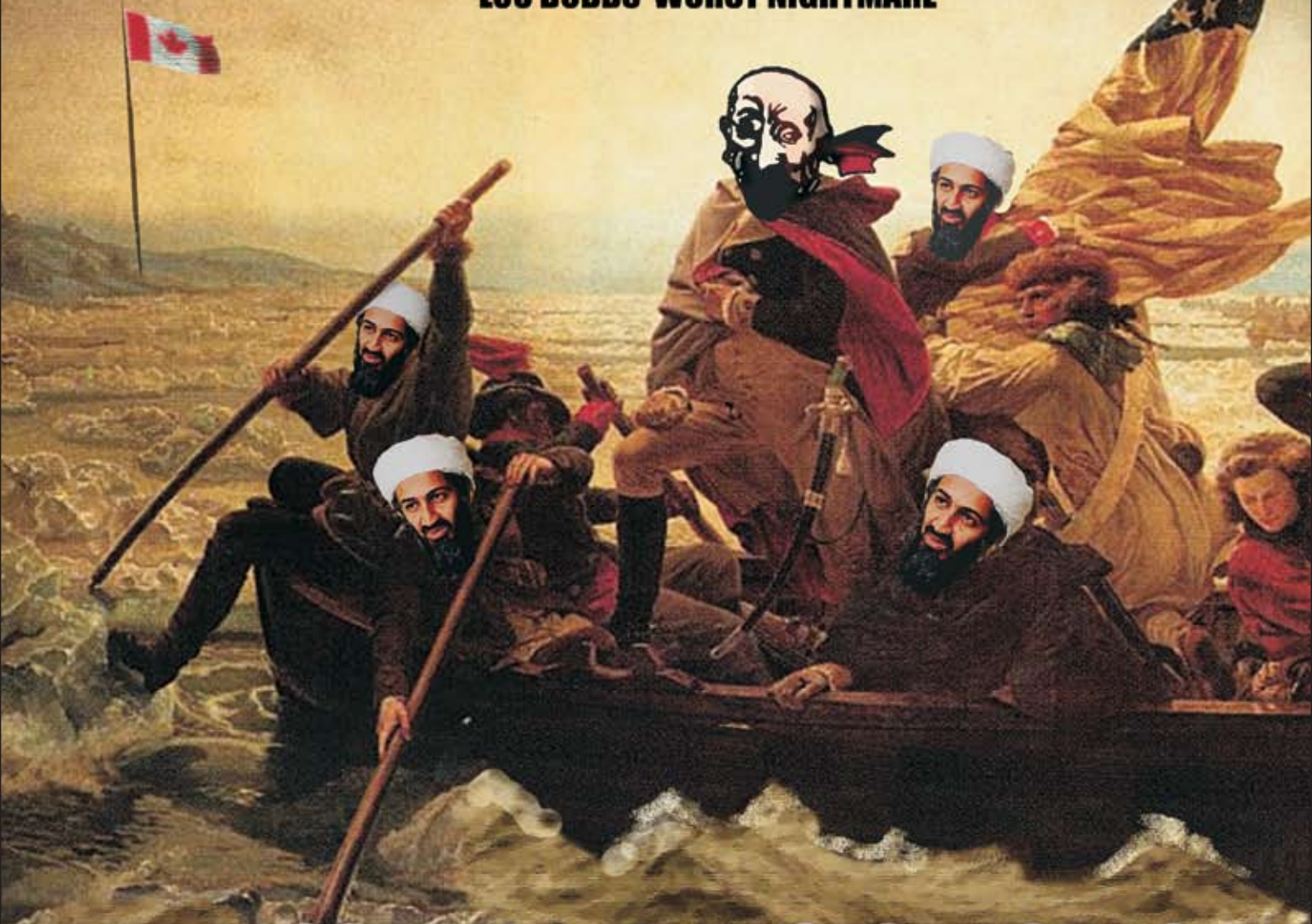


# THE BEAST



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# A PROLEGEMENOUS EPISTLE FROM EUSTACE TILLEY

Salutations to the ungulates, quadrumanes and bivalves who read *The BEAST*. The scrofulous lungfish whose names monthly deface this tabloid's masthead have dragooned me into offering, for your ill-advised consumption, this, their latest veneficial confection. It has been produced, I can attest, with matchless sloth; succeeded by the most virtuosic, pell-mell slubbering. Plantations worth of cigarettes were expended in its making—enough to empurple all of Turkey—and there hovers now over Buffalo in testament to their fevered, eleventh-hour lucubrations an uncleansable miasma that makes Beijing look like Bora Bora. Their living quarters boast a retinue of vermin sufficient to scuttle an African safari. And I confess that, before meeting them, I was hitherto ignorant of the illimitable range of thoughts and emotions which flatulence and eructation may express.

I should like to examine, with exceeding brevity, the manufactured



batrachomyomachy that has lately seized the national consciousness. I refer, of course, to the *New Yorker's* caricaturing of rightwing depictions of Barack and Michelle Obama. The range of reactions runs the quite brief gamut from hysterically indignant ululations, to the scandalous suggestion that this elegant japery might somehow be misinterpreted as a faithful portraiture. Bosh! Poppycock! Balderdash! Twaddle! Flummery! Humbug! One rather quickly exhausts

the lexicon of rarefied, monocle-cracking ejaculations.

No reaction has been so unwelcome as that of Senator Obama himself. What cheek! The immortal rind on this preening arriviste! As if the saccharine fables this Aesop of the basketball blacktop has sold to the American electorate are somehow less offensive than the masterful gibes of the *New Yorker*. We even omitted the joke about him renaming the White House "Cockayne." To those of you who think slopping the rest of the country with jejune pabulum—which the American booboisie finds so insatiably comestible—will reverse the plague of this country's intellectual undernourishment, I bid you all Godspeed to Nephelococcygia.

For the rest of you, who may have struggled to remain afloat in the current of my fluent urbanities, I toss you this pestilent life preserver from Buffalo. Cling to it gloved, and at your own considerable risk.

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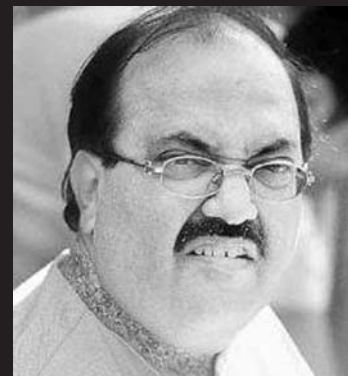
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## THIS ISSUE'S SNEER OF CONTEMPT



*"What are you looking at?"*

# Top 10 Idiocies of the General Election... so far

BY ALLAN UTHMAN

Top 10 Idiocies of the General Election  
...so far...

Allan Uthman

## The Surge: Working Overtime

"The surge is working." It's an incessant mantra, forever on the lips of politicians and "journalists" these days. It's as if they can simply will it into truth. Yes, there has been a reduction in violence in Iraq, if the stats are to be believed. But it's a mistake to think that's primarily due to an increase in troop strength. What is working in Iraq is the Awakening, a movement of Sunni tribes against al Qaeda in Iraq (which, while a franchisee of the al Qaeda trademark, is really an entirely separate group). Essentially what has happened is that the Sunni Arabs have grown weary of al Qaeda's tendency to wantonly murder their own people, and to start civil wars and stuff like that. So they've started taking money from the Pentagon instead of bin Laden, and things have quieted down somewhat. This change was bound to occur, and preceded the surge. In fact, if Bush had eschewed the surge, and instead sent the equivalent amount of money for bribes and salaries, it would have been much more effective.

What seems long forgotten is the original rationale for the surge, which was not simply to quell violence but to establish Iraq's ability to govern itself, setting the stage for American withdrawal. That would constitute true "success," although leaving has already been designated "surrender" by both Bush and McCain. But the real reason for the surge has always been to indefinitely prolong the conversation about withdrawal that was made inevitable by the 2006 elections. And in that sense, the surge has been an unparalleled success.

## The New Yorker Cover

This was really one of the strangest cartoon controversies yet, revealing just

how humor-challenged people really are. Admittedly, if the same cover had been on the Weekly Standard, it might have pissed me off too, but context is everything. What I find most alarming is the apparently widespread notion that satirists are required to present only jokes that are immediately obvious to every gump alive, and couldn't possibly be subject to misinterpretation. That's the death of comedy, right there. The rush to condemn the cover came at least in part because it didn't take seriously enough the smears against Obama that it mocked. It rightly said, "Look at this. Isn't this fucking ridiculous?" And it is. It is ridiculous, and it is fit to be ridiculed. But to see The New Yorker maligned as a "right wing rag" by pea-brained bloggers was probably the funniest thing about this whole controversy.

## McCain's War on Reality

The guy has referred to "Czechoslovakia" at least four times this year, after it was already a minor gaffe for him in 2000. He's called the Sudan "Somalia." He's referred to "President Putin of Germany." He's worried about the "Iraq/Pakistan border" -- perhaps an oblique reference to Iran? He doesn't know Shiite from Sunnis, and thinks the Iranians are helping al Qaeda. He thinks the surge caused the Awakening. All of these mistakes would be deeply damaging to a less coddled candidate. But McCain is an elderly war hero, and there is a natural tendency to hold back on blasting him for his poor information retention.

But what about the football story? McCain has been telling a story, at least since he wrote it in *Flags of our Fathers* in 1999, of substituting the names of the Green Bay Packers offensive line for his squadron mates when pressed by Vietnamese interrogators. It's a great story, as All-American as can be. He discussed it in 2005, when A&E did a movie version of the book, including the inspirational scene. Again in 2005, McCain used the story to illustrate how torture yields bad information. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, McCain told

the story again at a press conference in Pittsburgh—only this time it was the Steelers offensive line.

Setting aside the rank stupidity of destroying a great piece of image work for a cheap hometown shoutout to a regional media market, this fib stabs at the heart of McCain's straight-talking war hero mythology. It's a breathtakingly brazen and completely unnecessary lie, at least as bewildering as Hillary Clinton's "sniper fire" silliness, except that, again, Hillary wasn't running as a special forces agent. It calls into question every unconfirmed detail about McCain's POW years—how many other stories is he just making up? And what kind of man would sully his service with such pointless embellishments? But, dissimilarly to Hillary's sniper snafu, McCain's Packers/Steelers switcheroo slid by largely unnoticed, chuckled at by the media momentarily and tossed away. And they're in the tank for Obama?

## Shilling and Drilling

It's amazing what the PR industry can do to divert an issue. While the truth that carbon emissions are going to alter our planet in unpleasant ways in the near future is more and more well established, somehow the topic has been changed from reducing the use of fossil fuels to "independence from foreign oil." So now, after a few-week push, Americans are ready to start drilling offshore and in Alaska. You've gotta hand it to the oil industry; only they could take multiple crises for which they are responsible and turn it into a win for their agenda. Never mind that it will take years to have what will ultimately be a negligible effect on the price of oil. Gas is expensive, and people are easy to fool, especially if you play to their moronic fears of all things foreign. Meanwhile, it turns out that American oil burns just as dirty as it does anywhere else, and no meaningful emissions regulation is on the horizon. Get yourself some flood insurance.

## Gramm: Crackers?

John McCain's recently-fired principal



economic adviser Phil Gramm's comments about America being a "nation of whiners" in a "mental recession" are worthy of forced drowning. This golden asshole, drafter of the Enron loophole, Vice President at the disgraced and near-defunct Swiss bank UBS, and emitter of similarly foul, wealth-arrogant quotations about not feeling sorry for destitute 80-year-olds ("Most people don't have the luxury of living to be 80 years old, so it's hard for me to feel sorry for them."), thinks the economic downturn is all in your head, and has nothing to do with the collapse of the mortgage and credit industries or the unsound practices that were encouraged by an anarchist regulatory philosophy of which Gramm himself is a huge proponent. McCain and Gramm have been tight for years, and although he had no choice but to dump

Gramm for the duration of the campaign, fellow wealth-saturated dickhead Steve Forbes assures us Gramm will be back, to help combat the whining poor and their paranoid delusions about hunger and homelessness.

### **We're Winning What Now?**

McCain and Bush continually iterate their will to "win" in Iraq. But what is winning in this context? After all, we are not looking to colonize Iraq, at least not officially. In other words, there is no winning or losing in Iraq—only staying or leaving. Neither constitutes victory, but one is a hell of a lot cheaper.

### **Penniless Elitists**

A common complaint among Democrats is that it makes no sense to label Obama

(or whatever politician is the target du jour) an "elitist," since so many Republicans, including McCain and Bush, are children of wealth and power, and have considerably more money than Obama, while both Obama and his wife come from humble origins and attained their status through their own hard work. On the surface, this seems to make sense, but it's a misapprehension of what the elitist label has truly come to signify: education and intellect. McCain and Bush may be of the upper crust, but it's clear to all who observe them that they're not very bright. Obama, on the other hand, clearly was paying attention at Harvard. That's why the label sticks to him. Excessive intelligence is a liability in American political campaigns; there can be no doubt of that, and when people speak of Obama as "not one of us," that is, at least in part, what they're talking about. It's anti-intellectualism that brought us eight years of Bush, as well as eight years of Reagan. Americans love a simple-talkin' good ole boy, even if he does lower their wages and spend their retirement. Lucky for Obama, McCain is such a stiff that this factor will be somewhat mitigated.

### **Soundbitten**

Take a moment to recall Wesley Clark's supposed slander against McCain's military service from last month. Here's how the exchange went on "Face the Nation":

SCHIEFFER: I have to say, Barack Obama has not had any of those experiences either, nor has he ridden in a fighter plane and gotten shot down. I mean...  
Gen. CLARK: Well, I don't think riding in a fighter plane and getting shot down is a qualification to be president.

Of course, virtually none of the abundant, breathless stories which ensued bothered to mention that the "getting shot down" construct was Bob Schieffer's, and that Clark was merely repeating it. Nope, the story was that Clark said, "I don't think getting in a fighter plane and getting shot down is a qualification to become president." Obviously, this sound much worse, as if Clark is criticizing McCain's piloting skills. I don't love Wesley Clark, but it seems pretty damn unfair to put words in his mouth like this and then pretend the phrase was his own invention. Now, this doesn't mean the press is on McCain's side; they just know a sensational

# **THE BEAST PAGE 5**

## ***Phony Autistic Baby***

**Name:** Whiney McWhiners

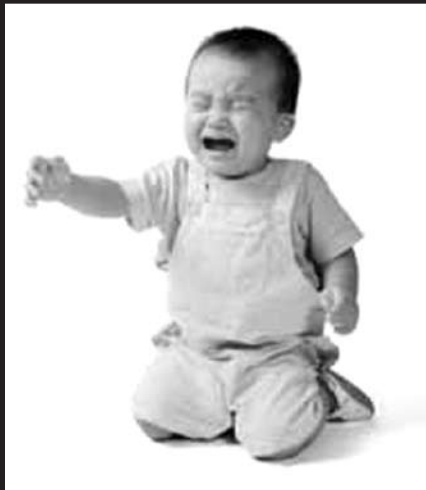
**Turn-ons:** Laziness, slacking, faking serious diseases, Meryl Streep and Gerber's strained manganese.

**Turn-offs:** Right-wing radio, Michael Savage, father-figures, tough parenting and contributing to society.

**How I got to be The BEAST Page 5 Phony Autistic Baby:** Well, everything was going great—for a while. I'd fooled my stupid, sissy parents and pediatrician into thinking I had autism. It was awesome. I just sat around all day, zoning out on my fingertips, doing fuck-all—and that's how I liked it. I could have coasted through my whole life like that. But no! Mike Savage had to go and ruin my scam. The jig's up, and now I have to work for a living. I read that The BEAST needed a Phony Autistic Baby, so there ya' go.

**Future Plans:** I plan on finding a different disease to fake—something in the neighborhood of Down's syndrome. Because, really, who has Down's syndrome anyway?

**How I'd Like to be Remembered:** Like Rainman, but lazier.





story when they see it, and this one was much more outrageous when amputated from the context of Schieffer's preceding statement.

This is something to remember when you see unfair coverage of either candidate: The media bias isn't usually left or right; the bias is toward profit. If a half-assed story is more appealing than a full examination, then half-assed it'll be. If, on the other hand, a news source risks alienating its audience—by, say, questioning McCain's POW narrative à la the Packers/Steelers gaffe, they'll shy away.

### Irreconcilable Deferences

It turns out white Americans don't like Michelle Obama as much as they like her husband. Why? A big factor in Mrs. Obama's unpopularity is that, unlike her husband, she is culturally African-American. She reminds whites of stereotypes that are specific to black women: too loud, too rude, too pushy—not dainty at all. They much prefer a dead-eyed robo-spouse like Laura Bush or Cindy McCain, because it implies a domineering, controlling, in-charge man, just the type they imagine to be suited to running a global empire. If Obama's deferential to his wife, how will he handle the Iranians? And what kind of table settings will she pick out for dinner with the Putins? I hear grown women expressing their distaste for enduring eight years with "that woman" in the White House, as if her skin color will rub

off on the walls. It's goddamn revolting, but that's America.

### Bomb Bomb Iran

Even as we discuss ways of extracting ourselves from the disaster we've created in Iraq, we find ourselves moving inexorably closer to attacking Iran, or at least supporting an Israeli attack on Iran. Amazingly, we hear the same bullshit WMD justifications coming from the same people who so expertly fooled us into invading Iraq, and even more amazingly, it seems to be working again. Personally, I never understood how Iraq hawks like Bill Kristol and Charles Krauthammer were ever able to find work after the WMD hoax ran its course, but they are more prominent than ever somehow. It's almost as if they were being rewarded for playing their roles convincingly. But even now, after rejecting the idea that weapons inspectors should complete their work in Iraq sealed our fate there, the very idea that Obama might go so far as to *talk* to the Iranians before bombing the crap out of them is seen as naïve. Iran is not like Iraq in one way, though: they have a real military and they will not be content to just let us in and take occasional potshots at us. They will fight back. And we will once again find ourselves overextended in a war we didn't really want, but were convinced by known liars to start. And then we will...probably still not learn our lesson. **BOB**

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MY NAME IS ALFRED.

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I REMEMBER HIM BEING... BIGGER. CUTER.

SENTIENT.

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# ZIRIINTERVIEW!

## Sportswriter Dave Zirin brings liberal guilt to the world of sports

### INTERVIEW BY PAUL JONES

Dave Zirin is not your average sportswriter. He's tight with Howard Zinn and Chuck D. He likes Barry Bonds. He thinks pro sports teams are intellectual property. He's profiled a pacifist, anti-capitalist UFC fighter and interviewed Pat Tillman's mother.

Zirin spoke recently with *The BEAST*'s Paul Jones. So, grab your nachos and beer hat and do your best to keep up, paging through *Das Kapital* with your ludicrously oversized novelty foam hand.

*My colleagues, who are political junkies, don't really regard sports as worth their time, yet games clearly play a role in politics. Do you think most Americans fail to make the connection between sports and politics because Jews aren't very athletic?*

We can deny sports is political, just as we can deny gravity when we're falling out of an airplane. Every day there are stories that show the intersection of sports and politics, and every day if you hear people complaining about the absence of resources in their communities, about a sense of where their tax dollars are going—even a sense about how their president manipulates information—all of this is connected throughout the world of sports. That's kind of the reason I have this book coming out: *A People's History of Sports in the United States*. It's meant to chart the history of the way sports and politics have always intersected. This isn't some new phenomenon...

*It would probably be easier to get my BEAST comrades interested in sports if they started selling cannabis next to the beer at games...*

Well, that could be helpful...They do in some stadiums, you just have to know where to look.

But your peers at [*The BEAST*]*—serious, left-leaning muckrakers, that we need*

so many more of in this country: I feel like that's the very group that is most dismissive of sports. And that's one of the reasons why sports has, in a lot of ways, become a refuge for passivity and rightwing politics. We don't see it enough as contested space—the very people who could be in there, slugging it out and fighting for a better politics of sports. In this country, you can have a much more honest discussion about things like racism or sexism or corporate greed on sports



**This isn't Dave Zirin. It's a photo of him.**

radio than you can on general political talk radio. Sports has become the last national salon, where a lot of people from different backgrounds, different ethnicities really do come together to hash things out.

*Have you heard about McCain's recent appearance in Pennsylvania, where he claimed that, to placate his captors while a POW, instead of betraying his fellow soldiers, he gave the Vietnamese the names of Pittsburgh Steelers defensive linemen? In his book, though, he had written that it was the Green Bay Packers offensive line. Do you think he really forgot, or is he just embarrassed to admit he's so old, he gave them names from the Decatur Staleys?*

I'm much more inclined to think that it's pandering, but what makes it so funny is that, as fans on Steelers message boards have been pointing out: the Steelers defensive line—the great line which had people like L.C. Greenwood and “Mean” Joe Green, the Steel Curtain—didn't come into play until long after McCain was back home. Actually, at the time he was a POW, the Steelers were the laughingstock doormat of the NFL. Even the most diehard Steeler fans have said they had to look it up, to know who was playing defensive line then.

*Do you think McCain, like the similarly decaying Mr. Burns on “The Simpsons,” is old enough to have “watched Gentleman Jim Corbett fight an Eskimo-fella, bare-knuckled, for 113 rounds”?*

[Laughs.] I don't think he's that old, but... he had a quote just the other day where he talked about, “I'm learning to get online.” Am I the only one who thinks that's fucking frightening?

*Well, given his ignorance of football, do you think there's any chance he'll undo Teddy Roosevelt's historic reforms, outlaw the forward pass and usher in a return to the flying wedge?*

He's recently said in an interview that Teddy Roosevelt was his model as...a leader. And if that means John McCain is going to inaugurate a new era of muscular Christianity, and walking tall and carrying a big stick...that's something I think we can all collectively do without. We have had a notorious jock-sniffer in the White House for the last eight years...

*I read a post on Deadspin.com that described Bush throwing out the first pitch at a Washington Nationals game. The author, Will Leitch, explained how a visiting dignitary or celebrity in that position might pop into the broadcast booth and stay for, maybe, half an inning. But Leitch was disturbed to see that Bush stayed for three halves—like he had nothing else to do...*



That just gets a little uncomfortable after a while. Look, he was a cheerleader in college. He's always been more comfortable snapping towels at people than actually trying to figure out policy or understand the world. I argue all the time that being a big sports fan does not, in fact, make you retarded. And he, unfortunately, is a counterexample.

*What about the Obama campaign toying with the idea of sponsoring BAM Racing's car in the NASCAR race at Pocono? The campaign now says they never reached a deal. How would that have resonated, especially in the wake of former NASCAR official Mauricia Grant's lawsuit?*

Not great! The Mauricia grant lawsuit—where she's suing for \$225 million, for just a shocking array of racial and sexual harassment—it's hard to imagine the Obama campaign just sliding smoothly into that kind of environment. Then again, Obama seems to be setting a land speed record for tacking to the right...

*Is baseball ruining steroids?*

[Laughs.] There's a serious question there somewhere, because steroids have saved the lives of people with AIDS, saved the lives of people with horrible, debilitating injuries; improved the lives of people with terrible muscle palsies. And yet, steroids are called by Bud Selig "a terrible substance that must be eradicated." So, if you're talking about the demonization of something which in some ways has offered tremendous medical and scientific advantages to people who in previous centuries would have been either cast off or left for dead, then, yeah, baseball has given steroids a bad name.

With steroids, it's a question not of use, but of abuse...They can be very dangerous and very harmful. And they could also upset the competitive balance of a sport...Part of the problem is...people are taking them in back alleys, people are getting injected in the team men's room. And it's not being overseen by a doctor, by someone who actually has some training...

When you talk about how some pitchers take steroids to heal faster from rotator cuff injuries—what's wrong with that? Usually players are praised for doing whatever they can to get back on the field. They're not making themselves better pitchers, they're trying to get over injuries so they can go back and help their team. Is that cheating, or is that medical progress?

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*Is part of the problem that sports reporters don't really understand the issue?*

Of course! You listen to [sports radio's] "Mike and the Mad Dog," or "Mike & Mike in the Morning"...[and] you get this very distorted discussion where it's like, "Oh, look at Mark McGwire. His career ended in his mid-thirties. That's proof he took steroids." Then it's, "Rafael Palmeiro, he's hitting homeruns into his mid-forties. That's proof he took steroids." So, you're like, *Wait, do they shorten your career or elongate your career? What do they do?* That's because this is not serious science. It's not a serious discussion. I'm all for the players and the ownership deciding collectively that they don't want it in their sport—that's their business, if that's how they want to regulate their sport...But the wholesale demonization—I'm not sure what that does for anybody.

*Barry Bonds has become the mythic bête noire of American sport—or really maybe just the latest. What do you think his legacy will be?*

Unfortunately, people are hammering to make sure his legacy is something that it really shouldn't [be]. His 756<sup>th</sup> homerun with the asterisk on it was officially submitted and will be in [Baseball's Hall of Fame at] Cooperstown. The fact he can't get signed this year...He had a .480 on-base percentage last year. The fact that he's a persona non grata in the sport, to me, is very shameful, because Barry Bonds is—without question and without argument—the best player I've ever seen.

*Your second book, Welcome to the Terrordome, actually begins in New Orleans, with displaced Katrina victims herded into a succession of sports arenas, which you call the "March of Domes." You point out it was likely the first time the city's impoverished residents had actually seen the inside of the arenas their taxes helped build—\$16 billion in public money has been spent on stadiums in the last decade. It was this grotesquely symbolic moment, when a nation's inability to care for its neediest citizens (say, by providing real shelter or temporary housing) intersected vividly with these monuments to corporate welfare. This year's Major League Baseball All-Star game is at Yankee Stadium—the stadium will be demolished after this season and the team will move into a new arena down the street that is mostly privately financed, but occupies former public parkland.*

That's right. With a lot of public tax

breaks, too, make no mistake about it. The city will be paying through the nose for this...The tearing down of Yankee Stadium is like what Ralph Nader said: it's like tearing down Carnegie Hall. And no one would ever tear down Carnegie Hall. And yet they're tearing down Yankee Stadium...When city budgets and state budgets are so deeply strapped—that we would be giving money to subsidize stadiums for billionaires is just obscene. The majority of the people in this country agree with me; it's something that really transcends political affiliation. It's also something that's across the board in terms of academic studies: this doesn't work. It

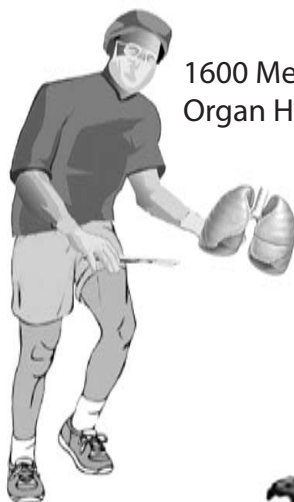
*make?*

That's a terrific question. Mainly because they're the public faces of the teams. Most owners really do stay behind close doors, with the exception of the Mark Cubans and the Jerry Joneses. They tend to try to stay more anonymous. It's always hilarious—and it's really only American sport that does this—when they present the trophy, the CEOs come out to take the trophy—

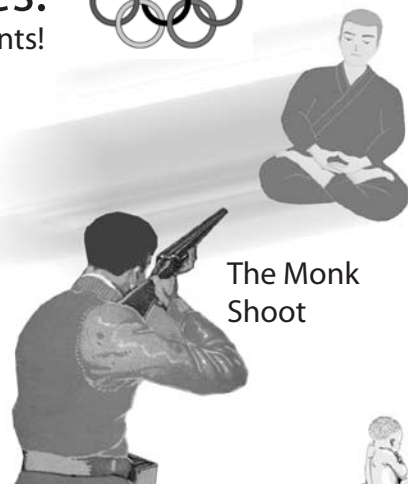
*Those rank among the most awkward moments in television...*

Definitely! [Like the owners of the

## The Chinese Games: Watch for these new exciting events!



1600 Meter  
Organ Harvest



The Monk  
Shoot



The Illegal  
Fetus Toss



The Smog Jump...

... And Many More!

doesn't bring in new revenue in the cities, it doesn't fund school systems, it doesn't fund libraries. All it funds are owners and the political cronies around them.

*Given that billionaire owners are the beneficiaries of all this needless largesse, why is so much public resentment directed instead at athletes for the salaries they*

2008 NBA Champion Boston Celtics,] they're surrounded by Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen, and you're thinking: *Who the hell are these guys?* And they're, like, "We did it!" And the crowd does this sort of collective, "Huh?" That's a funny thing about US sports: In times of championships, it elevates the owner...It's kind of like the reverse of



British soccer where people know who the owners are and there're efforts to hold them accountable for even things like if the teams go into debt. But when teams win championships, the players are front and center. It's the reverse in American sports, where the owners are anonymous until they win the championship and it's "Look at me! Look at me! Look at me!"

*Buffalo Bills owner Ralph Wilson has been hinting at moving the franchise for some time now and the team will play five games in Toronto over the next few seasons. A permanent relocation would be a devastating psychological blow to the already struggling city. Do owners—especially those in the NFL, where profits are virtually guaranteed through revenue sharing—have a responsibility to the communities in which they do business?*

Yeah. Absolutely. I'm a big believer that pro sports teams are intellectual property. They're not just physical property. So, there's an argument that the Buffalo Bills belong to the city of Buffalo as much or more than they belong to Ralph Wilson... And certainly if the team is taking tax dollars, there is a—not just a moral, or a spiritual or an ethereal, but a material—responsibility that it has to stay there.

That's what made the recent move of the [NBA's] Seattle Supersonics to Oklahoma City something that was just such a repellent slap in the face. Because it's this idea that the city that had housed this team for 41 years somehow had less of a claim on it than these guys, Clay Bennett and Aubrey McClendon—both of whom are to the right of Genghis Khan. They're corporate raiders and the idea that these

guys could show up from Oklahoma City, buy [the team], spend two years harassing and haranguing the [Washington] state legislature—which had just been through two ugly stadium battles—and then just book with the team...all while [NBA commissioner] David Stern doesn't say a word that's supportive of the city...is beneath contempt.

*What political figure would you compare Stern to?*

There's no political equivalent to David Stern, because nobody's as powerful as David Stern. This would be like if George W. Bush had 70, 80% approval and majorities in both houses—then, he'd be David Stern.

*Our founder, Matt Taibbi, once opined on the death of his own sports tabloid—New York Sports Express—that the sporting press, unlike their political counterparts, is "unbelievably vicious and demanding in its interviews; it doesn't take no for an answer from anybody; it is utterly relentless in its quest to find out What Is Wrong...and, most pointedly, it has absolutely no respect for...authority figures." Would we be better off having sports reporters cover politics? Would faulty Iraq intelligence be just like androstenedione in Mark McGwire's locker?*

Wow! I don't say this too often, but I strongly disagree with Matt on that one. Because while he's absolutely right that sports reporters are brilliant at going through the minutiae, they're terrible at challenging power. I would argue they're even worse than the people who write

the front-page story.... If sports reporters were in charge of [reporting on Iraq], they wouldn't have been asking tougher questions on weapons of mass destruction. Instead, their follow-up questions would have been like, "So, how did you choose to pick out that tie this morning that you're wearing for today? Why did you choose to go with the blended thread, instead of the silk? Did you buy that yourself at Brooks Brothers or did somebody buy that for you? Did your posse buy that for you—are they all wearing the Hermes tie now?" In most cases, it's not even like I blame the actual reporters themselves: it's because the teams hold so many of the trump cards when it comes down to access, when it comes down to tickets and because of that, it breeds a level of caution.

*Do you like any writers out there? Who should the highbrow sports fan seek out?*

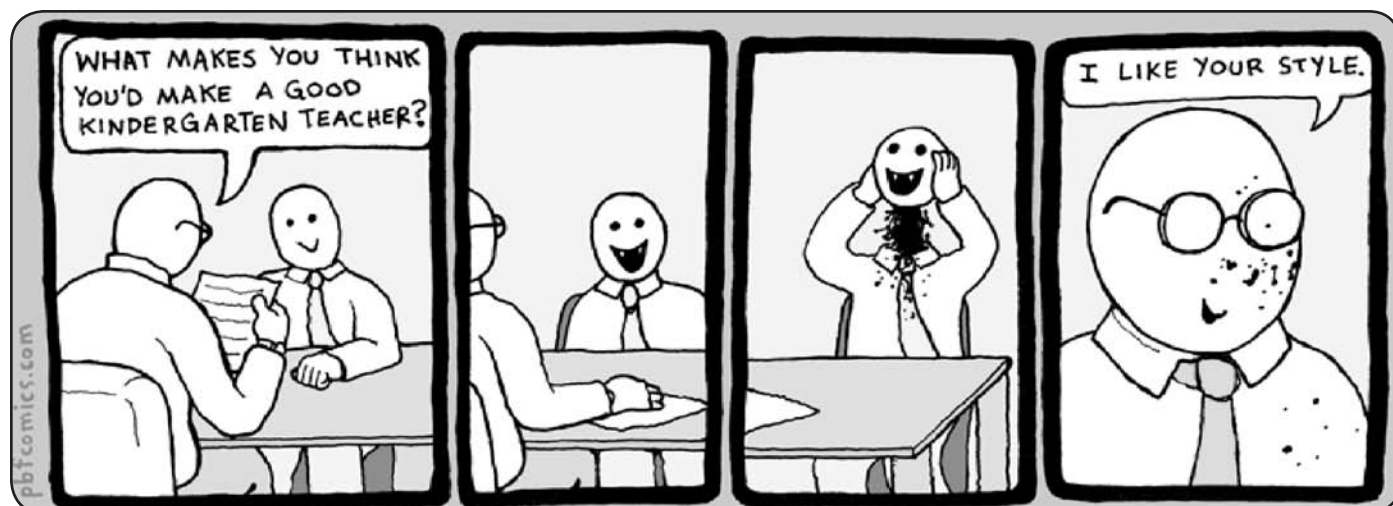
David Steele of the Baltimore Sun is fantastic. Scoop Jackson and Jemele Hill on ESPN[.com's Page 2]. I like Harvey Araton for the *New York Times* a great deal, Thomas Boswell in D.C.—I don't agree with Boswell at all on stadium construction—Richard Justice, Sally Jenkins.

*Has Jemele Hill been reinstated, following her suspension for writing that "rooting for the Celtics is like saying Hitler was a victim"?*

I just had Jemele Hill on my radio show. I thought what happened to her was disgusting...She was comparing Detroit fans who side with Boston in the playoffs as being the kind of people who would be sympathetic with Hitler. And you can

## THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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argue that that's not even funny—but if making an unfunny joke on [ESPN.com's Page 2] gets you suspended, then Bill Simmons and Rick Reilly should be at Abu Ghraib. Bill Simmons, the next week, made a joke about the player drafted in the first round by the Washington Wizards—Javale McGee—being the son of a WNBA player; and then he writes, "There's a joke I can't write here about a turkey baster." This is the question: What are the rules, then, that would get you suspended?

*I remember reading a Simmons column a few years ago, in which he compared being a Yankee fan to joining al Qaeda!*

Yeah, it's the same joke. It's the *same* joke...It pissed me off that people could call for her job. Here we are talking about that we want sports reporters to be a little more daring, a little more questioning, a little sharper, a little more incisive...the Jemele Hill thing has the effect of timidity. Particularly when more and more writers are being hired by ESPN. It will create a real culture of timidity.

*In What's My Name, Fool?, you interviewed the jellied Croesus, George Foreman. Foreman was unapologetic about his patriotic flag-waving display at the '68 Olympics in Mexico, which showed up John Carlos's and Tommy Smith's Black Power medal stand salute days earlier. George gushed that if he "had to do it all over, I'd wave three flags!" Do you think this is why Foreman has sold more indoor grills than Evander Holyfield?*

Probably. George Foreman has always been somewhat of a genius...in standing for the United States of George Foreman. All his kids are named George! He's great at publicizing himself. And, hey, those grills do some good grilling. The man puts out a good product! But, that moment in 1968...he really did stand on the wrong side of history. At a time when two of his Olympic teammates needed all the support and solidarity they could get, and even received it from...the Olympic crew team, which was all white and all from Harvard—they stood with Smith and Carlos. And George Foreman, who was one of the most prominent Olympians, did not.

*In Terrordome, you're very critical of the greedy, praetorian bureaucracy of the Olympics. Is this country, the games are, at best, largely ignored. There was a story, however, on the Australian Broadcasting Company recently about*

*the Palestinian Olympic team—consisting of only two runners and two swimmers—which contained this quote: "Yet it's really only at major sporting events like the Olympics that something called Palestine actually exists." Do you think the games still matter?*

The Olympics do still matter. First of all, it's recognizing this is a global sports world now. So any sporting event that has global ramifications matters. And this country is also very global...It's [also] one of the few times you get access to other kinds of sports, other than the tunnel vision we usually have in this country...Particularly, the Olympics give an unprecedented spotlight on women athletes...

The other thing about...the Olympics...is they always become places where geopolitical concerns get played out in different ways...Obviously, this year with China, you're getting the Super Bowl of geopolitical concerns crossed with sports.

*Did you read Naomi Campbell's piece for Rolling Stone about China?*

Naomi Campbell? The model?

*Yeah, uh...No! I'm sorry, Naomi Klein. She wrote that the Olympics are really a test case for China's goal of a centralized, nationwide network of government surveillance. There are already 200,000 cameras installed in just the industrial city of Shenzhen.*

*This year's Olympics has been discussed a lot—certain implications—but I think it's almost been underreported in a way...*

Yeah, I just was actually talking about that: it has felt underreported in recent months, certainly since the torch carrying through San Francisco and all the drama there... The corporate backers of sports are doing a very delicate dance with these Olympics. On the one hand, they desperately all wanted it to be in China because of the profit-making potential in China—the size of its economy, the size of its population. But...if they give too much publicity to it, then it becomes way too obvious and way too loud how complicit they are in China's crimes.

*Do you think Americans will start taking sports seriously as a means of challenging the status quo, once multitudes are rounded up and imprisoned without due process, and subsequently killed in extrajudicial human hunts on primetime television—a la Schwarzenegger in The Running Man?*


Ah...

*Or will they continue to just view games as a pleasant diversion?*

That's gonna depend on what happens outside the athletic field. If we have a politicized world, where people are challenging those very things you mentioned, then we're gonna see it reflected in the world of sports. But, if there's passivity on those fronts, you're not gonna see sports, in a separate vacuum, become a politicized arena...

*The image of Egyptian soccer star Mahmoud Aboutreika lifting his jersey during a scoring celebration to reveal a shirt that read "Sympathize With Gaza" probably went largely unnoticed in this country. Why don't we see more expressions of resistance and solidarity with oppressed peoples from top American athletes? Here's a blunt hypothetical: Would the Washington Wizards' Etan Thomas be so outspoken—on race, politics, the prison-industrial complex, the Iraq War—if he enjoyed LeBron James's success?*

That is a terrific question. I think if Etan Thomas averaged 30 points and 15 rebounds a game, he might even be more outspoken, because he'd have more of an opportunity to be heard...This isn't a question of fame, it's a question of principle...There are two names every NBA player knows...Craig Hodges and Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf...role players who—because of their politics—believe they were run out of the game...That tells you if you're an Etan Thomas, there's actually a greater risk when you're a role player than there is if you're LeBron James. LeBron James could walk into China for these Olympics and call for an insurrection of the Chinese people against the Communist Party and Nike would applaud, "Wow, he's so daring! Let's do a commercial out of that." He has utter invincibility. So, actually, fame in a lot of ways—that level of privilege—really does allow for a degree of insulation.

Granted, after you retire, you might not get a coaching job. Just ask Kareem. 

*Dave Zirin's column, "Edge of Sports," is available at his website, edgeofsports.com and at Sports Illustrated's SI.com. His forthcoming book is A People's History of Sports in the United States, part of a series edited by Howard Zinn. He now wisely ignores Paul Jones's phone calls.*



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# TERROR ALERT!

## *The absolutely true story of how The BEAST smuggled al Qaeda into the U.S.*

**BY IAN MURPHY**

*"I want security, yeah  
Without it I had a great loss, oh now  
Security, yeah  
And I want it at any cost, oh now"*  
-Otis Redding

**July 16, 2008**—"Are you guys crazy?" a fisherman screams to us across his bow. His larger, motorized vessel rocks precariously in the Lake Erie chop, fifty yards off our port. The wind is twenty if it's a knot. The sea, she's a daft wench this morn'.

"Yarrrrrr, matey!" Jones manages to answer, as a white-capped swell pitches our canoe like a child's toy. The fiberglass prow hammers the deep trough and he bounces forward. "Yarrrrr!"

The man yells again, his cries now muffled. Our ship yaws starboard in the quiet valley of swill. Rising with the wave, it rolls. We forgo paddling and cling like barnacles to the shallow hull. As we crest, our left port side juts into the air. The canoe teeters on edge like a die cast by Poseidon.

We're a third of the way across the Great Lake's volatile northern tip. We've been roughly a third of the way for the last two hours. The first hour, we made no westerly progress at all. After docking at the last break wall—to the shrieking indignance of countless gulls protecting their offspring, and an overwhelming stink of shit—we decided it wise to head south along its east side before battling the open water.

Our mission, when we launched from a barricaded Buffalo boat ramp (which now acts as a de facto dump for hypodermic flotsam and decomposing jetsam) was



**Above, Jones contemplates Canada in the distance, below, beautiful Lake Erie**



to slip into Canada undetected, procure some Anthrax and smuggle it back into the U.S.—just to see if we could. Now, a mere knot south of the Mighty Niagara's mouth, our mission is to stay alive.

"Row, ya bastard!" I lash out from the sagging stern. "Row!" We've taken on a few gallons, but we're still afloat.





***Above, the journey begins, below, seagulls defend their break wall***



The fisherman garbles at our fatigued backs. The roughest sea behind us, it's now an endurance game. To the dismay of several other boaters, and our own burning muscles, we maintain our speed and westerly trajectory. The current does the rest, curving us gently north, toward a placid beachhead at the foot of Ontario's historic Fort Erie.

Despite the millions of Homeland Security dollars being spent on infrared cameras, retinal scanners, helicopters and increased ship presence, the local Border Patrol has called upon civilians to be the first line of defense in this tiny battle in the War on Terror. Of the dozen boaters we passed, none reported our decidedly "suspicious behavior," as the DHS would

have them do. They've all failed their country. They're clearly against us and with them—the terrorists, which in this case are us.

Defended by a lone Canuck and his dopey golden retriever, we storm the beach with little difficulty. As we stash the canoe in a patch of thick brush, phase one of our mission is complete. The trip back, if we make it that far, must be easier—we hope.

Walking by the 18<sup>th</sup> century British stone fort, we banter in rehearsed Canadian accents about "Hockey Night in Canada" and "The Red Green Show." It's essential we blend in with the native culture. We ring a now defunct cab company—the

only number we wrote down. Having trusted that a local cabbie would know the area, we now have no idea how to get to the Anthrax pickup. We walk aimlessly.

Shells from the gull sanctuary break wall stab the bottoms of my feet as we march east on Dominion Road. It's sunny, and the humidity's stifling. We're tired and dehydrated. We turn north on to a long stretch of country road, hoping Allah deliver us to evil. We don't speak, focused exclusively on our Jihad. After a solid hour, we reach the bustling intersection of Helena & Garrison.

To the east, we see the Peace Bridge—an aging steel monster local pols have been failing to replace for the last two decades. Incidentally, the latest design effort was quashed due to an environmental impact study, which found that the 565 ft cable bridge would disrupt commuting gulls, terns and other waterfowl. Digressing further, why are we giving these winged dinosaurs quarter? They pretend they can't fly above, below or through the cables. But they can. It's like when they insist on crossing the road at windshield level. They don't have to do that—they simply lack the political will to impose safety regulations.

In this crappy sci-fi novel we call Post 9/11 America, people and birds are more similar than either party would care to admit. We're both scared, greedy creatures. The bird could flap over your car without expending too much energy, which is the currency of all beings. But they don't want to spend the cash. They'd rather swoop down from the trees and glide across your bumper. It's easier. The low risk of being pulverized is worth the gain of skimping on energy. Threaten their babies, on the other wing, as we did at the break wall, and they'll spend through the beak on the industry of defense.

The American people are actually related to birds, and it shows. In the interest of cheapness, we've deregulated every danger under the sun. So what if some poor sucker gets pulverized from time to time? And, like our distant avian cousins, we'll spend big dough protecting our offspring—even if the threat is minimal or entirely imagined. You may think I'm joking, but it's nothing to squawk at.

To the west, and our amazement, we see the Anthrax pickup site bathed in golden sunlight: Wal-Mart.

We enter and march, double-time, past the cheap Chinese goods and seemingly ubiquitous shrines to Hannah Montana. We riffle through the sad selection of CDs.

“Shit!” I curse. “They don’t have any Anthrax—not even the ‘Bring the Noise’ collaboration with Public Enemy.”

“Yeah, dude,” Jones charges. “It’s 2008!” I sense a mutiny afoot.

“What the hell do we do now?” I beg. “We came here to get an evil-sounding prop, goddamnit!”

“I don’t know,” Jones calmly evaluates. “Biohazard? Chemical Brothers? Poison? Celine Dion?”

“Damn! Damn! Damn!” I see nothing. We search.

“Allah-la-la-la-la-la-la-la!” Jones tongues from an isle over. “I got it!”

“What?” I rush up. “What?”

“Al Qaeda!” He beams sadistically, holding up a hip-hop album entitled “al Qaeda Jada” by Jadakiss. The purchase goes off without incident.

As with most trips back home, things go a bit faster. We’re at the Fort Erie beach in no time.

“Hey!” a sunbathing native beckons as we uncover the canoe. “Where you guys coming from?”

“There!” I point to the Buffalo skyline. “America.”

“Yeah!” he says. “I was out on the water this morning and I saw you guys. It sure was choppy—you didn’t have any trouble with the Border Patrol?”

“Not yet,” I gulp.

“I can’t believe they didn’t get you.” He’s stunned. “But... but... why the hell did you do it?”

“To test the border security, I think.”

“Good man!” he smiles. “Now we know anybody can get across!” We don’t take it personally.

The canoe trip back was quicker, too, as



***The undefended shore in Fort Erie, Ontario***

we were sucked mercilessly north by the current and ended up crashing into a rocky break wall on the quickly narrowing Niagara. We perilously portaged over the wall and redeployed on the other side, running aground at a private facility—located between an Army vehicle depot and a Navy building.

After pleading that they open the fence and not force us back into the river, we drag our weary bodies to the original launch site, drive back to pick up the canoe and call it a day. Our terrorist mission was a complete success.

The fisherman was right, though: We’re amateurs. We don’t even hate us for our freedoms. Practically anyone can

sneak across the U.S./Canadian border. Given that fact, there can only be one reason America hasn’t been completely annihilated by terrorists: They don’t exist—not in Canada, anyway.

Border security will get tighter and tighter, and passage more and more restrictive. While we spend nearly twenty years planning to build a better bridge, haggling over the price tag and design, we have no problem throwing millions upon millions at the slightest perceived threat, with no apparent design at all.

Birds and Americans are stupid like that. Jones and I posed no real threat to those gulls on the break wall, but we were a shadowy, nefarious other. They flapped and dipped at us; they squawked and yelled; they spent energy vigorously in an attempt to protect their families. They pooped.

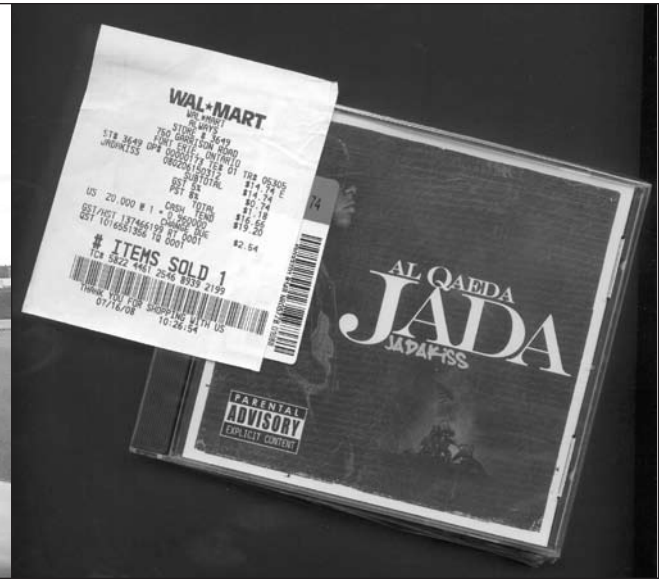
There are, however, some major differences between Americans and birds: No bird ever got rich peddling fear. There are scavengers and brash opportunists of every species, but birds don’t do kleptocracy. Incredible defense industry waste and theft, facilitated by public fear and hysteria, doesn’t fly for birds. Energy is a finite commodity, and if their flock spent as wastefully as Americans have on security, they’d find themselves on the losing end of evolution real quick.

Also, birds won’t sacrifice their freedoms to purportedly protect those very same freedoms. They have a finer sense of these things, apparently. But, if it’s any consolation, we look better in jeans.

***Murphy plants The BEAST flag, looks retarded***







***At left, the corner of Helena & Garrison, at right, our terrorist-sounding prop—with proof of purchase***

What's the story here? What's the moral of this sci-fi novel called Post 9/11 America? The benighted reader may get this thing completely backwards. So, at the risk of being pedantic, I'll spell it out:

The lesson is not that we have weak border security. The lesson is not to throw another million dollars at it, so punks like me can't make you worry about Mohamed canoeing into the U.S. with a suitcase nuke.


That won't make you safer—because I didn't only test the DHS on the northern tip of Lake Erie. I wrote e-mails and text messages about my original plan to “sneak Anthrax into the U.S. by canoe” for

months. I talked about it on cell phones and land lines as much as my friends could bear. And I thought the government was spying on us to protect us.

Again, to be thorough, the lesson is not that the government should give another billion in contracts to legally untouchable telecom companies. The lesson, simply, is that these security measures don't work, because they don't have to—they're not designed to. They're designed make the few rich at the expense of the many, under the pretense of security. That these costly follies can make us feel safer is moot, because the actual terrorist threat doesn't warrant our hyperbolic insecurity.

Already in this War of Terror, we've sacrificed over a trillion dollars, our civil liberties and thousands of lives. The more we spend, the less safe we become, the more we spend. Post 9/11 America is a national cuckoo's nest, terrified by a self-fulfilling prophecy that vast networks of evildoers are hell-bent on slipping over the border to kill our children.

So, we flap and flap. We dip and dive. We poop.

And in the end, we'll be too exhausted from protecting our children against imaginary threats to feed them. 

### ***The Buffalo skyline: begging for terrorist destruction?***



# The Asshole Disease

## DON'T BOTHER CALLING THE PROCTOLOGIST

**BY ERIC LINGENFELTER**

Are you unable to relate to others? Are you inflexible when arguing with loved ones? Do you really and truly not give a shit about the world outside of your front door? Would people say that you're an incontrovertible dickface?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may be suffering from EDD: Empathy Deficit Disorder.

Think I just made that up to be funny? Nuh uh. This is for serious. Check the Washington Post's December 25, 2007 edition for the original column ("Empathy: Could it be What You're Missing?") or – if you can stomach it – Oprah.com's more recent editorial on the subject from June 18, 2008 ("Empathy deficit disorder – do you suffer from it?").

To summarize the main points of both articles: Dr. Douglas LaBier, founder of the Center for Adult Development in Washington, D.C. ("a premier nonprofit educational, research, and service organization whose mission is to promote adult development in the workplace and in personal lives," according to its website), discovered a mental disorder through years of research and analysis that he calls Empathy Deficit Disorder.

The disorder, which he says is running wilder than Hulkamania, prevents people from being able to see things from another person's perspective and is responsible for a smorgasbord of ills, from relatively minor SNAFUs like divorce to that biggest of communication breakdowns, war.

His solution? Think happy thoughts. No, really. Here it is in his own words from the aforementioned Post article:

"Recent research shows that the capacity to feel what another person feels is hard-wired through what are called mirror neurons. Functional magnetic resonance imagery (fMRI) showed that brain regions involving both emotions and physical sensations light up in someone who

observes or becomes aware of another person's pain or distress. Similarly, research shows that altruistic behavior lights up the pleasure centers of the brain usually associated with food or sex.

"Just as you can develop EDD by too much self-absorption, you can also overcome EDD by retraining your brain to take advantage of what is known as neuroplasticity. Similar research shows that as you refocus your thoughts, feelings and behavior in the direction you desire, the brain regions associated with them are reinforced. What's more, changing your brain activity reinforces the changes you're making in your thinking. The result is a self-reinforcing loop between your conscious attitudes, your behavior and your brain activity.

"By focusing on developing empathy, you can deepen your understanding and acceptance of how and why people do what they do and you can build respect for others. This doesn't mean that you are whitewashing the differences you have with other people or letting them walk over you. Rather, empathy gives you a stronger, wiser base for resolving conflicts and trumps self-centered, knee-jerk reactions to surface differences."

So there you have it. When you pare down all the fancy-pants jargon, LaBier says that the answer to a shitton of our most pressing societal issues is to simply quit being jerks and focus on feeling for each other, even if we have to fake it. Simple, right?

Yeah. Right.

Now, it would be quite easy to just dismiss these articles out of hand. Lord knows I did at first. In fact, my original plans for this article/editorial consisted of a series of wacky-schmacky put downs like this:

*So they took douchebaggery and renamed it "Empathy Deficit Disorder?" What's next? Renaming jealousy "Narcissistic Hypercovetousness (NHC)?" What are they gonna do with apathy? They can't call it "Effort Deficit Disorder" because*

*that acronym is already taken! Pfff. LaBier. More like "LaBrie." Because he's cheesy. And French. Which makes him gay.*

You can thank me later for scrapping that approach.

After I thought about the articles for a while, I realized that my problem with them didn't lie with the basic ideas that inspired them. Any reasonably informed person can easily see that there's enough horrible stuff going on in the world concerning man's inhumanity toward man for a person to conclude that we suffer from a considerable "empathy deficit," if that's what you want to call it.

My main issue with his assessment of the problem is that he's far too optimistic about human nature.

People have been treating other people like shit ever since bipedal locomotion became all the rage. All those empire builders from B.C. and beyond kicked the crap out of everybody they came across and usually enslaved most of the people who were still fit enough to work. Christians have been fucking with anyone who isn't them ever since they rose to power. Black people were only considered three-fifths of a person in the Constitution until 1868, and though we've made progress, we still haven't reached the point where they're considered whole people in all areas of our society. We've been locking up people just because they look like the people that we're at war with ever since World War II. There's the Holocaust, which I shouldn't have to explain to anyone outside of Iran or Austria. And so much conflict has happened in the Middle East over the course of human civilization that you have to wonder if the Tigris and Euphrates flow with pure haterade.

These are, sadly, but a few of terrible things that we've done to each other during our time on this planet. I didn't even get into all of the stuff that we're doing to each other now. I'd need this entire issue and a sizeable chunk of the next.



So the question remains. Why haven't we just sat down and tried to understand each other? Why don't we just have a worldwide positivity party and synchronize our brain patterns so that we can have one big ol' simultaneous empathy orgasm?

I can think of a few reasons:

1) Humans are lazy. Understanding other people takes effort, and why expend energy when you could, you know, not?

2) Humans are fearful. Even if the things that convince us that it's OK dismiss others turn out to be lies, rumors that bad must mean that something else is wrong with them. There has to be a nugget of truth there, right?

3) Humans are petty. As long as everything goes right for us, everyone else can fuck right off. Respect for your fellow man is hippie shit.

4) Humans are stubborn. We're never wrong. Ever. About anything. Even if you prove it with irrefutable data. Fuck your facts. We're. Not. Wrong.

5) Humans are arrogant. Of course our group is superior to all those *other* people. How do we know? Because we say so, silly! Remember, we're never wrong.

6) Humans are greedy. See points three and five.

7) Humans are wrathful. There's not much that we like more than seeing people pay for their sins, even if their sins don't amount to much more than not being one of "us."


8) Humans are evil. Some of us just really like it when other people suffer.

When you go back and look at these articles, with all of the examples from the

authors and interviewees, you can see that all of the things listed above are said to be major indicators of EDD. And that's precisely my point. When has there been a time in human history when vast numbers of the population haven't been dangerously and often willfully blind to other people's situations, for all of the above reasons and more? Can you honestly look at yourself and say that you've never hit any of these roadblocks to understanding? I can't.

Labeling this lack of understanding a disorder implies abnormality. Unfortunately, it's one of the most normal parts of human existence.

So, what's the fix? Who knows? An 80,000 year-old problem isn't going to be solved in a thousand or so words, no matter how well written, how well spoken or how charged with positive energy they are.

Sorry, Dr. LaBier. I empathize. I really do. I know you had the best intentions. But intentions don't mean shit when you're just plain wrong. 

- *Do you have trouble achieving and maintaining compassion?*
- *Do you feel unable to relate to the pain of others?*
- *Are you a righteous dickhead?*

If you answered "Go Fuck Yourself!" to any or all of these questions, you may suffer from Empathy Deficit Disorder (EDD).

Empathy Deficit Disorder is a serious illness that affects pretty much everyone.

Ask your doctor about treating your EDD today!





**BY PAUL JONES**

*Tired of waiting for world-changing events to actually occur to find out what they are? Wait no more! BEAST senior foreign policy/soothsaying editor Paul Jones has read the Persian tea leaves, and possibly smoked some of them as well, providing us with a rundown of our inevitable war with Iran.*

Public support for John McCain wanes when the Republican presidential candidate makes a speech on foreign policy that includes references to Byzantium and Pangaea.

As McCain's abysmal poll numbers pour in, his panicked advisers frantically dial the White House but receive no answer. President Bush has ordered all phones off the hook for the evening, while he and Samuel Alito watch *Cocoon 2: The Return*. McCain staffers persist and, an hour later, an unidentified man answers the phone in slurred Japanese, becomes belligerent and hangs up. Several more minutes pass

before senior McCain adviser Charlie Black gets through. President Bush answers, with Gary "U.S." Bonds's "New Orleans" blaring in the background. Bush listens impatiently to Black and vows to "do something first thing in the morning." Black, dissatisfied and hoarse from shouting, asks if he might speak with Vice President Cheney. The phone goes dead.

The following day, Bush convenes as his first order of business a 3pm meeting with the Joint Chiefs. He immediately puts them to work on a 5,000-piece puzzle of Grant Wood's "American Gothic," depicting the farmer and woman as giant beetles. At 3:05, bored with the spectacle of the puzzlers, he decides to lighten the mood by sawing his Scottish Terrier Barney in half. At 8:30, while still attempting futilely to reassemble Barney, he suddenly remembers his conversation with Black from the previous evening and blurts offhand to the assembly, "Oh, yeah, we gotta do Iran." Ignoring the horrified silence from his underlings, he dismisses General Casey for shaving puzzle pieces with a razorblade and orders him replaced

"with my brother Neil's kid." It is unclear whether he intends simply to have his nephew, Pierce, finish the puzzle, or wishes him appointed to the Joint Chiefs.

He cradles Barney's halves in his arms and departs for "the Surgeon General's office."

Bush, Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates agree the announcement of the first wave of troop redeployment to Iran should be made to soldiers during a USO show. Sacha Baron Cohen reprises his role as Borat. In rapid-fire delivery, he tells soldiers at a base in Kirkuk: "You-can-stop-rape-of-Iraq-and-insert-penis-into-Iran's-anus. Pause!" Several side arms are discharged and Cohen is killed—not in response to his announcement, but because slow-witted Marines mistake him for a "hajji."

The McCain campaign enjoys a fleeting rebound in the polls when they hold a "Free Draft Day" in Washington, sponsored by Anheuser-Busch. Public sentiment again turns ugly, however, when voters learn the stunt is a tie-in to promote the White



House's reinstitution of the draft. As she ascends the stage with her husband, a drunken mob douses Cindy McCain with alcohol. The beer heiress instinctively tears her top off and swings it lustily over her head. Senator McCain lifts his feeble hands to cover her body, but only gets his palms as high as her breasts. The event becomes one of McCain's most successful fundraisers. *Newsweek* polling indicates McCain's numbers soar among "dirty old men." McCain seizes the opportunity to call for a reinvasion of Grenada. Pundits applaud the initiative as "Reaganesque."

The Iranian invasion begins auspiciously for the United States. Iran's Revolutionary Guard mistakes the first wave of ragged, wounded and unequipped American soldiers for Iraqi refugees and allows them unimpeded passage into Tehran. Their misjudgment proves harmless, however, as the haggard troops "surrender" to CNN cameramen.

The president, consulting with General Petraeus, devises a scheme to deliver, by Apache gunship, 600 anchovy pizzas each to the homes of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "That they didn't even order!" Bush declaims gravely during a nationally televised press conference. Several choppers are downed miles shy of their destination by Iranian missiles and the rest turn back. Somewhere, Jimmy Carter celebrates with a private fist pump. Additional plans to fire flaming bags of poop high-ranking officials' doorsteps are abandoned. Fed

Chairman Ben Bernanke is forced to engineer a taxpayer-funded bailout of Fratelli's House of Pizza. The White House disposes of the remaining pies, rejecting a suggestion to donate them to a homeless shelter, and orders Chinese takeout for dinner.

Having received no words or show of support, President Bush sends an urgent plea for assistance to US allies in Israel. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert replies by text: "NFW!" The establishment of a separate, independent Palestinian state is announced later that day. The war takes a bizarre turn when, for several days straight, Blackwater mercenaries fighting alongside American troops encounter Blackwater mercenaries fighting alongside Iranian forces. After an additional week of tense negotiations by the US with Blackwater CEO Erik Prince, the matter is resolved. Prince orders all Blackwater personnel to decamp from American bases and exclusively support Iran, telling US officials "It's purely a business decision." Exploiting the immunity granted them by Iran—and previously by the United States—Blackwater gunmen take potshots at American soldiers as they withdraw, decimating numerous outposts. Nouri al-Maliki and Hamid Karzai abscond, like Thelma and Louise—literally dressed as women—in Uday Hussein's Prowler roadster.

Fox News begins reformatting its programming. Bill O'Reilly grows a beard and dons a white headdress. His first post-

invasion "Factor" news special makes the case that former "Factor" producer Andrea Mackris should be whipped by Bill O'Reilly for witchcraft, and seducing Bill O'Reilly. The program is banned in Iran for its moral depravity. "Hannity and Khamenei" fares much better initially, but viewers soon gripe that the co-hosts "agree on everything" and ratings sag. "Moqtada and Colmes" is canceled after only three airings, but not before Alan Colmes is the target of multiple fatwas. Fox agrees to conduct and televise his stoning, for various blasphemies, during a special on Islamic law hosted by Greta Van Susteren. Media Matters criticizes the death squad, which includes Brit Hume, Jonah Goldberg and Ann Coulter, for its lack of diversity and Coulter's mid-throw characterization of Colmes as a "pussy." The show's high Nielsen returns are attributed to viewers' bloodlust and the fact Van Susteren's face is veiled.

President Bush announces simultaneously to the American people the US surrender in Iran and his plans to send forces into China. John's McCain's and Barack Obama's hopes for the White House are each dashed when Iran seizes on the US economic collapse to depose Bush and install Lou Dobbs as satrap. Dobbs immediately calls on legal and illegal Mexican immigrants "To learn Farsi or get out!" BEAST

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# SOUNDING GOFF!



**BY STAN GOFF**

## IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS I KNOW IT

Catastrophe: n.

1. A great, often sudden calamity.
2. A complete failure; a fiasco: The food was cold, the guests quarreled—the whole dinner was a catastrophe.
3. The concluding action of a drama, especially a classical tragedy, following the climax and containing a resolution of the plot.
4. A sudden violent change in the earth's surface; a cataclysm.

[Greek katastrophē, an overturning, ruin, conclusion, from katastrephein, to ruin, undo : kata-, cata- + strephein, to turn.]

For years now, I have been accused by sisters and brothers from right to left of being “catastrophist.”

There is an energy crisis coming. “Catastrophist.”

The housing bubble will devastate the economy. “What housing bubble, catastrophist?”

The war in Southwest Asia constitutes a strategic defeat of the United States government, now tied down in a two-front war.

[... ...]

On the first two, I can pretty much rest my case.

As to closing the case on that last assertion about the war, the main obstacle is a Chinese Wall of twittering ignorance that defines American culture. American culture is trained by media monopolies, and for them the war is an entertainment commodity.

For the time being, the war-commodity serves best as background for that quadrennial personality contest that we call the general election. That's how this “commander-in-chief” issue is being used to bewilder the public about the war itself. In the seemingly endless horse-race analysis of the upcoming elections, we can't escape the ersatz erudition of public opinion-makers on the subject of whether John McCain or Barack Obama will make a more suitable Commander-in-Chief. Every echo-chamber is attuned. The blogosphere is abuzz. The blanket has been thrown over the war, but this commander-in-chief thing has become the media Big Ten top-model competition of public affairs.

What we generally hear from the chattering classes on this topic seems to be intentionally clueless, so I feel impelled to do some of my own chattering. I should warn you that my chatter on this matter is... well, catastrophist.

Before laying out the argument, there are some assumptions smuggled into the info-media drivel that need correcting.

First assumption: Military service makes one more suitable for the position of commander-in-chief. This one is universally attractive not simply on account of the American idealization of all things military, but because so many liberals latched onto the highly-gendered and ultimately irrelevant “chickenhawk” criticism of George W. Bush. This critique of Bush, even coming from the left that should have known better, implicitly accepts the assumption that military service translates into suitability to be a president... since Congress long ago ceded its war-making prerogative to the executive branch, making every U.S. president now a de facto independent warlord.

There is the de jure command given in the Constitution; but then there is the reality that Congress has not only ceded the authority, they won't even cut the purse strings to an unpopular war like Iraq. So the position of commander-in-chief is not only real and powerful, it concentrates

the consequential impact of military adventures on that one person.

Having military experience might afford that person some potential insight into the military; and having been involved in a war does provide the opportunity to learn something about war. I emphasize “potential,” because it is not frequently actualized. Plenty of people can serve in the military, and even participate in one capacity or another in war, and still not have enough sense to pound sand. Conversely, plenty of people who have no military experience can attend to the strategic (read: politico-economic) goals of conflict, and delegate the tactical details to the lumpen-intelligentsia of the armed forces officer corps.

John McCain flew airplanes and dropped bombs. The only thing he commanded in wartime was an instrument panel. He did that 23 times in combat, before he was shot down and captured by the same Vietnamese he had been bombing. Before that, he was injured in a ship fire aboard the USS Forrestal. He had some harrowing (not synonymous with heroic) experiences, but there is no historical evidence that suffering automatically leads to increased intelligence or even empathy for others who suffer.

Ulysses Grant was a real commander of armed forces and a mediocre commander-in-chief who followed closely on the heels of Abraham Lincoln - a lawyer and career politician who had zero direct military experience... but who did win the bloodiest war in history at that time by directing Grant and others.

Franklin Roosevelt steered the U.S. through the greatest military conflagration in history - with no military experience of his own - bobbing and weaving to let other nations take the brunt of the war, and positioning the U.S. to climb onto the heap of 48 million bodies as the globe's newly predominant nation... a position the U.S. has held to this day.

Not making any moral points here. Lincoln and Roosevelt were as ruthless and cynical as any chief executive. They succeeded, is



all I'm saying, as commanders-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.

The hoopla about McCain's suitability as commander-in-chief might make a bit more sense if he had spent a real career in the military and become a flag officer, I suppose. But Wesley Clark – a sycophant who rose through the ranks, like Colin Powell, as a successful bureaucrat – makes me hesitate to say even that.

The point is, the military is one arm of the state; and before a former military person can employ the military intelligently, he (they are all hes so far) has to get hold of the fact that military outcomes are determined not in the local, tactical context, but by strategic-political factors. This is why the general analysis of the tactical trends and dispositions in Iraq right now are both deceptive and self-deceptive. Commentators are either not at liberty to explain, or simply incapable of explaining, the macrorends that define the boundaries of political (and therefore military) action in Southwest Asia and the world.

One of the better ideas embodied in the Constitution of the United States is the idea that civilian authority should be in firm control of the military. ("Civilian" is also supposed to imply a sovereign people, and in money-run elections reported by ruling class media, there is no sovereign people.)

The reason for that rule is that history taught past generations that military leaders who are successful in war are often brutal as well as stupid – a winning combination when the goal is simply to tear things up using a vast technological advantage.

It's the machismo, a synonym for brutal stupidity.

Military stewardship of nations has a disastrous historical record, which is why the media's focus on this aspect of the presidency is not only off the mark with regard to John McCain. His own "service" – the real or the idealized – is largely irrelevant.

The media focus also cops to the most dangerous accomplishment of the Bush administration: the publicly-accepted idea of a "global war on terror."

Smuggled assumption Two.

There is no such thing, of course. There is a war to control Southwest Asia and its strategic resources. The "global war on terror" (GWOT) is a legal pretext that apparently slipped right past all those fine lawyers in Congress.

What GWOT does is consolidate U.S. executive control over both domestic and foreign policy, by redefining the entire planet as a battlefield. This "global battlespace" justifies actions that are only sanctioned by international law on the battlefield.

"The whole world" cannot be shoehorned into any definition of a "battlefield" embodied in international law on the issue of war. That's one of several reasons the U.S. won't sign onto the International Criminal Court.

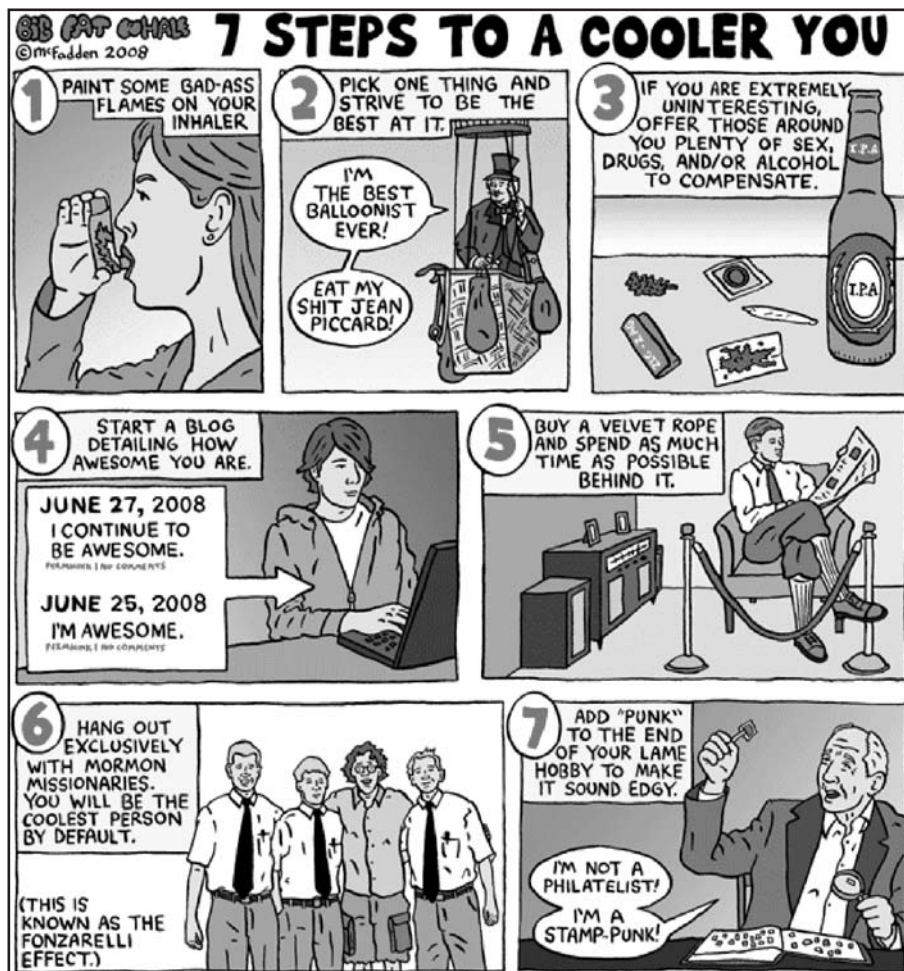
The GWOT is simply rhetorical cover for a naked political power-grab. And this suits a Democratic executive just as nicely as it does a Republican one, as Congress has demonstrated in its perpetuation by word and deed of the GWOT myth.

That is why – even though it's not a sexy issue – debunking the GWOT assumption of a "global battlespace" is one of the most crucial debates we can have about the war. It goes way beyond just Iraq, and set the stage for Guantanamo, rendition, et cetera.

The lawyer running against McCain is play-acting at having missed this pretextual fiction, too, because he talks about winning this GWOT himself. That commits him whether he likes it or not.

That is why, after he wins the Presidency, Barack Obama – our new commander-in-chief – will find himself becoming the Lyndon Johnson of Afghanistan, and the U.S. will continue sending troops to die for control of strategic resources through his entire term.

Meanwhile, the world and the nation will grow poorer and meaner. It may even be during Obama's first term that the debt ledge, public and private, snaps off (catastrophically). As the ledge plummets into the abyss with all of us tumbling behind, so his popularity will plunge down



with us as inexorably as Bush's has. The war didn't destroy Bush's ratings; losing it did.

Obama will not only be caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of Wall Street and a pissed-off public; he will be trying to win an unwinnable war in Afghanistan and Iraq. All he will do is shift the center of gravity from Iraq to Afghanistan, which is already shifting as the Taliban expands its power into the interstices of the current NATO occupation.

I know, I know. You've heard the media say Obama wants to leave Iraq. That's because they don't listen and don't want you to listen.

Obama has never called for a withdrawal from Iraq. He talks the al-Qaeda-babble just as enthusiastically as Dick Cheney, in fact, and has called for a permanent U.S. occupation of Iraq, linguistically disguised as "overwatch" with Special Operations on call.

Any withdrawals (that is, troop draw-downs) remains contingent on "the Iraqis." This means the squabbling cliques inside the Green Zone, not most Iraqis.

The trigger for discontinuing the occupation, then, is the "government of Iraq" taking measures that they are unlikely to take, and over which the U.S. has nearly no control... meaning these redeployment triggers will never be pulled.

This bait-and-switch worked for Bush, and it will work for Obama until our sheer exhaustion with the war and the domestic economic crisis force a change on the Obama administration.

Obama started his campaign for commander-in-chief with the easy – and false – critique that the Bush administration was killing the wrong people. It's not Iraqis we need to kill, but Afghans. His popular deception is not that Iraq is responsible for 9-11. His implication is that Afghanistan did 9-11 because bin Laden was there.

Again, not true, but why let that hold you back? The Taliban government of Afghanistan tried to give the U.S. Osama bin Laden *before* 9-11. Since the U.S. had invasion plans on the table, they didn't want to lose the bin Laden pretext, and they refused.

The attacks of 9-11-01 were conducted by

15 Saudis, one Egyptian, one Lebanese, and two citizens of the United Arab Emirates. No Afghans. No Iraqis.

Here is something that is true about Afghanistan, though. Guerrilla war against outsiders has always succeeded there. And it is succeeding now against the U.S. and NATO. The loss of a U.S. perimeter base near the Pakistani border last week is just a foreshadowing of where the war there is headed. This is the war that Obama wants to fight?

Yet he seems to have trapped himself in it already. He says that Afghanistan is being lost because there are too many U.S. troops tied down in Iraq.

Does he propose then that the current institutional trend lines in the military be maintained? More expensive recruitment and lower recruitment standards, falling morale, an unsustainable operations tempo, the reward of criminality and incompetence in the leadership, and reliance on \$180,000-a-year mercenaries to take up the slack?

Obama claims that he is going to fight terrorism by attacking Afghans instead of Iraqis, as well as maintain an "overwatch" presence of tens of thousands of troops in Iraq. Where will the troops come from?

Well, he has stated that he wants to expand the ground forces by 93,000 (both Army and Marines).

Lyndon Johnson started out like this, nickel-diming, and eventually found himself with 500,000 American troops occupying Vietnam. Several years later, the last U.S. troops were literally driven out of Vietnam at gunpoint. Johnson didn't run that war; the war ran him.

That's where Obama is headed right now, and for the record, that does not mean there is no difference between him and McCain, or that I am encouraging electoral abstinence. Those are red herrings.

It means the war has in many respects escaped the calculable control of the American state, no matter who the president is.

Obama will be the next chief executive of the American state – a state by, for, and of the business class. That's the job description. That business class depends on the larger economy, which is materially dependent on massive and unceasing throughputs of fossil hydrocarbons.

That same economy has been overrun by rentier capitalists who have driven the global economy over a cliff.

Competitors are on the horizon: China, Russia, India, Brazil... but mostly Western Europe. The war is one central drama in a multiply-determined crisis that also includes imminent food shortages, water famines, radical climate shifts, and the general decay of interclass stability.

Obama did not inherit Bush's war, except in the details. He inherited a business class's war that was inevitable (though not in its present form).

The United States was going to reposition its international military after the Cold War in any case; the old disposition for "containing" the Soviet Union was obsolete after all. And given the most obvious of considerations, the place to seek permanent and fully operational military bases abroad was in Southwest Asia. That's where the hydrocarbons are, and when you have the hydrocarbons, you have the competition on a nose ring.

Following through with this is Obama's job after the election. (We get to participate in the elections for which wealth-selected candidate will be the CEO, but we are not, alas, on the board of directors.)

Obama is a very smart guy – a genuine intellectual – who has jumped through a rare political window of opportunity, but there's a punji-pit on the other side.

Bush's approval numbers are abysmal in the face of a four-sided crisis: a bursting bubble of fictional value, skyrocketing fuel prices, an interminable, unpopular war, and the collapse of ecosystems. Bush (ahistorically) gets all the blame. That's the window of opportunity.

Obama has also run a brilliant and even technically audacious campaign (his policy pronouncements are anything but audacious). I suspect he is going to win, and win big.

In other circumstances, he might win to become a brilliant CEO for the business class, and even make enough of the rest of us comfortable enough to remain complacent. But he is inheriting problems that are already – as they have been for the Bush administration – supra-political, impermeable to intervention by the actually-existing political system in which we live. He is inheriting a complex and world-historic impasse for the world and



the American state.

And he will be the commander-in-chief for the United States Armed Forces.

He has already committed himself to the emergent consensus of that system. Southwest Asia will be secured for the U.S., by military force if necessary, or there will be a phase shift in American economics and politics that will sideline the entire system (and consensus).

There is not a shred of evidence (except in the public's ever-hopeful imagination) that he intends to be anything more or less than other commanders-in-chief. Like the others, he will bend the military to the emergencies of empire – that is, secure the continuity of the existing system.

Maybe McCain will win, and none of this will matter to Obama. It will go the same way for McCain, and worse still if he elects to vicariously relive his pre-capture glory days by ordering bombing runs over Qom. He'd be the commander-in-chief. He could do that as commander-in-chief. Congress will not stop him. Neither will we.

The "antiwar movement" has always been more an anti-Bush movement and an anti-defeat movement (nudged along by competing leftist cadres without their own popular bases); and it has shown no ability to employ anything except '60s-'70s tactics and techniques, even though the ruling class has long ago adapted to them.

Neither Congress nor the people-at-large will stop McCain or Obama from war-mongering.

That's one reason there has been so much emotional investment in Obama's change rhetoric. A general election (a new king) is the current limit of our cultural imagination and the limit of our collective political will.

This in no way means the system will continue along. It simply means that these creatures of the system will not be the agents of its undoing. The weeds have been in the wheat for quite some time now, but pulling the weeds will kill the wheat. The harvest has to come before we can winnow and start fresh.

Making McCain out a devil does not make Obama a rescuing angel. Obamas's mature, articulate confidence is certainly reassuring after eight years of a Yalie frat-rat smirking in the foreground of serial disasters; but there is such a thing as misplaced confidence – even feigned confidence.

Obama's foreign policy is likely to be warmed-over Brzezinski-ism, and it was Brzezinski who was the architect of the conditions that put the Taliban in power in Afghanistan in the first place.

Brzezinski, paradoxically, is warning Obama of exactly what's been said here, citing the Soviet experience in Afghanistan.

"We have to be careful..." Brzezinski warns Obama,

"...not to overestimate the appeal of the democratic Afghan elite, because we run the risk that our military presence will gradually turn the Afghan population entirely against us.

"I realize that in an electoral campaign you don't want to antagonize large groups which are highly motivated. This is a very dangerous period of time with very unpredictable consequences. You have three countries [Iran, Israel and the U.S.] doing a kind of death dance on the basis of confusion, division and fear.

"If we end up with war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, [and] Iran at the same time, can anyone see a more damaging prospect for America's world role than that? That's the fundamental foreign policy dilemma at the back of this election. A four-front war would get us involved for years... It would be the end of American predominance."

In fact, a two-front war is already contributing to the same thing. What's a commander-in-chief to do?

Welcome to GWOT world. Want that catastrophe with one lump or two? 

*Stan Goff's website is [feralscholar.org](http://feralscholar.org)*

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# Seven Words You'd Never Hear Today



**BY ALLISON KILKENNY**

Now is the time when bloggers, pundits, and your immediate family will act like they were personally invested in George Carlin's artistic acts of bravery. Everyone will crow about the great man because he was great, and they'll declare his "Seven Dirty Words" routine a pillar of modern American comedy and also a landmark case in censorship.

Those barely old enough to remember Carlin's mugshot, (and those old enough to remember his arrest and simultaneously crotchety enough to dismiss the opinions of anyone under 30) will masquerade as loyal Carlin soldiers. They'll bitch and moan like they were standing beside the man at his trial, U.S. Supreme Court case *F.C.C. v. Pacifica Foundation*, in which a narrow 5-4 decision affirmed the government's right to regulate Carlin's act on the public airwaves.

The internet will erupt into an orgy of suffering, because that's what happens when a great man dies. And a great man did die. So even if it's a tad contrived, Carlin should be paid his due respects. Every flattering statement, every overzealous compliment will still be too few for one of the greatest comedians ever to shout his fearlessness into a microphone.

Counter-cultural icons are always beloved and admired retrospectively. The people that faint after reading an expletive on the internet are the same people that buy t-shirts with Lenny Bruce's face airbrushed across the chest. These are the same individuals that bemoan a great

man like Carlin dying because – weirdly enough – there seems to be a shortage of independent artists fluttering around our corporate media.

Thirty years ago, the FCC functioned much the same way it does today. Let's say there's an uptight asshole – a real bible-thumping lunatic – who has a little cherub offspring that overhears a grown-up comedian drop the F-bomb. Logically, the parent turns off the radio, explains the evils of the English language and Satan's constant onslaught of temptations, and calls it a night, right?

Wrong. In 1973, a man complained to the FCC that his son had heard a similar routine to Carlin's Seven Dirty Words, which was broadcast one afternoon over

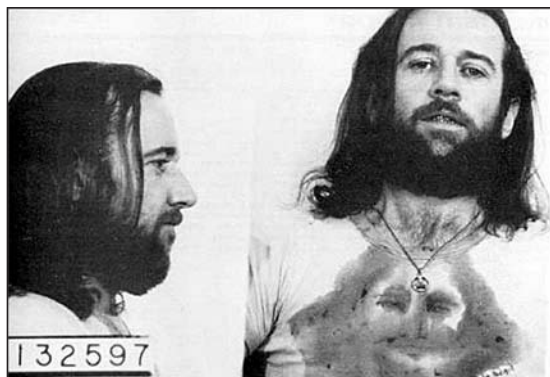
great man: Lenny Bruce. When the cops arrested Bruce for obscenity, Carlin allegedly mouthed off to the cops and joined Bruce in jail. It's difficult to imagine a performer today exerting such willful defiance and breathless indignation in the presence of a ridiculously corrupt world.

George Carlin hated censorship, and that hatred steadily grew through his life as he watched corporate mergers and an overbearing government sedate its citizenry with dumbed-down entertainment and materialistic toys.

Who would embrace a performer like George Carlin today? Clear Channel? FOX? What major network – what radio station – would broadcast his words? When would the admiration for his bravery stop and the fear of corporate retribution begin? Today, many suits would have patted Carlin on the shoulder and sincerely apologized, "Gee, kid, I love it. It's just... my boss is a real square! I mean, the guy is SO out of touch. I can't stick my neck out there."

The greatest tribute for Carlin isn't to worship him as the last brave performer. The idea is to take the torch and run with it. Carlin famously said that it's the duty of a comedian to find where the line is drawn and cross it deliberately.

He meant that oftentimes we only truthfully engage with one another when we violate some unspoken social contract. The best conversations, debates, and ideas spring from uncharted interactions. Carlin wanted us to surprise the hell out of each other, in our dull little lives and in our government. Maybe it says something about our culture that he needed to scream "FUCK!" in order to get the message across. ~~BTSP~~



**"Say cunt-motherfucker-shit-fuck!"**

WBAI, a Pacifica Foundation FM radio station in New York City. Pacifica received a citation from the FCC, and later the Supreme Court upheld the FCC action, ruling that the routine was "indecent but not obscene," which is a way of saying, "You're making us nervous as hell but we have this thing called free speech, so we can't technically lock you up."

Though, Carlin would have gladly gone to jail. He'd been there before with another





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NY Rochester Aaron's Alley  
NY Rochester East Ave Alley  
NY Rochester Spot Coffee  
NY Rochester World Wide News  
NY Tonawanda Mark's Pizzeria

OH Athens Little Professor Books  
OH Cincinnati Cincinnati Fountain  
Square News  
OH Cleveland Bank News  
OH Columbus Liberty Books and  
News - Columbus  
OH Columbus Monkey's Retreat  
OH Rocky River Liberty Books and  
News - Cleveland

ON Ottawa Mags & Fags, INS  
News Service

PA Doylestown Doylestown  
Bookshop  
PA Philadelphia Avril 50  
PA West Chester Chester County  
Book Co.

WA Bellingham Newsstand  
WA Seattle Elliott Bay Book Co.

WI Greenfield Greenfield News  
& Hobby  
WI Madison University Book Store  
- Wisconsin  
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# Waxy BEAST

**BY ERIC LINGENFELTER**



*Coldplay, Viva La Vida or Death  
and All His Friends (Capitol)*



Chris Martin is the Hugh Grant of modern rock.

Much like how Grant's romantic comedies offer an easily palatable version of love that filters out most of that messy heartache shit that pops up in every relationship from time to time, Martin's band offers an easily palatable version of rock and roll without any of the abrasiveness, attitude or sexuality that's ruffled the feathers of the prim and proper ever since the genre kicked, screamed and fucked its way into the popular consciousness all those many moons ago.

They're both nervously charming English niceboys whose simpering and mewling warms the hearts of Bed, Bath and Beyond shoppers and Bed, Bath and Beyond shoppers-at-heart the world over.

And they both make caustic douchebags like me want to vomit until our eyes burst.

Hell, Chris and company even inspire level-headed pros to lash out from time to time. Take Jon Pareles, head pop music critic at the New York Times, one of the fairest and most objective people in the field. Even he couldn't resist calling Coldplay "the most insufferable band of the decade" in his June 5, 2005 review of the band's last album, X&Y. Ouch.

Now, most musicians in Coldplay's position would laugh off stuff like this while sipping Cabernet Sauvignon and nibbling Caciocavallo podolico cheese in their gold-plated jacuzzis. After all, they're multi-platinum recording artists with legions of fans and we critics are just a bunch of nerdlings circle jerking over humanity's most subjective art form.

But, as Martin said in his June 26 interview with Rolling Stone - ejaculatorily entitled "The Jesus of Uncool" - Coldplay actually took Pareles' verbal bitchslap to heart. They decided to shake things up a bit.

They meditated on the duality of existence: life and death, love and hate, peace and war, Sprite and Coke, et cetera, et cetera. They wrote multi-part suites instead of mere songs. They hired legendary U2 and Talking Heads producer Brian Eno to zazz things up with synths and strings and tablas and all kinds of other crazy crap. They snagged some nifty 18th century French revolutionary outfits from the costume shop down the street.

They set the stage for an album so epic, so important, so life-changingly fantabulous that it needed two titles in two languages to fully convey its grandness.

But when you strip away all the neat bells and whistles and get into the album's musical and emotional core, you realize that nothing has changed except the window dressing. Same mid-tempo, mom-friendly balladry. Same sexless, kinda sorta heartbroken crooning. Same spit-shined, bombastic-yet-unconfrontational production style.

Same Coldplay. Same Chris Martin. Same as it ever was. Viva La Vida gets a rating of four weddings and a funeral. (Cue rimshot.)



## Torche, *Meanderthal* (Hydra Head)



Most of the time, heaviness is relative.

To 80-year-old Granny Agnes, grabbing a gallon of milk out of the refrigerator might feel like pulling a plutonium anvil out of a black hole. To four-time World's Strongest Man champion Magnús Ver Magnússon, hurling a full beer keg might feel like tossing an overstuffed pillow.

And so it goes with music. To Granny Agnes, Motley Crüe might sound like the blood-fueled vomit belches of Satan himself. To Bonesaw McGorefucker, a jaded dirthead with ass-length hair, a Grizzly Adams beard, a closet full of camo pants and a floor strewn with dirty t-shirts of bands with unreadable logos, Cannibal Corpse might sound as innocuous as John Denver's Greatest Hits.

However, some bands transcend subjective perceptions and present a brand of downtuned destruction that's just plain heavy no matter who you are.

Take Torche, for example.

Torche is so heavy that they could knock a yokozuna-ranked sumo wrestler on his ass by playing a single chord.

Torche is so heavy that if you dropped one of their records out of a plane, it would result in an earthquake that would make the demolition of China's Sichuan province seem as insignificant as the collapse of a bed top Playmobil town caused by the negligent use of Magic Fingers.

Torche is so heavy that they make your mom look like Kate Moss. (OH SNAP!)

But Torche is also smart. They know that heaviness alone can only take a band so far. It's what you do with it that separates true thundergods from mere mortals. And so Torche augments their aural assault with soaring, majestic, catchy vocal and guitar lines to burn the beatdown into your brain.

To me, listening to *Meanderthal* conjures up images of riding on the back of a winged colossus as it divebombs Buffalo into oblivion from 10,000 feet while singing a siren song in celebration of the devastation that I can't help but hum along to myself. I can't guarantee that it'll give you the same wacky thoughts, but I can guarantee that it'll be a listening experience you won't soon forget.

*Meanderthal* gets a rating of one mint condition theatrical print of *Destroy All Monsters*, the ultimate in Tokyo stomping giant monster action.

## Cute is What We Aim For, *Rotation* (Fuled By Ramen)



The jig is up, emo dudes. I'm onto you. I know you're just in it for the chicks.

And if there's anyone out there that doesn't believe me, just think about it for a second. The flamboyant hairstyles.

The makeup. The too-tight clothing. The androgyny. The hard-rocking but not too hard-rocking songs.

This is hair metal 2.0, people. The only difference is that when an emo kid wears a Scorpions t-shirt, he/she's doing it because LOL, THE '80S and not because of any real sense of scene identification.

And what's the defining characteristic of the hair metal scene? The sex. Yeah, those guys did a lot of fucking in their day. It's no different with this new breed of cock rocker. Yeah, sure, the emos put on a veneer of effeminism and innocence, but it's just a charade.

It's a classic Trojan Horse, disarm and destroy technique. You and your bandmates saunter on up to Janie from the record shop and her little sister Liz who works at the bookstore, you do your whole routine of "Oh, look at me, I'm so cute and harmless and yeah, I've had a lot of one night stands in my day but they

didn't mean anything and, shucks, I don't even know how they happened because I couldn't snag a piece of tail if a gecko fell into my hand ass first!" and before you can say "Panic! At The Disco," Janie's doing the Eiffel Tower with you and the drummer and Liz... well... Let's just say she's earning that backstage pass the hard way.

So parents, lock up your daughters. If he wears chick pants and you're pretty sure he's not a chick, shoot him. If he has hair that's half long, half blown-off-with-a-shotgun, smash his fucking face in. If he wears retro clothing circa 1985, get really retro on his ass and bust out the medieval torture devices (might I recommend the Pear of Anguish?).

We will protect our women, emos. This means war.

Rotation gets a rating of one Filthy Pirate. (Ask your kids. They'll know.)



## Snap judgment



Here's a depressing-ass story that tells you everything you need to know about the life of a retired mediocre athlete. Anyone out there remember Tony Zendejas? So-so kicker for the Rams, Oilers, Falcons, and Niners in the '80s and '90s, once went 17-for-17 in a season. Now 48 years old, he owns a sports bar in Los Angeles County. And he was arrested for rape this past week.

It seems some woman came into Zendejas's bar back in January, drank a cocktail he handed her, then woke up groggy and sore in a motel some time later. She talked, cops investigated, and this past week Zendejas was charged with one count each of rape by use of drugs, rape of an unconscious person, sodomy by anesthesia or controlled substance, and sodomy of an unconscious victim.

It's been an ugly few years for NFL kickers, especially ex-Rams kickers. In June 2007, former Rams punter Rick Tuten was busted for dealing hot flat-screen TVs in Ocala, Florida. It turns out Tuten was buying stolen goods, particularly electronics and recreational vehicles, and reselling them.

Zendejas faces up to 15 years if a jury

ends up serving him the whole meal. And he'll deserve it, too. Give him 90 points minimum — plus an extra five for being a kicker.

## Chop chop chop



Jacksonville Jaguar Matt Jones represents one of those ideas that never felt quite right. Sure, there have been plenty of athletic college quarterbacks drafted by canny NFL teams who subsequently converted them into quality wideouts. Hines Ward and Antwaan Randle El come to mind, as does Drew Bennett. Even Seneca Wallace is okay. All those guys had one thing in common, though — they were lowish draft picks. Nobody picked them in the first round and gave them huge money to play a position they had never played before at any level above high school. Nobody was crazy enough to do that.

But they did it for Matt Jones, an oversize good ol' boy who broke the SEC record for career QB rushing yards while at Arkansas. Jones stood 6-6 and had 4.4 speed — not to mention the silliest white-man hair on an NFL draftee since Brian Bosworth. NFL GMs drooled over him as the future white-trash version of Randy Moss, but Moss could catch a football and actually run routes. Jones was just

sort of big and could run fast in a straight line. And, as it turns out, blow coke in the offseason.

Jones was busted this past week near the campus of his alma mater, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, when cops spotted him chopping lines of cocaine with a credit card with two other dudes in a car. Police approached the car and were forced to draw guns when Jones didn't show his hands quickly enough. They eventually searched the vehicle and found a baggie with six grams of coke in it, plus a jar containing what they describe as "possible marijuana residue."

Although Jones was booked on felony possession charges, police, in a rare show of restraint, did not slap him with intent-to-distribute, even though he had more than the legal requirement for the charge. (It's about time the district attorneys of America realized that, when an NFL player has six grams of coke on him, he's not dealing — he's got just enough to keep his friends happy for eight minutes or so. In fact, an NFL player caught with less than six grams of coke should be charged with being a crappy host.)

Anyway, this might be the last straw for Jones. Bulging-eyeballed Jaguar coach Jack Del Rio benched him for three games this past year and also brought in talented malcontent Jerry Porter and butter-fingered speedster Troy Williamson. The writing, as they say, is on the wall — and was even before this



bust. Give him 10 points, and stay tuned to see how long he survives.

Meanwhile, Jags defensive back Brian Williams has been acquitted of a DUI from two years ago. Cops in Jacksonville nailed him in September 2006 after they said he swerved in front of a police car. Williams claimed he wasn't intoxicated and fought the charge. Two years later, he's off the hook. There are some happy endings in the sports-crime pages.

## Gone to the Dawgs



The University of Georgia Bulldogs football team has a fun fall to look forward to — it'll probably be the number-one team in the polls when the season kicks off, and may very well manhandle the SEC this year. But the 2008 campaign is getting off to an inauspicious beginning, thanks to a series of arrests.

Most recently, the school took a hit with the arrest of defensive lineman Michael Lemon, a strongside end from Stratford Academy in Macon who was expected to be a rotation player this year. Lemon was arrested and charged with two counts of battery, one of them a felony, in connection with a campus fight that took place in Athens on June 28.

In that incident, Lemon allegedly broke the eye orbit of his victim, a UGA student named DeMarius Jackson.

Georgia suspended Lemon from the team indefinitely as a result — the second such transaction coach Mark Richt had to pull this past week. Offensive lineman Clint Boling, who was busted earlier in the spring for a DUI, was given a two-game suspension.

But that wasn't the only off-the-field news involving UGA football this week. Police also announced that they were dropping charges against yet another defensive end, Jeremy Lomax, who had been arrested for carrying a concealed weapon and speeding in June.

Lemon is the seventh Bulldog arrested this offseason, following offensive guard Justin Anderson (simple battery), defensive back Donovan Baldwin (DUI), fullback Fred Munzenmaier (underage possession of alcohol), and offensive tackle Trinton Sturdivant (simple battery), as well as Boling and Lomax. Despite the spate of arrests, Richt doesn't think his team has a problem, telling reporters that the amount of effort his club is putting in in the weight room is a testament to its superior character.

"I'm extremely excited about what the vast majority of our team has been doing on a daily basis this summer," Richt said.

Meanwhile, across campus . . . it seems that the school's basketball squad is also having its problems. Senior Bulldog guard Billy Humphrey, Georgia's second-leading scorer in 2007-'08, was kicked off the team after being arrested for a DUI, his third bust in 18 months. Humphrey had already been on probation as a result of an alcohol-related arrest and for the

seemingly silly charge of having a butterfly knife in his room (the latter charge he shared with teammate/roommate Mike Mercer, who was kicked off the team this past season).

Credit coach Dennis Felton for having a couple of big ones between the legs. In addition to kicking Humphrey and Mercer off the team, Felton also bounced Albert Jackson (for violations of class-attendance policy) and leading scorer Takais Brown, a big man who was perhaps Georgia's only legit prospect of the bunch. Given the stink from the previous regime — former coach Jim Harrick resigned amid a cloud of scandal, accused of widespread academic fraud — Felton should get props for coaching a tourney team while upholding some sort of standard.

Too many individual Dawgs to give points to in this issue — let's just give the whole school 34 points, for generally being drunken, truant batterers. But hey, why spoil that top ranking? The starters on the football team should all have their cases disposed of before the season starts.

## Supplemental draft, here I come



Make room for JaJuan Spillman, a University of Louisville wideout who wins this week's dumbass award for having a joint in his mouth when police pulled him over early this past Friday morning.

Louisville cops say that Spillman refused to stop for several blocks, and that, when he did, he was smoking a blunt. Yanked out of the car, he slurred his words and had trouble standing up — but managed to impress upon police over and over that he played wide receiver for Louisville. Shades of Ty Law and Agent Zero — I love it. Police tacked on a concealed-firearm charge, and coach Steve Kragthorpe announced Spillman's release from the team on Sunday night.

Give this kid 25 points for the DUI, plus 10 for the repeat violation (he pleaded guilty to possession after a car accident in February 2007), and five more for being so high that he forgot to pull the joint out of his mouth. That makes 40 points total — go Cards!

## 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

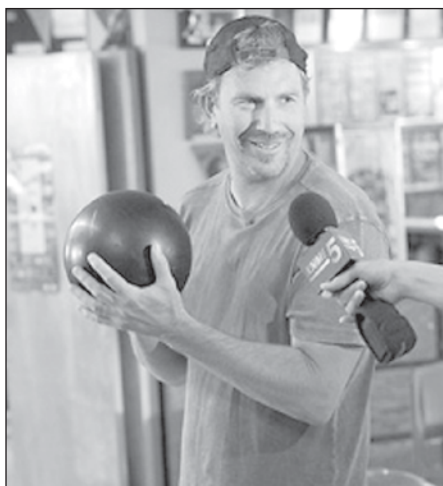


## Pineapple Express



**Seth Rogen will not go away**

## Swing Vote



**"It's crazy, but I like the colored fella'."**

Aw Jesus, I hate election years. I hate political comedies more, but the two always seem to be connected somehow. Either way, political comedies seem tailored to increase public tolerance of the fog of elitism and pretentiousness associated with politics. They also have a tendency to show worlds not unlike our

own, yet so frighteningly different, where politics are fun and filled with colorful and outrageous characters.

Just like they are in *Swing Vote*, the story of an unemployed, beer-soaked Kevin Costner who, through a transparently ridiculous plot device, gets to solely decide who the next president of the United States. Oh, and his choices are Dennis Hopper and Dr. Frasier Crane.

So the media starts hounding Costner and his precocious daughter/moral compass, as do the candidates themselves. Costner becomes an overnight celebrity. He seems to be playing Larry the Cable Guy's older brother, Bud. Then, guessing by Costner's daughter's speech about how everyone has the power to change the world, some heavy-handed, preachy, false hope message is on the way. *If you don't vote you're a shitball.* Yeah yeah, I get it. So how is some jabber-jaw 12 year-old going to sucker me into seeing this colossal turd?

She's not. All I've got to tell myself, in the unlikely event of finding myself about to watch *Swing Vote*, is that the last time Costner and Hopper got together on screen we wound up with *Waterworld*. That's a surefire boner killer right there. That shit kills boners dead.

I've been on Seth Rogen overload for the past year. Maybe it's because when I first saw him in *40 Year-Old Virgin*, I thought he was closer to 30. He had that *old asshole I happen to know* quality about him that's kind of appealing. Then I found out he's like 23 and I felt kinda lied to. Haven't trusted the guy since. He tried it again in *Superbad* and I felt like he was insulting my intelligence. Screw him.

But then I saw the red band/R-Rated trailer for *Pineapple Express*, and now I feel a little forgiving. Whatever you do, don't watch the regular "approved for all audiences" trailer. Watch the R-rated one online. Rogen's a stoner who presumably wears a suit to work. James Franco is his dipshit dealer. Lumberg from *Office Space* is a shady cop who kills someone, while Rogen witnesses the deed. Stupid gets spotted, grabs his dealer and they're on the run.

Zaniness ensues, of course. I thought I saw some hip hop breakin' in there, some car chases, explosions, and some big jumps too. Small problem: It's a stoner comedy. This usually isn't a bad thing, as long as it's out on DVD. Because who the hell wants to leave their own custom stinkhole in their couch if they don't have to, especially when you can't bring your bong to the cinema? This looks good, but I can watch *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* every week until *Pineapple Express* comes out on DVD. It don't bug me.



## Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2



*We're sorry, America.*

Does anyone know how to clean a moderately chunky puke off—actually *out* of a keyboard? The NNNNNNNN key keeps sticking. I'm guessing I'll have to remove each individual key but if anyone knows of a shortcut I can't take here that would be great. But I'm guessing I should just

go buy a new one. Or learn to type without using the letter NNNNNNNNNNNNNN.

So \$40 and a new keyboard later, I have to come back and tell you that *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2* is a sequel to a movie about 4 chicks who mail pants and a pair of swamp-ass jeans to each other. The first one to menstruate into them agrees to be tarred and feathered by the other 3. Then she gets a train run on her by whatever Whitesnake cover band plays down at the corner bar that night. There's never a shortage of them. After she's iced and passed out, she's buried alive in a muddy grave and wakes up 2 states away. And the revenge she takes is always exacting. *Always!*

As much I'd actually go see *that*, this movie is actually about 4 *girls with great personalities*\* who wine about guys and their lives as they share pants that they mail to each other. Why they all share these pants is beyond me. I don't mind suspending a certain amount of disbelief but there's no way in hell you're going to get me to believe that Ugly Betty and that blonde can fit their respective haunches into the same pair of jeans. Ugly Betty's in this movie, so it's assumed people will see this. I won't, but someone will. Mark my words.

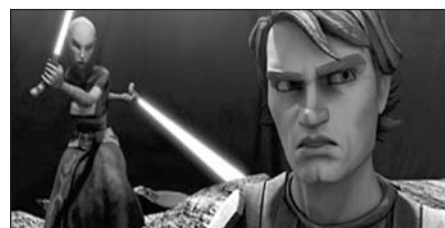
## Tropic Thunder



*Robert Downey Jr. does Al Jolson*

I avoided this trailer for weeks. Ben Stiller and Jack Black playing jerkoff actors who end up in the most disastrous Vietnam movie ever made sounds nothing short of heinous. Then I heard that Robert Downey, Jr plays an Australian method actor who undergoes surgery to make him black so he can play their black sergeant. I saw the R-rated trailer a couple months ago and I've been waiting ever since. Watch the R-rated trailer if you don't believe me. This is a magazine. It'll wait.

## Star Wars: The Clone Wars



*More lifelike than Hayden Christensen*

When *Revenge of the Sith* came out 3 years ago, part of me was definitely sad that it was over. Anakin became Vader, the Jedi were vanquished and Luke and Leia were born. The End.

*Not the end.* More. Now Lucas has made a 3D video game you can't control as he

## KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Betrayed by Those Who Trained Him



Impossible Science



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Rampant Xenophobia



Gratuitous Christ Imagery



Actor Plays Self



Likable Thug



Enchanted Object



Special Effects Circle Jerk



Chick Flick



Sex Pot Battles Demons, Robots, Some Crap



Nauseatingly Cute Children



Ordinary Person Pushed Too Far



Simplistic Epiphany



Embattled Loser Overcomes Obstacles



Crappy Remake



'70s Chic

expands the Star Wars universe and makes more Clone Wars cartoons. It was briefly touched upon a few years back when Cartoon Network belted out 2 volumes of the Clone Wars cartoons. A few of the things that went on in the years between episodes 2 and 3 were kind of cool, but you get the point pretty quick. So now there's a feature length movie that's not going to touch, but *poke* on this period in Star Wars history even further. Oh, and lead into a regular series on Cartoon Network. Over 40 episodes in the can already.

I love *Star Wars*. *Star Wars* has been a part of my life since I was 2 years old. It was my first movie. I own 4, maybe 5 editions of the original trilogy. If George Lucas releases another version with so much as an added Wampa fart I will buy it, no questions asked. But it's over, George. Let go. The Clone Wars ended. We need to get on with our lives and we need you to come with us, George. It's time, George. Let's go. I'm going to miss Mace Windu, too George. We're all going to miss Mace Windu. But he'd want you to move on with your life.

## Death Race



**Scientists say many Destructo-trucks will switch to hybrid power by 2020**

And here comes another chickenfucking remake. I'm so sick of remakes. If it's a remake of a movie that wasn't that great to begin with and an attempt at some kind of improvement is being made, I can

kind of see that. But to remake *Death Race 2000*? One of the greatest cult movies of all time? As low budget and unrefined as it was, a remake is completely unwarranted. *Pop off*.

As much as the idea of *Death Race 2000* being remade annoys me, it doesn't entirely piss me off. We're getting to that.

What does have me ready to start banging pots and pans at hard volume around the house at 3AM is the fact that Jason Fucking Statham is in this movie. This clown is like bank charges—no matter what painstaking steps you take to keep them at bay, they just keeping popping up. What's the appeal of Statham anyway? What? He's like one of 57 white guys on the entire planet that looks good bald. He's not fat and sounds like he uses Lava soap as mouthwash? Seriously, I'd love to know why I should give a shit. This guy has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he'll do anything—I wouldn't be surprised to hear about his exploits in the gay porn industry.

Statham, cockney accent and all, plays a NASCAR driver who goes to jail for the murder of his wife. The ballbusting warden, played by Joan Allen, holds a cross country—look, if you don't know the plot behind *Death Race 2000*, or in this case, just plain *Death Race*, I can't

help you. I just can't. And if you don't see *Death Race 2000*, but just *Death Race*, then I definitely can't help you. Don't come back until you've seen 3 movies Roger Corman made.

## The House Bunny



**A perfect film for your whore daughter**

Sometimes I'll watch movie trailers and they're so abominable that I have to take refuge in another place. One place where I recently sought emotional refuge came courtesy of a friend of a friend of a friend who dated another friend. The smaller details aren't really important here, but what is important is that one of these people has a mother who was so morbidly obese she couldn't bear to wear a stitch of clothing between late May and early September of any given year because she was so hot. And not Monica Belucci hot either. I'm told this mother character made Gilbert Grape's mother look like Myrna Loy.

I've never given the matter much thought, but it only makes sense that big people take big dumps. Generally larger people eat more, and the more you eat the more you crap. It's just simple physics, man. But apparently this mother's leavings were every bit as monstrous as she was. Every third trip to the crapper left a near-black anaconda that no amount of flushing would or could ever hope to banish or subdue. So the son or daughter (once you hear a twist like that, the smaller details vanish into the darkness) would have to fight and eventually break up this monster with a straightened coat hanger so it could be dismantled and sent to hell. Not made up.

And that's where I went during the trailer for *The House Bunny*. This *Legally Blonde* rehash stars Anna Faris, who was in all 476 Scary Movies, playing an ousted Playboy model with no life skills who ends up as a house mother for a sorority



of misfits and nerds. Faris teaches the girls to become attractive by taking off their glasses (you know, because every girl who wears glasses is stunning after she gets contacts) and the *girls who have great personalities*\* teach Faris not to be stupid as she hopes to hook up with a brainy hunk who happens to be Tom Hanks' son. So yeah, I'd rather think about the mashing of obese people's feces than *The House Bunny*. I could be wrong, but at least with the poo I can keep a consistent mood going.

## The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor



**"I'm totally gonna' stab you in slowmo!"**

Brendan Fraser seems like a relatively decent guy who can't make a good decision. It's like he's actually Encino Man and has managed to convince the world otherwise for the past 20 years. His career never shot through the ceiling but the hit left him with brain damage. How else do you explain him showing up in *Monkeybone*? *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*? And to that impressive and stellar resume we can now tack on a third *Mummy* movie.

But fuck that noise; I'm getting psyched for *Dark Knight*. I keep finding more and more clips that slowly unravel what the hell this movie's going to be. I'm going to have a geek boner through the whole thing. I hope I don't pass out from the excitement. It's opening almost as I write

this and I'm about to go blind from tunnel vision for *The Dark Knight*. I nearly painted my daughter up as The Joker the other day.

So how the hell am I supposed to get excited about *The Mummy*? A Batman movie where they finally explore the depths of human depravity and hell itself for its inspiration with a darkness that parallels Barry White reading Sylvia Plath in an opium den, and I'm supposed to give a shit because you brought in Jet Li and moved the action to Asia? And how about Asian "mummies?" Did Asians mummify their dead? I thought it was only Egyptians who participated in that practice. Anyway, Li plays the evil emperor who, along with his army, was imprisoned in stone thousands of years ago. And Rachel Weisz isn't even in this! They replaced her with Maria Bello and the son's a teenager now!

You honestly expect me to give a rat's ass when *The Dark Knight* offers a performance by Heath Ledger that promises to be so severe that playing the role arguably had a hand in his death? Oooh, but *Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* has armies of the dead fighting in an open battlefield in a way that would be appealing to Lord of the Rings and 300 fans! Kiss my dick, Mummy! I wouldn't poke a straightened coat hanger through this steaming pile if you paid me. Well, okay, I'd see *The Mummy* if you paid me enough. But it's on a night where I work the big job. I take the night off and you pay me your initial fee plus what I'd normally make. All expenses paid, including a rental car of my choice. I'm fed before and will be made inebriated after the feature presentation. If someone would set me up like with a gig like this twice a week, I'd be set.

\* Uggos 



## A TAD DEFENSIVE

Cow shit is not the problem [Allison Kilkenny, "Eat Shit and Die," issue 128]. In fact cow shit, chicken shit, goat shit, rabbit shit...all great fertilizers. The problem is centralized "holocaust style" meat production.

Veganism is great for some bodies. For some folks, like myself, who have had traumatic injuries, protein needs can be more than a vegan diet makes possible.

It is possible to eat meat responsibly by growing it and/or supporting local farmers, and for me personally by understanding the sacrifice involved and at the very least having gratitude for the life given to support mine.

It is ridiculous to blame meat

BaruchZ

*Dear Baruch,  
We'd address your concerns, but we just ate a whole marinated pork tenderloin and we're feeling kind of woozy.*

## MEAT BEEF

Fabulous article - Meat kills

As a 7 yr vegetarian, it's disgusting that we have to suffer for the meateaters and animal farmed food. We also pay a portion of our taxes to subsidize the industry that kills animals and people eventually and the world.

Americans know less about their food and what's in it, than any other country on Earth.

meria

*Dear Meria,  
Yeah, but those Venusians are even worse!*

## SHITSTORM

Most folks are unaware that sewage sludge, particularly from hog factories, is being sold as fertilizer and spread on fields of vegetables. Human and animal waste disposal is a growing problem but is very problematic for the meat factory farms. They have been marketing the sludge as fertilizer for over a decade. There will likely be more cases of e-coli and salmonella in the future. Environmental organizations in the midwest have been fighting the practice but with minimal success. While buying organic might give the consumer a higher percentage of safety it's not a guarantee since organic and non-organic farms can be adjacent to



one another. Run-off can contaminate the organic fields. We just have to know where our food is grown and under what conditions. The agencies charged with oversight are unreliable. For more information just google 'sewage sludge as fertilizer'. You'll unearth the entire debate.

Sgreen

*Dear Sgreen,  
Nice: "Sewage sludge includes anything that is flushed, poured, or dumped into our nation's wastewater system--a vast, toxic mix of wastes collected from countless sources, from homes to chemical industries to hospitals. The sludge being spread on our crop fields is a dangerous stew of heavy metals, industrial compounds, viruses, bacteria, drug residues, and radioactive material." Fucking radioactive vegetables now? Thanks, EPA!*

## DUBIOUS SCIENCE

In the day and age in which we live, where antibacterial soaps, air fresheners, toilet bowl cleansers, and (yes, I saw this one today) antibacterial window cleaner, (still trying to imagine the scenario where anyone's going to be licking their windows) people seem to be trying to distance themselves even farther from nature, of which we are still part... The immune system needs exercise. When I was young, (years ago!) my parents took us to measles parties, where the neighbors' children had come down with measles, or mumps, or chicken pox, and we played together, in hopes of contracting the disease. Great fun, sure we caught it, then we had our own measles party, and the neighbor kids that hadn't caught it the last time would get to try again. Didn't need vaccinations for it back then, getting the disease improved the immune response! Living in a germ free environment is sure to put the immune system into a coma, so that when a germ does make an entry, there's no guard at the door, and then it's all over! Getting sick is actually the immune system's opportunity to strengthen itself...

xonk

*Dear xonk,*

*We took your advice and went to what we were assured was an "AIDS party." The games we played there were a lot of fun! We're not feeling anything yet, but we're sure it won't be long before our immune systems undergo some astonishing transformations. Thanks for the tip, buddy!*

## FECOPHILIAC

Holy cow

I must be a walking bomb.  
When i was a kid on our 1,800 acre dairy farm, one of my favorite pastimes was jumping out the third floor hay mow in winter into a big gushy pile of freshly scooped cow manure and piss.  
Yeah man its true, i loved the smell and feel of that soft mushy cow shit.  
It was warm to with vapor raising off it.  
Weird kid huh?  
Actually my nieghbor buddies came over and we made a game out of it.  
Even today at 62 i love the smell of cow shit.  
Told my wife they ought to make perfume that smells like fresh cow shit and fresh mowed hay.  
She does not like that idea to much.  
My mom and grandma did not like it much either,I had to strip and bath outside, then wash my own clothes but i thought it was worth it.  
I almost never got sick in those days.  
I could only do it in winter when the manure spreader froze up.  
Like i said in another post we cut the hearts out of veggies as thats where the poisons collect, and we wash each leaf of cabbage and lettuce as things collect as the heads form.  
Boil, stew, bake, broil, stirfry it.  
In Europe thats what most people used to do, Americans went fresh salad crazy.  
In many countries of the world "night soil" is used. (Human shit and piss) So when you travel be careful of "fresh vegetables".  
-zorba1

*Dear Zorba,  
Yes--what were we thinking, eating fresh vegetables? Salad is totally crazy! Jumping in shit, however, is good for what ails ya. We're going to go out on a limb here and venture that you are not a doctor.*

## SELF-LOATHING REDEFINED

yeah, great job with the russert article-only read the same thing on about ten other sites [Paul Jones, "Big Fuss," issue 128]. kudos, though, for reworking the ideas of smarter people into something totally unreadable. innovative! paul jones must be the puffy combs of journalism, they even have the same first initial. i sense the first of many name makeovers...how about p. thetic? go fuck yourselves.

stephon lee

*Dear Jones,  
We love you man, but it's really pretty weird  
that you wrote this e-mail.*

## FIGHT THE POWERLESS

"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." [Allan Uthman, "Media Manners," issue 128]

This is exactly my own thought.

When you analyze why people vote for the Republicans, and automatically side with the Republicans, it is hard to come up with an answer. After all, Republicans are torturers, war-mongers, and frauds who have looted the treasury, destroyed constitutional rights, and have fought against healthcare reform. I am only naming a few of their many sins here.

So why do people continue to side with the Republicans? It is because people are sick of the bullshit attitudes of the left. People hate being categorized as racist, sexist, ageist, anti-immigrant, anti-gay, anti-multicultural, or anti-whatever just because they have dared to disagree with the some item in the precious litany of liberal doctrine. When your choice is to engage in self-loathing or to watch Sean Hannity, you might just choose to flip the TV over to Fox.

Doctor Panacea

*Dear Doctor,  
You could always go outside, you know.*

## SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE KURU

cannibalism is a waste of time. can we PLEASE wait until the goon squad have been removed before we start feeding on ourselves?

choirgirl

*Dear choirgirl,  
Waste of time? Why, it's both nutritious and delicious!*

## THAT'S GOTTA HOIT

I am surprised that this article is still generating rants and comments [Ian Murphy, "Fuck the Troops," issue 126]. I figured it was good for one month, maybe two, tops.

Having said that, since it is still a subject of contention, I'll throw in my two cents worth.

I am a medically retired vet, who served 9 years in the Corps and 15 in the Army before getting run over by a HUMVEE during a training exercise in Germany.

I joined the Corps in 1965 for the basest of reasons. A sincere desire to be a Marine. Nothing more. When I was informed of the "conflict" in Vietnam, halfway through bootcamp, I wondered what in the Hell I had gotten myself into. I wouldn't say that I was looking for a way out of it but I wasn't applying for immediate deployment either. Decided to take it as it came. It came. 13 months later I came home somewhat wiser, considerably crazier, and determined to enjoy life. Believe it or not, the following years in the Corps and the Army allowed me that luxury. I enjoyed soldiering for it's own sake. I wasn't worried about money, promotions, security, school, or much of anything else. I just liked working as a surveyor, following the daily routine and in general being a good troop.

The odd thing is that the further we left Vietnam behind, the more those 13 months

paid a dividend. It seemed that that ancient experience gave me a credibility that for outweighed my actual investment.

When I left the Army with a crushed right leg, for the first time I felt true bitterness. They wanted me real bad when I was whole but as damaged goods, I was shown the door. It took me nearly ten years to get over that.

Today the retirement check comes each month along with a supplemental from the VA and once again, life is pretty damned good. I walk with a hell of a limp, I'll never hike or jog again but I've learned to compensate.

As to "Fuck The Troops", if it makes you feel better to say that, well go ahead. It's no skin off my nose and it doesn't stop the checks.

How about the troops today? I can only hope that they too can find a sense of peace with themselves when they are 62 and looking back on their lives however they chose to spend them.

Brummbaer

PS The Marine Corps was a calling, the Army was a job. My home has Marine Corps crap all over it but only one picture from my Army days. How 'bout them apples!

*Dear Brummbaer,  
So killing people and being maimed for the government is a good deal financially? Bully for you. At least it didn't cost you an arm and a leg.*

## THE CAMO MAFIA

Just curious: have you received any thoughtful rebuttals to Ian Murphy's "Fuck The Troops" article, or does every single response deserve to be rendered in crayon font?

It does seem ironic that the social element so keen on advocating personal responsibility when it comes to sacrificing oneself to a shitty employer's demands at all costs, as well as taking an overwhelming concern over what people do with their sex organs, give a free pass to "the troops" regarding their inability to learn from other suckers' past mistakes. Guess it all depends on what gang you join.

Mickey Mephistopheles

*Dear Mickey,  
We hear the Latin Kings even observe the Geneva Conventions.*

## Fun Fact





## BRIDGE UNDER TROUBLED WATERS

It is a mistake to say any jobs are safe in any sector [Allan Uthman, "Bait and Switch," issue 126]. Large numbers of service sector jobs have been outsourced. Even low paying call centers are overseas now. Major American industrial firms are becoming little more than brand holders as product design is outsourced to India. And it is not because the Indian engineers are brilliant just cheaper and more arrogant. Indian outsourcing is even being used on critical structural load evaluation on significant state and municipal projects in this country. Some of the Indian so called engineers evaluating load ratings on bridges, etc. do not understand engineering fundamentals taught at the sophomore level in the US. I have direct experience with this. People will eventually die because of this but the firms will be shielded from liability.

Blood Red Sun

*Dear Blood,  
For an American to call any other nation's people arrogant is... well, just astoundingly arrogant. But thanks for the sunny forecast on bridge collapses—it's going to be an exciting century!*

### EVERYTHING IS PEACHY

free trade means slavery - Not the case!

I have not spent much time at those steel mills but recently had to spend time with a Customer who has. Growing up in the mid west, working at the steel mills, and finally a long career at Delphi.

His comments: Unions have killed the business because it gave folks a sense of entitlement. People earning overtime while playing cards, not caring about the quality of the labor because they get paid no matter what, and lastly these folks saying we owe them a job making \$60K or more because they are American. Most/many others who really want to work and show they can be productive find they can not due to fear from fellow Union workers. Unions have killed the jobs. He hates them.

Those are his words and not mine though I have visited the facilities and noted that there was no sense of urgency and I was the only one working my lunch hour.

My employment experience is quite different as I have spent my career developing factories in Asia.

From above  
"Look closely at these poor brown and yellow

serfs: That is our future."  
and

"Far away from our Chinese plasma HDTVs, impoverished peasants work endlessly in unsafe facilities, breathing putrid air and collapsing nightly in squalor."

I do see it and this guy has it wrong. He should see what I see at high tech facility from Malaysia, Korea, Philippines, India, Thailand, and of course mainland China. Folks are moving business over there because it working not because people work more cheaply.

No peasants or under nourished slaves collapsing nightly in squalor which is by far the exception.

Unsafe - not at the many factories I have visited/worked and the ones I know about are losing/going out business - it represents bad/poor business practice. We train employees not exploit and harm/kill them.

Note: Union workers I met while traveling in US knew all they wanted to know and were not inclined to learn more. How nice it is to be like the author above and know everything.

Pollution, yes it bad but no worst than Southern Cal were I grew up and it has gotten better just like Southern Cal has gotten better. Improvements must/will continue in both as we all learn to live with mass transit and hybrids.

You know what we are growing overseas?  
Customers.

You know what we are losing here? Jobs that require no education. We need to invest to re-educate our workers, provide better student loans, extend unemployment benefits, etc.... because no one can fix the issue that in today's world if you don't have an education you will be punished with minimum pay jobs.

Big Labor loses because it results in people sitting on their asses (see also Government Jobs). People overseas are building nations and have little time for the arrogant American Union Worker - My words.


albinodog

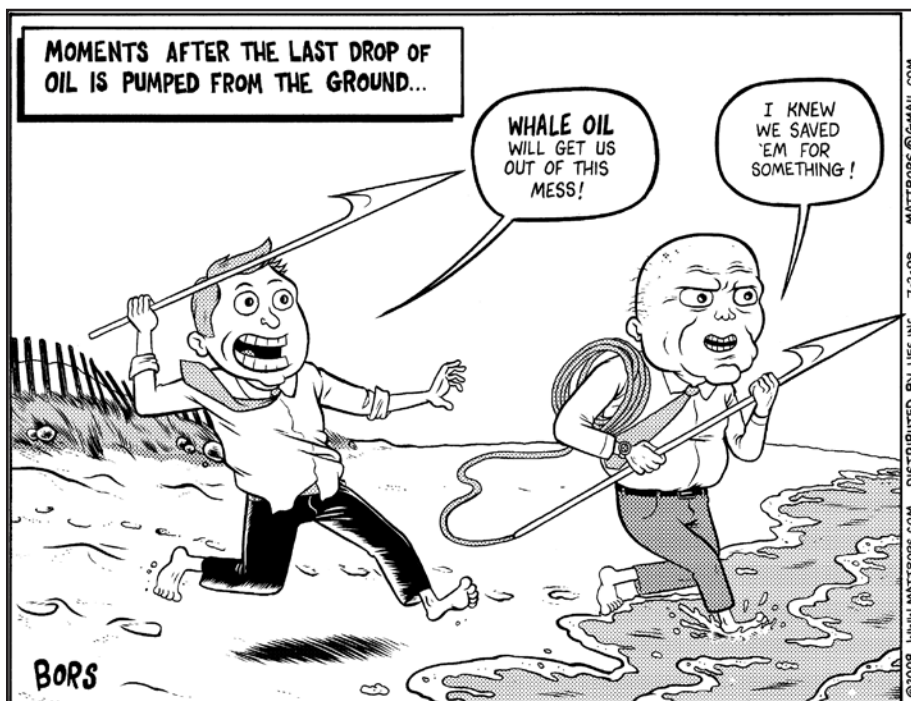
*Dear dog,  
If you take jobs that require no education away from people who have no education, what have you got but a bunch of uneducated people with no jobs? If it's a choice between lazy Teamsters and hand-to-mouth servitude, well... it isn't. But thanks for your whitewashed anecdotal information.*

### THE ANSWER IS YOUR NAME

How do I get 1 of my poems published in your paper ?

James Pray

*Dear James,  
You don't.* 



# BEAST-O-SCOPES

## Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

Every time someone says Barack Obama's middle name, Leo, an old Scots-Irish woman has a stroke. You need to stop, you monster.

## Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

It was funny at first, Virgo, that you fell for that hoax alternative medicine website pushing "Tobasco enemas." But after three traumatically painful "cleansings" without the slightest glimmer of understanding, it's starting to feel more like abusing a helpless animal. Virgo, You should probably see a doctor.

## Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

No, Libra, it's not all that unusual for a child to stick beads so far up his nose that he requires medical attention. But James is 23 now, and it's time to stop calling him a "late bloomer."

## Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

I know your working conditions are less than ideal, Scorpio, but in the future could you try not to shit in the jalapeños? I have a thing for homemade guacamole.

## Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

I'd tell you to withdraw all your money from the bank, Sagittarius, but that might cause a run on the bank, which



BY ANDREW GULLERSTEIN

would mean you can't get your money, which is why you should withdraw your money.

## Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Your girlfriend may be stiff and robotic, Capricorn, but she is not a Cylon. She's a Terminator. Get it right.

## Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

John McCain loves Abba, Aquarius, and Barack Obama can sink a three-pointer on the first try with the entire world watching. Now who ya like, jock-tard?

## Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

The surge, which is working, is working, Pisces. Did you hear the surge is working? It is. It's working. I mean,

after all, if it weren't working, would politicians feel the need to insist incessantly that it were? So there you go.

## Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Conan O'Brien as host of the Tonight Show I can live with, Aries, but have you heard who they're replacing him with on "Late Night"? Jimmy Fallon, for fuck's sake. Jimmy fucking Fallon. What, was Adam Corolla too busy? But you'll be all right: later this week, you'll be crushed by a frozen block of human waste from an airplane. Congrats!

## Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Your giant SUV may cost too much to keep, Taurus, but its value has fallen so much that you can't really sell it, much like your house. At least the Escalade is big enough to stretch out in, which will be nice when you're sleeping in it. USA! USA!

## Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

If you didn't want to die in prison, Gemini, you shouldn't have referred to your cellmate's shoes as "the bomb" while going through customs.

## Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Cancer, Your letter-writing campaign to officially ban the word "Roastito" will not ultimately succeed.

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