like a father to me: He was Irish, raised in South Buffalo, I never saw him and I got no money when he died. Most people from Buffalo thought of Tim that way. He was a shining red-faced beacon for us all. He was an example of what a blue collar guy from Buffalo can accomplish—and without smoking crack or playing funk bass! He never once used his lowly upbringing as an excuse. He lived large, and knowing from the geographic shit-hole he was born into, he must have dreamt even larger.

What people outside of Buffalo don't understand is how hard it is to make something of yourself when you are from Buffalo. It's nearly impossible. For example, over 80% of Buffalonians die before they are ever conceived! But that's not the real tragedy. The real tragedy is that of the 20% who make it, almost all of them will succumb to suicidal wings. It's a cry for help. It's the poverty that makes us that way.

The typical Buffalo home is made of wood and the lawns of dirt. Now, I don't mean that as a metaphor. I mean actual dirt. Sure, there's grass, but under that grass is dirt. And there's nothing poorer than dirt. Is it any wonder that the MSM bigwigs are so amazed that a blue collar guy from Buffalo was able to overcome such obstacles?

Well, I gotta get back to the grind. This ditch's gotta be a hundred yards long by noon, or I'll get fired and then fed to a pack of wolverines—which is a Buffalo tradition.

It's no wonder Tim Russert worked so hard!



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THIS ISSUE'S AIR ECONOMIST

"Diversify your portfolio!"

Media Manners

IS MEDIA MATTERS FOR AMERICA SUFFERING FROM MISSION CREEP?

BY ALLAN UTHMAN

David Brock is an interesting character. He started out his career in “journalism” in the late ‘80s as a typical hateful conservative closet homosexual, eventually penning widely disseminated, dishonest hit pieces on Anita Hill and the Clintons for right wing rags like *Insight* and *The American Spectator*. He was a key figure in the Arkansas project, dredging up any smear he could to dirty up the Clintons at the behest of legendary scumbag Richard Mellon Scaife, including Troopergate and Paula Jones.

But by 1997, Brock had undergone a change of heart, brought on in part, as he admits in his fascinating book, *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*, by his growing acceptance of his own homosexuality. Brock became a man reborn, trying to redeem himself by confessing to and attempting to undo the media crimes the right wing perpetrates to this day. It’s in that spirit that, in 2004, Brock founded Media Matters for America, “a web-based, not-for-profit, progressive research and information center dedicated to comprehensively monitoring, analyzing, and correcting

conservative misinformation in the U.S. media.” It’s the right Brock attacks these days, but with considerably more rigorous journalistic practices than he once employed. But the attack dog instinct is still strong in Brock, and sometimes it gets the best of him.

Here’s the thing: I love Media Matters, for the most part. They do the soul-crushing work of plowing through countless hours and column inches of hopelessly bad political analysis, just so some lazybones like me can Google some ludicrous statement we remember hearing on Glenn

MSNBC’s Chris Matthews and his pet dinosaur show Hillary Clinton her place as a woman



Beck or Rush Limbaugh, and find the Media Matters page documenting and meticulously refuting whatever idiocy the shoutingheads are promoting. They provide concise, distilled outrage-capsules for the mainstream media to attack itself with on slow news days. And they're relentless: Years after the "Al Gore says he invented the internet" distortion made its debut, Media Matters *still* smacks it down pretty much every time someone says it. They're clearly partisan, and surely seemed to be working extra hard on Hillary Clinton's behalf during the primaries (Hillary spoke last year of "institutions that I helped to

start and support like Media Matters and Center for American Progress."), but they do a reliable, credible job of countering misinformation, which is obvious by the way they've been consistently demonized by the likes of O'Reilly and Hannity, and they sprang up to fill a tangible, longstanding need to counter the sadly effective GOP tactic of simply lying about their opponents.

But all of this is why I find it bothersome when they waste time and effort pitching hissyfits about this or that media figure's vulgar jokes or indecorous turns of phrase.

I don't know when Media Matters started doing this exactly, but the trend has grown significantly over the last couple of years.

There are basically two types of posts at MMFA: The usual "so and so said such and such, which is bullshit" posts, and then the "so-and-so said something mean" posts. You can tell the difference between these types of posts easily: If they're countering a provably false claim, they cite evidence. But if they just give you the sound bite, what they're essentially saying is, "Can you believe this dick said this?"

It's easy to see the appeal of going in this direction. Some of these "offensive" statements are ones you've heard about: Bill Bennet's "abort black babies" comment, Don Imus's career-killing "nappy-headed hoers," David Shuster's "pimping Chelsea" remark, which earned him a suspension from MSNBC. And then there's Chris Matthews. Matthews, an old Irish geezer who is completely hopeless on gender issues, pretty much can't get through an episode of *Hardball* without saying something that women can elect to be offended by, if they're looking for it, and Media Matters is definitely looking for it. Matthews was forced (judging by his demeanor) to apologize on air for a remark about Clinton, that "[T]he reason she may be a front-runner is her husband messed around."

Every time one of these controversies catches on, and the targeted pundit either is fired, suspended, or submits in the form of an apology, Media Matters grows in stature, and their attention strikes more fear into the hearts of the press. It's a sad irony that it's off-color language, not factual errors, that actually have the more career-threatening potential. But the people they're knocking off aren't Republicans. Because the only people who really give a damn what Media Matters thinks about their insensitivities are Democrats and liberals. The real shitheads only feel empowered. Media Matters has been going at the liars on Fox News for years, but have yet to do anything but provide them with another target for their misplaced aggression. MSNBC, on the other hand, have capitulated to them at every turn. Is that progress, really? Certainly, Chris Matthews has had an axe to grind against the Clintons for years, and he's said some pretty groan-inducing things about

THE BEAST PAGE 5

Appalling Racist Anachronism

Name: The Sock Obama™

Turn-ons: Pickaninnies, mummies, Sambos, tragic mulattoes, magical negroes, Jemimas, Jim Crows, white Utahans.

Turn-offs: Touchy Negroes, liberal traitors, demonstrative pastors, that Hillary Clinton nutcracker.

How I got to be The BEAST Page 5

Appalling Racist Anachronism: I was born and raised in the United States of America. I proudly stand 16" tall and I'm made with high quality knit materials. Now, my macaca-like countenance has upset some people, much to my surprise, but I really think people need to settle down. I mean, I'm the homespun craft item that transcends race! My creators assure that they "simply made a casual and affectionate observation one night, and a charming association between a candidate and a toy we had when we were little." Nothing racist about that! Sure, it's kind of awkward that I'm a variation of something called a "sock monkey," but hey, come on, let's be post-racial about this. I mean, it's not like I have a tail or anything. Oh wait, shit, I totally do have a tail! Goddamn, that's motherfucking racist!

Future Plans: Oh, I'm just the first in a long procession of alarming reminders over the next few months that America hasn't changed quite as much as you thought. In fact I'm not the first: In May, a bar owner in Georgia was selling "Obama '08" T-shirts featuring Curious George eating a banana. Hah! Enjoy general election season, suh!

How I'd Like to be Remembered: As a harbinger of a big change in race relations—back to the days when blacks were afraid to vote.



Hillary. But the Republican pundits have said completely insane things—about her being a murderer, a lesbian, and worse. Only Matthews actually has to give a crap that he's offended Media Matters, while the others wear it as a badge of honor.

Lately, especially, Media Matters has really been jumping the shark on this tactic. Their last post on Matthews, for instance, is laughable, blasting him for calling women voters “low-hanging fruit.” “Low-hanging fruit” is now a sexist slur? No. No it isn't. It's a metaphor, a metaphor for the most easily pickings of a group. Obama can win the white female vote, Matthews asserts, by simply highlighting the fact that he is pro-choice and McCain is not. And he's probably right. Hence “low-hanging fruit.” I'm hard-pressed to imagine, really, what kind of insult is perceived here, unless it's the implication—undeniably true—that reproductive rights are important to most women. But Media Matters finds this statement so offensive that they put it up without comment, as if its outrageousness is self-evident, and yes, many of their readers reacted predictably, excoriating Matthews' supposed misogyny without ever bothering to articulate it.

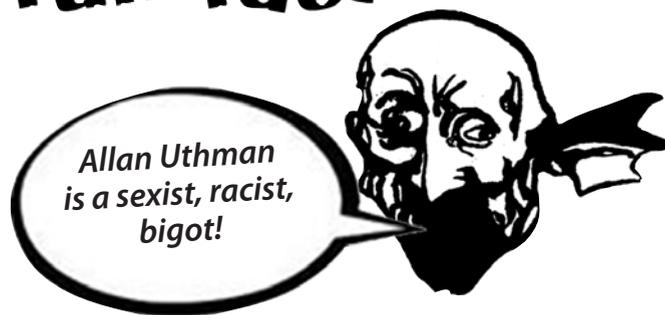
Another example is a post quoting Andrea Mitchell describing southwest Virginia as “real redneck, sort of, bordering on Appalachia country.” Seriously, you're

supposed to be offended by that. There's no mistake of fact there; it really is redneck country. So why did Media Matters flag Mitchell's comment? Because it offended their eminently offendable sensibilities. And then, four days later, “NBC's Mitchell apologizes for “redneck” comments.” Score one for the good guys?

Every time they do this—go after a media figure for making an utterance which falls beyond their prescribed limits on “colorful” speech—Media Matters loses a little more credibility as an organization devoted to *accuracy* in media reports. Because whether someone speaks or writes with social sensitivity or not, it is the relative *accuracy* of those statements Media Matters should be scrutinizing, not their politeness. Each time liberals pitch a misguided shit-fit over a misinterpreted

metaphor, or a euphemism like “redneck” that everyone outside of a TV studio uses with comfort and regularity, they further alienate the “regular voters” they need to win. The fact is that most people, and not just working-class whites, but really almost everybody, including me—think that excessive, preening PC language policing is asinine, uptight, joyless bullshit, and they recoil instinctively from it, and its progenitors. If even a robotic corporate tool like Andrea Mitchell isn't cautious enough for you, then who the hell is? What we need in the media isn't more guarded, neutral language; it's more accuracy in factual statements. Media Matters used to be about that, and indeed, they still are, primarily. But it's pretty damn hard to take them seriously when they've declared war on naughty words. **BEAST**

Fun Fact



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THE 9/11 MEMORIAL IN PENNSYLVANIA LOOKS LIKE AN ISLAMIC CRESCENT!

BLOG ATTACK!

LINK!

POST!

SHE GOT DUNKIN' DONUTS TO PULL AN AD FEATURING WELL KNOWN ISLAMOFASCIST RACHAEL RAY.

PALESTINIAN SCARF MAKES SUICIDE BOMBING LOOK ALL THAT MORE FASHIONABLE!

ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE INFLUENCED FROM THE BEYOND BY JIHADISTS IN HELL.

I'M GOING TO GET RACHAEL TO COOK ME SOME STEAMED NAPA ROLLS WITH JEW CHILD SAUCE!

9/11 HIJACKERS

BUT THANKFULLY, MICHELLE IS ON THE JOB, PROTECTING US FROM THE DEMONIC ISLAMIC MENACE.

THEIR POWERS ARE STRONGEST DURING THE CRESCENT MOON!

NEXT: FINGERNAIL CLIPPINGS. ARE THEY MUSLIM?

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It's all about the beans.

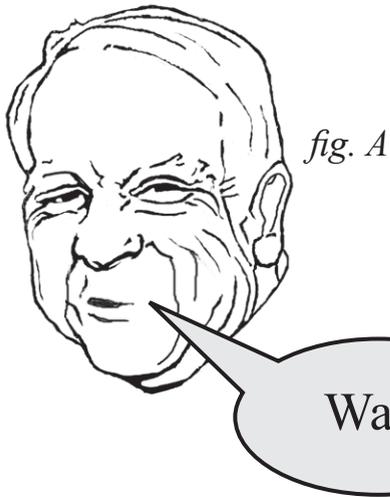


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John McCain's Guide to Physical Fitness

1) Let's start with a simple warm up



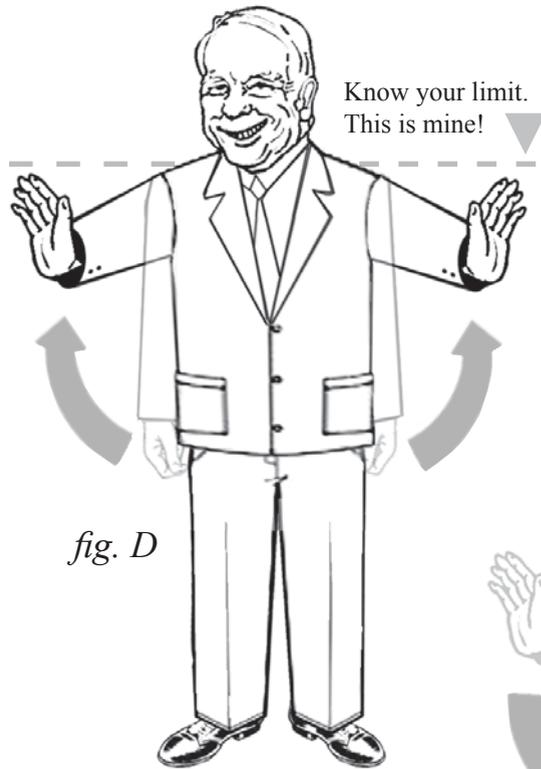
First, pucker your lips as if you were kissing a lobbyist (*fig. A*). Then, curl the corners of your mouth upward (*fig. B*). Experts call this "smiling." Repeat the steps until you feel the burn!

Those in better physical condition may want to add a cardiovascular element to this warm up by talking with a subtle lateral lisp.

I like to say the name of my favorite town: Warshington. Pronounce the "r" for maximum benefit.

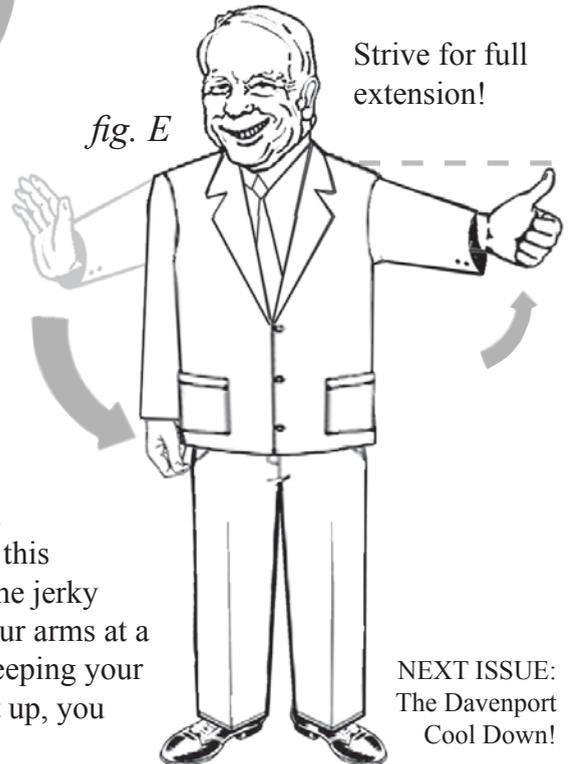
2) Hanoi Hands

Start with your arms in the downward position. Raise both hands up rapidly in one jerky, painful-looking motion of the hips, shoulders and elbows (*fig C*). The jerkier the better!



4) Never Surrender

Now, lower your right arm to your side and extend your left thumb upward. This works your vitreous humors as well as sending a clear message: The thumbs-up means "fuck you" in the Muslim world.



3) My Friends

Get ready to blast your delts and quiet your dissatisfied base with this maneuver (*fig D*). Using the same jerky motion from exercise 2, raise your arms at a 45 degree angle to your torso, keeping your palms outward as if to say "Shut up, you stupid bastards!"

NEXT ISSUE:
The Davenport
Cool Down!

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Pen or Sword

RETIRED NAVY COMMANDER KEN HUBER ON WHICH KICKS MORE ASS

BY RUSS WELLEN

Like Scott McClellan, it's more common for military men to speak out after they've retired. Most recently, General Ricardo Sanchez, who was commander of coalition forces in Iraq from June 2003 to June 2004 – the Abu Ghraib glory years -- said, Iraq was a "nightmare with no end in sight," thanks to "incompetent strategic leadership within our national leaders."

What's so incompetent about the pep talk related by Sanchez in his book, "Wiser in Battle," that Bush gave his advisors? "Stay the course!" Bush exhorted. "Kill them! Be confident! Prevail!"

But, unlike McClellan, whose book reached the top of the bestseller lists, speaking out can lead to a dead end for a military commander. That's not only true for those still on active duty, but for those retired, to whom such an act can put a chill on their prospects for work in the defense industry.

Especially if they make a "career" of it – like former naval commander Jeff Huber, whose columns criticizing the military and the administration's foreign policy actually run on Military.com's op-ed page, the Passdown. (As well as on his blog, Pen and Sword.)

While in the Navy, Huber was operations officer of Carrier Air Wing Eight and USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), and commanding officer of Airborne Early Warning Squadron 124. In his columns, not only doesn't he pussyfoot around, he's great fun to read.

Written in the same trenchant tone, Huber's first novel, *Bathtub Admirals*, has just been published by Kunati. Publishers Weekly calls it a "profane parody."

You can be forgiven for wondering why you should read a military spoof that's

set during peacetime instead of the Afghanistan or Iraq war. In fact, it reveals patterns of behavior that have been festering in the military for decades, but have now hardened. Such as rewarding officers who either place their ambition above their commands or, incompetent, rely on others to pull them out of fixes while they keep their focus on advancing their careers. *Bathtub Admirals* is filled with self-serving characters that we identify with ease, like Admiral Fix Felon and Senator Ex-Prisoner-of-War, and those we can't, like Senator Tailhook (Kay



Huber: A strange looking dude

Bailey Hutchison?).

Not only does Huber have a sure ear for military-speak, he takes great pains to explain terminology, such as how the counterintuitive deck system on a naval ship work. Meanwhile, the wit on display in his columns is allowed to run riot in his book.

Pitch *Bathtub Admirals* to prospective readers as if you

were trying to interest an agent in representing you.

In the background we see the bizarre world version of historic events: The Cold War, the Tailhook scandal and so on. In some of the promo material I describe the book as a "satire of America's rise to global dominance," and at one level it illustrates how the military-centric U.S. policies led to the mess we're in now, although I cut the book off on the week before 9/11.

Hopefully I portrayed more or less universal personalities and situations. If I worked things right, people who were in the Navy at the time I was will think they know who most of the characters are really supposed to be and they will be wrong.

I worked on the book for quite a long time, and had hoped it would be thought of as the *Catch-22* of its generation. It's mostly really funny and pretty sad in some parts, and a whole lot easier to read than *Catch-22*. If it sells enough copies, or gets picked up by television or the movies, I'll finish the sequel that I now call *2020*. *2020* would be the *1984* of its generation.

But I won't have time to write it before the year 2020 if I don't make some money on *Admirals* because I'll have to take a full-time service job at 7-11 or Burger King to pay some bills. In all modesty, I think that would be a tragic waste of my talents, so I ask all your readers to please, please, please buy a copy of *Bathtub Admirals* at Amazon or at any other online or brick and mortar bookseller.

How's that for marketing? Pretty pathetic, huh?

No writer can be too proud to beg these days.

Hey, at least I haven't stooped to kissing Don Imus's wrinkled old behind yet. Granted, he hasn't asked me to, and kissing Don's keister doesn't do for you

what it used to now that he's on podcast or wherever he went off to. So maybe he hasn't asked me to kiss his bottom yet because he's not such a big deal anymore and he's afraid I'll turn him down. You think?

The initial caps in Jack Hogan's name are the same as yours. Were The Great Big Backfire Raid and The Almost Great Big Train Wreck real incidents and did you play a role in them?

I've noticed over the years that a lot of people use my initials without my express written permission. There doesn't seem to be anything I can do about it. Jack Hogan was the name of the actor who played Private Kirby on the '60s television series "Combat" starring Vic Morrow as Sergeant Saunders and Rick Jason as Lieutenant Hanley. People who worked for me would likely tell you I was far more like Admiral Wild Bill Hitchcock (who I'd really like to play in the movie) than Jack Hogan.

The characters in my book give a lot of the major episodes in their lives names that sound like book or movie titles, which is their way of romanticizing their otherwise often dreary lives by pretending they're the stars in a movie like *Top Gun*. The Great Big Backfire Raid is a take off on *Catch-22's* Great Big Siege of Bologna.

The supposedly real incident I based it on allegedly happened shortly before my time. The Great Big Backfire Raid is also a spoof of the climax in Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*. *Admirals* itself is also, at

one level, a lampoon of all military fiction since Homer.

The Great Big Almost Train Wreck and The Rocky Horror Recovery and The Off His Rocker Rendezvous are taken from incidents I personally witnessed and materially participated in, but incidents like them happen all the time. [*All the time? The Great Big Almost Train Wreck involved the commander of the lead ship of a carrier group halting his boat without alerting the ships behind. -Ed.*]

Are spineless commanding officers like Generals David Petraeus, Tommy Franks, and Richard Myers inevitable in today's military? Is the best we can hope for an Admiral Fallon, who, after a brief moment of clarity, fades back into the woodwork? Does the military career track inevitably corrupt brass?

When I was studying for my master's degree in war we called "inevitable" the "I-word." Studying the history of human wars, it sometimes seems that one logically followed another, and that they were all inevitable. By extension, one can easily conclude that future wars are inevitable, and the Naval War College faculty discouraged that sort of thinking.

Officially, that is. Military academia actually depends on the very assumption that wars are inevitable, and it's that mindset that fuels cockamamie political movements like neoconservatism.

As to whether the pattern applies to the

selection of our generals, I'm afraid it does. Petraeus's recent promotion to head of CENTCOM pretty much confirms that yes-men generals are the wave of the future. That Petraeus presided on the Army's latest brigadier (one-star) general board added even further to the momentum.

The signal has been transmitted to the rank and file of the officer corps, and there's no mistaking the message. Shinseki, Fallon: bad. Petraeus: good. I'm quite dismayed. Things have been moving in this direction for a long time, but I never dreamt they'd get this severe. God help the military if McCain is elected; it will get even worse.

I think it was back in a '98 *Proceedings* [the US Naval Institute magazine] piece when I joked that we'd evolved to a point where our politicians play general and our generals play politics. A decade later it's no joke any more.

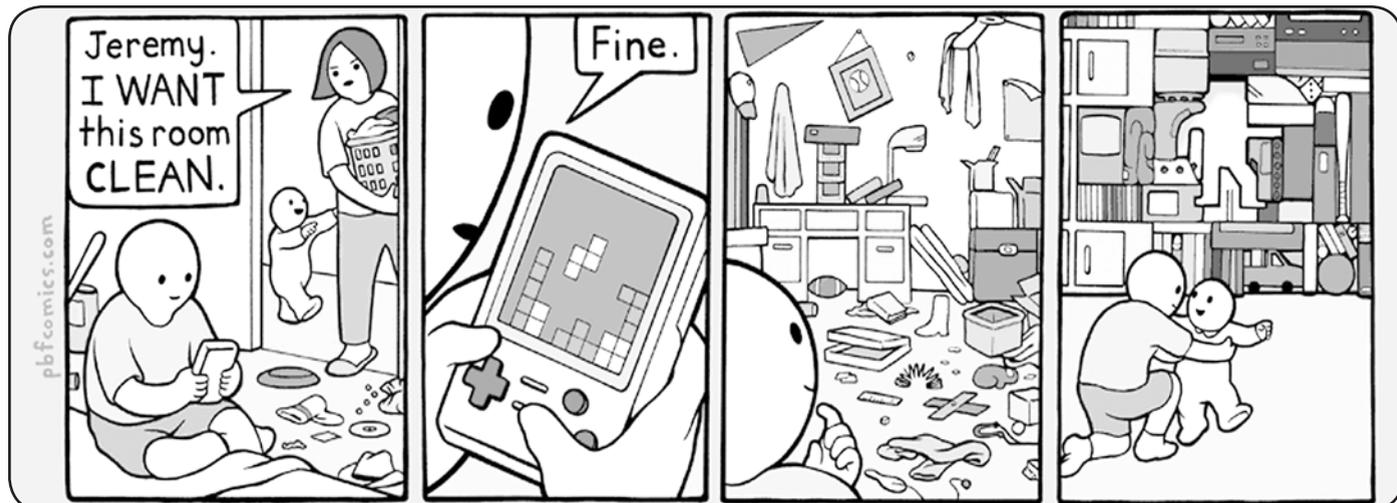
How did you score a column on Military.com?

It was easy, to rob an expression from Inspector Clouseau. All I had to do was enlist. Milcom's editor Ward Carroll and I were contemporaries. Ward was a Tomcat back-seater and no, before you ask, he's not Buzz Rucci from *Bathtub Admirals*. I never met Ward while we were on active duty.

Some years back, Ward, who had already published his successful debut novel *Punk's War*, heard I was working on a novel and called me out of the blue to encourage me to stay at it. Time passed.

THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

WWW.THEPBF.COM



Ward had seen my blog and asked if I wanted to start submitting things for the Milcom editorial page. I said yes.

Things have worked out pretty well, I think. I still have to chuckle when I see my picture next to right wing yahoos like Frank Gaffney and Ollie North, neither of whom I'd have a beer with if they were buying and I was broke.

Like yourself, as is apparent from military media like Military.com and Joint Force Quarterly, some officers differ with stated military and administration policy. When the likes of Bush and Cheney don't even seem to have read "Foreign Policy for Dummies," that would seem to encourage enlisted personnel, just like said officers, to question the motive for a war, as well as strategy, not to mention tactics. Once they've developed their own opinions, should they continue to follow orders with which they disagree?

Could I have an easier question, please? I honestly don't have a good answer. If enlisted personnel don't follow legal orders, the very fabric of military discipline unravels. It's a bit different in the officer ranks – the officers' oath doesn't include that bit about obeying the commander in chief – but not that different. You work within the system as best you can, and at some point you decide you can live with it or you have to leave.

Across the top of your blog, Pen and Sword, is blazoned a quote by William Faulkner capable of stopping a web surfer dead in his or her tracks: "Men have been pacifists for every reason under the sun except to avoid danger and fighting." Can you expand on what it means to you?

War is at best a necessary evil. Unnecessary wars are merely evil. Opposing an unnecessary war is an act of bravery. Supporting an unnecessary war is the worst kind of cowardice.

Speaking of unnecessary wars, Bathub Admirals shows how you became disillusioned with the military. You seem to have gone through the same process with the administration's policies. In fact, your admiration for left-leaning reporters like Gareth Porter and

Larisa Alexandrovna, as well as cross-posting to Booman Tribune and Daily Kos, suggest you're sympathetic to progressives.

Often, though, military people who become disillusioned with our nation's foreign policies more often align themselves with libertarians. Is that how you would describe yourself and are you backing Bob Barr or Ron Paul in the presidential race?

Disillusionment is for people who are just start figuring out the truth about Santa Claus in their mid-thirties. If you haven't realized by age eight or nine that the adults are all screwed up, you're behind the power curve. Thanks probably to early life experiences and a youthful appreciation of satirists like Swift, Voltaire, and Twain, I've always known that just about everybody is full of it.

So no, I didn't become disillusioned with the military, I just decided I'd filled my joy quota with them and it was time for a different kind of fun.

As to my political leanings: I wrote recently that Lord Acton did not say, "Power tends to corrupt *Republicans*." There is no such thing as a centrist venue of ideas anymore, so if you're critical of the Bush administration and its woebegone wars, you're going to land in the progressive camp. The far right, as it has been throughout my lifetime, is a crowd of herding rodents, and not a very pleasant one.

No, I'm not "backing" Paul or Barr, and I'm not a Libertarian. Libertarians are Republicans who don't like having the GOP hit them up for money. Neal Boortz is a Libertarian, for heaven's sake. Shudder.

I'll vote for Obama most likely, but I don't expect him to be, as Gary Trudeau so aptly

put it, the first black Jeffnedy. I'm sorry he caught so much flak over the things his pastor said, but like I always caution, that's the kind of thing that happens when you go to church.

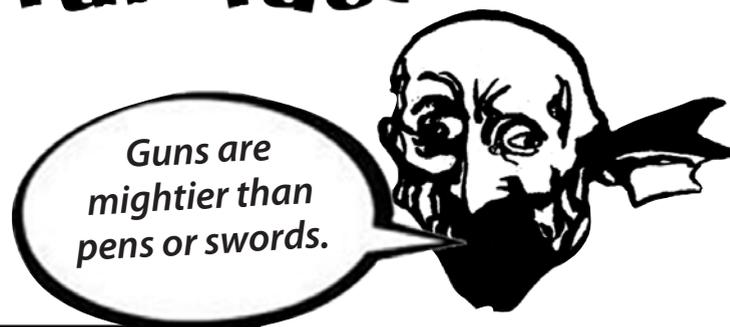
I guess that Wright character was pretty extreme, but I don't see him as being any worse than say, Pat Robertson, or the Catholic Bishops who told their followers they'd go to hell if they voted for John Kerry. Wright's a buffoon. Robertson is dangerous. Catholic bishops need to keep their hands out where I can see them.

I'm perfectly comfortable with Barak getting that three AM phone call. I don't think any phone on earth could ring loud enough to wake up John McCain at that hour. Come to think of it, if McCain gets elected, the best thing he could do in any crisis is sleep through it.

In a New York Times article, "Look Who's Tough on Iran Now," on June 1, William Broad explains that the International Atomic Agency, which had heretofore viewed Iran's credibility on its nuclear program as a glass half full, now sees it as not just a glass half-empty, but one rapidly draining. There seem to be two camps: One, Iran is developing nuclear weapons and they must be stopped, period. Two, Iran ceased to develop nuclear weapons before it had a viable design. Is there a middle way between denying Iran intends to develop nuclear weapons and insisting, as the administration does, that Iran cease and desist even though we're not reciprocating with substantive disarmament on our part? (In the process, dishonoring the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.)

Yes, we've been leaning on the UN and the IAEA for a long time to conform to our narrative on Iran. I've always thought that

Fun Fact



was job one for John Bolton and I think it's the same deal with his successor Zalmay Khalilzad. Khalilzad has better manners than Bolton, but never forget that he's a neocon thug too. Think of him as Bolton with a clean shave and fresh underwear and maybe not so much of a penchant for upscale gentlemen's clubs.

The Bush Iran policy is, I'm convinced, specifically designed to make sure diplomacy doesn't work. The UN non-proliferation treaty grants Iran an "inalienable right" to pursue nuclear technologies for peaceful energy purposes. We're telling them we won't even talk to them unless they give up that right. We've made them an offer they can't accept.

I can't tell you for sure that the Iranians don't have nuclear weapons ambitions, but they don't if they're as smart as I think they are. A fistful of nukes, if they had them, would be little more than a self-targeting doomsday machine. Most of their people live in about eight cities.

If they ever use a nuke on anyone else, the retaliation, either by us or by the Israelis, would be the virtual end of the Persian race. The American Christian right may be crazy enough to drive off a cliff like that, but I doubt the Iranians are. Persian civilization dates back to around 4000 BC, so those folks aren't prone to self-destruction.

The Soviets started building Iran's first nuclear reactor in September 2002 and the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on the Iranians says they suspended their nuclear weapons program in fall 2003. Whatever kind of nuclear weapons program they had, if they had one at all, had to be the kind a couple of Revolutionary Guard colonels drew on a bar napkin at the Fort Farsi Officer's Club.

The real jackpot of their nuclear program would be a viable nuclear energy industry. That would give them the kind of international political leverage that a couple of bombs in their wallet never could. That would give Iran and its senior partners Russia and China a significant share of the control of the future of the global energy market, and Dick and Dubya's pals at Mobil/Exxon and in the Arab oil producing countries could go fish.

Finally, left to their own devices, progressives tend to be more energized by domestic than foreign policy. Is it true – to indulge in a shameless generalization -- that progressives are weak on national security?

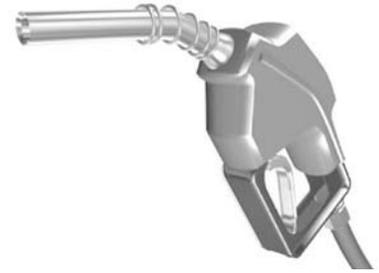
I don't buy the line about liberals or progressives or whatever we call Democrats these days being weak on security or defense or whatever we call war these days. The twentieth century was the era of Democrat wars, and the wartime commanders in chief were Wilson, FDR, Truman, JFK and LBJ.

Of the GOPers, Ike gave us the military industrial complex before he condemned it on his way out the door and Nixon got in the White House by promising to end Vietnam but never quite did. Reagan's role in the Cold War is way, way overrated. I refer to that obliquely in *Admirals*. We'd really already beaten the Soviets, maybe as far back as the Cuban missile crisis. When Reagan came along, they were like the boiling frog that's still conscious but already three quarters cooked.

Reagan's high point as commander in chief was that circle entertainment in Beirut where he got a bunch of Marines whacked for no good reason. And young Mr. Bush kicked off the New American Century by becoming the first U.S. president to lose two wars, so please don't tell me the GOP is the "strong on defense" party. The warmonger party, yes. The military industrial complex party, yes. The keeping America safe party, no. The "support the troops" party, no.

The GOP does, however, have the neocon think tank network behind it, and those people, of course, want war at all costs. In fact, the more their wars cost, the better they like it: The better to bust up the New Deal with. And the think tank network is plugged into the Big Brother Broadcast: talk radio, FOX News, *National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, etc.

The left has nothing like that at all, and as I said earlier, there is no center any more. You're with the crazies in the basement or you're against them. Unless you go along with buying two billion dollar stealth bombers to fight adolescent suicide bombers, you're weak on security. 



Summer gas-saving tips

The price of gas is on the rise, with no relief in sight, and the sorry state of America's economy is no help either. Americans are strapped for cash, but as always we need to get around. How can you make traveling easier this summer? Here's a few helpful tips to get you on the road again!

Full speed ahead: Frequent stops and starts wreak havoc on your gas mileage, so remember to just blow through all stop signs and traffic lights. If you run someone over, steal their wallet! Cha-ching, another free tank of gas!

The rickshaw method: Chain a few impoverished illegal immigrants to your grille and offer them a dollar each upon arrival at your destination. For a round trip, just pretend you left your money at home! If they complain, threaten to call INS.

Sleepy-time: Soak a rag in gasoline. Clutch it over the mouth and nose of a nearby motorist until he or she passes out. Siphon the victim's gas.

Five-alarm discount: If you're really in a pinch, after filling up your tank, spray gasoline all over the service station and set it on fire. With any luck, no one will notice you driving away with a full tank for free!

The good Samaritan: If you run out of gas, flag down a friendly motorist and tell him you need a jump. Feign total ignorance of how the operation works, and while he or she is busy attaching cables to your battery, hop in the helpful stranger's car and drive away! Repeat procedure as necessary.

Stacycation: Buy a single gallon of gas and take it home in a safe container. Huff the gas until you lose your will to drive anywhere.

Newton's errand: Try to drive to places that are downhill from your location. Wait until the price of gas falls before you drive back.

Location, location, location: Move to Iran.

The Republican solution: Go to the Alaska National Wildlife Reserve and drill for oil there. If you are successful, in ten years or so the price of gas will drop by one penny! 

THE WRATH OF CON

DIRTBAG SCAMS THOUSANDS FROM CITY'S POOREST, MEDIA TAKES NAP

BY IAN MURPHY

"Can I hear ya say hallelujah?"
"Hallelujah!"
"Can I hear ya say debit 'r credit?"
"Debit 'r credit!"
"Hallelujah Lord!"

June 6, 2008, BUFFALO—Ex-con, con-man "faith healer" Rev. W.V. Grant hard-sells the flock of 150 at the One in Christ Temple. This humid night is his last working a five-week hustle on the city's east side. Tomorrow, the "Miracle Crusade Revival" pulls up stakes to go bleed another town. As instructed, I hold hands with a Muslim convert from Sierra Leon.

"Hallelujah," she whispers, eying my drenched paw. The gospel three-piece ups the tempo.

"Sorry," I say and start clapping to the music.

With all the hand holding, singing, jumpin' and hollerin', it'd be easy to miss the grift—if it weren't so obvious. Grant's sweatier than Satan's ass-crack, selling the routine. He wipes his forehead and removes his jacket. An usher folds the coat neatly over his arm and hurries it to the reverend's pig-wife. She's clad conspicuously in red, and lurks next to an office in the back corner of the quaint wood-paneled church.

Earlier in the service, all the newcomers were instructed to fill out a card with their basic information: name, address, e-mail and phone number. These cards were also delivered to Mrs. Grant. Later, when the usher retrieves the jacket, slowly helps Grant slip it on and the reverend promptly starts "divining" the names of a few newcomers, the trick appears to be something less than a miracle.

"Because the Lord doesn't care *how* you sow your seed," he says, motioning to a credit card reader on the carpeted steps below the glass pulpit. The red stitching along Grant's collar and cuffs suit the

Dallas-based huckster. He looks the perfect used car salesman—tan, tooth, coif and cloth. "Or you can offer up your two largest bills... In a few minutes, here, we'll have some more of y'all called up—hallelujah!"

Grant explains that he doesn't have "psychic powers," and that what he's about to do "isn't like Miss Cleo." He's right: What she did was illegal. Grant motions



Rev. W.V. Grant: *subhuman shit-sack*

to the back of the room. The usher rushes Grant his jacket and holds it obediently before him with his back to the audience. After a few moments, Grant puts it back on and the "miracles" begin.

"Now, who's Maggie?" the preacher asks a hand-picked subject. He forces a perplexed expression.

"That's me!" the old woman shouts. Grant was also able to peer into the void of publicly available information and come up with the names of dead and living relatives. Did his ruminant accomplice, Mrs. Grant, do a quick Google search during the "beautiful" candlelight prayer? All the fluorescents were turned off for "effect," and afterward there was too much choking smoke in the air to see or

care what was happening.

The Rev. cracks "Maggie's" cane over his knee and dramatically hurls it into a pile of other similarly abused ambulation aides. He then "cured" her stomach cancer and arthritis. She ran barefoot around the church to prove it. She left soon after—to either die of stomach cancer or collect her money. It's hard to say.

At one viewing, I don't know exactly how Grant's gang execute their con. You don't know who's a shill, who's deluded or who's just plain schizophrenic. But as with any magic act, unless you're a fool or a four-year-old, you know that he didn't really cut that woman in half—or in Grant's case, lengthen that woman's leg. Famous debunker James Randi detailed Grant's MO in his '87 book *The Faith Healers*. "60 Minutes" even did a few pieces on this charlatan back in the day. His tricks have been well documented. The true miracle is that this swine is still scamming people.

"Make out your checks to W.V. Grant Ministries," the reverend stresses. "That part is important."

After his '96-'97 stint in federal prison for tax evasion, Grant went right back to his life's work—bilking the poor and desperate. In 2006, a Richmond, Virginia NBC affiliate ran a two-part investigation, and he soon fled to New Jersey. Otherwise, he hasn't attracted much scrutiny. And since, he's been broadcast regularly on the CW network, lying from the same Miami-area stage once graced by prodigious evangelical scumbag Robert Tilton. Born into a family of traveling Christian concert artists, Grant knows no other life. (On weekends he returns to Dallas to preach at his Eagle's Nest Cathedral, which apparently takes its name from Hitler's infamous mountain retreat, though, it looks rather like a bowling alley.)

Compounding the offensiveness of the man's continued success is the sheer sloppiness of his shtick:

"Now, what's your son's name?" he asks a

weeping man.
“Emanuel.”

“Now who’s Eman—Eman—is it Emanuel?”

“That’s my son.”

“How could I have known that? Have we ever met before?”

“No.”

“Has anyone been asking you any questions here tonight?”

“No.”

“Did you pass me a note or anything like that?”

“No.”

“Hallelujah Jesus!”

There were similar affronts to reason. People flubbed their purported afflictions and some of the “testimonies” were pure comedy:

“Who filled your cavity?”

“Jesus!”

“Hallelujah! Look at it shine! Because when the lord fills your tooth he uses precious metals!”

This, apparently, is the best dental plan

poor black folk on Buffalo’s east side have access to—Dr. God, DDS. And that’s the diseased heart of the thing: The smarmy likes of Grant can only leech off the poor and poorly educated. His business is bustling in Haiti and Africa, for example. As an economic indicator, the presence of W.V. Grant in your town does not portend well. Religiosity thrives in poverty (Pew Research, 2007). Within a two-block radius of the One in Christ temple there are well over a dozen other churches—half are closed, dilapidated.

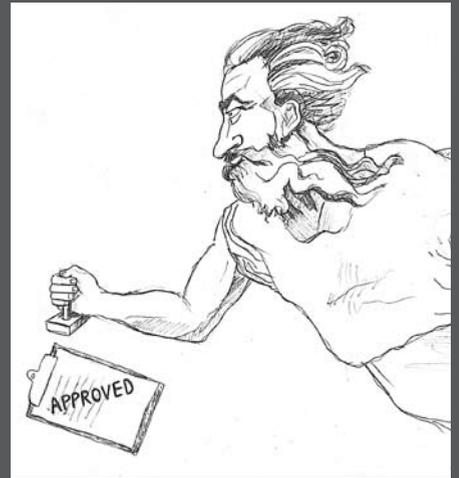
FAITH HEALING: HOW’S IT WORK?



STEP ONE: The trained faith healer locates your God Gland. Once pressed, the God Gland transmits your request for supernatural medical attention.



STEP TWO: The closest cherub transcribes your symptoms using a golden pen.



STEP THREE: God evaluates your claim.

STEP FOUR: God sends his only begotten son to medical school.



STEP FIVE: Jesus and the faith healer perform emergency surgery to remove the evil from your body



STEP SIX: You live happily ever after!



Grant's sermon was an incongruous mix of Christian Zionism, apocalyptic prophecies, UFOs in the Book of Ezekiel and, inexplicably, a lengthy list of Lincoln/JFK coincidences:

"Lincoln was elected in 1860—Kennedy, 1960!"

"John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald both have fifteen letters in their names!"

"Lincoln's secretary was named Kennedy. And Kennedy's secretary was named? That's right—Lincoln!" And so on...

One of Grant's more impressive "gifts" is making educated guesses. An older, overweight black lady—with diabetes! What are the odds? One in four, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

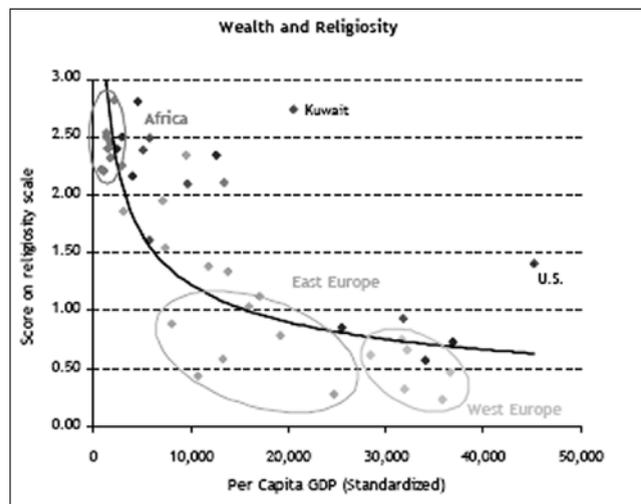
The angle of the con is twofold: The shyster tells us that not only will God heal our bodies, he'll also heal our wounded finances. "One man had an electric bill for over eight-hundred dollars," he tells us. "A week after I laid hands on him, his balance was zero dollars," Theatrically, he looks up at the dingy drop ceiling. "Hallelujah!" The ushers pass out Grant's "Eagle Club" seed books. "God supernaturally fixed my credit," reads one testimonial in the booklet. It's like God's lottery—you gotta pay to play.

The cleverest ruse in Grant's arsenal is his singing voice. He's trained his vocal chords to approximate the sound of a Muppet mouth-fucking Burl Ives—to identify chuckling skeptics in the crowd. I broke my cover early on in the arduous four-and-a-half-hours laughing at his hilarious crooning.

Honestly, it'd be giving Grant too much credit for his voice. Or for the rest of his scam. The old con-man proverb goes, "you can't cheat an honest man." Religion and belief in miracles are the height of intellectual dishonesty. Or is it stupidity? Twice on this night, the capacity crowd formed a long circular line to palm the preacher some cash as one would a Mafia Don. From the denominations I could make out, I guess he pulled in Two Large. It's a racket.

The only truly befuddling illusion of Grant's run in Buffalo was the media's disappearing act. Five weeks, five nights a week. He could have hauled in \$50,000 easy, yet there wasn't a peep in the local press or TV news about the robbery. Then again, the "victims" left the door open, and clearly, no one was home. To the most vicious rat goes the cheese.

But no, the local media wasn't silenced by libertarian principles. It was something less noble. Besides myself, Grant, his hideous wife and a handful of other loony crackers, the crowd was blacker than Wesley Snipes. "White Man Rips Off Black People" just doesn't work as a headline. It's old news—400 years and running. Nobody cares. And it's not entirely true, considering the role of One in Christ's Pastor Frederick A.



Pew Research, 2007

Gelsy and his lovely mahogany wife. They certainly have something to gain from the arrangement. Gelsy's the inside man. He brings in the marks and he gets a cut of the loot. Like always, the matter isn't strictly black and white.

But imagine the media backlash if a convicted a tax evader, say, I don't know, Wesley Snipes, had come to Buffalo's largely white suburbs, claiming supernatural powers and taking money from naive, crippled grannies. He'd be lynched with column inches.

There's a larger issue: Grant's running the ultimate confidence game, because God's the ultimate angle. Were he a secular charlatan, making empty promises to fix folks' bodies and billfolds, he'd be locked

up for good. Ms. Cleo's mistake wasn't being black, which she is, or claiming false powers and ripping people off, which she did, but that she gave the credit to spirits and psychic ability. Wrapped in The Cloth, however, Grant has total legal immunity. He's free to prey on the gullible, crazy, hopeless, desperate, poor and uneducated. As a society, we can tolerate only a certain brand of chicanery, performed by manipulating certain idiotic beliefs. "Thou shalt have no other cons before me," God once said at a party.

After the service, I talked to a guy going by "Hollywood." His worn clothes were sweat-stained and he reeked faintly of vinegar. He'd been called up by Grant to heal his diabetes. "They don't call me what they called me in there," he tells me as we sit on the sidewalk. "I was in so many movies back in the '70s," he adds. "I'm in the Screen Actor's Guild. If I could have gotten a million dollars, I could have stayed out there and became a star!"

He went on for a while. I'm not a mental health professional, but he was a nut-job—a group well represented this evening. "At least my diabetes is gone—by Jesus," he turns and smiles. "Now I can drink all the pop I want!"

"Um, Hollywood," I pause, "maybe you should get your, um, miracle confirmed by a doctor."

"Doctor!" He just laughs.

"Any'y'all know where I can sleep tonight?" cuts in a beautiful, but badly beaten young lady. She moves her bruised and swollen face down toward us. "I'm in a domestic relationship."

"Sweet Jesus!" I jump up. "Sorry. Gotta go."

God willing, one of the good souls filtering out of the church that late evening did what Jesus would have. Lord knows I wasn't going to put her up. And God willing, she didn't rob that good soul blind during the night.

God would never let that happen, right?



GOFF ANGRY!!!!

CONGRESS AND THE DISPOSABLE OATH



BY STAN GOFF

When I joined the army and when I reenlisted five times, I did something that every member of Congress does. I took an oath to defend the Constitution as the core commitment of my service. Then the army sent me to eight different conflict areas to attack, or assist others in attacking, people who were not even remotely the enemies of the Constitution. Oddly enough, that oath said I was obliged to “defend the Constitution from all enemies *foreign and domestic*.”

I’m retired now; and since I got out of the army I’ve had more opportunities to oppose the domestic enemies of the Constitution, because they are mostly those who were or worked for my former Commanders-in-Chief. I was employed by scofflaws from Nixon through Clinton (Clinton violated the UN Charter when he bombed Yugoslavia... the US is a signatory, therefore the Charter has the force of the Constitution).

Yesterday, Congressman Dennis Kucinich fulfilled his duty according to that oath by listing articles of impeachment before the House of Representatives that detailed the serial and blatant Constitutional violations by our current President. Kucinich made a *prima facie* case, but that’s not news to anyone with an attention span greater than a goldfish.

What’s news is that Congress is obliged by their primary duty — to which they took a solemn oath before God — to defend the Constitution; and that means voting to impeach anyone who has blatantly undermined it at every turn. The reason only a handful of Democrats will do so is that the Democratic Party leadership —

which has enabled the Bush administration at every turn by refusing to take action or even investigate most of these crimes and misdemeanors — is more interested in winning elections than they are doing their sworn duty.

Today, Congress will refuse to even hear these articles of impeachment.

The popular wisdom — wrong in my opinion, but that’s beside the point — is that making Bush a defendant will vector in sympathy and hurt Democratic chances in November. So... winning elections — not part of their oath — has priority over doing their Constitutional duty.

While Democrats have played out this cynical strategy, the US government has continued to kidnap and torture people, kill, wound, harass, and displace millions of Iraqis, Afghans, etc... but that human misery and those rivers of blood don’t mean jack-shit to the leadership of the Democratic Party, because they have a Strategy. To them, these horrors only represent an opportunity: Let Bush run free, give him enough rope...and don’t think about who’s being water-boarded, or gunned down by some macho lunatic with Blackwater, or being raped then shot, or watching their parents slaughtered in front of them, or of the caskets that keep showing up at Dover, or of the limbless, disoriented legions of 20-somethings now moving among us.

Kucinich will be portrayed as peculiar, just as John Brown was painted crazy; but history and a just God that watches these Democratic Party

operators wipe their cushioned asses with this oath *to win an election* will see things through a different lens.

They will be seen for the cheap con-artists that they are; and they have blood on their hands.

Moreover, until now there has been no attack on Iran because it makes no sense to do so. Such an attack will cost the US a broad tactical defeat in Iraq and the consolidation of nascent counter-US blocs around the globe... but if the numbers come in by September-October that show McCain to be the dangerous dolt that he is — the “hero” whose heroic act was being shot down while he rained bombs on Vietnamese — that McCain doesn’t have a snowball’s chance, *then* the absurd fantasy that the Bush administration will attack Iran — with all its profound consequences for the US’s malignant but profitable position and influence on the world stage — *then* the administration could commit the last spiteful act. They could broaden their little, lost war to include Iran, and leave the new Democratic administration and freshly minted, bloody-handed, instrumental, oath-breaking, Democrat-controlled Congress with a swarming hornets nest of unpredictable and inextricable relations.

And some of us will say, you had opportunity after opportunity to stop this; but you enabled George W. Bush. You protected him and his coterie, because your elections were more important to you than either your oaths or the lives of countless human beings.

Shame on you all. ☹️

Stan Goff’s website is feralscholar.org



GOFF OUTRAGE INDEX!

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Eat Shit and Die

DISEASED VEGGIES ARE MEAT INDUSTRY'S FAULT



BY ALLISON KILKENNY

Despite being one of the most grotesquely overfed populations in recent memory, Americans remain preoccupied only with the quantity, and not the quality of their food. They don't mind if scientists inject their French fries with High-Fructose Corn Syrup as long as McDonald's Super-sizes their order for a nickel.

Yet, the attitude toward vegetarianism is changing in the United States. While it's difficult to quantify how many vegetarians live within our borders, it's easier to observe the attitude towards vegetarians. Twenty years ago, "What're you, a *Commie*?" was a more typical response to a confession of veggie brotherhood. Nowadays, despite the occasional stink eye, meat-eaters at least understand that vegetarianism is healthy, if not a lifestyle particularly suited for them.

Even though the U.S. is more veggie-friendly these days, it's still difficult to avoid crappy food, even if one chooses to become a vegan as I did six years ago. Despite my decision, I found myself projectile vomiting into my toilet last week. Diagnosis: food-poisoning. Suspect: tomatoes. Unfortunately, becoming a vegetarian or a vegan doesn't ensure healthiness. Sure, vegetarians enjoy many health perks (low rates of: heart disease, obesity, diabetes, cancer, etc.) but we're still at the mercy of the meat industry in many ways.

For starters, the meat industry poisons the environment. A 2006 United Nations report described the devastation caused by

the meat industry as "one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." Aside from global warming, meat production is a large factor in overexploited natural resources, deforestation, wasted land, and air and water contamination.

Water contamination may play a large part in increasing reports of vegetable and fruit contamination. In 2007, a California produce company recalled bagged fresh spinach after a sample tested positive for salmonella. Nearly a year before, an outbreak of *E. coli*, in fresh spinach killed 3 people and sickened 200. This week, the tomato salmonella outbreak has affected at least 145 people, resulting in 23 hospitalizations, and many believe water contamination is the cause of the infected tomatoes.

It's not the veggies that are to blame. The problem is the meat. Salmonella is an animal pathogen, so it doesn't originate from tomatoes. Most experts agree that the

bacteria probably come from groundwater contaminated with animal feces.

You read that right: Cow shit is in your tomatoes. Actually, cow shit is in everything: the water, hamburgers, other plant life, and if one ascribes to the hippie New Age belief that we are all one pulsating organism upon Mother Earth, then cow shit is in all of us.

But in a realer, more concrete sense, frenzied production lines coupled with lax management have resulted in a dramatic increase in food poisoning. The shitty (literally) food is so prevalent that it's affecting non-meat-eaters. While salmonella prefers fleshy fruit like tomatoes, our friend *E. coli* prefers leafy greens like spinach.

The problem is prevalent. A recent census of produce outbreaks between 1996 and 2007 counted no fewer than 33 epidemics from salmonella-contaminated fruits and vegetables.

Bessy the downer cow sez:



Some scientists claim the cure for salmonella and E. coli contamination isn't scrubbing clean the fruits and vegetables because doing so could remove the good bacteria humans rely upon for survival. The solution will come from the government and outraged citizens demanding that the meat industry clean up its practices so fresh produce doesn't suffer at the hands of hasty slaughter and overcrowded holding pens.

The outrage has already exploded in other parts of the world. While irresponsible butchers poison groundwater and otherwise healthy plant life here at home, Americans remain mute about the diseased slabs of meat they're consistently forced to choose between at their grocery stores. Meanwhile, angry mobs took to the streets of South Korea when their government resumed importing beef from the United States. This wasn't some kind of

fervent anti-American protest, but rather concerned citizens protecting themselves from potential mad cow disease.

In America, the only way citizens can protect themselves is to grow their own food or to buy their food from local, trusted farmers, who don't use chemicals or unethical farming practices. But many poorer, urban citizens have no choice but to buy whatever food is cheap and readily available.

Still, all of this isn't cause for concern. Unless, of course, citizens are worried about the expanding legion of rotund American children, who despise vegetables, binge on bagged chips, and walk only if the landscape slopes downhill. The obesity rate is so wildly out of control that Americans collectively celebrated this year—not when the child population began to lose weight, but when they ceased to get

fatter and obesity rates finally plateaued for the first time in 20 years.

Unfortunately, Americans can't fix their unhealthy eating until supposedly "healthy" food is clean of bacteria originating in diseased cows. Of course, the crazy practices of the meat industry shouldn't concern citizens... unless they're worried about global warming. The Environmental Defense reports that if every American skipped one meal of chicken per week and substituted it with vegetarian foods, the carbon dioxide savings would be the same as taking more than a half-million cars off U.S. roads.

In fact, the crazy practices of the meat industry probably won't rock citizens at all until they find themselves knelt over their toilets, hurling. Right about then, they'll understand how cow shit affects them all.



YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHO'S READING THE BEAST

VISITOR ANALYSIS		
Referring Link	No referring link	
Host Name	dhcp-0-138-220-91-44.worldbank.org	
IP Address	138.220.91.44 [Label IP Address]	
Country	United States	
Region	District Of Columbia	
City	Washington	
ISP	The World Bank Group	
Returning Visits	44	
Visit Length	26 mins 10 secs	
VISITOR SYSTEM SPECS		
Browser	MSIE 6.0	
Operating System	Windows XP	
Resolution	1024x768	
Javascript	Enabled	
Navigation Path		
Date	Time	WebPage
		No referring link

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Big Fuss

TIM RUSSERT, "A GUY WHO DID THE NEWS AND JUST DIED"

BY PAUL JONES

"Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo."

-William J. Rapaport

It's difficult to recall an important televised moment in which Tim Russert's owlish face was not agleam with self-satisfaction. As though his excrescent snout were industriously secreting nitrous oxide. I used to wonder what, about his innately unpleasant work, he found so amusing.

The bonds with his father, Tim, Sr. and son, Luke, were obviously adamant. Against all probability, he united the classes—of Washington's reportorial peerage, and the reliably media-averse working white folk through whose lives he jovially trundled—in unanimous affection. CNN's Anderson Cooper found time while in Africa, where nothing newsworthy ever happens, to call Russert "a remarkable journalist and an extraordinarily decent human being." While the latter constituency, with whom the NBC News Washington bureau chief literally oversold his kinship in two bestselling books, was unwavering in its devotion. That's remarkable for a man who was, according to media critic Bob Somerby, "made a multimillionaire by...conservative Republican defense contractor...Jack Welch." Somerby argues on his website, *The Daily Howler*, that Welch, onetime CEO of NBC parent General Electric, "hand-picked" Russert for "Meet the Press." But Russert's fabulous wealth and his summer castle on the exclusive island of Nantucket were inconsequential to these table salts of the earth.

At the Superfund site in South Buffalo that is Tim Russert Park, the jogging track is—perhaps fittingly, given his premature death at age 58 from coronary artery

disease—abbreviated and misshapen like a pork chop. Pedestrians on the main street leading there are more "heterogeneous" than when young Russert trudged the sidewalks. But they embody unmistakable blue-collar values, like open contempt for motorized traffic.

Memories among the earlier generation here who met him are bland, but sincere: he was a "real nice guy" and "down to earth." Around the corner at The Blackthorn, an Irish pub and men's club where his father, "Big Russ"—titular hero of one of Russert's treacly potboilers—is a member, recollections are slightly more flavored. Visiting the bar one night, he sat with the regulars, drank Heineken and "talked Buffalo." (The Heineken seems slightly indiscreet for an inveterate brand-conscious Irish Catholic like Russert.) Co-owner Pat Lalley echoed the sentiment of every cable television obituarist when he said the newsman was "like an acquaintance."

At some point, however, this vibrato adulation becomes discreditable. After all, what grizzled muckraker has ever boasted a wide circle of cordial acquaintance? Let alone among powerful people?

Yet Russert's friend, Rush Limbaugh, called him "the closest thing there was at any of the networks to an objective journalist." This is the Rush Limbaugh who claimed Hillary Clinton abetted the "murder" of Vince Foster; that no scientific basis existed in 1994 for concluding nicotine is addictive; and that Michael J. Fox "exaggerat[ed]" his Parkinson's tremors for political purposes. In other words, don't expect Seymour Hersh to be mourned so liberally.

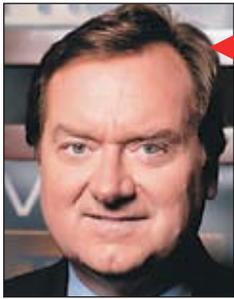
You may pinch your sniffer and declare nasally that this reeks of selective

quotation. Well, what to make of Russert's inquisitorial flourishes as Democratic debate moderator? It was he who decided that Barack Obama must assuage the fears of Jewish Americans by exorcising the anti-Semitic specter of Louis Farrakhan. A man whose endorsement Obama did not court, and whose company he did not keep; but who is swarthy, Chicagoan and, well, you get the idea. Meanwhile, John McCain's public dalliance with John Hagee went unremarked for months, because Russert—lauded as one of Washington's most resourceful men—couldn't locate footage of the pastor's hate screeds.

The encore to this sordid episode came many weeks later when Obama secured the party's nomination. Russert marked the momentous occasion with a chauvinistic emission to the effect that he would "love to teach American history at an inner-city American school tomorrow morning." Gushing, he asked his co-hosts, "How great would that be?" Comes the question: For whom, precisely? Imagine this man before such a classroom. Imparting the lesson that, regardless what heights they might achieve, his pupils must always be weighted by superstition and bigotry.

This curious favoritism is stranger still for a man whose career began in Democratic politics. If it's possible to suggest such a thing in America, then perhaps his master passions were too working-class. He was a former altar boy who, according to *Newsweek's* John Meacham, still regularly attended mass—long after his childhood schoolmates had lapsed. Like the Buffalonians so surprised that this successful fellow would continue to vouchsafe them essential courtesies, he retained his own tendency to be overawed. He felt blessed to meet two popes, but he was more fickle in his secular reverence.

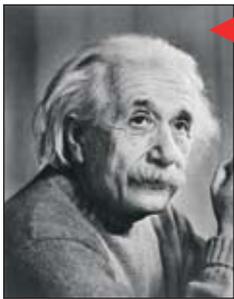
The **10** Greatest People to Ever Live, Ever



1 Tim Russert
Loved his dad and the Buffalo Bills.



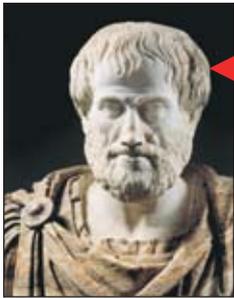
2 Don Knotts
From Barney Fife to Ralph Furley, Knotts's roles were some of the most brilliant brilliance to have ever been brillianced.



3 Albert Einstein
The uncontested genius of the 20th century, Einstein's theories correctly predicted the relativity of time and its oneness with space.



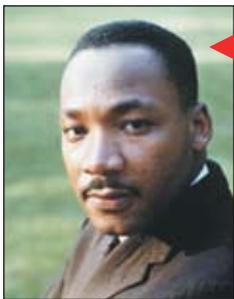
4 Mohandas Gandhi
The Mahatma fought apartheid in S. Africa before toppling the British Empire in his native India. He was also really good in *Sexy Beast*.



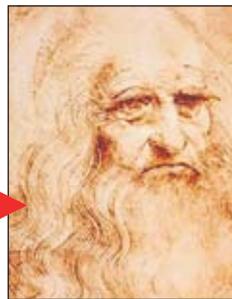
5 Aristotle
Wrote a bunch of crazy crap a long time ago.



6 Isaac Newton
The quintessential polymath, Newton's Laws of Motion made him the father of all physics. And he had good hair.



7 Martin Luther King Jr.
The recognized leader of the civil rights movement, King didn't care for public transportation.



8 Leonardo Da Vinci
The Renaissance man, Da Vinci invented the concept of the helicopter and enriched the world with his art and beard.



9 Shakespeare
The most influential author to ever put pen to paper. He was also banging Gwyneth Paltrow.



10 Siddhārtha Gautama
The Great Buddha lived 500 years before Christ, and his religion is way cooler.

In 2004, as Somerby noted, he allowed President Bush to stutter his way through a retrospective interview about prewar planning without venturing a single pointed follow-up. Later that year, as the election drew closer and the prospective veeps sparred, he inexplicably let stand Dick Cheney's lie that the vice president had never before met John Edwards—though the NBC host knew it was false. Is it any wonder White House aide Catherine Martin, testifying at Scooter Libby's trial, called "Meet the Press" the administration's "best format" for propagating its messages?

NBC morticians misspent much of their nonstop tele-vigil futilely making over Russert's derelict treatment of the Iraq War run-up. Chris Matthews contorted his glistening, dribble glass mouth and whimpered that Cheney's invocation of mushroom clouds had stifled his boss. "The guys who wanted the war used that one thing to sell the patriot in Tim," he said. Defending "Tim's" dutiful ingenuousness, he referred to him as "everyman...Mr. or Miss America—Mrs. America." The country can sigh in collective relief that we at least were spared the swimsuit competition.

The normally sensible Lawrence O'Donnell portrayed Russert as "patient enough to let the history roll out and let us find out...the ultimate truth..." How magnanimous! Only a believer in invisible hands, perpetually sweeping brown-skinned detritus under the vast rug of time, could be so unvigilant. For what was the man compensated multimillions? Of course, Tim could afford to forbear, because his beloved fortunate son, Luke, would never be imperiled overseas. Still, O'Donnell insisted Russert was dogged. "The answers," he argued, "were oversimplified." Remember that Russert's greatest contribution to American media was reducing the 2000 presidential election on a whiteboard to the words "Florida! Florida! Florida!" He was an insatiable gourmet of simplicity.

Russert's answer to the charge of negligence, leveled at him by Bill Moyers in the film "Buying the War," deserves its own well-lit display adjacent that whiteboard now in the Smithsonian. Asked why he didn't verify the Bush

administration's intelligence on Iraq with other government officials, he replied, "I wish my phone had rung." There, in his words, is the summation of his fabled reportage. Picture the Tim Russert Monument: the stone giant drowning in his oversized host's chair, his telephone cradled for eternity.

His faith in higher power might explain his insouciance, but it doesn't make it any easier to stomach. In his penultimate broadcast as "Meet the Press" moderator, he bluntly called erstwhile White House press secretary Scott McClellan "part of the propaganda machine that sold the war." He then extorted from his guest a promise that McClellan would donate a portion of his book sales to war victims. I thought Catholics had an overactive sense of sin.

The McClellan appearance was memorable for another reason. Russert patented the

very simple act of poring over a public figure's entire career worth of statements and asking them to explain the inevitable discrepancies—discrepancies that, alone, told no story. This tiresome technique of catechism attained the stature of the Gordian knot in Beltway mythology. And woe betide any aspiring pol who came unprepared. But McClellan's unruffled admissions that he'd simply been lying for years visibly perplexed Russert. As though the host, an unrivaled insider, had never actually expected any guest to confess his opportunism. He'd only ever encouraged more evasions. A squat, dissembling little knave undid the whole business.

Driving through Buffalo on Friday the 13th, hours after the announcement that Tim Russert—respected journalist and adored family man—had collapsed at NBC's studios, I pulled over to the side of the road. Some teenagers were skateboarding in a small square. I got out and asked a few

of them if they knew that one of the city's most famous sons had passed. Only one knew he was.

"[He was] a guy who did the news and just died," said Sean, 15. That was the clearest thing I heard in a weekend drowned out by rote eulogizing. All for a gormless leviathan whose clumsy bulk made tiny ripples in the manmade shallows of American political media.

On that Buffalo sidewalk, on the eve of Father's Day, I thought of the Russert clan and hoped for their consolation. I thought, too, of the orphaned children and bereft parents of Iraq, and the fatherless sons and daughters of dead American soldiers. And I took heart later, on a damp, drear night, as thunderclaps roared and pitchforks of electricity scored the darkness. Buffalo had other sons, like Sean, of whom it could be proud. Go Bills. 🐾

This space is blank in loving remembrance of Tim Russert.
That, and we're totally going to miss our print deadline.
But mostly for that first reason.



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Old Dogs & Hard Times

CONVICTED RAPISTS ARE PEOPLE TOO

BY JOE BAGEANT

Late at night through my window by the computer I can see my neighbor Stokes bicycling at 10 pm to the local convenience store to buy groceries. Not only is that an expensive way to feed one's self, but it is the only way for old Stokes to cop some grubbs without getting thrown in jail. Seriously. As a convicted sex offender, he is not allowed to come in proximity with young women in a supermarket checkout line. Nor is he allowed to visit a park, or even his own grandchild, even though he is not a child molester by the court's own admission. He is not allowed to drink a beer. In fact, he is not even allowed to read Playboy Magazine.

A dozen or so years ago Stokes, now 66 with a gray ponytail, an altogether gentle soul who labors under the illusion he looks like Willie Nelson, (and even has a framed photo of Willie on his wall to invite comparison). Got caught by police in a, shall we say, "a vehicular sexual incident" with a married woman. They were both drunk, big deal. That happens in beer joints. To make a long story short, by the time they got to court the lady's testimony was that it was all against her will, which being a married woman, solved a lot of problems for her. That resulted in Stokes being convicted as a sex offender while his public defender all but slept through the trial.

To make matters worse, Stokes had an unregistered handgun stashed in his car. Stupid, I know, but rednecks are often like that, and I'd be willing to bet there are more unregistered handguns than registered ones around here. This may horrify urban liberals, but legal or not, it is the common practice of tens of thousands of people down here in the southern climes of our great nation, not to mention common nationwide to many thousands more cab drivers, night clerks, hotel parking valets, bill collectors, repo men, single women and god only knows how many others. At any rate, thanks to the gun, which he never touched, Stokes was prosecuted for armed abduction for sexual purposes, and

did ten years.

He's been out for years now. But he was released into an entirely different world than he left -- one which seems scripted by Adam Smith and Hanging Judge Roy Bean. As a convicted felon, he has been released from prison to serve a new sentence—to serve time as a profit center for our economy. In truth, he has been one from the day he was charged.

"As a convicted felon, he has been released from prison to serve a new sentence—to serve time as a profit center for our economy. In truth, he has been one from the day he was charged. "

First off, he was a profit center for the prison where he served his time. Now it is fairly common knowledge that America's burgeoning system of privatized prisons, "super jails," and related services has been a boon for corporations such as Corrections Corporation of America, Geo Group (formerly Wackenhut Corrections Corp.) and their investors. Prisoner leasing programs such as Florida's, which rents out prison labor for less than 50 cents an hour to private industry in the name of "job training," make building more prisons an attractive option for state governments and investors. It also makes recidivism desirable, since it assures the prison labor pool. Somewhere between 1% and 2% of Americans are behind bars, locked up at any given time, and as many more on probation or under state monitoring, obviously capitalist style punishment is a solid financial investment.

Now I am not about to screech here that our prison system is anywhere near that created by Uncle Joe Stalin. We do not have nine million people in it and we do

not get sent there for being late for work at the factory, our factories having been outsourced. However, after 1929 Stalin's prison camps were transformed to an economic machine. And in order to fulfill the camps' economic goals, more and more prisoners were required, just as more prisoners are required to fulfill the investor goals of Corrections Corporation of America, Geo Group. In any case, convictions are profitable and the more of them there are the more money both private interests and the state take in.

That in itself is way the hell past just being strange. But throw in the term sex offender and get on the registered sex offender list (which seems to be mostly filled with Johns who solicited prostitutes, though you'd never know it by the way they name the offense) and it all gets really weird. Chilling even. This is partly because of the taboo and stigma associated, but mostly for the bizarre monitoring rules, and the money involved in enforcement. For example, Stokes must pay a couple hundred a month for counseling, group therapy and so on, until they tell him he can stop doing so. This therapy mainly amounts to listening to the stories of more serious offenders, such as child molesters, even though he is not one, but being treated by law as if he were. Such is the fate of being legally shackled to any of dozens of types of "certified sex offender treatment providers," an ever expanding industry, they tell me.

He also must pay for registration as an offender, blood, saliva, fingerprints, palm prints, police registration of his internet address (within 30 minutes of obtaining it) and so on with the Department of State Police and the Sex Offenders Registry, providing a new photo, address, etc., for 10 years, effectively the rest of Stokes's life, not to mention registering with the local cops wherever he lives. After five years he may petition the court for relief from having to re-register monthly. He cannot leave the state. He is supposed to inform employers of his status as a sex offender, so he cannot get a normal job and subsists on handyman work. In the

end he generates about \$400 a month for one post-incarceration entity or another, whether he has a job or not.

Stokes's designated handlers tell him that the system would smile upon him if he would get more formal 8-to-5 employment, something that could be more easily tracked and taxed. Would that it were so easy for a 66-year-old man in this country. So he replies, "I'm retired dammit. I got the same right to live on my social security, if I can manage to, as anyone else."

Yes, but it's not much of a life for someone who once worked a skilled job setting up lights and stage gear in large arenas and performance venues. Now he lives in a basement workshop of an overcrowded apartment building/rooming house, in a space that is supposed to pass for an apartment but doesn't even come close. For that privilege he pays \$600 a month, and is allowed to work off part of it off by the landlord as a handyman.

Stokes tells me he could get out from under much of this by, and here's the legal wording, "satisfying the court's criteria for clear and convincing evidence that due to his physical condition the person no longer poses a menace to the health and safety of others."

"You could cut your dick off," I suggest.

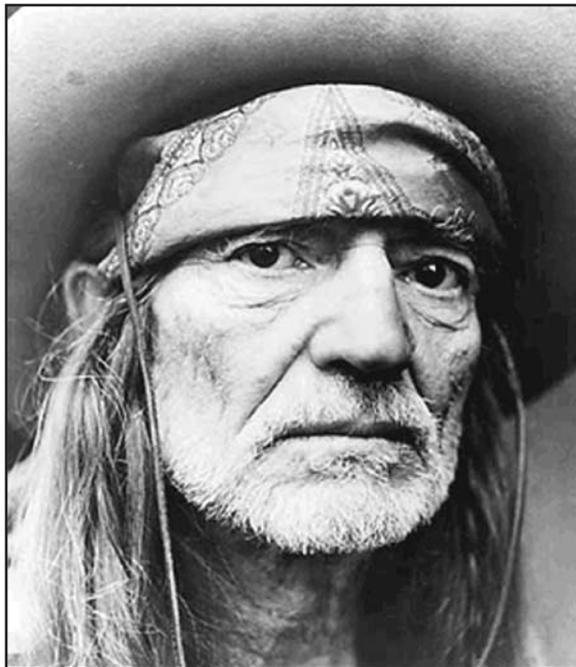
"Sometimes I wish I had," he sighs.

In any case, I am pretty damned convinced parole is a racket, just like incarceration has become a racket, just as everything in this whole goddamned country is a racket in disguise, from home mortgages to health care. If it is vital to ordinary citizens, it's a racket. But fear is the biggest racket of all. Even our rightful fear of sex offenders gets harnessed to the objectives of the corporate and political elites, woven into the weft and warp of the national delusion we call "the fabric of our society." The freedom loving one that currently has 2.2 million of its own citizens locked up and another 2 million walking around under strict post-incarceration supervision and monitoring.

At this writing there are supposed to be

117 registered sex offenders in this burg of 24,000 from which I write, Winchester, Virginia, yet only 61 in the surrounding county which has a population of 73,000. Let me make a wild speculation here and say there may be a difference in the way justice is administered in the two localities.

As if Stokes needed to catch any more bad breaks, his situation got worse. It seems he had the outrageous gall to get himself a dog. Stokes came upon a rather large black female mutt recently, who looked like she had a little retriever in her, according to



WANTED: A guy who thinks he looks like Willie Nelson

Stokes, though I could never see it. She was bone skinny, partially blind and being neglected and abused by an old alcoholic woman down the street.

That dog, named Beulah, just loved Stokes. He lovingly fed her, and she stayed by his side constantly and obediently. But she kept getting skinnier and skinnier no matter how much he fed her. For a while we speculated it was worms, but I've seen enough dogs to know something worse was at work. Stokes spent money he didn't have on expensive worm medicine. But he surely did not have \$150 for a vet and tests, and in a nation where uninsured folks are let to die slowly because they cannot pay cash, there was damned sure no more mercy for dogs.

Mercy too has been privatized and costs money. Meanwhile old Beulah is hanging out in the back yard in a friendly fashion, weak and sick as she is, sniffing and getting petted by all who come her way. Dogs are like that. Uncomplaining and decent unto death. I've had several who passed that way. She was old and getting ready to die, sure as god made little green apples. Broke as Stokes is, this was certainly was not going to be a veterinarian administered death, with a canine Kevorkian attending. And being a paroled felon, for damned sure Stokes was not going to produce a gun and shoot her, which is the way old dogs such as we saw animals put out of misery back in our day.

A situation like that is bound to draw the animal control officer's attention, and rightfully so given the outward appearance of the situation. So Stokes was busted. An examination showed that Beulah had diabetes. Seems they'll get a vet to examine a dog to get a conviction but not to save a dog's life. Whereupon Stokes was charged with animal abuse by the animal control office of our city police department. "You should never have let that dog get in this condition; you should have taken her to a veterinarian!" Now Stokes has a court appearance on the docket for animal cruelty. And of course no money for a lawyer. That's where the compassion of a lonely old man for another sentient being will get you. Smack dab in the jaws of our justice system.

I hold middle class America responsible for this deformed thing we now call justice. And I've wanted to write an article about the sex abuse crime industry scam in this country, and proposed it to several magazines. Every one of them said that sex abusers are too unsympathetic as characters for them to publish. I pointed out that these are real people, not characters in a fictional work. The editors added that they were afraid the public might mistake such a story as being supportive of real sex offenders.

Governments and states exist to control people, and for no other reason. If justice is achieved somewhere in the process, it's an added bonus. But control above all else is necessary for modern civilization to exist. Population grows by the minute, increasing social pressure on humanity.

More rules and more control are required to keep order. Order is defined as the way we think others should behave – or imagine them to misbehave. We support the state’s police machinery and massive incarceration of our fellow citizens, so long as they are being imprisoned for the right reasons. They should pay. Every action in a capitalist world must produce money. So they should pay in cash.

Last week I was in Minneapolis, and spent a couple of nights getting drunk with a friend, an apartment building owner, who in his younger years did hard time for burglary. Things were somewhat different then, he avowed. In the fifties and sixties, a prisoner may or may not have worked off his “debt to society.” But in these times, he says, “The system demands that you just deliver payment in cash. It’s more efficient. But not fundamentally different. Back then, the rich still profited for our crimes more than we did. We stole \$10,000 worth of stuff. Next day in the paper we found that the guy we burglarized claimed it \$30,000 worth for insurance purposes. Getting robbed was a winning situation for him. He made 20-K on us.”

It’s also is a wining situation for the 20 percent of Americans in what we call the middle class – those actually living the middle class life as advertised by the commercial and financial state’s marketing department. It works well for

Stokes’s psychologist, his piss tester, his lie detector service contractor, the people with the sex offender website contract, and all good citizens with investments on Wall Street. The psychologist needs money to send his kid on the private school trip to Italy this summer. The contractor providing the sex abuser services just built a summer down on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The state police officer running the sex abuser monitoring program will retire in six years – his investments need to earn another \$50,000 in that time... But hold on!

Honest to God, as I conclude writing this—and I swear on a stack of friggin’ Bibles—a police prowler car and two of the department’s animal control officers in a police truck just parked in front of Stokes’s place across my driveway. They get out after rifling through some papers on a clipboard and talking on cell phones.

Now they have walked over to Stokes’s back door. He comes out and they sit him down in a lawn chair while they stand over

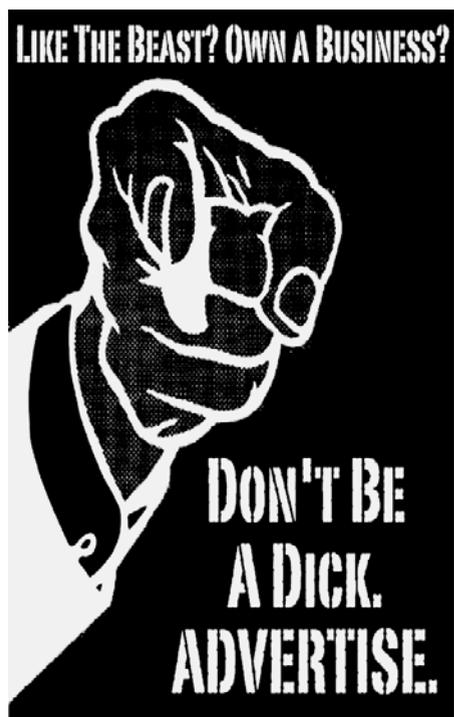
him, hands on hips, lips moving under dark sunglasses. And the neighbors are all peeking out their blinds, watching the cops accost the registered sex offender (once he was on the internet registry, word got around here fast). They are probably looking at the animal control officers’ truck and thinking: “Oh my gawd! Bestiality too?”

Anyway you look at it, this cannot be good. Not for Stokes, not for you or me or anyone else less than enamored with the idea of a police state.

And Stokes? As he told me only yesterday, “I’m a goddamned magnet for bad luck.”

No he’s not. He’s just one more anonymous human profit center to be squeezed, one more grape to be crushed in a grotesque blood and money press that has no mercy.

Joe Bageant’s latest book is *Deer Hunting With Jesus Dispatches from America’s Class War*. His website is joebageant.com





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NM Albuquerque Flying Star Café, I, ii, iii, iv, v, vi
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Album Reviews

BY ERIC LINGENFELTER



Scarlett Johansson, *Anywhere I Lay My Head* (Atco)

I was so ready to rip this album to bloody giblets.

For one thing, it's a celebrity album. Saying that celebrities-turned-musicians have an awful track record is like saying that untreated syphilis can be kind of unpleasant.

And it's not just a celebrity album. It's a celebrity *tribute* album. Specifically, it's a tribute to Tom Waits. For those unfamiliar with Waits's music, imagine a three-pack-a-day-smoking carnival barker fronting Satan's personal jug band. And pretty little Scarlett Johansson wanted to recreate the madness for her musical debut. How cute.

I licked my lips at the prospect of curbstomping an album that

would almost certainly be an Everest-sized mountain of pure shit. I cackled as I sat at the computer and clicked play on track one. I cracked my knuckles and waited for my fingers to dance a gleefully venomous jig across the keyboard.

But against all conceivable odds, the album doesn't completely suck. In fact, *it's kind of good*.

Ugh. Way to ruin my fun, you fuckers.

Now, the album isn't anywhere near flawless, mostly because Scarlett's performance is so lifeless that I'm surprised EMTs weren't called to the recording studio to declare her dead at the scene. She could have been replaced by any random deep-voiced hot chick with a decent sense of pitch and the results would be exactly the same, if not better.

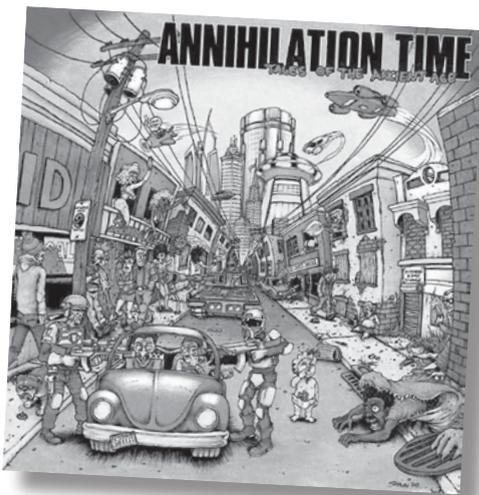
The production team deserves all the credit for making this thing halfway enjoyable. First, they made Waits' music their own. They took his recipe for musical moonshine, switched out the harsher ingredients and brewed themselves something smoother - a dusky, dreamy indie pop concoction that sounds like something Angelo Badalamenti composed for a lost David Lynch mindfuck.

Then, they drowned Johansson's flat, Valium-addled drone in effects and let it sink beneath the waves of their sonic ocean.

The result: an album that's nowhere near as disastrous as it should have been.

We'll call this round a draw, Hollywood.

Anywhere I Lay My Head gets a rating of two bra-busting gazongas, fulfilling a 2006 federal mandate requiring all stories about Scarlett Johansson to contain at least one reference to her tits.



Annihilation Time, III - *Tales of the Ancient Age* (Tee Pee)

I can't skate and I don't smoke weed but Annihilation Time makes me want to build a halfpipe in my backyard and use the leftover wood to carve, like, the gnarliest bong ever.

They sound like what would happen if Deep Purple decided to ditch the keyboards, quit the major label - probably by getting trashed on Natty Ice, breaking into the label prez's penthouse condo and pissing all over his priceless Turkish rugs - and crash out at the local punk flophouse, watching trashy horror movies and listening to Black Flag and other assorted late '70s/early '80s hardcore punk acts all day.

Translation: they fucking rock. I even have objective evidence just in case my gushing isn't convincing enough.

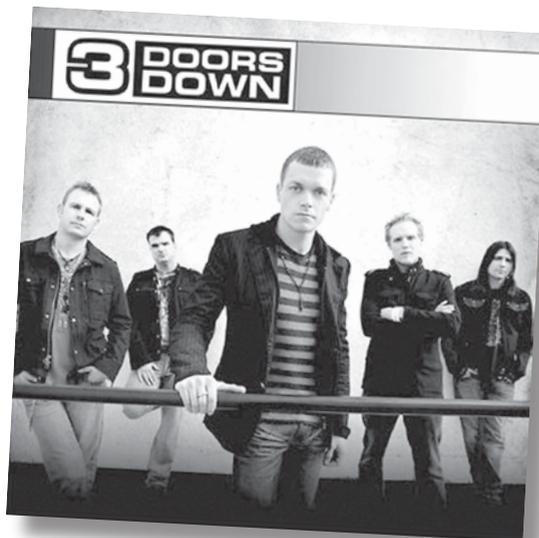
Consider this. At Annihilation Time's last basement show in Buffalo, one guy jumped out of the swirling mosh pit, straddled the ceiling-mounted air duct like a monkey and repeatedly bashed his face into it in time to the music.

If that's not definitive proof that they've achieved maximum rockitude, I don't know what is.

As for the album, it's their best full-length yet. If you're looking to get into them, grab this one and the *Cosmic Unconsciousness 7*" and work backward from there. And if you really want to rock the fuck out, go see them live. Just don't go literally banging your head like that guy I mentioned before. I hear concussions kinda suck.

III - Tales of the Ancient Age gets a rating of one bongwater-soaked Thin Lizzy t-shirt and one vomit-encrusted denim vest with a Motorhead backpatch.

3 Doors Down, *3 Doors Down* (Universal)



A reading from the Book of Kurt.

"And, lo, Kurt Cobain stood atop the mountain with his mighty Fender Mustang, unleashing a thunderous i-IV-III-VI chord progression in F Minor, that most righteous of keys. The great spandex dam tore asunder. The tears of the downtrodden spewed forth from the break, the flood waters carving a new landscape where meaningful rock and roll would flourish. And it was good."

So sayeth the Bible of Modern Rock. And I guess for a little while all that shit might have been true. But despite what everyone who was *there*, man would have you believe when they wax orgasmic about "the year that punk broke," the Great Grunge Explosion of the early '90s that Nirvana spearheaded probably did a hell of a lot more bad than good in the long run.

Case in point, this heaping helping of alternametal gruel.

You see, right after Nirvana kicked in the door wavin' the four-four, imitators spawned and made the genre quite a bore. Almost instantly, bands like Bush, Live, Everclear, Collective Soul, Silverchair, Seven Mary Three and Days of the New popped up and rode the Seattle sound's "quiet verse, loud chorus, whine about my shitty life" formula so hard into the ground that it's a wonder northwestern Washington state is still above sea level.

Then a new crop of emotionally scarred meatheads took the formula, beefed up the guitars to appeal to the *Varsity Blues* set and proceeded to dominate mainstream radio with a generic sound that's exactly what hair metal would be like if it was played by a bunch of self-loathing mama's boys with a severe allergy to fun.

The dreck that nigh indistinguishable bands like Godsmack, Nickelback, Staind, Puddle of Mudd, Daughtry, Seether, Hinder, Three Days Grace and 3 Doors Down feed listeners is just as substanceless and processed as any of Poison's musical Twinkies, but the sweet poppy cream filling that makes L.A. trash metal such a guilty pleasure got replaced with a slimy jelly made of the bitter, snotty tears of a petulant teenager caught staying out past curfew.

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss. Viva la revolution.

3 Doors Down gets a rating of 1,000 muffled screeches of "I HATE YOU, DAD!" as heard through the bedroom door of an oppressed pre-teen whose parents just don't understaaaaand. 🤖



Horse of the same old color



Remember former Celtic Chris Herren? A vet from the grand old days of green-and-white lore — the juggernaut era, the time of Jerome Moiso and Bryant Stith and Rick Brunson. Now, that team was a beast, unlike the collection of stiffs Boston's stuck with now. Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever — not excellence and not, it seems, the once-promising career of a McDonald's All-American and New England hoops legend.

Herren, in all seriousness, was once considered an upside-laden combo-guard type. He lasted two years in the NBA, and eventually landed in the CBA (where he most recently played for the Dakota Wizards), but was tailed all the while by whispers of off-the-court issues. Looks like he's finally hit bottom after a drug-related arrest this past week.

Throughout the past few years, Herren would periodically appear in the news, but not for his on-the-court prowess. In 2004, in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, he allegedly lost control of his car in a Dunkin' Donuts drive-thru; police subsequently discovered 18 empty H bags, a needle, and a spoon in his car. A year later, Herren got a heroin-related

DUI in Massachusetts (he later pleaded no contest to reduced charges).

Now he's in the soup again, headed for the dreaded jailhouse kick. On June 4, he was discovered in his hometown of Fall River, sitting in a stopped car with the engine running and in gear, slumped over the wheel. Herren was sweating and having trouble breathing, his skin an "ash-gray color."

Cops took him to a hospital, where he regained consciousness. Police found his works in the car, however, and he's being summoned to District Court on charges of driving under the influence of drugs, possession of a Class A drug, and reckless operation of a motor vehicle.

Not much to say about this except that it's sad. Heroin: it's his life, it's his wife. Give him the minimum 25 points for the DUI, minus three for being an ex-Celtic.

Heel on wheels



Well, there wasn't much activity on the Justin Miller Award front this year — none of the prospective NFL draftees got arrested right before the draft, undercutting their chances at professional

gridiron fame and fortune. We do now have, however, the second such entrant on the NBA-draft front. Earlier, UTEP's Stefon Jackson got himself in trouble for allegedly withholding information about an FBI fugitive (Jackson's cousin, as luck would have it), and now we have another hoops hopeful trapped in the net of fate. Ty Lawson, point guard of the North Carolina Tar Heels, got popped in Chapel Hill on June 6 and charged with driving after consuming alcohol, violating a local "noise ordinance," and driving with a revoked license.

Lawson, it should be noted, might very well have drawn some interest from the Celtics in the upcoming draft. An undersized one-guard with good quickness, he was on the bubble of the first round — right in the Celtics' sweet spot, as the team certainly needs a backup for Rajon Rondo. One wonders if this incident will push Danny Ainge away from even considering Lawson . . . time will tell. In the meantime, give Ty the requisite 25 DUI points. Go Heels!

School "credits"



We've had another incident involving college athletes and identity/credit-

card theft. Astute readers will recall that University of Florida D-back Jamar Hornsby was just a few weeks ago busted for allegedly using a dead woman's credit card. Now we have another defensive back, this time from West Virginia, busted for allegedly using a series of stolen credit cards.

Charles Pugh, a safety who mostly plays on special teams, was arrested after police connected him with a series of purchases totaling around \$1600, made with credit cards stolen from a car parked near the WVU campus. Police executed a search warrant at Pugh's apartment and unspecified "property" was recovered. There have also been reports that Quinton Andrews, another WVU safety, was with Pugh during his shopping spree, though he has not yet been charged.

Keep an eye on this trend — it looks like it might be an up-and-comer in the sports world (the pellet-gun violation of 2008). Give Pugh 21 points, and stay tuned.

That's a Zip gun



There was an extraordinary incident in Akron, Ohio, this past week involving 20-year-old Rydell Brooks, a sophomore guard on the UA Zips basketball team. According to reports, cops pulled over a van on Bellows Street in Akron in what we

might euphemistically describe as your standard "routine traffic stop."

Side note: in many states with large urban black populations, there are laws against "excessively tinted windows," and police use this dubious legal maneuver as a probable-cause lever to stop and search cars. In this case, the van in question had such windows, and cops approached it. But they reportedly hadn't made it even close to the vehicle before shots rang out. Two men inside the van fired at police and then took off on foot, only to be eventually chased down. Brooks and one Edward Davis, also 20, were apprehended.

The real intrigue began when police searched the '97 Dodge Caravan and found five guns and two ski masks. Nobody is saying what they think the endgame was supposed to be that night, but one suspects it wasn't an improv-comedy performance. Brooks is now being held on a \$1 million bond — repeat: *\$1 million bond* — and the charges so far are attempted murder, felonious assault, carrying a concealed weapon, driving with a suspended license, and driving with the aforementioned excessively tinted windows. One imagines a possession-of-burglary-tools charge might also be in the works, as well as some other assorted prosecutorial yokes for the eventual trial.

I've been unable to find an instance of another athlete getting arrested with a gun and a ski mask in his car. About the closest thing was the Maurice Clarett incident, in which the former star Ohio State running back was arrested with

four guns and a hatchet not far from the home of a witness who had identified him as the man who stole a cell phone at gunpoint in an alley. (Clarett was also in possession of a CD containing children's songs that had been distributed to prisoners of an Ohio penitentiary.) That incident, you may recall, led to revelations about Clarett's relationship with an Israeli ex-con/mobster named Hai Waknine — revelations that helped observers make sense out of some of Clarett's more mystifying past statements, including his head-scratching exit from a meeting with East-West Shrine Game officials in 2004 ("I've got to go. It's Shabbos.").

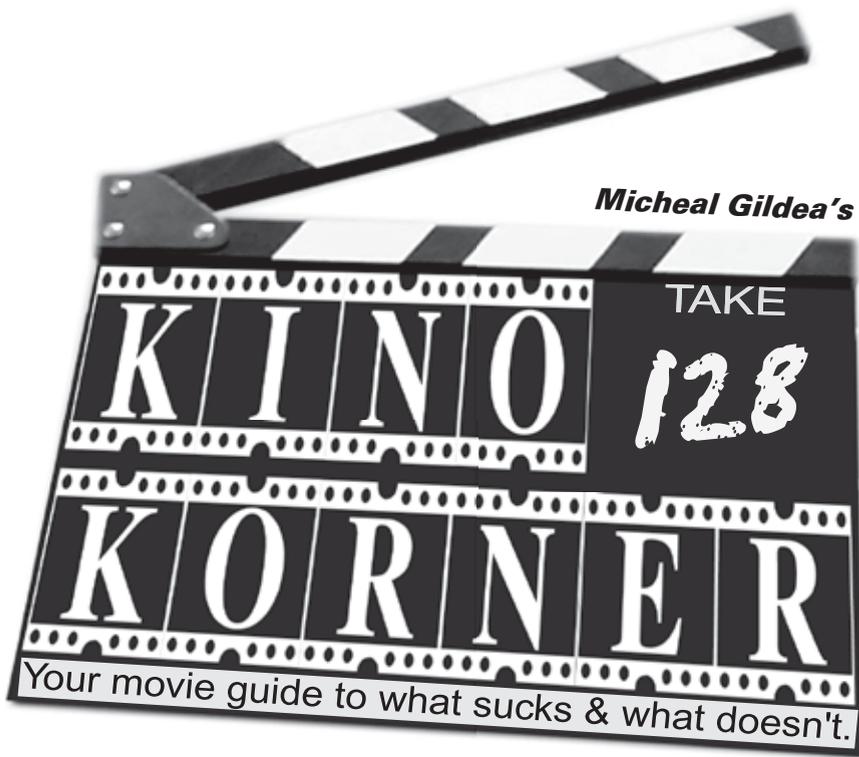
As for Brooks . . . hardcore hoops fans may remember him as the guard who propelled little-known Niagara U. to the 2007 NCAA tournament. He sat out this year and was due to begin playing for the Zips next season. Unlikely, to say the least. For shooting at cops, he heads toward the top of the board with 88 points. Further details on the way . . .

2008 LEADER BOARD

- CEDRIC EVERSON AND ABE SATTERFIELD (EX-IOWA) | rape of an incapacitated person | 90
- JIM LEYRITZ (EX-YANKEES) | DUI manslaughter | 90
- BRADY SMITH (EX-BC) | being a drunken slob of a would-be rapist | 89
- BRANDAN WRIGHT (EX-BETHUNE-COOKMAN) | running dude over with an Isuzu for owing him \$200 | 89
- RYDELL WOODS (AKRON) | shooting at cops; getting caught with five guns and ski masks | 88
- JEROME MATHIS (TEXANS) | choking pregnant babymama | 75
- FABIAN WASHINGTON (RAIDERS) | red marks on girlfriend's neck | 70
- AHMAD BROOKS (BENGALS) | punching chick in front of her kids, the asshole | 60
- CARL ELLER (EX-VIKINGS) | assault, terrorist threats, being a generally dangerous old geezer, driving a motorcycle with busted plates | 60
- JAMES HARRISON (STEELERS) | punching girlfriend to facilitate a baptism | 60
- ANDY CHRISTENSEN (NEBRASKA) | wantonly grabbing unguarded vagina in bar | 55
- JEREMY ELDER (EX-ALABAMA) | late-night stickup | 55
- CEDRIC WILSON (STEELERS) | punching girlfriend, but not in order to facilitate a baptism | 55
- ADAM "PACMAN" JONES (TITANS) | being a menace to peaceful strip-club patrons everywhere | 50
- MAURICE SIMMONS (USC) | being the wheelman for a Compton armed mugging | 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-shrunken wiener | 46
- KEITH MCCANTS (EX-ALABAMA) | getting Tasered after hurling pliers and crack pipe at cops | 43
- BRANDON PETTIGREW (OKLAHOMA STATE) | elbowing Stillwater's finest | 42
- RIAR GEER (COLORADO) | randomly assaulting two students, being an asshole | 40
- JOSH JARBOE (OKLAHOMA) | bringing totally unnecessary .380 handgun to track meet | 40
- LYNN KATOA (COLORADO) | campus assault | 40

Sports Blotter Legend

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



The Dark Knight



"Hey, buddy, want some pills?"

Hancock



Bateman & Smith: They do things!

So what do you do when you get sick of seeing the same movies and sequels about those same old superheroes? Well, you can find even more obscure ones to make a movie out off—you know, the ones from *graphic novels*. No? Create a whole new hero? Yeah, yeah. That's it. But let's take it further. Let's make him edgy, smarmy and crass. I know! Make him a homeless, low-grade alcoholic! Ooh, ooh! And the best part? We make the movie a comedy!

And this is where the mighty often and almost always fall. Superheroes and comedy generally go together like an open can of paint thinner and closed windows. If you're into either of those combinations I believe my point is made. And I also get bonus points if you saw *My Super Ex-Girlfriend*.

So we're at *Hancock*. It's the story of an alcoholic dickhead superhero who seems to do more harm than good. He's all about rough take-offs and landings when he flies. He's a proponent of infrastructure and property damage on a large scale. And if some little kid calls him a jackass, Hancock will throw him 200 feet up into the air, then catch him once he's scared good and shitless. At some point the public's had it with Hancock, and he voluntarily goes to jail. But somewhere Hancock saved an image consultant who volunteers to help reinvent himself. And if that doesn't sound bad enough, Will Smith plays Hancock.

Personally, I don't care *now*. And I'm guessing that anyone who's down to see *Hancock* won't care by the end of 4th of July weekend. This movie looks like they used margarine instead of sweet cream butter to make it and margarine doesn't hold shit together that well. God, this summer movie season sucks so far.

Walking out of the movie theater three years ago after seeing *Batman Begins*, I was floored. It made up for a Batman movie that had the pox/taint of Schumacher upon it in a way not unlike someone offering to buy you a new house after they pass out drunk and piss on your couch. And with the promise of The Joker for the next movie, The Golden Age would soon be upon us.

Admittedly I'm excited for *Batman Begins'* sequel *The Dark Knight* in ways the printed word cannot describe. Christian Bale returning as Batman/Bruce Wayne and the rest of the cast minus Katie Holmes (replaced by Maggie Gyllenhaal—yessssssss!) is reason enough to be there opening night. Throw in recent dead guy Heath Ledger as possibly the creepiest incarnation of The Joker ever, then add Aaron Eckhart as Harvey Dent and I'm facing the constant threat of dehydration from the state of perpetual orgasm I face at the mere prospect of this movie. When I hit the theater in July, I'm showing up with an IV just so I don't risk passing out.

But there's also a part of me that dreads going to see this movie. More specifically,

wading through fanboys who've hit *all* the viral sites for *The Dark Knight* and dealing with the subsequent damage it's already done to their frail, virtually non-existent personalities and their already questionable senses of humor.

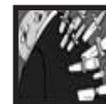
For example, take the case of some stammering hammerhead who ganked the phone of one of my friends and left me a manic voicemail. First off, this nincomfuckingpoop mispronounces my name—that told me I was dealing with a Grade-A tardcake right there. Then this assclown has the sack to impersonate my editor, Al Uthman. This fool sounded like he'd been downing Red Bulls or smoking meth straight since Neil Patrick Harris came out of the closet. Uthman usually sounds like he hasn't gotten a full night's sleep this century. Then this fool tells me he's upset with me because my reviews haven't been turned in yet. Oh really? Pligga Neese! My shit's always in on time. Unless I get an incorrect deadline but that's beside the point. [Sorry. -Ed.]

This turkey on my voicemail proceeds to threaten me if I don't say that "Batman is the best sequel to a movie made eight or nine times already" and he's going to sick Ian Murphy on me if I don't say that in my review. Ooh! And possibly the worst part of this whole twisted message was the fact that this guy said *capice*. Then he said he had to go because he had to go piss his pants or something. Oh, and he sounded like he was at the Old Pink.

The whole experience (especially the *capice* part) was enough to make me want to submerge myself in the shadiest parts of Asia and learn obscure martial arts techniques. Of course that message was also inspiring to the point where I'd more than willingly wear a rubber outfit with a cape and pointed ears if only to tear fanboys apart at a midnight showing.

But each trailer that's been released has been more impressive than the one before it. *The Dark Knight* maintains the grimy film noir elements that *Batman Begins* introduced. Ledger is nothing short of staggering in the few brief shots in the trailer and REAL BUILDINGS (as in non-CG ones) are being blown up in this movie! All this and director Christopher Nolan is citing Michael Mann's *Heat* as a major influence on *The Dark Knight*. And all that's worth fighting through some douchebags dressed up in costumes at the theater.

X-Files: I Want to Believe



"You know that cell phones can't really pop popcorn, right, Mulder?"

When *The X-Files* rode off into the sunset 6 years ago, it disappeared in a way not unlike your childhood dog that lived to old age and eventually died. There were indeed the Good Old Days, and you were indeed still supportive when ol' Rusty's eyes started going. Hell, you didn't even mind ponying up the \$50 a month for that medication that you swore wasn't doing any good. But once ol' Rusty went blind, got mean and started shitting and pissing up the house, it was time for him to go live out the rest of his days on a nice big farm in the country.

If you caught even one episode from the last four seasons of *The X-Files* you know the whole thing went on way too long. The only things those seasons had to offer were a progressively better-looking and somewhat less bitchy Scully and a handful of classic Mulder one-liners. And after 1998's *Fight the Future* movie it was pretty obvious that series creator Chris Carter was pulling the ongoing mythology out of his ass. Don't believe me? Watch the series finale. Then tell me what the hell happened, because once the previously mentioned snappy banter was gone I was off like a prom dress.

If you thought *The X-Files* was cryptic and vague before it went to hell, this trailer views like a cryptic and disjointed

montage of utter nonsense with no real context to place it within. What—these asshats drop the most anticlimactic turd of turds of a series finale in our laps after nine years of faithful viewership? The whole thing was like a long-term relationship and you were getting the red flags that this wasn't going to last forever, but then it's over and it didn't end well.

So this person who wasted nine seasons, I mean years of your life is now trying to lure you back. With what? What? A lot of quick cuts of generally indeterminate imagery that offer no insight or even a general idea as to what this little opus is about. Don't forget the running; lots and lots of running. But most importantly don't forget to throw in a few brief shots of a weather-beaten David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. Trying to breathe life into That Old Magic with this trailer is like taking back an ex you haven't seen in years after they tell you they drink just 3 nights a week instead of 7, only do Civil War re-enactments once a year now, are getting their license back in a couple of months and offer you an engagement ring purchased at Wal-Mart. Some people are easier than others, but not me! I'm a different person, I've changed. I'll take that lifetime supply of quiet desperation any day, thank you very much!

Hellboy II: The Golden Army



Hellboy? Ron Perlman's like 50!

Neat monsters, lame story. That's what the first *Hellboy* was all about. A big demon working with a shadowy government agency to save the world from Rasputin (that main bad guy was supposed to be Rasputin, right?) and some wind-up Nazi assassin that turned out to be dust wrapped in duct tape.

Hellboy II just basically looks exactly like the first *Hellboy*, except the creatures look cooler. I thought I saw one that had a small house for a head. Could be wrong about that. So anyway, yeah. Some bad guys are trying to take over and Hellboy, an asymmetrically-coiffed Selma Blair and the Abe the fish guy have to stop them. Maybe they go to some otherworldly place to get help?

Yeah, I'm sorry I'm not being much help here. I know its my job and everything, but once I saw it was *Hellboy* I stopped listening. The creatures look awesome and I might actually watch *Pan's Labyrinth* sometime in the next few days. With that movie, which was also made by Guillermo Del Toro, I know I'll get a good story with some cool creatures. *Hellboy II* just doesn't really challenge me to enjoy it. The only thing this movie challenges me to do is see it for free as soon as possible.

Journey to the Center of the Earth



"Gee whiz, Mr. Fraser, do you really think we'll find your career down here?"

Watching the trailer for *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, the words "innocuous kiddie ride" sprang to mind. "Pointless" showed up after further ruminations. Brendan Fraser yet again plays the adventure hero/scientist who, with his nephew, ends up falling through a cave floor to... well, the center of the Earth. It

took more than half of the 2 minute and 14 second running time of the trailer to explain this.

The rest of the trailer was a PG-rated car wreck of dicey special effects involving prehistoric creatures, Spielbergian summer blockbuster worship, lame "in

KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Betrayed by Those Who Trained Him



Impossible Science



Noble Retard



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



Chick Flick



Post Apocalyptic Wasteland



Washed Up Hero Gets Second Chance at Glory



Ordinary Person Pushed Too Far



Mind Fuck



Embattled Loser Overcomes Obstacles



Crappy Remake



'70s Chic

your face” 3-D shots (yes, it’s a 3-d movie) and painful, painful kid-friendly humor. *Journey to the Center of the Earth* looks so remarkably generic! Granted, the story in one form or another is basically older than time itself, but this is like the Hydrox version of Indiana Jones. The new one even! This movie makes me want to punch out parents who take their kids to see it, and—obviously—kidnap their children for the afternoon and make them watch *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Parents who take their kids to see this should be brought up on child endangerment charges. You know, because it is possible to bore someone to death and you can absolutely overdose on vanilla.

Mamma Mia!



Your vagina will love this movie

If you watch “Family Guy” with any regularity, you’re familiar with a hilarious recurrent bit from the show, one of those things that is funny because you’ve seen it happen in real life. Peter Griffin will bang his foot, knee, or whatever, then fall to the ground, wincing in pain. What accompanies this is an extended period of *ooooohhs* and *aaaaahhhs* that go on much longer than they need to.

The trailer for *Mamma Mia!* did that to me. I know that it’s a musical heavily mired in the works of Abba, but somehow it just doesn’t prepare you for what’s coming, even if you’ve seen the musical. A lot of dancing while those dancing stare at you. Stop looking at me! *Oooooohhhh*.

A lot of music. *Aaaaaahhhh*.

The plot offers no respite either. Some girl raised by her single mom *ooooohhhh* on a Greek Island *aaaaahhh* is getting married *ooooohhhh* and wants her father to give her away. The problem is that her mom was a big whore back in the day and in true Maury Povich style can only narrow it down to three guys. *Oooooohhhh*.

Look. Enough with the *oooohhh* and *aaaaahhh* shit. There’s going to be three sets of circumstances under which you’re going to see *Mamma Mia!* 1) You’re a woman. Call it misogynist but tell me I’m wrong. You think John Wayne would’ve

gone to see this movie? Didn’t think so. 2) You’re a gay man. You can say I’m basing that statement on stereotypes but everybody knows stereotypes save time. Who doesn’t like saving time? 3) You’re a straight guy trying to nail, or continue nailing, a girl. Maybe she didn’t like *You Don’t Mess With the Zohan* and now you’re in a world of shit. But if you haven’t reaped the so-called rewards, she’s just trying to see how much shit she can put you through until she finds someone better. You saw *Sex and the City* with her, didn’t you? She’s going to have you wearing women’s underwear by next weekend. Have fun watching *Project Runway*, you vagina. 

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HATE-FILLED RANT

A couple of hours ago Tim Russert died of a heart attack and already outpourings of sticky grief are soiling the internet.

All over supposedly liberal blogs there are not only the proper and justified expressions of sympathy for his loved ones, but also apparent attempts to deify him as a patron saint of journalism.

People are commenting about how they are in tears at his death, mourning the passing of "the last true journalist."

A few choice quotes:

"I never believed the big, fat news stories, until I heard it from The Reassert and only then, I knew it was true."

"You could always trust Tim to be fair and honest with who he was interviewing."

"A sad day for the Russert family and the world. He represented the best of journalism and humanity."

"Tim was one of the few who recognized the grave error of many in the media, who did not do a good job during the past two elections and in selling America an illegal war. Tim was a man of great integrity who, after reading the Scott McClellan book, was able to see the errors within his profession and stated that the media had to do a better job this time."

These comments are from "progressives."

Now, I know decorum requires that we wait a week or so before telling the truth about the recently deceased, but that doesn't require that we tell lies about him in the interim.

What about his role in the Plame affair?

What about his admission that he asks his cocktail party buddies in government their permission before he reports what he's learned from his connections?

What about his leading role in turning "journalism" into mere stenography?

The guy had a family who are in grief, they deserve our sympathy. He himself deserves all the sympathy any other now non-existent person deserves for having gone through one of the two most common human experiences.

But can we please not deify the guy? And if we have to, can we at least also deify... I dunno, one of the thousands of people who have died today who WEREN'T helping to destroy democracy... just to kinda balance things out?



-Jafafa Hots

Dear Hots,
But...but...TIMMEH!

PULLING OUT EARLY

Couldn't agree with Suck my Jong [*Allison Kilkenny, issue 127*] more.

Unfortunately, if you look-around the most popular feminist blogs, you'll find such defamation tactics as screaming "Mom humper!" aren't that unusual. A common response to criticism or dissent is to distort the person's words beyond recognition and attack the distortions as if they are the genuine article.

The only sane reaction is to withdraw in disgust and bewilderment, in response to which the ever-so-intelligent Vagina Ninjas usually declare victory.

Keep-up the righteous snark!
-W_C

Dear W,
You misogynist worm, get your tiny-penised opinions off of our bodies! That's it; we're voting for McCain! You'll be sorry, you ball-less pervert!

MASTER OF FUCKITS

I know this article's old news, but I just found it, so my vitriol is fresher than the attack of the killer tomatoes. It's about time someone had the balls to fucking say it. Fuck those assholes who were so fucking insecure about the length/girth of their cocks they needed to go halfway around the world to kill someone without fear of consequence. Ever notice that most people who say they love their country have yet to leave the fucking county they grew up in? Fuck them in the ass with a broken pipe and dump them in a dumpster where their sobs will be metallicly amplified upward to the heavens so God can know the extent of their consternation and shame when they scream "Does this mean I'm gay?"

It's like, I want to feel bad for the amputees coming back, but I knew I wasn't joining the military when I was 14 and I read Johnny Got His Gun. At this point in history, with information, diaries and photos documenting the horrors of warfare readily available - not to mention mandatory teaching in every state in the US - Johnny Gets What He Fucking Deserves.

So anyway, fuck yeah. Fuck the troops.
-Mike

Dear Mike,
Yeah, that Metallica video was awesome.
Dananananana! dananananana!

FOUNDING FUCKERS

I am writing this in response to the responses you received concerning your article "Fuck the Troops".

I've noticed a bit of a theme here. I see two common responses (and often a combination of the two) 1) "I'll kick your ass!" or "Say that to a Marine so he can kick your ass!" and 2) "Respect the troops, you bastard, they are the reason you are free to say that shit...."

The idea that anyone should unconditionally respect and support our troops (despite any disregard for basic ethics they may exhibit) based on the argument that they [our troops] are somehow responsible for my constitutional right to Free Speech is preposterous. What's worse is to insinuate that I should forgo my constitutional right to Free Speech out of respect for those [our troops] who have supposedly granted me my constitutional right to Free Speech.

Where did I get my constitutional right to Free Speech, the mullet sporting armchair patriot might ask? Well, that would be from our Founding Fathers; the framers of the Constitution of the United States and its amendments; and the "troops" who fought the American Revolutionary War (sorry puffed up Marines of 2008, you missed that boat by miles, and by miles I mean more than 200 years).

The reality is that it is not Iraq who is threatening to revoke my constitutional rights, it's my own government.

Exercising my right to say what I fucking want to granted me by our Founding Fathers, not some dill-hole trolling for free college tuition,
-Ann

Dear Ann,
You should try telling that to one of our brave soldiers! Then you'd get the

murdering you deserve for exercising the rights they give you!

YAWN, ANOTHER DEATH THREAT

FUCK YOU very much. people like you would be better off with a bullet between your eyes. Or two in the back of the skull.
-James Schovanec

*Dear James,
If only our brave heroes weren't so busy in Iraq, we could have been brutally murdered by now!*

ATYPICAL RESPONSE

I'd just like to add my two cents as a Gulf War veteran. I see a lot of vitriol being spewed your way and am guessing that most of it comes from civilians. I have to disagree with the assessment of military members being "rubes", but to be honest I thought the same thing until I joined up in 1984. One of the best learning experiences I've had in life was discovering that I actually *wasn't* smarter than everyone else in the service; going through life thinking no one around you can hold a candle to your own superior intellect tends to erode your faith in humanity after awhile. I can't speak for anyone but the several dozen I met and worked closely with, but none of us were buying the hero bit being splattered around by the media when we joined up; it was irritating and insulting to the intelligence. With the exception of one weird chick from Texas, every single person I knew well in the military joined for the same reason I did: to get out of some shithole town or job, to travel, and to be able to afford a decent education at a good college instead of dicking around some lame community college campus in between shifts waiting tables. For all of us out there who weren't from wealth, it was a viable option. We took a calculated risk; when the Gulf war started heating up you could hear the bitching a mile away. None of us wanted to get into a war and kill people..we joined up for the sweet deal on education and the chance for world travel! Rubes? No; more like opportunists. When that gorge-riser of a song, "God bless the U.S.A." was played for us overseas, it was received in stunned silence. The general attitude was "Who is this redneck peckerwood trying to sell this song to--the Busch corporation? Who the fuck is stupid enough to swallow this dreck?" Well, we got our answer; civilians, apparently. As for us actually over there, don't patronize us, you arrogant horse's ass Lee Greenwood! And don't think we don't know you never served in the military, you dumb-hick-exploiting piece of dung! None of us were jaded, but

we weren't stupid either..and I'll bet I'm not the only vet who cringes every time some government P.R. moron who never saw duty starts in with the patronizing patriotism rap. There might be a percentage of rubes serving in this war who swallowed that line--I hope not--but I'll bet most who enlisted originally did it to get the things they can't afford otherwise: health care for themselves and dependents, a steady paycheck, affordable college education and hands-on technical experience.
D. R.

*Dear D.,
We thought it was about fighting lava monsters or something.*

REJECT CENSORED

LOOOOOOOOOK UPPPPPPPPPPP stupid people of Buffalo!!Chemtrailing!!!!!!spraying chemicals in our air!!!!I have proof!!!!!!They are doing this all over the World.

This is the kissenger 1975 plan for depopulation.They are spreading MORGELLONS disease and probably looking forward to a Bird flu epidemic.

Can you guys verify that there are no U.N.prison box cars?seen pictures doesnt look good.
Can you guys verify there are no F.E.M.A. prison camps?

What about the R.F.I.D. implant?
What about REX*84????
What about U.N. box cars parked in wyoming wilderness with chains on the floor and seating for many with, a guiluteen at the end of it.
these are some of the rumors just wondering with all your skills maybe you can stop playing retarded people at scam churches and look into this.

the chemtrailing is real I have extensive footage.

LOVE LOVE LOVE YOU GUYS,and hope that you will take this seriously and look into it.
I do not have the resources.

THANK YOU for telling the truth,and for opening eyes.
-QUEEN O SHEBA

*Dear Queen,
Alex Jones has lots of good info on this stuff, if "good" means "paranoid and retarded at the same time." Wait—we thought you had proof!*

RECENT STROKE VICTIM

you guys rule!!! i'm in this wasteland known as syracuse and want out. the beast helps me

get through 'orange fever' navigating carrier circle after 2 brewskies, and more snow than minnesota. hey, beast guys, i'm kinda funny, and think i can offer a unique take on america. as for 07's 50 list? awesome. except the one about the troops. give 'em a break. murphy-the retard article was BOSS! christ, i laughed so hard i thought i was gonna . . . oh man. i can't continue this mail-u-mentary. it . . . hurts. bad. i regret doing it. do you, too, suffer from 'tears of a clown' syndrome? I DON'T! BEING SUPERIOR IS THE BEST!
sincerely,
sheriff john brunell (reality cop show jerk)

*Dear Sheriff Bunell,
We're glad we caught you. We find your combination of tough talk and swishy persona as mesmerizing as the low-budget police videos of car crashes you string together and call TV. However, we have a question regarding your recent commercial, endorsing the ID Watchdog identity theft protection service. In that commercial, you state: "Even if you're doing all you can to protect against identity theft, it's still not enough." Again, "Even if you're doing all you can... it's still not enough." Sheriff Bunell, it seems to us this comment is demoralizing and self-defeating fearmongering. Presumably, after all, "all we can" would include hiring ID Watchdog, would it not? We cannot give into this pessimistic attitude in the face of such grave threats, can we? What kind of American are you Bunell? Are you working with the terrorists? We challenge you, sir, to prove you are not a secret Muslim hellbent on waging psychological warfare against good, cop-fearing Americans. Don't make Keith Olbermann whip out a special comment on your ass. He'll do it, too, the ratings whore.*

ATHEISTS ARE RETARDS TOO!

This Agnostic, Atheist Activiest says Ian Murphy is a perfect example of a mentally challanged low life who should have been aborted.

He is too lazy to get the facts about Iraq and too stupid to understand them if he did. Informed , intelligent and rational people know the facts PROVE the Iraq war is fully justified and a necessary part of our war on terror.

Ian Murphy is a parisitic leach who lives in the freedom provided for him by the members of the US military so he can prove to the world how stupid he is every time he opens his stupid mouth.
-Neil C. Reinhardt

*Dear Neil,
Facts. Fully justified. Informed. Right. Have*

you read a newspaper in the last five years, pinhead? Well, at least you're not going to pray for us.

CONCERNED ADVERSARY

An absolutely splendid example of why diatribes such as this continue to further marginalize the arguments on your side of the aisle.

A masterpiece of non-sequiturs, strawmen, and general loony-tune logic. I congratulate you, for one of the most deranged rants I have ever seen in my many years on the Net.
-Marcus

Dear Marcus,
Hey, thanks! Don't forget to blame it on Obama somehow!

TURNING TIDE OF OPINION

I'd like to take the time out to commend you on Ian Murphy's article re: the troops.

I've heard too many people I've gone to high school with brag about how many brown people they've killed, as if running in to someone from high school weren't bad enough right?

Some people I know who've been to Iraq have come back seriously mentally disturbed, but they sucked to begin with.

Anyway, thank you for finally putting into words what I've always felt about the military (at least in the past twenty years): that they recruit people who want to kill people and not get in trouble...explicitly.

Hope your baby-killing goes well today.
Sincerely,
Thomas Q. Methadone, DDS

PS - Why do so many military people read this magazine?

PPS - YOU ARE A COWARD AND NOT ME BECAUSE I'M CHALLENGING YOU VIA THE INTERNET MUCH LIKE YOU DID SO COWARDLY ORIGINALLY! ::Logic train goes sweeping by::

Dear Thomas,
Military members read *The BEAST* to remind them of what they're fighting for—our right to piss all over them. Thanks, heroes!

NOT EXACTLY JANE FONDA

Well said Ian. An Iraq veteran returned from his third tour and is now porking my wife. He got her interested with a confession (that

is to say, a boast) that he killed a bunch of innocent people and still has flashbacks. Fuck him, fuck them. Thank god for the Beast.
-Evilcor

Dear Evilcor,
This, even to us, is a fairly petty and self-centered reason to hate the troops. But it'll do in a pinch.

SERGEANT SODOMY

Dear Beast,
I find the common tread in the letters of abuse that you have been receiving is that of some sort of repressed homosexuality. This guys seem to talk of nothing but asses, balls and long barreled guns. It's enough to drive a gay man wild (which I'm not of course... neither gay or wild).
Keep doing what your doing...
-Aidan

Dear Aidan,
What are you, queer?

LITERACY VOLUNTEER

Dear Crazy Mother Fuckers,
This shit should be in every Pre-K class classroom across the nation (including Indian reservations). Thank the god I don't believe in Zawisky brought this in the office.

Rock on
-Neil
PS the Sabers still totally blow.

Dear Neil,
Uh, say thanks to Zawisky for us, whoever the hell he is.

THIS IS GETTING WEIRD

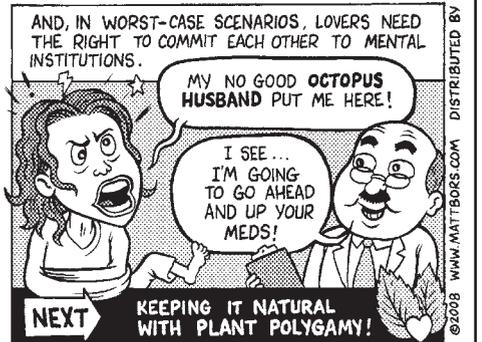
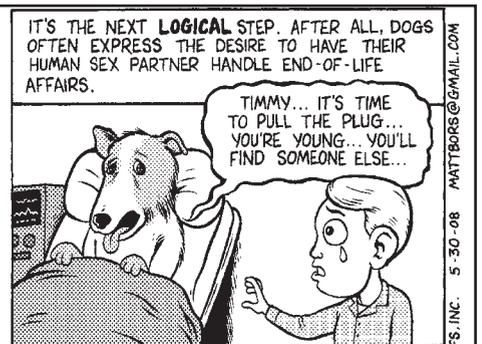
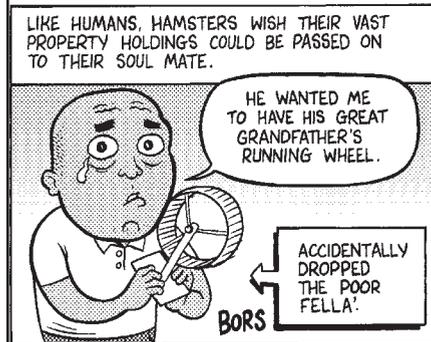
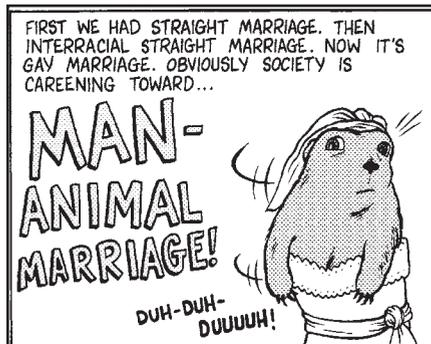
Beast:
Your article "Fuck the Troops" was excellent. I have always wondered how anyone could go into battle and risk their life for 3 lying cowards (George, Dick, Don) who wouldn't go into battle themselves, then call Kerry a decorated Vietnam veteran a coward.

I figured "the troops" fit into one of three categories:

- 1) I've always wanted to kill someone. "That felt great, can I get some more bullets?"
- 2) I need the money to support my family, or pay for college. "McDonalds, Burger King, the military?"
- 3) I am a sheep who doesn't have a mind of my own. "George will say I am not a patriot if I don't kill for him."

Keep up the good work you sons a bitches.
-Harv

Dear Harv,
Er, tell a soldier that, so he can kill you! And so forth. 



BEAST-O-SCOPES

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

You're right, Cancer: everything's giving you cancer. But at least you're getting something out of the deal.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

Dear Leo, the stars are telling me to shut your fucking mouth when you chew!

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Your observation about "butch lesbian couples" being strange because they're both attracted to masculine-looking partners demonstrates your utter lack of understanding of human sexuality and the meaning of "gay." The idea that one woman from a lesbian couple should fashion her appearance after what our culture regards as feminine, is idiotic on so many levels. But you're right: it's hotter if at least one of them gets all whored up.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Libra, it's your anus, you can do with it what you want. But using it as a reference isn't a good place to start.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Sure, Scorpio, conscious beings evolved on this planet hardwired to recognize other conscious beings. Prey that ascribed agency to a flailing leaf would run, but live to procreate. Prey that didn't ascribe agency to a



BY ANDREW GULLERSTEIN

dangling tree snake would die. Thus, it's been an evolutionary advantage for conscious beings to err on the side of caution—and ascribe agency or intention to events which haven't any. And yes, Scorpio, this hardwiring is still with us. And yes, that's why we personify that without personality, and create gods and boogey men where there are none. And yes, that's also why we see faces on the moon and in the clouds. But that still doesn't explain why your face looks like a butt.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

If drunk enough, "Sagittarius" sounds like "Saggy Terrorist." Certainly, this means something.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Not everyone has seen Dune, Capricorn. That's why they don't appreciate your poison-filled tooth.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Sorry, Aquarius, but getting crushed by a vending machine does not earn you the title of "hero." You'd have to get eaten by a shark for that, at least.

Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

Someone close to you will eat fast food in the very near future.

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Hey Aries, did you know Tim Russert liked the Buffalo Bills? He did, you know. He really, really liked the Bills. He also loved his dad a lot. And he was from Buffalo. Plus, he liked the Bills, like big time. You heard anything about that?

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

You're attractive, financially secure and getting married to a gorgeous dancer you met in a strip club. And I'm supposed to get you a wedding present? Eat shit, Taurus.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Hey Gemini, we all know "The Simpsons" used to be a really great TV show. Please stop saying "it's like that Simpsons episode where..." It's old already. Plus, it's just not polite to compare my mother's health to "the Monorail."

THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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