

# THE BEAST



ISSUE #133 - December 2008  
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How to make fun of  
a black President  
p. 20



Wolverine named  
Secretary of Defense  
p. 22



Palin plans fact-finding  
mission to Atlantis  
p. 13

# Separated at Bitch?



**Congressman  
Dan Lungren...**



**...and Bartender  
Moe Sizlak?**



**Evil Publisher**  
Paul Fallon  
(pfallon@buffalobeast.com)

**Evil Editor-in-Chief**  
Allan Uthman  
(aluthman@buffalobeast.com)

**Evil Movie Guy**  
Michael Gildea  
(Michael@buffalobeast.com)

**Evil Contributors**  
Matt Taibbi, John Dolan,  
Joe Bageant, Allison Kilkenney,  
Alexander Zaitchik, Brad Friedman,  
Eric Lingenfelter, Steve Gordon,  
Anchor Downs

**Evil Associates**  
Bill Ayers, Jeremiah Wright, Colin  
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Keating, Warren Buffett

**Evil Comix Makers**  
Matt Bors, Nicholas Gurewitch,  
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**Evil in Some Respects**  
Andrew Blake

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down and back away slowly.



712 Main St. Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: (716) 830-2931  
Fax: Fax? What is this 1983?

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## A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM READERS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES



As readers of The New York Times, we get it. We are the segment of the population that is actually paying attention to what we're supposed to. We are small business owners, politicians, corporate managers, finance, insurance and real estate executives, lawyers, doctors, college professors, engineers and computer programmers. We're even bohemian peace-loving vegan environmentalists that love art, the theater and Barack Obama. And we care.

You see, when you read "All the news that's fit to print," you obviously know much more than the average citizen – the "Joe the Plumbers" if you will, hah, hah, hah. Sorry about that. This is not a time for levity. We come to these pages out of our sense of duty as well-informed readers. We know what's worth reading and what's not. We believe that we have to make sure people act responsibly. Therefore, we would like to take time here, as a public service to Beast readers and the nation, to advise and warn you that The Beast is not at all worth reading and in fact can damage your wellbeing. As good citizens we have to make choices, and choosing not to read The Beast is one choice any intelligent and sincere person would obviously make. The Beast is not serious at all, and in light of the most important election in the history of all elections ever, it is time for all of us to get to the serious business of getting America back on the right track of being the greatest country ever.

This a momentous time, and there are many tasks that we are being counted on to support in order for them to succeed. There are financial troubles to be overcome, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to be won, terrorists to be killed, the climate to be tamed and, of course, Iranian mullahs, Russian fascists and Chinese communists to be put in their place. In order to accomplish all that we must, it is necessary to place our trust in the guidance of The New York Times. This is no time to be reading The Beast, with its unfunny jokes and disrespect toward politicians and business leaders. If you are going to help, then such silliness must be shunned.

There has been a lot of talk these days about a looming recession. Most of this talk is just going to get you worried, and fear is something FDR told us not to fear. Read The Times; you'll feel so much better. You'll see there are very smart people like Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke in charge, and they know what they are doing. If that isn't enough, then look at Warren Buffet! The sage from Omaha and the smartest investor of all time recently scribed an article in The Times that us smart people found most enlightening and reassuring. He said, "I've been buying American stocks." You know why? Because, he said, "Over the long term, the stock market news will be good." Good! Did you hear that! Good! He said things would be good! That's why reading The Times is so important. These are words that touch the heart and ease the mind, because their simplicity and brilliance come from the mouth of such an exceptionally wealthy man. Where else than in The New York Times could you find such comfort?


It's important to remember that we have not yet quite won the war in Iraq, while we have always known we would win. And now with the great success of The Surge, and with the election of Barack Obama, we know that it's just a matter of time. While there may have been much ado about the justifications for the war, we all knew deep down that The Times would not let us down. All we had to do was trust The Times to get us through, and it has. The complaints

about The Times going along with the Bush Administration's lies in order to justify the war are ancient history, and should be forgotten now that the war is so clearly soon to be over.

The same thing goes for Afghanistan. With victory in Iraq all but sealed, we cannot forget about this war. Some are questioning our resolve. They are misguided, and obviously not reading The Times. Its November 15 editorial, titled "A Military for a Dangerous New World," said it all. We "must be able to defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan—and keep pursuing Al Qaeda forces around the world." And to do this, "the military needs the 65,000 additional Army troops and the 27,000 additional marines that Congress finally pushed President Bush into seeking."

There is much more to say, but action is what is called for. So the next time you see a Times reader at coffee shop with a copy of The Times conspicuously protruding from under their arm and a confident, determined look that says, "I read The Times, and I'm sophisticated and intelligent," think to yourself how nice it would be to be just that way. You can!

The first step is easy, even in a dreary, depressing, cultural black hole like Buffalo, New York, where The Beast roosts. You can free yourself with a subscription to the newspaper that boasts, "There's The Times and then there's everything else." Soon you'll be saying informed-sounding things to your family and friends, just like they do in The Times television ad. You'll be saying things about The Times like, "It tells me, in depth, what I want to know," or "It is such a useful tool for living in the world," or "I carry it with me everywhere," or "Everything is very well written," or "It makes you feel like, 'I'm in the know,'" or "It helps keep me inspired." We could go on and on, and so could you, if you put your mind to it.

By reading The New York Times, you'll forget all about The Beast. You won't need to concern yourself with the fact that The Beast will continue its diligent advocacy for rapacious socialism and total disrespect for authority. Because the really infuriating thing about The Beast is not that it is a craven cheerleader for destroying all that is good about America; that's its job. What is really disgusting is how easy it is for it to convince its annoying and uneducated peasant readers that it's telling them the truth. You don't want to end up like that, do you? So please, put down The Beast and ignore it. If not for yourself, then for the sake of your children, Jesus Christ and all of us. 

### THIS ISSUE'S BRUTAL OUTSHINING



*"You know the difference between you and me?  
I make this look good."*

# THE GREAT SHAME

## BUSH'S LEGACY IS OUR FAILURE

BY ALLAN UTHMAN

When the networks projected an Ohio win for Obama on November 4th, I counted up the remaining states, and realized that Obama was going to win. Like a lot of people that night, I wanted to celebrate. I gladly turned off the TV and went out to get drunk.

As they were everywhere, people were out in the streets of Buffalo, NY, too that night. Shouting, singing, crying, forming impromptu drum circles and dance troupes. Strangers hugging each other, cars honking as they crawled by—this was unprecedented behavior in the Queen

City, where the people generally exude a dull aura of eternal defeat. Maybe this was what it would look like if the Bills actually won a Super Bowl.

Of course, people were celebrating Obama's victory, but I think the main source of jubilation was that the end of the Bush administration, and Republican rule, was finally in sight. There were many cries of "Obama!" that night, but there were just as many people expressing a superlative relief, like a long over-strained muscle finally relaxing, that our long national nightmare was finally over.

I, too, am glad—elated, really—that

Bush's absurd, colossally tragic reign is nearing an end. But that doesn't change the fact that we failed. We all failed. Congress failed, the courts failed, and the American people failed. We have suffered through two terms of plainly illegitimate, nakedly contemptuous tyranny in a country that was designed to facilitate overthrowing tyrants, and we failed to do so.

I have no doubt that Obama, as disappointing as he will no doubt turn out to be, is a vast improvement over the past eight years, and may even be the best president of my lifetime—a dubious achievement at best. But it's not enough to look forward and move on. If anything is to be learned from the Bush disaster, it's important to look back, and to understand how terrible our failure has been.

As citizens, our expectations have fallen far and fast. When Nixon ignored a subpoena, the nation was outraged. Even Republican congressmen were vocally outraged, and Nixon was forced to resign to avoid impeachment. When Nixon tried to fire a special prosecutor, his Attorney General resigned. Then his Deputy Attorney General resigned. When Reagan lied to the people about crimes far worse than Nixon's, it was a scandal, but our expectations had already been dramatically lowered. There were hearings, but no impeachment. A few years later, a Republican congress abused the impeachment process as an instrument of prudery, in an act of supreme political perversion.

And then the real rape of American government began, starting with Bush v. Gore. Now, the president, and even his former employees, ignore subpoenas as a matter of routine. They can exact political retribution on CIA agents (Scott McClellan recently revealed that Bush told him he was responsible for the Valerie Plame leak), and get nothing but a few critical editorials in return. They can fake us into a costly, bloody war, and no one will do anything but bitch about





it. They torture people to generate false intel, and nothing comes of it. Nothing.

All this is to end on January 20th, presumably. But Bush's underhanded tactics will not end on that day. Still, he is showing us what "sprinting to the finish" means, as he furiously works to undermine the incoming Democrats in as many ways as possible. For one, Bush is generating a last-minute smorgasbord of polluter-friendly regulatory rollbacks, setting new lows in terms of water quality and global warming emissions, setting new, lower standards for "acceptable" levels of coal slurry in streams, of melamine in food products, and generally manifesting their shamelessness and hostility toward American citizens. New DoJ rules permit the FBI to engage in prolonged infiltration and surveillance of subjects who are not suspected of wrongdoing, and increased latitude in selecting these subjects based on their race and religion.

Over 90 such new "regulations" have occurred or are in the works, and while executive orders are fairly easy for an incoming president to reverse, changing new department-generated regulations entails a long and arduous process. This extends Bush's disastrous impact well

into the next term.


And so does this: Reports abound that scores of loyal Bush mid- and low-level appointees in many departments are in the process of "burrowing," that is, changing their job status from political appointments, which change with each administration, to career civil service positions, which will make it hard for Obama to fire them when he takes office. The object is clear: to surround Obama with hostile operatives, hamstringing his agenda at every turn with leaks, foot-dragging and other forms of sabotage. Smooth transition, indeed.

Because congress and the American people have been asleep at the switch, the Obama administration will be spending much of the next four years struggling to simply undo most of what Bush has left them. It will only be a few months before our amnesiac press starts to blame Obama for the inevitable economic collapse, environmental catastrophe, and foreign policy blowback Bush will leave him. The next few years will reveal even darker secrets still unknown to us, a predictable result of tolerating the shadowy machinations of the most secretive administration ever.

this could have and should have been avoided, if the congress or the American people had any sense of duty, or responsibility, or really any sense at all. The fact that Bush, Cheney, and the rest will walk out of the White House and back into lives of decadent opulence and ballooning bank accounts is a shame, a damn shame of historic proportions. And the shame is ours. Bush is the worst outlaw ever to occupy the White House, and it is not enough that he simply leave. The message we have sent to power-mad, totalitarian presidents of the future is clear: Do whatever you want; we will do nothing to stop you. The press will do everything in its power to gloss over your worst excesses, and marginalize your critics, and when the public finally catches on, the press will simply ignore you in favor of optimistic coverage of your possible successors. At least that's how it works for Republicans.

Bush lied about Iraq; it's nothing if not clear at this point. And what the hell did we do about it? Bush failed miserably in New Orleans, dashing the image of Republican competence. But what did we do about it? Even now, as Bush's economic team fools us into pouring an insane, gargantuan amount of money into the largest banks in the world, pulling a classic scare-and-switch tactic we should all be familiar with by now, nobody even murmurs about holding him accountable. As we all hold our breath and wait for Obama to take office, we allow the most craven, criminal administration in American history to keep right on pillaging our laws, our money, and our collective sense of decency right to the end. We, as a nation, are a miserable failure.

It's just not enough that it will soon be over. It's not enough that we managed to get through it. It's not enough that the Republicans are in disarray, apparently headed toward a schism. These people should be in jail. They should serve as an example to all who come after them, that there is only so much corruption, malfeasance, and rank incompetence that this nation will put up with. Instead, their scot-free exit signals the impotence of this country in the face of an all-out hijacking of its government.

So sure, celebrate a victory for relative sanity in Obama's win. But at the same time, we should be lamenting an all-out defeat for accountability. An eight-year crime wave has swept through the most powerful democracy in the world, and the only people being punished are you and me. And maybe we deserve it, because the true failure is ours. 

# THE BEAST PAGE 5

## *MENACING ANACHRONISM*

**Name:** Somali Pirates

**Turn-ons:** Booty, hostages, parrots, giant oil tankers.

**Turn-offs:** Indian gunships, Johnny Depp, people who say "arrrr" when they meet us.

**How I got to be The BEAST Page 5**

**Demagogic Stooge:** Well, it's like this: Somalia has had 14 new governments since 1991. It's pretty much anarchy. There are no jobs, no prospects. Basically, if you're an ambitious young Somali, there's no chance of becoming a rapper or a basketball star. Piracy is pretty much it. It's kind of cool, too, you have to admit.

**Future Plans:** We'll be cruising the high seas, taking your stuff, and occasionally humping each other without thinking of it as gay.

**How I'd like to be remembered:** As the most historically incongruous danger to make the news, until the 2013 dirigible wars.



# STUPID

## HOW TO LOSE MONEY RUNNING A SPEED LAB

BY JOHN DOLAN

### Part Too: The Grand Plan

If it hadn't been for Bongoburgers there would have been no speedlab for me. Bongoburgers was my first gang, my first friends. It was the apartment where Paul and Terry split the rent, and it was right above this Bongoburgers place. The first time I went there, Terry, who was Asian and therefore wellbred, made me a cup of coffee and gave it to me. There I was inside somebody's apartment and they were giving me coffee, like in a movie. And it got better from there.

It was a happy time. It really was. Funny, I have no problem going on and on about any stupid gory misery you care to name, but it makes me very queasy using that word "happy." It's not my field, as academics say. There's a lot of that kind of lying going around, people who were happy once pretending their lives have been all grim. You don't see that with people from really awful places. That's why African music is always cheerful; they don't need to compare scars. They'd rather dance.

So I'll try to describe what happiness was, at Bongoburgers. I can tie it back to this miserable story in the end, because if I hadn't been happy there, I'd never have had the ego to decide to become a bad person. Back when I was alone and despised by the hippies, even suicide seemed too good for me. But when people have liked you, people outside the doomed family that stands for Ireland and the Church and the Ice Age mammals and everything else great and gone—then you can dream of doing bad things.

Bongoburgers was actually Persian Burgers. A fast food place on Dwight Way in Berkeley. The name Bongoburgers came from the Free Speech days, probably, the whole bongo-drums beatnik

era celebrated in bad murals south of campus, cops teargassing hippies and all you could think was, "Good, good, aim for the heads with that canister, you wimps!" That's what I thought anyway, walking to the train alone every night.

Then I met people in workshops who were kind enough to think I was kidding with those poems about the beauty of nuclear war. Thank god for misreadings. Not that everyone misread those masturbatory screeches. Thom Gunn heard them clearly and laughed, and encouraged me to do worse. But he was gay and English and liked leather. For good pious Americans the only option was pretending to think I was kidding, and they were kind enough to do that for me.

Except Paul, because he was from Orange County and his proudest boast was that he had once made Norman Lear's daughter cry. Norman Lear was the bastard who produced *All in the Family*, and that Family looked and talked exactly like my family, and America laughed at them every week. Why'd he have to hire Carroll O'Connor? That was the question, mumbled very, very quietly at the TV at home. Because that kind of question was extremely dangerous. Don't even say the word.

I knew that much; there were no illusions about Free Speech in our house. Speech was sedition, any speech we could have made, anyway. A lot of very quiet, bitter hatred. You'd think I'd have rejoiced when the sullen majority triumphed later, under Reagan, but by that time I'd lived in Vegas, I'd seen those people and they were worse. Worse than Berkeley? I can hear Paul asking that furiously even now. And yeah, I'd have to say: even worse than Berkeley.

But figuring that out has taken me my life. Back then all that mattered was that these people who were cool with each other in the workshop were also cool with me.

There was an initiation, of course, and it was rough, getting sneered at on a half-mile walk through Berkeley by Paul and his even meaner, even more rightwing friend Michael. But then I actually went over to their place and had burritos and went to San Francisco and popped a qualuude, my first and last, and because I was a punk they thought I'd get in fights and I was too shy so Paul decided to start things off by going up to Fast Floyd and yelling at him onstage and Fast Floyd mumbled, "C'm'up here an'I'll show ya" and Paul did, bounced up all eager, and Floyd popped the bottom of his electric guitar right in Paul's eager face, blood and everything. Paul was delighted, though not so much when his two supposedly mean friends and bodyguards, me and Michael, couldn't manage more than going over to Floyd at the break and standing menacingly.

Just boys. I was an oldish boy already, 23, but if you don't get it out in adolescence it has to come out later. There were three years then, of equally silly and chivalrous expeditions, amateurish drug buys, dilettante decadence, and we were friends. If you've never had a gang, a gang is the best thing in the world. These people who talk up the loner cult...I always wonder what they're talking about. Have they tried it? Loners are idiots, they have no clue what's going on around them. Me, I love gangs. I love uniforms. That was where punk came in: I wanted to be loyal to punk to the death, and it irked me that there wasn't a military wing. It would have been great to die with that soundtrack, all full of some overpriced drugs, in proper leather uniform.

It would have been much, much better, in fact. Hey, I still had a chinline at that age; I'd have made a great, soldierly coffin. And none of the bad stuff I did would have had time to happen.

Because Heidi was also in that poetry workshop where I met my new friends. She was with a dumb rich guy, but of

course I didn't get that. I was sure money was silly, a consolation prize for those who didn't have a shot at glory.

She took me up, and then she put me down. A footnote in her picaresque narrative, and burial in the heart of a glacier for me. Unthinkable, because it never happened in the movies, to go from lonely misery to happiness and then back? No hero ever went back. Unbearable, unthinkable.

In the murk and chill of that jettisoning I somehow allowed Paul's victim writer girlfriend Marian to jump me one night. It wasn't lust; if it was lust I could have forgiven myself in a second. My body would have declared an absolute amnesty. It wasn't lust. It was her face when I said, "No, we can't." Her face collapsed like the end of the world. I thought it was the end of the world. I didn't know then that she did that face collapse thing about five times a day. I thought the world would end if I said no. So I said yes, and bla bla bla, Paul found out, the guy who taught me how to exist, and fled Berkeley to work minimum wage at a bookstore back in Orange County and I got Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, three years of deserved nonstop coughing agony, and nobody would hire me because my thesis was about Sade and...and...and therefore when Butler said we could make money running a speed lab I jumped at the idea. Not so much the money as the crime.

I knew Butler was a bad person; that was the point. He slunk around the edges of the Bongoburgers crowd, avoiding Paul's sharp tongue (that Paul never used on me) but dangling after the weaker members of the group, notably me and Doug. He knew fellow trash when he smelled it.

He had this idea. Saved it for when Terry was out of the apartment. Terry never even locked the door; we all went in whenever we were on Dwight, threw darts at the map of the universe and made instant coffee and played first-generation games on Terry's first-generation Mac.

And then of course Paul had to move out because I betrayed him with Marian and wrecked his life. And Terry offered Paul's room to Butler. Who sat around the formica table talking about how smart he was, and he was, in a mean way, one of these people who hit their peak at the SAT and scuttle around like gifted little scorpions for the rest of their lives.


He had this idea. A lot of money in it. A

thousand dollars an ounce. But where would you, uh, sell it? I said, trying to sound cool, like a movie.

Oh, that was no problem either because he had a dealer, very cool guy. Named "Pink Cloud." That was his actual name, apparently, right there on his CA driver's license, "Pink Cloud." Did that send me fleeing for the hills? Obviously not.

Let's do it, I said. Yeah but we need a place to cook it, Butler said. I know, I said, we can use this house my parents have in Benecia. I never hesitated to offer him our one asset, our one hope of something appreciating and lifting us out of the demographic where you wince at every knock at the door, because in those days collectors could come to the door. I winced, knowing I was betraying my

parents, but so much was betrayal, what wasn't? I was trying to adjust, and that seemed to be the way things worked, like it or not. And besides, I'd spend the money on them. Little selfish dumb coughing pedantic overage baby Robin Hood, that was me.

Butler jumped at that offer, and the next thing I knew we were in our stupid disguises, in my parents' surplus cop Plymouth, driving down the access road to that chemical supply warehouse. Butler had mentioned that the DEA staked this place out, but by that time I had too much momentum. I was going to crash the bad world's party, I was going to be in it but not of it, robbing the tweaks to pay the... something or other. I'd get my mother that Cadillac, heads would roll, Heidi would be sorry. 

# NEED SALES LEADS???



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# A Million Little Pundits

Ian Murphy

Notes from a political junkie

I woke on Wednesday, November 5 at the crack of noon to a different world—even more terrifying than the short-lived *Cosby* Show spin-off of the same name. The election night high was gone, the last two years of my life a blur. Sweaty, nauseated and nauseous, too, I was a disgusting sight. Lying there in my own urine and a hardened pool of unfamiliar vomit, I tried to remember what life was like before I'd ever tried presidential politics. I couldn't. I'd hit rock bottom.

"Just take a taste," he said, handing me

the junk.

"Gee whiz, Mr. Blitzer," I stammered innocently. "I don't know if I—"

"Don't be a pussy!" he growled, sticking a rolled up copy of *The Post* under his nose and inhaling a half gram of pure, freshly cut speculation. "Wooooo!" he howled, pumping his fist. "Wooooo! Is Barack Obama too white to be president? Wooooo!"

I started off small-time, only using on the weekends with McLaughlin and Russert.

They seemed invincible—golden, shiny Gods of election coverage, who rode the high day and night. I wanted to be like them. If I'd known then...

Next thing you know, I was hanging out in dark corners of the Situation Room and mainstreaming media speculation just like the rest of the addicts. I was up to a full gram of Colmes and three or four Hardballs a day. I was popping over the counter O'Reillys, Limbaughs and handfuls of Chuck Todds at a time. Then there was the Kristol Meth—that terrible, terrible stuff. I sought my fix day and night, yet vowing that each indulgence would be my last. Soon, I was hooked on Rasmussen and Zogby. Things were getting ugly quick.

It never stopped, the craving, the sickness. I was forced to go to new and desperate lengths to get high. The rumors, innuendo and wonkery of TV, print and blogs were no longer enough. I drove to Manchester, New Hampshire and walked in the obscenely large foot prints of David Gregory—praying that a crumb of baseless primary speculation would fall from his finely tailored pocket. "Little Stretch!" I heckled. "You know where I can score... the good stuff?"

"We're broadcasting out of the Radisson," he looked down at me. "You might want to try there." I staggered down Elm St. and found Mike Barnicle breaking up a large, uncut brick of pure fabulism behind the dumpster.

"Get back!" he yelled as I approached with hungry eyes. "This is my shit, man!"

"Come on," I begged. "I'll suck George Carlin's dick!"

"Real funny," he frowned. "Now get out of here, fiend, before I mess you up—Boston style."

"My man, my man!" I screeched at Tucker Carlson during a McCain rally uptown. "You holding?"

"Holding?" he tilted his head sideways like a confused German Shepherd. "Holding what?"

"Oh, come on, man," I prodded. "Don't do me like that, dog."

"OK, see you later, man," he waved to *Newsweek's* Jonathan Alter and then casually looked around. "What you need—you looking to wonk-out?" he asked, leaning toward me. "I have some high-grade Bradley Effect—if you can handle it."



The week in Manchester chasing down a fix wherever I could find it wasn't enough. I harassed anyone and everyone: Matthews, Cillizza, Buchanan—even a limey from The Economist during a Mitt Romney town hall. I was in a bad way. But I still wasn't getting the good stuff. The junk had been stepped on so many times that I was no longer getting high—just fending off the sickness. Like a needle seeking the vein I needed to go to the source.

"Jesus, Lord," CNN's Dana Bash hushed as she walked past me in the parking lot of Brookside Congregational Church, a polling place. I was throwing my guts up. And then Mike Huckabee arrived.

"Governor, Governor?" I wheezed, pale and glistening. "If elected, will you make rapture preparedness part of Homeland Security?"

"I don't know what that means," played the creationist candidate. I left New Hampshire sicker than ever. It was the winter of my electoral discontent. And other clichés.

The rest of the primaries blurred into one big Political Jones. I drove from state to state in search of the ultimate election high—the Carolinas, Ohio and Pennsylvania. I couldn't stop. I didn't want to. I was consuming fewer substantive news items everyday—and more and more contrived controversies, 3 am phone calls, questionable candidate associations and 527 ads.

And then there were the conventions. St.


Paul saw me staggering and begging in the streets. Denver saw me a mile high. I knew the end was near; my body couldn't take much more punishment.

The night of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 found me in the midst of a street carnival—a real party. I'm not sure, but I think someone licked my shoes. I have a vague recollection of Jerome Corsi buggering a hobo and Sean Hannity riding a gigantic midget. Everyone was out of control. Though I promised myself I never would, I was receiving election updates via Twitter. Sick. This was the culmination of two years of madness. I passed out loving it, yet strangely unafraid that I didn't have any stuff to wake up on.

So, as I lay here, a broken man, I realize that I can't quit—not cold turkey, not gradually, not ever. I'm too accustomed to the fluff, lies, pandering, bloviating

and endless contest speculation. Who'll get the republican nod in 2012, 2016, 2020...2056?! Will white women vote for a robot?! These are things I need to know!

Fortunately, there's still plenty of dope on TV. Hard news is thin and facts thinner. The election—the longest and costliest in American history—is finally over, but I never have to truly worry about real news overtaking superficial coverage. I can stay high, distracted from the depressing realities brought about by Bush, global warming and economic meltdown. All I have to do is turn on the tube to escape into a land of celebrity obsession and fourth estate failure.

And if that doesn't work, there's always heroin. 

*Ian Murphy is fake political junkie from Micronesia, or that's what he told us.*

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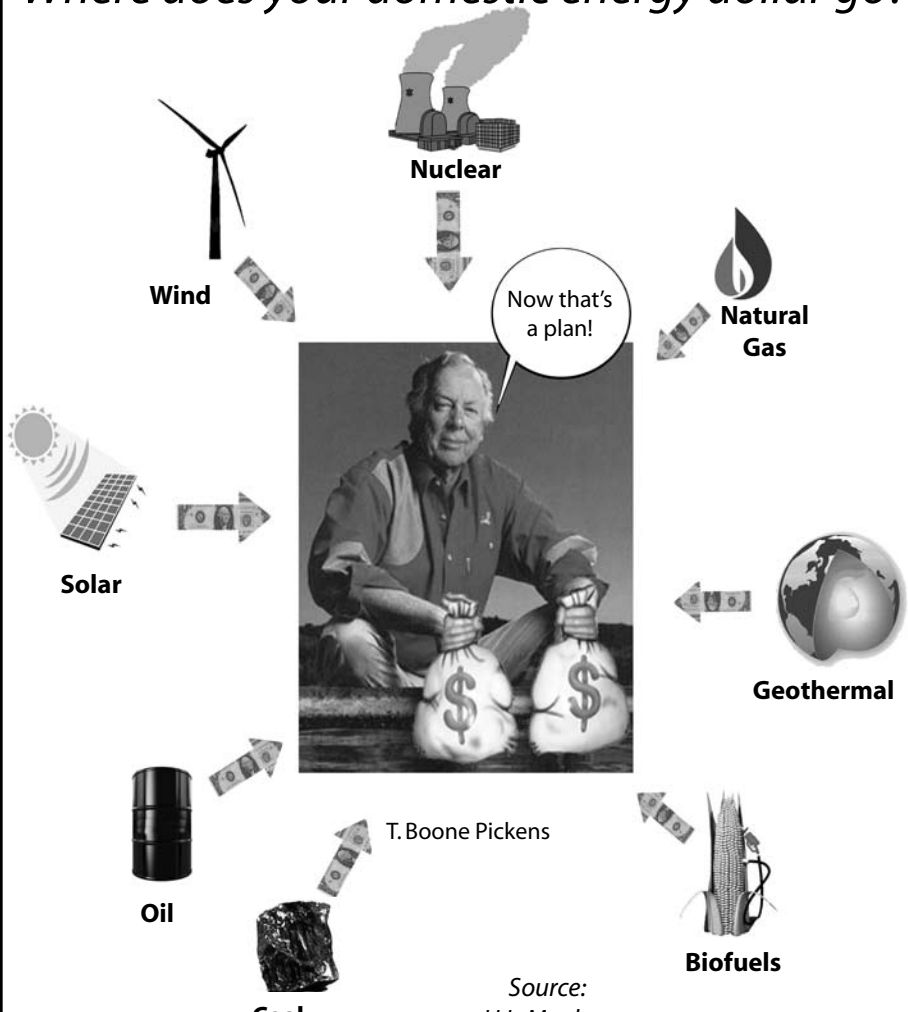
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# BACK TO THE FUTILE

## GUESS THOSE OLD POLITICS AREN'T SO BAD

By **ANCHOR DOWNS**

Here in post-election D.C., things are pretty turbulent. Topic numero uno, of course, is The Transition. The usual power addicts, greed heads and war-mongers are all licking their chops, despite what looks like a clear mandate to get the government the hell away from them. If you voted for Obama, it's almost already time to get pissed because it's become apparent that you are irrelevant. Me, too, mind you. Every night I find myself at 3 in the morning watching the late night repeats of the cable shows with a pile of empty beer cans and full ashtray at my side. I think the disillusionment is already setting in.

But how can you possibly compete? You gave five bucks to Obama for America and Move On. Sure, there were lots of you, but it was mere 'giving', which any good American consumer knows is never as rewarding as 'buying'. Big business, on the other hand, funneled millions. It was more of an 'investment', really, because it looks like they will actually be seeing returns in the form of administration jobs for every DLC-type and their mother. Probably the best investment those Uptown New York yuppies have made all year. As for you? Just don't quit your job at the Gap because you needed that Wednesday off to riffle through the Plum Book and fill out the vetting questionnaire. I'm definitely going to keep scraping by with the writing gig, and attending these goddamned transition

think tank events where the experts don't say anything, to avoid stepping on any toes just in case they get picked. Seriously, people don't return phone calls. Some of my sources who do pick up (must not have caller ID) refuse to go on

eight years to get back in the driver seat!

Sure, the big O has rebuffed the DLC since his Senate run four years ago. He even asked to be taken off their list, which never works for me – despite my pleas, I still can't get on an airplane without having my ID checked a thousand times and sometimes even my balls cupped. Nonetheless, those Wall Street guys up in New York, who can't even afford their coke habits since their bonuses took a dump, all opened up the wife's checkbook (their own is dedicated to their dealers and Scores) and forged her signature for a fat wad payable to Obama. Maximum contributions and donations to PACs for legal political laundering was in full swing. They must really love him in them thar fancy office-building penthouses.

And Obama's closeness to the extravagant world of greed has never been a secret. He loves them right back. He said as much in his book, where he admits he likes to pal around with investment bankers and the like because they're intelligent and, y'know, I guess dig paintings and stuff. And plus, some rich people throw serious parties. Now, the poor folk here in D.C. have ragers,

too, but cheap bottles of beer and Patrick slaving over barbecued wings on his roof at four in the morning ain't exactly free top-shelf booze and easy-on-the-eyes waitresses with silver trays of fresh Maryland crab cakes and those spring rolls with the sweet chili sauce.

So Barack, in a gesture of his love for



***Hillary Clinton, seen here breaking the glass ceiling with her voice***

the record.

Ahh, the chosen people – a cautious bunch. But I guess it's working for them: They just get chosen over and over again. Of course, Bush didn't choose the Clinton people. But now every Clinton-era 'New Democrat' and liberal interventionist is lined up for a big gig. It only took them

these people, is giving their duly bought representatives all kinds of seats at the table of power. Looking back, it makes perfect sense and we should have seen it coming from the beginning. Obama was at his most progressive in the Illinois state legislature before had to run for the Senate, a moderating body if there ever was one (more so than the White House, apparently, as Bush pulled hard right during his stint). From there on, it's all the Clinton model: Run as populist, govern to win reelection votes from moderate republicans and the Godforsaken Blue Dogs as a business-friendly, moderate/centrist guy.

Maybe that's the reason for all these Clinton-era reappointments. I mean, the list goes on and on, and none of it is very reassuring. First there was Clinton chief of staff John Podesta appointed to lead The Transition. Next up was the son of an Israeli terrorist (I know, I know, sins of the father and so on, and then he did the Arafat-Rabin handshake photo op) and a guy with fingerprints all over the DLC, Rahm Emanuel – appointed to be Obama's chief of staff. It's like musical chairs with Clinton White House heavy hitters, and Al Gore is the asshole left standing every time. The prime Clinton pick, of course, is Clinton. If she lands at State then I simply give up. All the discussions about rumor mills and leaks (rare from team O) should just be brought to a halt. If moves to keep Bob Gates on at Defense or offer Hillary the gig at State are any indication, then anything is possible.

You heard me, you poor saps who actually chipped into Obama's campaign through Move On. A real possibility of the second Bush Defense Minister and H-I-L-L-A-R-Y in the cabinet. There's

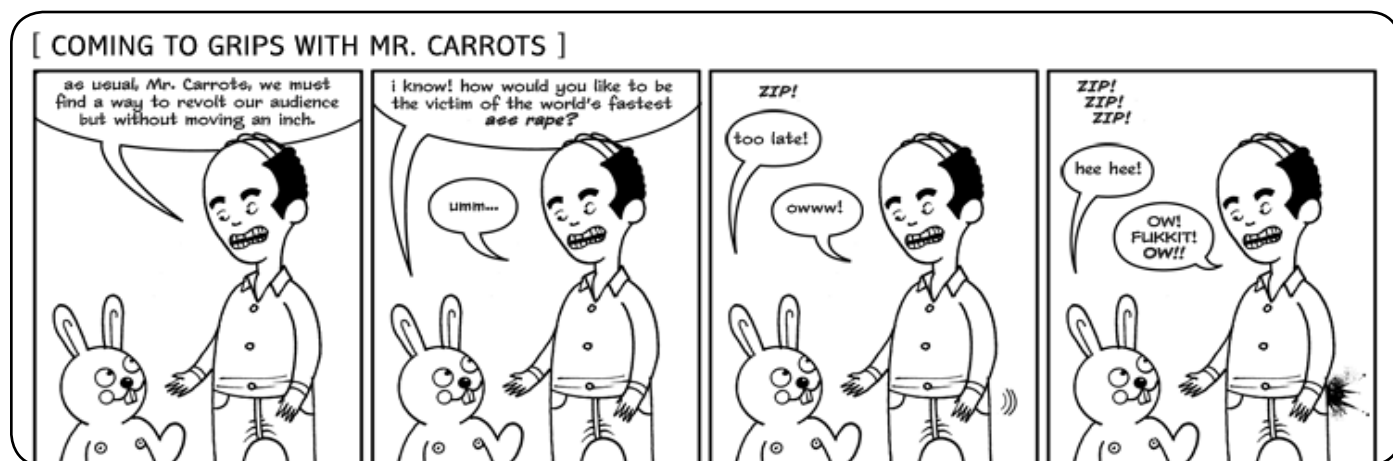
your good anti-war candidate for you, you sad peaceniks (leaving alone that Obama's been for escalating Afghanistan since day one). You can take your 58 million and shove it up your collective asses, then fill out your draft papers for the Iran invasion, about which Hillary's belligerent language bolstered concerns about her judgment raised because of the Iraq Debauch (I'm going to try to coin a phrase in every article until they give me Tom Freidman's Times column). In fact, were it not for No You McCain't and his singing, which incidentally I'm convinced all came out of a Hanoi Hilton flashback ("bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb bomb Vietnam"), we might all still be talking about how incredibly irresponsible it is for a leader to use the word "obliterate" about any country in any context.

Of course, Hil fits in quite well, with her right-tilting views on Iran. Dennis Ross, a lawyer for the AIPAC-formed Washington Institute, is rumored to be clamoring for the Iran portfolio. And while Ross is relatively good on the Israel-Palestine issue (relatively good for a Clinton-era ambassador to Israel who has been accused by even fellow American negotiators as being Israel's lawyer in deliberations), his Iran experience is limited at best and he's been a leading voice for batting around Iran like that half-dead mouse my childhood cat used to play with before it ate the whole damn thing except for the guts. That kind of a meal scenario is total, open war with Iran – an inevitability of playing around with an increasingly injured mouse, in this case "surgical strikes". I mean, that poor mouse rarely got away.

One decent expected pick that I think is worth mentioning is Jim Steinberg for National Security Adviser. Yes, I'm a

little pissed that I wasted two hours last week listening to him and Kurt Campbell of American Progress tell jokes about throwing away Transition binders instead of really digging into the important part of the process – the vision, loyalty, ideology, and compatibility of potential picks. Irrespective of his entertainment factor (I've been at a party he was at before, too, and he was very low-key), Steinberg seems like a good guy. Two things to look out for with him, though, are that he (of course) is a Clinton person, and his associations with fellow Brookings traveler Ivo Daalder. Now, Ivo, as his name would indicate, is a smug son of a bitch in European suits and expensive sunglasses. But I can't fault him for snooty tastes alone. What really worries me is that he's always pushing this stupid fucking Concert of Democracies idea, which has been repudiated by loads of its former boosters because of the damage it could do if the mechanism falls into the wrong hands. Without getting too wonky, the idea is that all the democracies in the world (well, at least the Western ones, where we have "real" democracy) are in a security organization. It's essentially a wet dream for any mildly pragmatic neocon in post-unilateral preemption world: You only have to sell your fellow rich, white, Northern Hemisphere allies on going to war. You know how those neocons like Bolton want to chop a couple of floors off the U.N.? Well this one ups that: It doesn't take buttons off the elevator and instead actually usurps the power of the U.N. to be the only legitimate and inclusive forum for those gravest matters of security.

What's worse (okay, not really worse than war itself, I suppose) is that it appears that the Obama foreign policy is being



completely strong-armed by these by these DLC-interests. Hil isn't even in yet, and already she's bullying people out of positions. That's the word on the street (which quickly filtered all the way up to the New York Times) as to why Greg Craig, a relatively well-respected foreign policy guy, won't be specifically tasked to that arena. Craig, who so far has the stupidest name of any pick, with his two-first-names-that-sound-super-alike bullshit (and this includes a president elect named Barack Hussein Obama and a chief of staff named Rahm Israel Emanuel, who my pop thought was "Mexican" until yesterday), was critical of Hil's foreign policy during the primaries, despite connections with both Clintons going back to law school, and more recently when he was tapped to defend the Clinton with the penis

from impeachment. Craig, whose only major skeleton, as far as I know, was his lobbying work for a family of the anti-democratic Haitian oligarch class created by Papa Doc, was presumed to land in a good gig at State (Deputy Secretary) or perhaps on the NSC. Alas, Clinton, the power player, swooped in and declared that she couldn't possibly work on international affairs with this guy. It all seems very high-schoolish, doesn't it?

"Like, Barry, you better listen to me. I totally would ride in your limo on the way to prom, but not if that loser Greg is going to be there. Did you hear what he said about me during homecoming? Oh - My - God!" (Yeah, I went to high school in the nineties.)

So instead of having a promising

international guy who gave us the foreign policy that Obama ran on (Craig was a top adviser), he is getting squeezed out to make room for minds more like Clinton's. God forbid she deal with someone who disagrees with her. That would be crazy, like that whole Lincoln 'team of rivals' idea I keep hearing about on the news. (Shameless namedrop here: I met Doris Kearns Goodwin last year and talked Lincoln with her for a little bit and she was sharp and pleasant. I'm glad her book is on Obama's reading list. She should send Hillary a signed copy, too.)

If Obama could nail some picks right about now, it would be a real relief, and I wouldn't have to be excited about the book that he's reading and could actually be excited for the government he was putting together. Jesus, here I am railing against an administration that has made two picks so far and doesn't take office for two months. I feel a bit like I'm pushing for a late-term abortion here: "Is it too late to change our minds, honey?" Yeah, it probably is.

Well at the very least, every Elliott Abrams-style hack is filling in applications to rejoin Wolfowitz, Bolton and Perle at the American Enterprise Institute. So instead of actually running shit, they can go back to putting together these shadowy foreign affairs apparatuses like Project for a New American Century. If nothing else, watching those fuckers take a hike from their offices will be worth all the potentially painful Obama appointments. At least that will be some modicum of change. Even with all these folks getting new jobs, I don't expect all the excess condos in Columbia Heights to get filled up real quick with an infusion of new blood into DC: Most of these old windbags have been living here for the past twenty years.

Nonetheless, 'Transition' is in the air! Even this environmental NGO girl I've been shunning has faded in favor of a cute magazine editor (a conservative magazine, no less, but a high minded one). In the long view, that might be the biggest change to come out of this Transition - Everything else looks like it will fall into place very conventionally.

**BEAST**

*Anchor Downs is a real working DC reporter, who exorcises his demons with scotch, riding crops and pseudonymous BEAST articles.*

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# THE 25<sup>TH</sup> YEAR AFTER

## IT'S BEEN A LONG COLD LONELY WINTER

By **ALEXANDER ZAITCHIK**

Before reports of post-production delays began leaking out in mid-October, the film adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's acclaimed novel of nuclear winter, *The Road*, was scheduled to release on November 14. Now the studio is saying early 2009 for the Viggo Mortensen vehicle. Possibly as late as March.

This is a shame. Mid-November would have been an eerily appropriate drop date, and not just because November is the month that much of the northern hemisphere begins to resemble the cold dead landscape of McCarthy's novel. A November 14 release would have seen *The Road* open exactly 25 years to the week after the last realistic American film portrayal of nuclear Apocalypse. This was, of course, *The Day After*, which aired on ABC during primetime on the evening of November 20, 1983. The most watched television movie in history, it was viewed by nearly half the adult population of the United States, or more than 100 million people.

I was not one of those millions. Like most of my friends in third grade, my parents ordered me to bed early on November 20, 1983. I did not protest the diktat. My life that chilly autumn was one long and losing battle against nuclear dread, a conflict made all the more intense by ABC's massive marketing campaign in the run-up to *The Day After*. The ads depicting the blinding blasts and dark red mushroom clouds rolling skyward were on regular loop on ABC, at the time one of only three networks. Although fascinated by the possibility of seeing my own nightmares brought to life on television, I understood it was best to stay away.

It wasn't just *The Day After* that made November 1983 so memorable. The film's long cultural shadow overlapped with the political shadow cast by the increasingly tense U.S.-Soviet standoff. Ronald Reagan's first years in office were among the darkest of the Cold War, a time when U.S. officials spoke blithely of a "winnable" nuclear war and actively prepared for it. One high-ranking Pentagon official, Thomas K.

Jones, famously advocated in 1981 a civil defense program centered on the digging of holes covered with wooden doors and a layer of dirt. "If there are enough shovels around," he told journalist Robert Scheer, "everybody's going to make it."

I was too young to grasp the full absurdity of this, or to understand the politics behind the debate over the Pershing II and the Strategic Defense Initiative, for that matter. But the scorched Earth stakes were all the time becoming more easily imagined. Pictures of missiles and mushroom clouds claimed the covers on the newsweeklies. Test patterns interrupted after-school cartoons. Freeze activists with clipboards and graphic pamphlets worked our building during dinner. On the afternoon of November 20, the rabbi addressed my Hebrew school class to try and reassure us. The attempt failed. We knew *The Day After* wasn't "just a movie." During that bleakest of Novembers, we could see that even the grown-ups were debilitated by the dread. It wasn't for children that ABC set up national 1-800 counseling hotlines to deal with the psychological shock waves sent out by the film.

As with many people I know of a similar age, a return of 1983-flavored fear accompanied my reading of *The Road*. McCarthy's harrowing novel of a man and his boy surviving nuclear winter brought it all back. When it comes to nuclear fear, we never grow up, and I fully expect the film version to disturb at least a week's worth of sleep. Based on the few stills released so far, director John Hillcoat has captured every bit of the book's relentlessly stark sorrow and horror. The names of the characters in the script tell the story: Man, Boy, Cannibal, Gang Member, Woman in Cellar, Baby Eater...

Although it remains the most famous, *The Day After* is not the nuclear war film that *The Road* most closely resembles in spirit. That would be *Testament*, another film that opened in November 1983. Like *The Road*, *Testament* centers on a suburban family's survival after the blasts—McCarthy's "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions." It follows the deepening reality of this dying new world, as radiation sickness sets in and the plants wither and food stocks

disappear.

But unlike McCarthy's novel, *Testament* gets the weather wrong. When *Testament* and *The Day After* were made, filmmakers and audiences did not yet understand what was missing from these mild temperature deathscapes. It was only in the roundtable discussion that followed *The Day After* on ABC that the country was introduced to the concept of nuclear winter. The idea was explained with typical eloquence by Carl Sagan, who represented the Freeze movement in the lopsided post-*Day After* debate moderated by Ted Koppel. Defending the balance of terror from across the table were Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, William F. Buckley and George Shultz. (All of whom, it should be noted, have since endorsed Sagan's vision of a nuclear-free planet. Only Buckley did not live to make the conversion.)

At the time of the roundtable, few knew just how close we had come to triggering our permanent winter just two weeks prior. On November 2, NATO governments commenced the most elaborate and realistic war game of the Cold War. Known as Able Archer '83, the ten-day simulation went through the motions of a mounting international crisis culminating in a nuclear exchange; it involved multiple levels of official involvement, from launch commanders to heads of state. The Kremlin, led by the ailing and paranoid Soviet premier Yuri Andropov, was by then already on extreme edge about Western intentions. The NATO exercise sent Soviet nerves to a screaming pitch. Some inside the Kremlin thought the inevitable was at hand, and that their best bet was a preemptive first-strike. It was the Cuban Missile Crisis nobody knew about at the time; not even the President of the United States.

There have been similar nuclear war scares since the end of the Cold War. In 1995, a weather satellite launched from Norway led to a heart-stopping scramble in the Kremlin, as Boris Yeltsin, reportedly fuming drunk at the time, had just a handful of minutes to decide whether the radar blip was a missile headed Moscow's way. But even as reports of such incidents became

known in the 1990s, there were no calls for abolition, no revived disarmament movement, as in the 1980s. By the mid-90s, the Great Nuclear Forgetting was well underway. Even though most of the nuclear weapons left over from the Cold War remain on hair triggers, we've all allowed ourselves an extended vacation from nuclear fear. Not that the temptation to forget is new. As Sagan wrote in 1983, at the height of the danger, "There is a tendency — psychiatrists call it 'denial' — to put it out of our minds, not to think about it. But if we are to deal intelligently, wisely [with nuclear weapons] then we must steel ourselves to contemplate the horrors of nuclear war."

I wonder how many of those who came of age in the 1990s have ever "steeled themselves to contemplate the horrors of nuclear war." I mean really contemplate it; feel it in their guts, the way we did, day and night, for weeks, months, years. Will this post-Cold War generation — for whom *The Day After* is just a daytime Steven Guttenberg movie with cheesy 80s effects on the Sci-Fi Channel — will they see *The Road* as horror-genre dystopia along the lines of *28 Days Later*? Will they understand this toxic snow-frosted world could be their own in a matter of months? Do they understand that we've come so close to conjuring this nightmare, and are almost certain to again?

At some level, I'm glad for their ignorant bliss. And more than a little jealous. My sister, born in 1984, never knew the paralyzing fear I battled during her infancy, or that our parents lived under as teenagers. For that I am happy. Still, fear has its uses. It was the waking nights of detailed contemplation of nuclear war that spurred and sustained the anti-nuclear movement in the U.S. and Europe. And it was the devastating realism of *The Day After* that helped change Ronald Reagan's belief in winnable nuclear war, leading to the arms control approach taken by his second administration. In 1986, when Gorbachev and Reagan met in Reykjavik to discuss withdrawing mid-range nukes from Europe and contemplate total disarmament, an official within Reagan's entourage sent *Day After* director Nicholas Meyer a note. "Don't think your movie didn't have any part of this," it said, "because it did."

If a future Obama-Medvedev summit succeeds in putting us back on the road to dismantling the world's largest stocks of nuclear weapons, it's possible Cormac McCarthy will deserve a thank-you note of his own.

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# SMARTISTS FOR OBAMA

## FEAR OF A BARACK PLANET

By **MICHAEL J. SMITH**

I happened to overhear an elevator conversation recently, between two of my neighbors. They were talking about the election -- when, I wonder, will anybody on the West Side start to talk about anything else?

Neighbor A: "At least Obama is intelligent. Bush was such a... dummy."

Neighbor B: "That is SO true. Thank God!"

Got me thinking. I've heard this intelligence trope a lot. What does it presuppose?

You want your lawyer to be smart. If you hire a computer programmer, you want him or her to be smart (unless the job includes Javascript, which a smart person won't write). And so on.

Wanting a smart president, then, goes along with another trope: that the presidency is a "job." And of course (unlike people who actually make hiring decisions, in the real world) we want the best man -- or woman, as the case may be -- for the job.

What exactly is the job description? Administrator of the global empire, right? Required skills: bland hypocrisy, experience with mass murder....

All of which makes me think I'd rather have a "dummy" in the job. It's not, actually, a job I want to see done well.

I made this point recently to another neighbor of mine -- call her Lyle. West Siders are nothing if not quick. Lyle shot back, "You just had eight years of the biggest dummy in US history. Did that make you happy?"

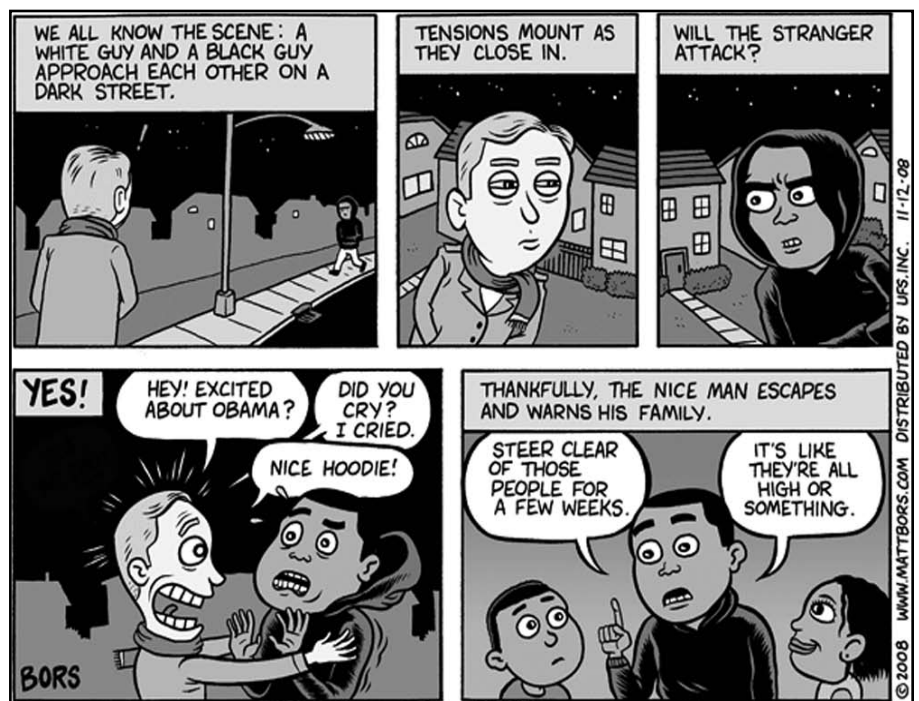
Now factually, I don't think she's right about Bush. She's deceived -- as New Yorkers often are -- by the hick accent. Who knows what Bush is really like? But the carefully-contrived persona to which both she, and the people who voted for him, are responding, is not that of a dummy, but of a sly and crafty peckerwood anti-intellectual, quite a different matter. Lyle mistakenly believes that a peckerwood anti-intellectual must be dumb -- it's her New York provincialism coming out. And it must be noted that if this Administration was run by dummies, it nevertheless strangely succeeded -- with a good deal of help from the Democrats, to be sure -- in doing exactly what it wanted to do.

Still. Let's grant Lyle's point, *arguendo*. I didn't have a response ready at the time, but pondering the matter later, I realized that I wasn't all that happy after the presidencies of the two officially-certified Brainiac presidents in my lifetime, Carter

and Clinton. (Nixon was smart too, but poorly educated and crazy as a bedbug, so he's in a class by himself.)

Smart as they undoubtedly were, they left very unsatisfactory records behind them -- unsatisfactory to me, anyway, happy though others may have been -- and more to the point, these two mighty intellects paved the way for Reagan and Bush II respectively.

So how important is intelligence in a president? It depends, I suppose, on what you're looking for. Here I must return to a favorite theme: to wit, that people like Lyle and my neighbors in the elevator, when they go to vote, are mostly looking for someone they can recognize as a person like themselves. In the case of my neighbors, this would be a smart person, with a reasonably good education (as these things go), with some regard for culture, and above all -- no fucking hick accent.



# We Won & That's Not a Panda



## MY EPIPHANY IN THE NO-SPIN ZONE

BY ALLISON KILKENNY

I want to publicly thank Bill O'Reilly. Up until his recent appearance on the Daily Show, I had foolishly started to believe that the right-wing cluster of our "Happy Family" political spectrum still had rational members, and by extension, rational ideas.

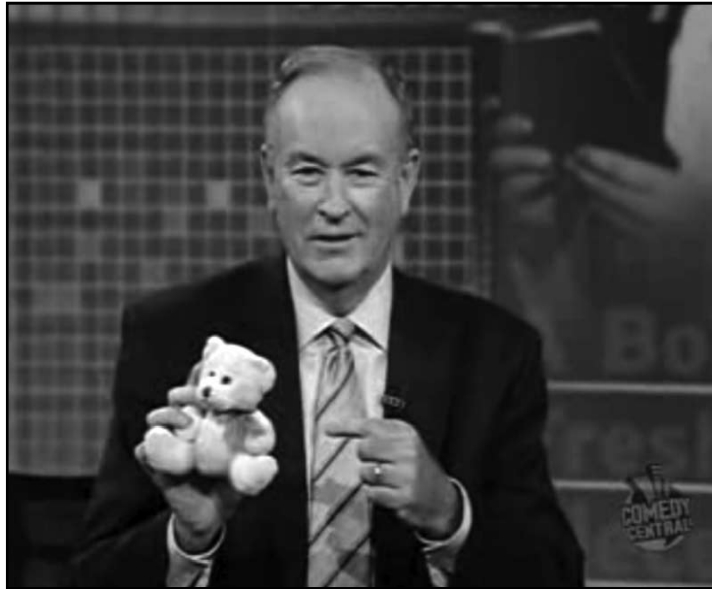
So I started to nod whenever I heard right-wing pundits and politicians say America is a center-right country. Therefore, Barack Obama has to be bipartisan in his cabinet selection. Otherwise, they say, the country will explode into civil war and Congress will grind to a stand still, which is weird because I thought Obama secured 52.7% of the popular vote, which is more than any Democrat has won since Lyndon Johnson in 1964. That sounds like a mandate.

Furthermore, Congress securing 57 seats sounds like a mandate. And 3 seats are still up in the air, though the race in Alaska now seems to favor Democrat Mark Begich by 1,022 votes, which again proves that Alaskans will only tolerate the "Maverick" thing until you're convicted on seven felony counts. Sorry, Uncle Ted. Minnesota's Norm Coleman barely leads Democratic contender, Al Franken, by 206 votes. Meanwhile, Georgians are having a mandatory run-off election.

The point is things look great for Democrats. So why are their spines turning to jello already? Conservatives are muttering that 52.7% of the popular vote and 57 congressional seats are hardly a mandate, but George W. Bush swaggered into his second term with around 50% of the public behind him, and called it a mandate, so

why can't the same standards be applied to this election?

But putting aside the popular vote, some recent polling about issues most important to Americans is very telling. In a New York Times/CBS poll, voters overwhelmingly declared the issues most important to them are the Iraq war and healthcare. At the time, only 27% approved of president Bush's handling of healthcare. More importantly, the poll also showed that Americans are willing to make significant trade-offs for a better healthcare plan, in-



**O'Reilly: Colorblind, yet still racist somehow**

cluding paying \$500 more annually and foregoing future tax cuts. This puts a dent in the Republican theory that Americans universally reject raising taxes. On Americans' part, that kind of thinking sounds pretty progressive. Oh, it also sounds like a mandate.

One might even say Barack Obama has a Progressive mandate from the American people.

In order to thwart this stubborn fact of reality, the right-wingers defer to their second favorite Republican of all, all time, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln, they smugly remind those of us who cling to our fact sheets, had a bipartisan cabinet.

Well, yeah, but he has also just led the country through a Civil War, and he had a tenuous grip on the country. If he hadn't invited his enemies into his cabinet, everything would have fallen apart. Now, the Republicans will surely whine and bitch for the next four-to-eight years, but I doubt they'll take up arms and storm the Capitol.

This sudden embracing of all things bipartisan is curious, especially from a party that has been so consistently partisan for the past decade. Where were the cries for inclusion during the Bush reign? It's as though the Republicans and the right-wing media are in utter denial about their presidential loss, Congressional loss, and also the future of their political party.

Which explains why they're desperately trying to finagle their way into the Oval Office. They've already made great strides in hammering the "Continuity" drum. Certain members of the intelligence community must remain in place, they say, or Al-Qaeda will catch whiff of the exact moment of transformation and attack. This is speculative reasoning, at best, and there is no evidence that the United

States would be made considerably more vulnerable by officially firing the old guard Bushies.

Now is the time for President-elect Obama to act like a stern father, tell the Republicans to be quiet for a while, and start undoing the damage done by the Bush administration. It's also the time to consider reality and start objectively weeding through corrupt ideologies. Being inclusive will only get you so far before it gets you under the track of the Republican tank.

Obama can't tolerate the Neo-Conservative policies of torture, preemptive, endless war, and domestic spying. He must

unequivocally denounce these policies, and distance himself from the perpetrators of these crimes. That includes people like Jamie Miscik, who is helping to lead the review of intelligence agencies and is making recommendations to the new administration. Obama, no doubt, made this decision in the spirit of bipartisanship. It certainly can't be because of Miscik's resume, which reads like a disaster list of failed life decisions.

Miscik, who was fired by Porter Goss, is the former Deputy Director for Intelligence. She is guilty of passing along the October 2002 estimate, complete with the 28 lies Colin Powell eventually delivered to the UN, which is now considered an international embarrassment. Basically, this is the lady who supplied the lies that led us to war. Some countries consider that a war crime.

But that requires a rational examination of history. It's 2008. We don't consider history anymore. Polling tells us Americans are ready for Progressive policies, the Bush doctrine has failed, but we're not concerned with this reality. It took Bill O'Reilly to make me realize that.

Up is down. Black is White. Brown bears are Pandas, and America is not a Progressive country. That's what the Republicans would have us all believe. Except, it's not true.

That's when Bill O'Reilly reminded me the truth doesn't matter. Not as long as you're a pig-headed bully with a fat paycheck and control over corporate airwaves. The truth doesn't matter if you can out-muscle and out-shout your opponent.

After a prop gag in which O'Reilly was given a cup of hot chocolate and small, yellowish, perfectly normal teddy bear, John Stewart foolishly tried to reason with him. He pointed out the obvious: A majority of Americans voted for Barack Obama, who based his campaign on Progressive ideals: ending the wars, providing health care for citizens, creating green jobs, establishing a living wage, and restoring America's standing in the world. John argues, therefore, that the country is Progressive. O'Reilly's head nearly exploded.

**Bill O'Reilly:** There's a foundation to the country, and secular progressives want drastic changes--

**John Stewart:** No we don't!

**BO:** Oh come on, stop it! You ever read

the DailyKos?

**JS:** They want the tax rate to go from 36% to 39%. At what 3% does that turn it socialist?

**BO:** OK, you know what? (picks up bear, strokes it)

**JS:** I'm just telling you! You're a labels guy.

**BO:** You're telling me propaganda.

**JS:** No, I'm telling you the thought behind the label.

**BO:** Look. I like Barack Obama and I hope he does well.

**JS:** They're still gonna let you eat; don't worry about it!

**BO:** As long as I can have the panda, I'm fine.

**JS:** All Right.

**BO:** But I'm telling you--

**JS:** That's not a panda!

**BO:** Sure it is! This is a panda! What do you think it is?

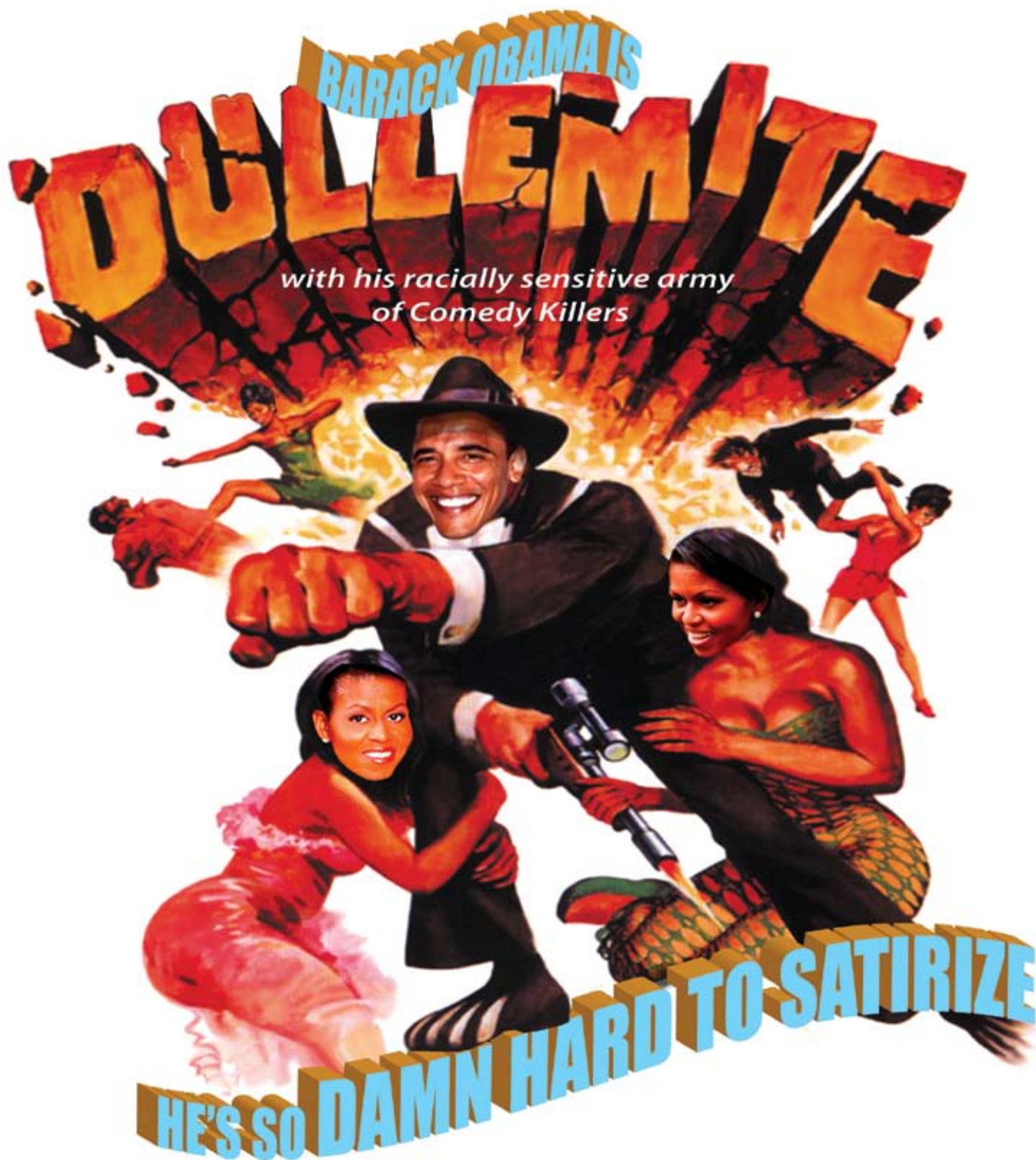
(crowd disagrees)

This isn't a matter of vengeance. The American people will never "get square" with the Republicans. Their Constitution is in shambles. Their rights have been violated. Their safety is in grave jeopardy because of the imperial desires of a handful of needle-dick Neo-Cons.

This is a matter of being sane and remembering the last eight years. It's time to stop letting people who have no grip on reality dictate the future of America. The country isn't center-right, you're not a bold, fresh piece of humanity, and that is not a fucking panda bear. ~~PEEP~~







By IAN MURPHY

Let's face it: Barack Obama just isn't funny. He's sort of gangly and he has big ears. That's it. But the man's going to lead the free world; he must be effectively derided and satirized. Anything less would be un-American!

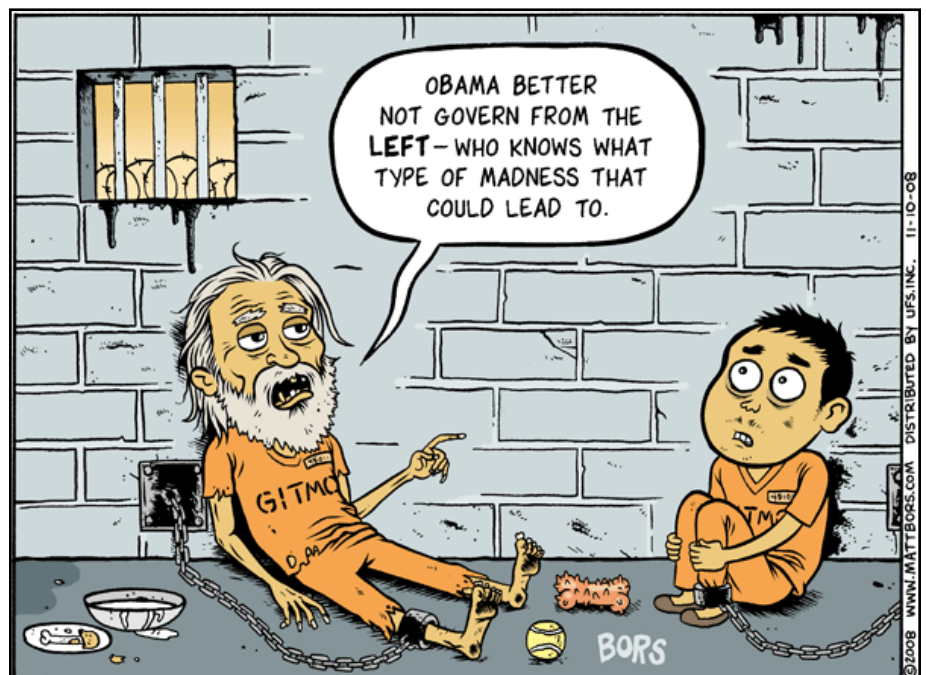
But Obama's race has been a challenge to the work-a-day satirist, too. What can we say? How far is too far? Does mocking the Obama administration come with a free membership to a white power group? And does that membership entitle one to discounts at Sam's club? It's hard to say.

There's no doubt that Barry represents a change in American politics, and to help you, the reader and terrified pundits, with the apparent changes inherent an Obama presidency, here's a convenient list of cowardly, borderline acceptable ways of commenting on "the first black president." Enjoy, you bigot:



- The first president who wouldn't look completely ridiculous with a bald head.
- The first menthol presidency.
- The first president to not be able to hail a cab.
- The first president who won't smell like a wet dog after swimming.
- The first president who can't get head lice—no matter how unclean or inarticulate, according to his Vice Persident.
- The first president to move second if he were a chess piece.
- The first president to die first in an action film.
- The first president who'd even consider using mayonnaise as a hair treatment product.
- The first president at risk of developing Sickle-cell anemia.
- The first president that must pretend to be bad at bowling, because seeing that black ball smash those white pins, would frighten retirees in gated communities.
- The first president whose hip-hop sales would increase if he were shot.
- The first president who could conceivably have hip-hop sales—aside from William Howard Taft, who recited his first State of the Union in bombastic 12-bar freestyle.
- The first president to be romantically involved with a black woman—that he didn't own!
- The first Huxtable president.
- The first president whose offspring have the statistical mortality rate of children in Bangladesh.
- The first president who could be pulled over and beaten by police simply for driving a nice car. And Air Force One? Forget-about-it!
- The first president whose uniformed attackers would be acquitted of all charges—even if it was caught on video. (“I thought he was reaching for a gun, but it was just hope!”)
- The first president who can make white women uncomfortable in elevators.
- The first president who wouldn't think putting chicken on waffles was some horrible mistake.
- The first president whose black children weren't a tightly held secret.
- The first president who wouldn't look out of place on a box of instant rice, pudding or Cream of Wheat.
- The first president that Don Imus just isn't allowed to talk about.
- The first modern president who won't feel totally guilty while watching “Roots”.
- The first president to flinch at the title “Minority Whip.”
- The first president to cut pork from the budget strictly for barbeque concerns.
- The first president capable of moderating his policies, yet unwilling to moderate his volume at the movies.
- The first president who, no matter how well he performs, can't be called “one of the good ones.”
- The first president to make the White House feel insecure about its manhood.
- The first president who can call another man “baby” and sound cool doing it.
- The first president who can be admiringly referred to as “Big Brother.”
- The first president whose head can be Photoshopped onto NBA slam dunk contest winners.
- The first president to make the position “White House Sunburn Advisor” seem doubly implausible.
- The first president who can recite Chris Rock's “they spinnin'!” bit without getting beaten up.
- The first president to deny the deliciousness of watermelon—for political reasons.
- The first president to be less than a thousand generations removed from his African DNA.
- The first president who's forbidden to date Pat Buchanan's daughters.
- The first president to diminish the accomplishments of George Washington Carver—since Jimmy Carter.
- The first president who's deft at employing the suffix “izzle.”
- The first president to make Wayne Brady seem inexcusably black.
- The first president to effectively deflect criticism by saying, “It's a president thing; you wouldn't understand.”
- The first president to rightly believe that sandals should never be worn with socks.
- The first president to truly think grits are an acceptable foodstuff.
- The first president who can sing both the Stevie Wonder and Paul McCartney parts of “Ebony and Ivory.”
- The first president to make Bill Clinton look like Edgar Winter.
- The first president who can both pop, and lock, without the approval of congress.
- The first president to make the economy more palatable with hot sauce alone.
- The first president who could be impeached simply for barking like DMX.
- And finally, the first president to be mercilessly pigeonholed because of his melanin.

We hope this has been both educational and fun. But remember, kids, if you laughed, you too are a racist!



# RACE TO THE CABINET

## GENTLEMEN, START YOUR SPECULATIONS

By **STEVE GORDON**

Barack Obama became president-elect last week, and if the mainstream news media have anything to do with it, his selection of members for Cabinet will be the most important thing to happen in the world. Ever. Since the Bush policy of hiring recruits fresh out of the Cobra Command Academy didn't fare so well, Obama will have to devise a new strategy for selecting a strong team. The president-elect has quite a challenge ahead of him, so here is a helpful list of the best possible candidates.



### Secretary of State – Sarah Palin

Palin is the best choice for the foreign affairs position of Secretary of State. Since the election, a number of McCain strategists have come forth with complaints about Palin's incompetence, including the astonishing account that the former vice-presidential nominee had been unable to name all of the countries in North America. Canada America Mexico. Done. So by "best choice,"

I guess I meant "worst, most distressing, gun-in-the-mouth, plane-to-the-towers choice." But come on, do we really need to go around paying for the kit anytime a head of state gets raped?



### Secretary of Defense – The X-Men

Look, Wolverine's got adamantium claws, Storm does the weather thing, and Cyclops shoots fucking lasers out of his eyes. The choice for Defense Secretary is obvious. And the fact that these heroes haven't already been nominated to such a high government position really shows how archaic

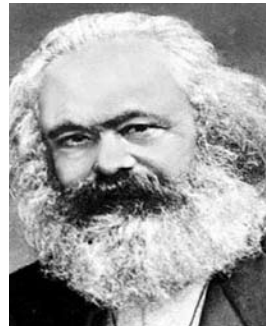
our attitude towards mutants is. Obama can really prove his tolerance by selecting The X-Men, provided they pass a not-gay test.



### Attorney General – C.J. from San Andreas

C.J. knows a little bit about law enforcement, having spent most of the 90s trying to evade crooked cops. Obama has said he is looking for people who don't necessarily agree with him. C.J. wouldn't be afraid to stand up to the president, before slicing his throat, taking his money and

stealing his ride. And after years of cabinet members getting into serious trouble for breaking the law, it would be nice to have an Attorney General who just has to get a new paint job for his car to get away from the law scot-free.



### Secretary of the Treasury – The Ghost of Karl Marx

Obama's first sort-of-act of sort-of-office has been to advocate shoveling a few billion dollars to American automakers who accidentally forgot to be competitive, functioning corporations. This shows that he is bent on taking money from hard-working whites and giving it to lazy blacks, and not that he is seriously

indebted to the corporations that funded his campaign and will continue to run his presidency. A bonus to selecting Ghost Marx is that many Americans may mistake him for railroad industry magnate, Ghost of Frederick Douglass.



### Secretary of Energy – Billy Mays

I may not completely understand what the Energy Secretary's responsibilities include, but there is one thing I can say with complete certainty: Billy Mays has liquid cocaine for blood. The sun spends a week in bed with tuna and saltines after he sees the amount of energy expended in a single OxiClean TV spot. So rigorous a human, Billy Mays could sneak into your house and sell you your own dick for three easy payments of \$19.95. Your own dick.



### Secretary of Housing and Urban Development – Lil Wayne

That Lil Wayne is so hot right now. His last album sold millions of copies, garnered positive reviews from everyone

from Pitchfork to the BBC, and firmly established the artists as officially “so hot right now.” Not much of a record in government or public policy, but with white conservatives shitting themselves out of fear that Obama is going to turn the White House into a nonstop Rap, Sex and Crunk party, Lil Wayne is probably our best hope that that actually does happen, and that everyone won’t have shat themselves in vain.

### Veterans Affairs – Rambo



Not Rambo Emmanuel, the real one. John Rambo knows war is hell. He was there. But he also knows it’s almost easier than not-war. No one can better empathize with vets who come home from war only to suffer from physical and mental health problems. Rambo will take on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, What-Were-They-Injecting-Me-With Syndrome, and Strangle-My-Wife-In-Our-Sleep Disease, no matter how many cops he has to kill in the process.

### Secretary of Homeland Security – Hillary Clinton



HRod is a tough political figure these days. To switch gears for a moment, Sasquatch Rock Parties are a not uncommonly reported phenomenon. Many people throughout American history have claimed to have intruded, intentionally or not, into the territory of one or several bigfoots, whose recalcitrant response is to hurl rocks and

boulders at the perceived threat. It can be a quite horrendous ordeal. Well, anyway, HClinton would make a perfect Nine-Eleven Czar.

### Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Transportation – The Chicago Seven

While some of Obama’s questionable pals brought the candidate last minute scrutiny before the election, this set of 60s radicals went surprisingly unnoticed throughout the campaign. These hippies were charged with inciting a riot during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Obama was there, shaking hands with the freakiest freakies, and throwing rocks at cops. Obama should



force these Chill Bros to use their power at these seven cabinet positions to reverse the detrimental effects of hippie culture on today’s society. A bunch of kids who smoke weed, eat Taco Bell, and watch Family Guy no longer constitute a counterculture. And Obama could also create a new cabinet position and select Bobby Seale to run it, but then change his mind at the last minute and sentence Seale to prison for contempt instead.







# It's all about the beans.



*Coffee so fresh, we post the roasting date right in our cafe!*

200 East Avenue @ Matthews in Rochester

Delaware at Chippewa | Elmwood at Cleveland

and in the lobby of Sheridan Meadows North at Sheridan and Transit



# THE \*TRUTH\* ABOUT HUSSEIN OBAMA

## COMING SOON TO AN INBOX NEAR YOU

By **ERIC LINGENFELTER**

**E**ven though he's been all over the media for the entirety of the longest presidential campaign in American history, and even though he's had tenacious news goons going over every aspect of his life with a comb so fine-toothed that it could part the leg hairs on a housefly to find something, anything about the brown guy with the funny name who wants to send his Negro ninjas into our houses while we sleep to silently steal our guns so that he can incinerate them with the fire breath that he got by pledging his soul to Allah in exchange for magical terrorist anti-Christ powers, powers that he will one day use to fly up to Heaven and re-crucify Jesus, do we really know that much about our new Fearless Leader, President-Elect Barack HUSSEIN Obama?

No. We do not. Or at least we didn't until now. My crack team of undercover sources has unearthed a wealth of disturbing information about Barack HUSSEIN Obama that those lowdown liberal liars in the loony left-wing landscape that is the mainstream media fought tooth and nail to keep on the downlow until their boy Big Barry O. could set up shop at Pennsylvania Ave.

Those elitist bullies almost got away with it, too, but it turns out that The Truth can't be held at arm's length forever. Eventually, The Truth gets tired of wildly swinging its arms in a futile attempt to strike back at its tormentor for stealing its lunch money, so it runs off crying to the nearest teacher, who takes pity on it and calls the bully's parents to make sure they give that little hellion the discipline that he deserves.

Friends, The Truth came running to us! We are that teacher! You are that bully's parents! And soon, the MSM will be so grounded.


Now strap on your tin-foil hats, 'cause we're through the looking glass, people! This is the truth about Barack HUSSEIN Obama:

- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks O.J. is innocent.

- Barack HUSSEIN Obama doesn't understand all of the hatred for Jar Jar Binks.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks "The Simpsons" is better than ever.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks Donnie Darko is too arty.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama has seen Rocky Horror 527 times.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks that Will Ferrell is the funniest man alive.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama liked "The X Files" better without Mulder.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks Rachael Ray is hot.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama reads Playboy for the articles.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama wants his MTV.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama loves the '80s.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama killed the radio star.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama's best move on the dance floor is the Cabbage Patch.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama yells "FREEBIRD!" in between songs.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama still taunts Buffalo Bills fans by saying "BOY I LOVE LOSING SUPERBOWLS!"
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama was so wasted last night.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama thinks it's OK to talk with your mouth full if you just push all of the chewed up food into one of your cheeks.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama doesn't know to take the corn husk off of his tamale.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama eats his fries with mayonnaise.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama preferred the New Coke.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama has had a piece of corn stuck between his two front teeth, like, all day.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama drinks milk out of the carton with cookies in

his mouth.

- Barack HUSSEIN Obama wipes his mouth with his forearms when he eats.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama doesn't rinse the dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama puts the ice cube tray back in the freezer when there's only one cube left.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama has never put down the toilet seat.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama wipes from back to front.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama hangs his toilet paper so it rolls out from the back.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama frequently brings 8 to 10 items through the 7 items or less lane.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama is not kind; he does not rewind.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama tips with change.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama gives pennies to trick-or-treaters instead of candy.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama just wants to be friends.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama refers to Target as "TAR-ZHAY."
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama says "irregardless."
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama calls Asians "Orientals."
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama nags you even though he knows you aren't listening.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama never graded his students on a curve because if Kevin here aced the test, then it couldn't have been that hard.
- Barack HUSSEIN Obama is a great orator. Just like Hitler.

So you can suck my red, white and blue balls, Osama! (Oops! I meant to say Obama! HAHAAAAHA!) The truth is out there! God bless the Real America! 

# GOING POSTAL

## VOTING BY MAIL IS NOT THE ANSWER

By **BRAD FRIEDMAN**

Someone named “DavidNYC” at DailyKos filed a well-meaning diary recently, titled “How I Became a Vote-by-Mail Convert,” in which he offers some reasons, after years of opposing it, that he now supports VBM based on his experience as a poll watcher on election day.

I’ve previously offered just a few of the most noteworthy reasons that I believe VBM is a terrible idea for democracy, even as I realize that many hard partisans -- from both sides of the political aisle -- love the idea of VBM as it tends to increase turnout and allows them to target their voters quite directly. Lists of who already voted are routinely made available to the major political parties in the days leading up to the election, allowing them to more specifically target their expensive Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts on, and before, Election Day.

That’s swell for partisans, but not so good for many of us who are more concerned that voters be allowed to vote freely, and that their votes be counted accurately and transparently. And some of “DavidNYC’s” thoughtful arguments are misleading at best...

While partisans tend to favor VBM, it seems that most election integrity advocates do not, even though there are notable exceptions there as well, including several of whom I much respect, even if I disagree with them on this point. For example, my friend and colleague (and frequent BRAD BLOG contributor) John Gideon of VotersUnite.org does not oppose VBM, and CA SoS Debra Bowen and I have gone back and forth on this, as she tends to advocate for the idea.

The ensuing discussing over at dKos, on “DavidNYC’s” piece today, is a good one. The comments there offer many good points on all sides. It’s very important to have intelligent democratic (small “d”) discussion and informed, genuine

debate before leaping into any perceived “solution” to our current horrific electoral woes. But just because something seems like a good idea at first blush, doesn’t necessarily make it so. Yes, voters in Oregon tend to love their all-VBM system. That doesn’t mean it’s necessarily good for democracy, any more than those voters who, according to studies, say they enjoy voting on touch-screen voting machines makes it a wise idea to vote on such a system on which it is strictly impossible to verify that any single vote has ever been recorded accurately as per the voter’s intent.

I’m happy to see discussion on this, such that any electoral reform to come --- and lord knows we desperately need it --- need to come about out of an informed debate, rather than knee-jerk reactionism. To that end, while I recommend reviewing the many of the smart comments on “DavidNYC’s” article, I wish to quickly respond to several fallacies he offers in support of his main argument.

Writes “DavidNYC” in his dKos diary:

*Voting by mail doesn’t just solve the “wrong polling place” problem, it solves the broken voting machine problem, the incompetent poll worker problem, the long line problem, the voter intimidation problem and a whole host of others.*

Allow me to take on each of those one by one:

### ‘Wrong Polling Place Problem’

Yes, VBM may help to resolve the “‘wrong polling place’ problem” -- “DavidNYC” describes watching voters in Connecticut stand on line for 45 minutes, only to reach the front of the line and find out they’re at the wrong precinct -- that’s not the only way to solve the problem. Nonetheless, it’s the most persuasive of the arguments he presents in that graf.

### ‘Broken Voting Machine Problem’

VBM paper ballots are also counted by flawed, error-prone and easily-manipulated voting machines which are made by private companies and run on secret software.

It is also much harder for citizens to oversee the counting of those ballots since, for instance, when 437 voters show up to a polling place and sign the register to that effect, we know that there should be 437 ballots counted from that precinct (no matter how they are counted, by op-scan or by hand). It’s difficult, if not impossible, to have that same sort of oversight and reconciliation for VBM ballots since they are all generally tossed into a single “super precinct” for counting purposes, and it’s impossible to know how many ballots should be in that pile.

As to actual broken voting machines that keep people from being able to cast their vote at the polls on Election Day. Well, ban all Direct Recording Electronic (DRE, usually touch-screen) voting machines, the type which, when they break down, mean that people can’t vote, and the “broken voting machine problem” goes away. Even with optical-scan tabulating devices, voters can vote anytime, anywhere with paper ballots at the polls. As long as we ban godforsaken DREs once and for all, broken machines should never be a barrier from folks being able to cast their vote. The optical scanning of ballots is at the end of the voting process, and even if that machine breaks down (and it frequently does, as it did at my poll this Election Day), the paper ballot can be counted later at county headquarters. No delay or disenfranchising of voters.

Going to VBM in order to counter the broken voting machine problem is akin to going to war with Iraq because we were attacked by 19 Saudi Arabians.

### ‘Incompetent Poll Worker Problem’

This one somewhat offends me. Poll workers should be celebrated, supported

and thanked the way we thank troops who volunteer to serve our nation in the battlefield. It's a thankless job, carried out by usually quite dedicated people, under enormous duress, for ridiculously long hours, for often little or no pay. Where "incompetence" tends to come in, it's where these patriotic folks have been saddled with too many responsibilities, overly complicated rules and procedures, and ridiculously complex and poorly designed systems that are not created with the completely-predictable mission critical specificities that everyone understands before deploying them.

No, many poll workers are not rocket scientists. Nor should they have to be. But even when they are -- e.g. when a Johns Hopkins computer science professor worked the polls during the 2006 Primary Election in Montgomery County, MD and even he couldn't fix the problems with the new Diebold e-pollbooks stupidly deployed by the state -- they should never be asked to be IT specialists or any of the other duties they have now been given, largely by election officials who haven't properly thought things through, and elected officials who are hoping to make the process as complicated as possible in order to help keep as many voters from voting as possible.

Please lay off the poll workers, and be one of them next time instead.

### 'The Long Line Problem'

Again, we have another "problem" that could be solved by more sensible means. Expanded early voting (even while I have concerns with our current processes for that as well, I believe they could be overcome with smart attention given to those concerns), rollback of anti-voter "registration validation", increased numbers of voting stations and the ban of DRE/touch-screen voting machines would go a long way towards solving that problem.

Also, making Election Day a holiday would ease the crush of voters turning out at once (at poll opening before work, during work lunch hour, or after the work day). Though I'd recommend changing Election Day to a Wednesday when making it a holiday, so that a Tuesday holiday doesn't simply turn into a long out of town 4-day holiday weekend for many.

### 'The Voter Intimidation Problem'

Of all the problems "DavidNYC" suggests might be solved by VBM, this is the weakest argument, if only because voter intimidation would likely become worse with VBM, rather than better.

Yes, we'd be able to end polling place intimidation, but the routine buying and selling of ballots could become a nightmare. Thuggish, anti-American employers might require employees vote a certain way, and force them to prove it by instructing them to show them ballots before they are mailed in, abusive husbands may force their wives to vote a certain way, etc. etc.


Another corollary problem is the buying and selling of votes. Does anybody think a party that spends millions to keep people from voting, by any means necessary, even going so far as to create an office to jam GOTV efforts by the other side (see Republican Party, New Hampshire, 2002) would not find a way to offer a few bucks for proof of a ballot cast the "right" way?

Both intimidation and vote-buying/selling of that sort can, of course, already be done with the absentee ballot mail system we already have in most states, but I see no reason to institutionalize the practice and make it worse than it may already be.

Remember, if the bad guys can find a way to gain a few votes -- by hook or by crook

-- they will. We've got a rich history in this country to prove it. And even if you think that would only be a minor problem (and I'm not sure why you'd think that), why don't you ask Al Franken or Norm Coleman in Minnesota, where their U.S. Senate race currently stands at a 221 vote margin, if they would have minded if a few Walmart employees or union workers, out of the 3 million voters who cast ballots in that race, were forced to vote a certain way or otherwise face possible job loss, or if it would have been okay that some "well-meaning" supporter was willing to offer some neighbors \$5 per vote.

Anyway, the discussion of these matters, as noted, is a good one. And there are many others related to the absolute necessity for Election Reform that we now face, that we must have now and in the very near future. But let's be careful not to leap before we look this time, lest we end up with another nightmare akin to the one that the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 -- pushed through Congress as a supposed response to the FL 2000 debacle -- has wrought.

HAVA has made things far worse than better. It's going to take many years to unwind the utter havoc and loss of transparency and ability for citizen oversight that it's brought to our American elections. So can we please take care to not make a similar mistake again this time? Pretty please? 



# Waxy BEAST

BY ERIC LINGENFELTER



## Fucked Up/ Psychedelic Horseshit

@ Mohawk Place in Buffalo, NY

10/25/08

### Part I: Psychedelic Horseshit

I'm sure all of us at one time or another have known some dickhead who regularly made it a point to justify his boorish behavior by braying, "Whatever, I don't give a fuck," or some variant thereof.

This, we all know, is bullshit, akin to perennial mom-favorite niceboy songsmith Billy Joel branding himself a "luuuunatic." People who really don't care about what others think of them don't have to explain themselves to everyone within earshot. They let their actions do the talking.

Enter Psychedelic Horseshit, only the second band I've ever seen that I'd actually believe if they told me that they didn't give a whit of a shit about public perception. If fuck-giving was measured in Kelvin degrees, I'd bet my weight in geldings that they'd temp absolute zero.

The drummer used an empty Jose Cuervo box in lieu of a real kick drum. The bassist... Well, he was rather nondescript, content to hang back in his corner of the stage and lay down a solid low-end base for whatever the fuck the frontman thought he was accomplishing.

The frontman was a triple threat of ineptitude: he lackadaisically talk-

sung like a quarter-assed Bob Dylan impersonator, skronked on the exact same \$99 Squier Stratocaster shitbox that I used to plunk out "Iron Man" and "Ace of Spades" on in my best friend's basement when I was 14 and tickled the synth ivories with all the graceful virtuosity of a sausage-fingered quadriplegic Parkinson's patient in oven mitts.



Their set was the musical equivalent of that time your friend got so utterly shitfaced that he:

a) was physically unable to do anything other than bonk his head semi-rhythmically into the table you were all sitting at and mumble to no one in particular about how Kevin Smith is the voice of a generation and Bruce Campbell is the most underrated actor in film today.

b) sat crouched in the corner of the basement while everyone else played beer pong, stripping off one article of clothing every five minutes or so until he was in nothing but his flimsy, ball-exposing boxers. Someone then whispered, "Oh god, I hope he doesn't

get naked." Your friend, overhearing this and interpreting it as a dare, then peeled off said boxers, threw them across the room and giggled to himself while rocking back and forth in the seated fetal position.

c) decided to leave the party and walk three miles to his house in the middle of a brutal Buffalo winter after drinking something like 22 beers and 4 tequila shots. Of course, he only made it about 100 feet before falling into a snow bank. Unable to get up because he couldn't quite figure out how to get his hands out of his pockets, he was helped to his feet by a friendly police officer. The officer asked your friend where he was coming from. "Uh... Oh... I don't know," was his brilliant reply. The officer then decided to give your friend a ride home, as it was painfully obvious that he wasn't going to make it there by himself. Your friend thanked the officer for his courtesy by sleep-vomiting all over the back seat of the squad car.

The officer, who was no longer feeling very friendly, abruptly stopped the car, pulled your friend out and sped back to the station, leaving your friend to his own devices.

In other words, they were an absolute shambling wreck, far more entertaining in their awfulness than most bands are when they play the most solid set of their careers.

The fact that there were people there who actually seemed to enjoy their music on a non-ironic level -- two girls at the front of the stage were giggling and whispering in each others' ears and almost-but-not-quite kissing while doing

that white chick dance where it looks like they're half-skipping, half-running in place, while bearded contemplatives stood expressionless with their arms folded or their hands in the pockets of their hoodies while slightly nodding in dour approval -- just made it even more surreally hilarious. I could barely muster enough self-control to stop belly-laughing long enough to drink my beer.

Would I buy their records and listen to them at home? Hell no. Would I go see them live again for slightly more than the price of a movie ticket? Hell yes.

The final verdict: one of the best worst bands ever. If they were a movie, they'd be Plan 9 From Outer Space. See it to believe it.

## Part II: Fucked Up

Over the years, I've found that a band's "punkness" is directly proportional to the strength of its fan base's body odor.

If you walk into the club or bar or basement or what have you and it smells like, say, a locker room filled with the rotting corpses of a gaggle of hippies who had just completed the Tour de France and then suffocated on their own noxious crotch and armpit fumes, you can be sure that the band you're about to watch is punk to the mothafuckin' bone.

The less gag-inducing the smell, the further the band is from pure punk. It's a formula that never fails.

(I attempted to devise a similar barometer based on beards since the Grizzly Adams look seems to have replaced the 2-foot-tall mohawk as punk rock's follicular disaster of choice, but I scrapped that because I remembered that the indie hipster crowd has embraced facial hirsuteness as well and that would screw with the metaphor.)

((And while we're on the subject of beards, a word of advice to a couple of kids I saw at the show: if your facial hair is too patchy to form a proper beard, stripping it down to a moustache does not make you look any better. Sporting a full-on pubic archipelago on your mug

makes you look like a sloppy 12 year old with a mild case of Progeria. Creepy, but still passable. But shaving everything but your crustache makes you look like Napoleon Dynamite's child molester uncle. I consulted my girlfriend and a number of other female acquaintances and they all agree: kid touchers are not attractive. So if you ever hope to touch a boob without the aid of booze, cocaine or rohypnol, shave that shit. The More You Know...))

But even though the air is a little fresher when Fucked Up plays nowadays, their shows are still as wild as ever.

Musically, they're at the top of their game. They recently added a third guitarist/backup vocalist to help inject a little more nuance into the band's explosive, power-packed live sound. The result? The newer songs sounded incredible, making an exceedingly excellent transition from their densely layered, almost orchestral studio forms to their more stripped-down, aggressive live incarnations, and the old favorites sounded better than ever.

The crowd was in rare form that night as well. From first song to last, the fans were in a frenzy. Limbs were flailed, heads were banged, crowds were surfed and traffic cones were flung. Yes, I said "traffic cones were flung." Some geniuses went outside, grabbed an oversized traffic cone and whipped it across the room, narrowly missing several people's heads, including that of Buffalo hardcore mainstay Aaron Adkins of Everything Falls Apart and Able Danger, who shook his head in disbelief at the display of jackassery that he had just witnessed and muttered to himself, "You damn kids and your music. This is why punks can't have nice things." Then he shook his fist at them like he had never shaken his fist at anything before. (OK, I really don't know what he said because he was across the room and the fist shaking part didn't happen. But that's how I like to imagine it, so nyah.)

But the biggest ups have to go to vocalist Damien Abraham for providing the antics that gave the show the extra nudge it needed to cross the threshold from mere goodness to total greatness.

Most of the time when musicians play (or fool themselves into thinking that they play) music that's progressive and forward-looking, they put on their po-faces and get all stoic and Christ-like on our asses because they're working sooooo hard and their art is so very, very Serious and Important that any trace of undue joy would diminish its power, which is such that if their latest, greatest album was played simultaneously on all of the radios in the world, AIDS in Africa would be nothing more than an unpleasant memory.

But Damien, frontman of the most progressive, forward-looking punk band in recent memory, is a goddamn comedian.

During soundcheck, he tested the microphones by shouting into them through a long cardboard tube so as not to diminish the effect of his grand entrance during the first song. Within minutes of taking the stage, he stripped off nearly all of his clothing until he was wearing nothing more than boxers and a tuque (that's Canadian for "a fuzzy winter hat with a little ball thingy on the top" for all of you non-border towners out there) and as we all know, fat guys + nudity = comedy gold. He pulled down his boxers to show us how tightly his ass was clenched from holding in a shit because he was, in his words, "so close to home (Toronto) that I'm just gonna hold it in and poop in my own toilet." He grabbed a belt from an audience member and strapped it around his flabby chest to "keep my boobs under control." He even joked about his band's recent rise to semi-fame: "I was standing next to some guy outside and he's like, 'Oh, man, they're so over-hyped.' And I just went, dude, I'm right here! Obviously we're not hyped enough if you don't even know who the fuck I am!"

Hopefully someday everyone will eventually know who the fuck Fucked Up is. With their killer music and balls-out performance style, they damn sure deserve the fame.

Fucked Up and Psychedelic Horseshit at the Mohawk Place gets a rating of two massive, dimpled, jiggling, pasty Canadian butt cheeks, the sight of which will haunt my dreams for the rest of my days.

*Assail Eric's taste at [lingepx76@gmail.com](mailto:lingepx76@gmail.com)*





## He choked big time



Choked a woman, that is. University of Florida cornerback Jacques Rickerson was involved in one of the ugliest sports-crime stories of the year this past week, accused of beating, choking, and suffocating his girlfriend at her apartment complex.

Rickerson allegedly struck his girlfriend and choked her; then, when she screamed, he threw her down on a bed and put a pillow over her face. He also blocked the door when she tried to escape, and grabbed her phone when she tried to call police. Cops eventually arrived at the scene and hit Rickerson with charges of felony domestic battery by strangulation.

These stories of chick-battering by football players just get worse and worse, and, dare we say it, it might be time to start asking if both the NCAA and leagues like the NFL are complicit in the problem.

Granted, Gators coach (and good Bill Belichick buddy) Urban Meyer did the right thing this past week by removing Rickerson from the squad. The normally squeaky clean Meyer immediately

bounced Rickerson, saying, "That is not what our team is about."

The question is, how long it will take for some other college to pick up a guy who had been a good player for an SEC powerhouse. The one constant in college domestic-violence cases is the second chance — if the guy can play well enough. If and when he reaches the NFL, the same guy could then get a third and fourth and fifth chance.

Watch any NFL game this week and see if you can count the number of players on both teams who've skated on a domestic-violence incident at least once. Larry Johnson of the Chiefs is actually going to be back in uniform this week after his fourth domestic-violence incident. A one-game suspension for your fourth domestic-violence case? After you got caught going all Pacman on your ex, spitting in her face in a bar?

The curious thing is that Dolphins linebacker Joey Porter recently chose to make an issue of the league's inconsistent discipline policy by wondering aloud why first-time drug offender Matt Jones is still playing after catching a coke charge. But Porter's comments were actually off-base. If anything, the NFL and the NCAA go after drug abusers harder than they do batterers. Multiple offenders on the domestic-violence score — guys like Michael Pittman — can stay in the league for years. And too many teams draft

guys with domestic-violence histories and then give them second chances once they misbehave in the NFL; the Bills' Marshawn Lynch, last seen getting stifled by the Patriots defense this past Sunday in Foxboro, is a great example.

Anyway, we'll keep an eye out to see if Rickerson resurfaces. Until then, 70 points for this vile business.

## DUI complete me



Leigh Steinberg, the onetime super-agent who was the model for Cameron Crowe's Jerry Maguire, has been arrested for a third alcohol-related offense.

In a weird incident, Steinberg, 59, was busted by police in Newport Beach, California, after reports came in of a man "screaming and attempting to climb a hill" behind a car-repair shop.

Cops caught up to Steinberg and found him slurring his words and smelling strongly of the stuff. He was nabbed this past year for a DUI after he hit three cars and knocked over a fire hydrant with his Mercedes. In 1997 he was arrested for hitting a car and injuring the driver while drunk.

Steinberg, you might remember, was Drew Bledsoe's agent. They both mattered around here about 10 years ago. Give him 25 points, plus another 10 for one of Tom Cruise's more obnoxious roles.

## Not really a football story

Okay, so this doesn't really have anything to do with sports, but it does sort of relate to football (the soccer variety), so it seemed worth a mention. This past week the United States did what it very seldom does — prosecute a US citizen for bad behavior abroad. The defendant was Charles Taylor Emmanuel, son of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, prosecuted in Miami for crimes committed in Africa.

You have to do something very serious to be considered a violent psychopath in Liberia, and Emmanuel — a Boston native, by the way — qualified. Nicknamed "Chuckie" and the commander of something called the "Demon Forces," Emmanuel was convicted of, among other things, forcing prisoners to play something called "stone football." Basically, he would make people play soccer barefoot, using huge rocks as a ball, until their feet bled out or broke.

Emmanuel became the first US citizen to be convicted under a law that prohibits Americans from committing torture overseas. Although born in Boston, he grew up mostly in the Orlando area, about nine miles from the Universal Studios theme park. He fled to Africa in 1997 and would later be accused of such things as burying people alive and forcing prisoners to hold boiling water in their hands. Incidentally, after an early arrest in Florida in 1994 for robbery, a psychiatric evaluation revealed that he had "anger-management problems." Shocker.

## So maybe that's why



There have been a lot of mysteries surrounding the Patriots in the Bill Belichick years, not surprising given the intense effort the team (read: Belichick himself) puts into maintaining airtight clubhouse and organizational secrecy in general. A Pats player might see his patella sheared off during a game, fly across the field, and hit a cheerleader in the mouth, and on the injury report two days later all you find out is that he's doubtful for the next game, because of "leg." Unlike other teams, where wide receivers do their complaining openly, in front of reporters, about not getting enough touches, on the Patriots all the idiotic in-house stuff happens in a way that passes mostly undetected.

Thus, we never really knew what Hakim Akbar did to piss off Belichick, never found out what Kyle Brady did (if he did anything at all), never learned the full story on guys like Steve Martin, Jonathan Sullivan, Fernando Bryant, Leonard Myers, and others who went the revolving-door route on the roster. Only occasionally, like when Pepper Johnson decides to write a book, or when some news report trickles out long after the fact, do we get some hint as to why this or that player didn't cut it in Pats-land.

Example: Jeff Burris. Anyone remember Jeff Burris? He was once a starting cornerback for the Colts, back in the days when "starting cornerback for the Colts" was a synonym for words like "consistently

ineffective" and "posterized" and "total pussy." This was a while ago, back in the pre-Marlin Jackson, pre-Kelvin Hayden days. Burris left the Colts in 2001, played for the Bengals for a while, and then — this was after the Pats' most recent Super Bowl win — Belichick managed to get Burris to sign a one-year deal for less than a million bucks. It was considered something of a coup around here. We thought we had another bargain-basement pickup on our hands.

Then a funny thing happened: Burris didn't show up for training camp, and was quietly released. Nobody knew what happened.

Well, last week we got a little peek into the private life of Burris. He was busted for a very odd DUI in Carmel, Indiana — caught driving not only drunk but backward. . . not to mention west in an eastbound lane. This is a bad-driving trifecta perhaps never observed before, even among pro athletes: driving drunk, backward, and in the wrong direction. At the same time.

Why did he do it? Here, it might be useful to quote Belichick, when asked why Burris didn't report to training camp that time: "He made a personal decision." He sure did. Gotta give some extra points for this one — the usual 25 for a DUI, plus 10 more for the unusual circumstances.

## Long John dumped?



Following up on this past week's John Daly story: as most of you know, the golfer was found passed out at a Hooters in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on October 26. He wasn't arrested, but instead was taken to a local police station to sleep it off.

The incident creates an interesting business dilemma, as Hooters has been a sponsor for Long John since 2005. Do they dump him, or do they keep him on, reasoning that most young Southern men who read about Daly getting drunk and passing out in a flower bed will think, "If I was a fat pro golfer, that's what I'd do in my spare time too!"? Daly publicly apologized to the wing-and-tit chain, but at press time, the company had not yet commented on the situation.

## Sports Blotter Legend



Exotic  
Dancer/Hooker



X-treme  
DUI



Women's  
undergarments



Open container  
of alcohol



Cloying/  
Agent-drafted  
public apology



"Disagreement"  
in parking lot



Marijuana  
Supernaturally  
large quantity  
of marijuana



Rape/Sexual  
assault



Unregistered  
handgun



Those drugs  
belong to my  
brother/cousin/  
some guy



Frantic spousal  
911 call



Stats cheerily  
recited after  
AP report



Big-ass SUV



Incident involving  
"baby momma"



Burglary/theft



No contest plea



## Punisher: War Zone



***"I like to shoot people, but only if they're engaged in petty crime."***

*"Sometimes I'd like to get my hands on God!"* -The Punisher

And the best part is it wouldn't make the slightest bit of difference if that line was delivered as a joke or seriously. I still laugh with total abdominal discomfort for a good 8 minutes every time I hear that line in the trailer for *Punisher: War Zone*. That was awesome! That was so awesome! *Sometimes I'd like to get my hands on*

*God*. Oh, that's so rich! Shit on a shingle, man! I haven't pissed my pants that much since Papa Jon put me in that camel clutch back in '87! Oh, I'm dying here! That is the funniest thing I've had crap in my lap since I saw those two filthy Jewish kids fighting over a penny in a K-Mart parking lot. And these kids were actually filthy. I'm talking fucked by a mud pie and teabagged by Pigpen filthy. And it was a fucking penny! And their dad didn't break it up! None of this "have some respect for yourselves" nonsense! Is it really worth getting your head slammed in a car door and both shoulders dislocated over a penny? I know I could've broken it up, but they were in such berserker money frenzies that I wasn't going near it. Oh, the awesomeness I've seen.

So what's this movie again? *Punisher: War Zone*? For those keeping score, this is the 3rd time the Punisher character has made it to the screen. The first time had Dolph Lundgren smearing his face in molasses to achieve a five o'clock shadow before riding a motorcycle through the sewers straight to the "so bad its good" shelf at the local video store. Then 15 years later, they try some bad spaghetti western-inspired malarkey with John Travolta as the bad guy. And this wouldn't have been that horrible, if it wasn't for the Friends (I'm pretty sure that David Schwimmer had a cameo too) bullshit

going on with the neighbors and the homoerotic fight with the Russian albino sailor scored as an operatic.

Now we've got something that looks like they just might be getting it right with *Punisher: War Zone*. The other Punisher movies were just low-rent action flicks that happened to star people you may actually have heard of. The previous Punisher attempts were merely action movies that just happened to be about a comic book character--a psychotic armed bull in the china shop version of Batman, with lots and lots of guns. This newest incantation of The Punisher looks like it's going to give you the horns instead of the ass by making a comic book movie that happens to be full of action. Lots and lots of action. Chock full of CGI, ridiculous dialogue ("Sometimes I'd like to get my hands on God"--seriously, knock it off or I'm going to dehydrate from this excessive pants-pissing!), a serious suspension of disbelief requirement and an actual villain, in the form of Jigsaw. Granted, he looks like a guy who decided to wear a poorly-constructed mask made of luncheon meats, but the whole thing is so damn over the top and ridiculous that this movie just might work.

Now I'm not saying I'm going to actually spend anything more than 2 hours to see if this jagged belief of mine holds any water. And I don't think I'm going to kick myself for not finding out sooner, presuming I ever do. But I hope I don't want to... shit, here it comes... get my... thank Gahd I wore the black jeans today... hands on Gahd... oh that's so warm... if I ever do see *Punisher: War Zone*. Ooh, asparagus...

## The Day the Earth Stood Still



I can only theorize as to why things like a remake of the 1951 sci-fi classic *The Day the Earth Stood Still* would happen. I can give explanations as to why a person or persons would feel the need to take a damn fine piece of vintage filmmaking and reshape it into some crap that a deluded studio executive would describe as "not remade but reimagined." Pligga nease! What in the hell could possibly justify a remake (sorry, reimagining) of



**"Nanu nanu motherfuckers!"**

one of the best, if not perfect, classic sci-fi movies? Why? Is it because *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was a cautionary tale that pulled its message straight from the bowels of the Cold War and warned of the dangers of nuclear warfare? Are the then-revolutionary special effects so horribly dated by today's standards that you've got to erase its memory by covering it in computer-generated cheese sauce? Didn't Michael Rennie in the role of Klaatu act otherworldly enough for you? Okay, Patricia Neal was a bit homely in that one. Black and white were never too kind to her, were they?

Oh wait! I've got it! I figured it out! We've got another, more modern, cautionary tale to tell, no inspiration or talent to tell it, and there's enough respect for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* to draw a crowd. So let's yank that Cold War you're going to blow each other up if you don't stop your primitive ways Earthlings message and plug in another one. But what will you preach about? The economy? Nah. We don't have to worry about a moose-hunting psychopath who can't name a newspaper, has a penchant for putty knife make-up application and a hatred for pronouncing the letter G in polite conversation, so that's out. Duh! The environment! If the Earth dies, you die. If you die, the Earth survives. Oooh!

So a doughy Keanu Reeves is Klaatu, now an apparently autistic alien who comes to warn Earth that their violent actions have computer-generated consequences. Jennifer Connelly plays what I'm guessing is some kind of scientist who desperately needs donuts to fill out her eye sockets. Oh and Will Smith's kid is playing what I'm sure is the movie's moral compass with his childish naiveté. Five bucks says Moby covers "The Greatest Love of All." Listen for it. The more-circulated trailer paints more of a trendy green storyline, but the international trailer shows straight-up Armageddon more along the lines of *Independence Day*. Gort (Klaatu's bodyguard/companion) is now a hundred foot-tall harbinger of

doom, and mysterious orbs all over the planet threaten to turn sporting arenas and 18-wheelers into ashes! And that latter trailer turned a maybe someday into an opening weekend odyssey. It'll be a completely drunken odyssey but what the hell, I'll bite...

## Seven pounds



**"I hear ya. Parents really just don't understand."**

If you watch the trailer for the new Will Smith movie *Seven Pounds*, you will see a textbook example of what I like to refer to as a truly shitty trailer. Well not so much truly shitty so much as truly upsetting, and not because the content is disturbing, but because I have no idea

what's happening. What's going on? What's it all about? I'm getting confused and I'm getting scared. I'm beginning to feel like I'm 50 years older, out of Werthers Originals and the TV won't turn on for me to watch my stories. I don't like feeling this way! Make it stop! For Chrissake, how do you make it stop? If you don't stop it I'm going to give you a birth defect! Who stole my cat? Where's Wilfred? Where's the phone book? I'm going to call the cops. I need to check my sugar. Where's my cat? Tell me or I'll box your ears, you little so and so! What's the matter with you anyway? Are you going to answer me? Why won't they help me at the bank? My one grandson was on TV once! My oldest's son. I was Jack Webb's lover! You can't treat me this way! **MAKE THIS STOP!!!**

Well, that passed. Based on how morose Smith looks in the trailer for *Seven Pounds*, I'm guessing he got dumped or ran over his neighbor's cat. Or maybe he's going for an Oscar. I haven't figured out which and I'm pretty sure Smith hasn't either. He's got some plan that the trailer doesn't really go into, aside from him giving his house away if someone never calls him, so if the rat bastard who stitched this trailer together can't be bothered to give me even a vague idea what this swirling turd is about or why I should care, I'm not going to look for a reason to see it. Bitch.

## KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Betrayed by Those Who Trained Him



Impossible Science



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Vampires/Wizards as Gay/AIDS Metaphor



Gratuitous Christ Imagery



Mind Fuck



Likable Thug



Stockholm Syndrome Romance



Special Effects Circle Jerk



Rampant Xenophobia



Sex Pot Battles Demons, Robots, Some Crap



Glorification of Law Enforcement Bodies



Ordinary Person Pushed Too Far



Simplistic Epiphany



Embattled Loser Overcomes Obstacles



Crappy Remake



Washed Up Hero Gets 2nd Chance at Glory



## Gran Torino



**"Whose head do I have to blow off to get a fresh light bulb in here?"**

Lately, the works of Clint Eastwood haven't amounted to much (for me, at least) more than the cinematic equivalent Tom Clancy novels, cataract shades, Crown Victorias or episodes of JAG. They're generally well done, but unless you have some Metamucil to shoot them through you're going to have a hard time getting them down. Or maybe you just don't care about them. For example, I haven't seen *Million Dollar Baby* yet. I'm told it's good and have heard nothing but good things about it, but I haven't seen it yet. You know why? Because I just don't care.

But the funny thing about Clint Eastwood is he has the ability to make you care. He hasn't played a badass lately, and now suddenly he's playing a cantankerous old racist codger who just happens to be a military veteran with one of the sweetest cars ever. Hence the film's title, *Gran Torino*. His asshole kids are trying to stick him in a retirement home on his birthday, and to make things worse the goddamn Chinese moved in next door. And we're on our way to becoming an episode of All in the Family with triple the racial tension and none of the humor.

Then some goddamn gang starts busting up the neighborhood on Clint's front lawn. Then he gets out the goddamn rifle. By the way, in the trailer for *Gran Torino*, Clint Eastwood just looks like he's going to throw the word(s) "goddamn" in front of every goddamn noun he can. So he scares off the gang and the neighborhood starts worshipping him like he's Tom Goddamn Maccio. They give him beer and he even winds up knowing their names!

I'm not looking for some kind of fable about a racist prick getting a case of

yellow fever and realizing all his ignorant wrongs throughout his life. I agree with the message, but that shit's nowhere, son. I want to see Clint's raggedy hide get all Old Dirty Harry on somebody's ass. I want to hear him grumble about how the Chinese live in filth, pick mushrooms in the park and then make a condescending comment about laundry and the apparent lack of seagulls in the vicinity of the closest Chinese restaurant. You know, racist old people talk.

## The Spirit



**"Check me out, I'm retro!"**

Okay, super quick. Seeing the first trailer for comics legend Frank Miller's sole directorial debut (he co-directed *Sin City* a few years back), *The Spirit*, was kind of cool. It was kind of a hint that another *Sin City* isn't happening, but whatever. That initial trailer looked exactly like *Sin City* and I was perfectly fine with that. Opens Christmas Day. Yesss!

Then I see a third trailer that looks like a tampon once used by Lauren Bacall. It sprouted legs and became a total menace. The photography with the actual actors looks like bad Lifetime Channel black and white dream sequences. Samuel L. Jackson is playing a character called The Octopus, because he apparently has eight of everything. And to top it off, the otherwise forgettable cast is rounded out by poop face Eva Mendez. There goes my Christmas.

In about two minutes, *The Spirit* went from a must see to a will see eventually. The guy actually playing Denny Colt looks like he uses the word "manure." Who knows what this son of a bitch sees in the middle of the night when all is quiet. But I think the reason that I will one day see

*The Spirit* is because it's got the line "I'm gonna kill you all kinds of dead" in it. You just can't say no to that.

## Valkyrie



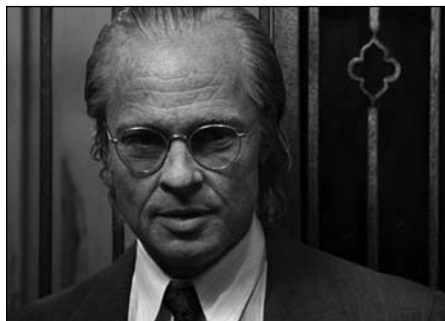
**"Eyepatches are very dramatic."**

If there's one thing that puts pudding in my socks, it's the idea of Tom Cruise playing a Nazi. Not sure why, but it fills me with glee. Maybe its this publication's past relationship with the man, but I can't rule out that Cruise is playing a "sympathetic" Nazi. Either way, it sounds like a short trip to me. The movie is *Valkyrie* and in it, Tom plays Nazi Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, the architect of a Nazi plan to kill Hitler and end WWII. As usual, Tom is pretty intense, but this time he's got an eyepatch for added intensity. Intense, right?

So I'm going to be a dick and ruin it for you. You never hear about how Hitler was blown up by a bomb or died in his sleep when his Winnebago went off the road and rolled over in the middle of the night. Another never heard tale about Hitler involves his fetish for fresh warm cat shit, the barely ambulatory, and autoerotic asphyxiation. And I guarantee you've never heard that if Hitler did enough coke, he'd actually do the deed with a transvestite he (often) mistook for Leni Riefenstahl, or that it was by this person's hand he was ultimately assassinated. The transsassin's name was Lenny, if that counts for anything. (His real name was J. Edgar Hoover. Lenny was an alias. Don't tell anyone.)


Unless the big assassination plot was to end with Hitler's body being doused with gasoline and burned in a bomb crater next to Eva Braun's, I'm going to guess they fucked up. Kind of how I'm expecting this movie to fuck up.

## The Curious Case of Benjamin Buttons



**"Am I ugly enough for an Oscar now?"**

Come with me now, won't you? I'd like to take you down a strange path where you will hear about the trailer of the tale of Benjamin Button, a man who was born well into his 80s and ages backward. Before you start bellowing about how this sounds a lot like Jonathan Winters' shark jump character from Mork and Mindy, I'm going to tell you to shut up because there's a whole other problem here. Brad Pitt plays Button and David Fincher is directing *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, and the last time these two got together it was for *Fight Club*. Now I doubt we're going to get to watch Jared Leto get beaten within an inch of his life, and I'm guessing the audience won't see single frames of pornography spliced into the movie, but *Benjamin Button* doesn't look bad. With that said, here's the problem:

Brad Pitt starts off (through great effects by the way) as a trollish little old man/infant not that unlike Yoda. With great cinematography, we watch Button's life move physically backwards but emotionally forwards. And that's cool, but here's my problem. We're watching a movie where Brad Pitt gets perpetually younger and better looking. What? Like I need a reminder of how irrepressibly attractive Brad Pitt is? With his chiseled features and incredibly blue eyes? Like I could forget that? As if any random magazine is going to let me misplace that notion. Other than being mocked in the most subtle and passive-aggressive of ways, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* looks pretty good. But you can see a mile off that ending's going to be a bitch. 



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## SOCIAL STICKLER

I read the whole thing [Allan Uthman, "Let's Get Social," issue 132], but the essay began with 'true facts' which reminds me of most of the knee-jerk right-wing arguments. "Bush is the 6th best President we ever had. Sorry, but those are the facts!" I would feel more comfortable reading it if there were some damned facts or statistics to back up the assertions of the 'best countries'. For example throw in some mortality rates, incarceration rates and self-reported happiness measurements.

On the other hand, I hadn't picked up on the idea that they have to move away from the liberal label as it must not be working. Good catch. I doubt that we will ever get to the point where labels are replaced by whole arguments, but maybe that's a start.  
jperry

*Dear jperry,*  
*Do we really have to drag out the same damn statistics? It's obvious from your letter that you already know European social democracies seriously outclass us in the numbers you mention and many others. It's true we don't always cite sources for our facts, but they are actually facts, and that's the difference between us and the knee-jerkers. But that is a surprising stat about Bush, never would have guessed.*

## IGOR'S LAMENT

A small distinction

"I find the Republicans to be evil, and I find the Democrats to be idiots."

Alas, though no one wants to say it, I think that the American electorate, myself included, is also culpable. In theory, the government serves us, not vice versa. At some point we either have to take the power back or settle for unconditional surrender. There is no middle ground when dealing with evil and idiots.

I love conservatives, but hate Republicans. - Abraham Lincoln, October 2008  
tailgunnerjim

*Dear Jim,*



*Um, what do you mean, "no one wants to say it"? We want to say it. We've been saying it for years. But clearly, there is middle ground, and that's called bitching on the internet.*

## BLASPHEMY

W.V. Grant Jr. [Ian Murphy, "The Wrath of Con," issue 128]-- This supposed faith healer is in our town now! I went the first night and was amazed but very skeptical.

I read your article and went back down to the church to investigate further.

He is a fraud for sure! Very entertaining... like a magic show.

I am just disappointed...because the rest of the congregation love him and think he is healing them! This is a small town, full of hard working people and he is taking their money!

*Dear Whoever,*  
*Maybe you should tell them. Then again, maybe you should recognize that you've been enjoying a much less entertaining (but just as fraudulent) magic show every Sunday. You should talk to Grant—you could probably get a few bucks as a skill.*

## THINKY SLEEPY

NEWS TIP - Scientist discovers natural phenomenon that answers any question you have

Physicist, Gabriel Agbasi, discovered a natural occurring phenomenon.

The ability of having every question you have answered overnight.

Using the simplicity of a child's game of "making a wish".

Gabriel attached the idea of "making a wish" with the ideas of "asking for Truth" in a question and sleep.

And voila! A dream is shot right at the person, the same night, answering their question.

By saying the simple phrase out loud:  
"I WISH TO KNOW THE TRUTH +  
(ATTACH ANY QUESTION HERE)?"

Then going to sleep - the person asking the question gets the answer in a dream that same night.

Gabriel Agbasi calls this unique natural phenomenon: "Sleep Programming".  
Gabriel Agbasi

*Dear Gabriel,*  
*Congratulations! You have discovered a phenomena heretofore only reported in the "Great Brain" series of children's books. Tonight, try saying, "I WISH TO KNOW THE TRUTH: Why do I refer to myself in the third person, like a classic douchbag?"*

## WEIRD AL HAS LOST IT

Ever since the campaigns started  
My TV's no longer my old friend  
The Beast speaks words of wisdom:  
Let It End

And when the bullshit stories  
Are the same on Fox as CNN  
The Beast speaks words of wisdom:  
Let It End

Let it end, let it end  
Let it end, God Let It End  
Before I claw my eyes out  
Let It End..

(Sorry, couldn't resist)

D. Armenta

## DON'T GET UP

Wait, I just thought of another verse:

And when the brokenhearted people  
Realize it's all pretend  
The Beast has got the answer:  
Let It End

It smells like someone farted--  
No, that's Shephard Smith on "Voter Trends"  
The Beast speaks words of wisdom:  
Let It End.

Sorry for being so silly, writers; I just got the Nov. issue and it's the first time I've laughed since October 28th.

I'm a little giddy now; thank you all, especially Allan Uthman, Alison Kilkenny, Ian Murphy, Steve Gordon and Joe Bageant.

Can I still renew my subscription?  
D. Armenta

## OK NOW WE'RE ANNOYED

Sorry, but if I don't send you guys the last verse it will drive me bonkers, and misery loves company:

"And when my mind is cloudy  
and I'm trying to clear my head again,  
I close my eyes and whisper:  
Let It End

I wake up to the sound of bullshit,  
Hillary's on Fox and Friends,  
Screeching about "tomorrow"  
Let It End!!

\*\*\*Okay, I'm letting it end now. Thanks for your patience.

Regards,

D. Armenta

Dear D.,  
You have no idea.

## AN IDEA

I think people should get married and never file legal papers (if they're into marriage that is) as a protest of the sad and embarrassing laws that have passed in California and elsewhere. The text of the California bill actually says that "Only marriage between a man and a woman will be valid or recognized in California" If heathen marriages everywhere (straight and gay) were suddenly religious events only, it might point out to the egocentric religious folk that they shouldn't be meddling with the government.

Patrick Harold  
Dear Patrick,  
*Nah, it really wouldn't. Nothing would.*

## GROSS ETHICS

Please reread "crock the vote" [issue 132]. As a conversation between two friends, it was interesting, but as an informative interview, it failed to reference or explain anything to me. It assumed I already knew and agreed with the charges, and then just went off on a long string of liberal ire. Sure, I go off on long strings of liberal ire all the time, but I am not a journalist. Next time, read it over before printing and ask: is this the kind of thing a 9-11 truth nut would send to his conservative office workers? Because while voter fraud is a real issue, this article would not have passed that test and it has absolutely no credibility attached. Also, please; when you write things that are unbelievable, you must CITE them, or else I will be frustrated, because as much as I want to, I won't allow myself to believe them.  
andrew gross

Dear Andrew,  
*Dude, seriously. Everything we referenced in the interview is available, with links to mainstream sources, at the blog named after the guy we interviewed, Brad Friedman, which we mentioned at the beginning of the interview. Did you really want a hundred or so bracketed notes that all read the same thing, "see bradblog.com, like we already said, and is pretty much the whole point of this interview"? At some point, you have to let go of our hand and ride the bike yourself, Andrew. And we've got news for you: Your conservative friends are less likely to believe a detailed Washington Post article than an unsolicited e-mail that tells them Obama is the Antichrist, so they're not much of a standard of credibility.*

## JOE THE ASSHOLE

"Who the hell has \$250k in the bank"? Are you kidding?.. Guess what? Reasonable hard working people do. I would say, umm, real people do.

I'm 24, I moved from Russia to Canada less than a year ago. I was brought up in lower middle class single-mother family

with younger sister... The only noticeable thing we got out of socialist system is free 2-room (1-bedroom by US standards) condo for 3 people and my appendix removal operation. I flunked most of the education (except math), mostly to get a piece of paper called diploma, because Russian socialist programming education, all except math, is utter piece of crap. I guess mine/family's taxes (over-)paid for most of the above.

Still, somehow I have \$22k in the bank in Russia and about \$20k in Canada by now; I didn't do anything regular except job (and freelancing back in Russia) - and I don't save pennies, for example yesterday I got a limited edition of a \$50 game on ebay for \$300 just because I want it. Somehow my mostly-reasonable spending and lack of mindless consumerism allows by saving...

Guess what? If I ever get \$250k at that rate, I'd bloody care that it stays there. Moreover, if I ever get into those N ppl that have more money than many-times-N people, I wouldn't give a damn about these more-than-N people and sure as hell I wouldn't sacrifice my wave pool for their health insurance. Help for seriously disabled - sure, what percentage of population are them? Education grants for persistent and/or gifted children - sure, how many are out there? But I don't understand why socialists want people who do work to pay in bulk for "educating", healing, and sometimes even accommodating and feeding, morons and losers?

Am I an exception? From my experience, even in Russia, I had an impression that most people who do business or work a good job and make themselves are not what your site describes them as, and it's not the case - most of better-off people, inheritance aside, do deserve to be better off than most others. Even people who just work a honest job like my mother (electrical engineer/accountant) somehow managed to get by semi decently with two children in an economic hell-hole that Russia in the 90ies was.

It is a pity that most of the American upper/middle class has been brainwashed into wishful thinking about human nature/equality of all humans regardless of merit and helping others as a working economic prototype, and



thus “voting against their economic self-interest”, but I wonder what drives you as pundits?

I subscribed to your site after “Let there be retards” articles, that was just fabulous, but with every article I read now I see that basically, you are against me, as a class. Whether I would have been an electrical engineer or software developer, productive and minding my own business what you want to do is basically take part of my earned money, divide them into two parts - one spent on bureaucracy, pork spending/waste/corruption (underline based on country), and such, and another given to people who can, but wouldn’t, get themselves out of the deep they got themselves into in the first place.

And no, I don’t believe that differences will be small and that “it’s not really about taxes” - look at Europe, where Obamas of the day has long prevailed. There are countless cases, but the best illustration is probably the semi-secret document leaked by whatever British crazy-right-wing party that managed to get a seat with access to it, about asylum seekers. I read excerpts, and it made my hair stand up on my head. Mandatory TV with subscription? Regulated blinds, lighting, furniture, allowance? For a person who is never actually going to produce anything except more children living on welfare? Nice, sure, have my money! Knowing someone from Bangladesh is going to get a free ride with plasma TV and whatnot is what makes me get up in the morning and go to work, elementary biology/ethology be damned. We are all wonder-people of new, socialist/communist edge.

Do you really believe all people are “good at heart”? Or do you just want equal sharing of miseries, regardless of merit? What drives you to attack the productive and promote the losers?  
Sergey Shelukhin

*Dear Sergei,*  
1.5% of U.S. households have incomes of \$250,000 or more. That’s households, not individuals. So by your definition, less than one in a hundred people is “real.”

*You don’t flunk because the education system is shitty. You flunk because it’s*

*hard. Judging by your assessment, we’d guess there’s a serious deficiency in the math department.*

*So you have forty thousand in the bank. If you ever make 250k a year at that rate... oh, wait. You will never make 250k a year at that rate. You are exactly the kind of dipshit that the “Joe the Plumber” PR campaign was designed for: A poor loser who thinks he’s going to be rich, and hates the idea of non-whites benefiting from his work. You should have moved to Somalia.*

*No, we do not believe people are good at heart; we believe most of them are spiteful, shit-hearted scroungers like you. If they weren’t, they wouldn’t need to be compelled to help the needy, they would just help them directly.*

## KNEEL BEFORE GLOD

writing too let u know i have a big idea. this idea is soo big we can make bags of money.in to bags of glod

dont know if u gonna write back.but love your book..  
danny from bronx

*Dear Danny,*  
*Bags of glod? Man, we could really use some glod! And all we need to get the glod is bags of money? Your big idea must be airtight and well-planned, seeing as you can almost read and write! And now we’re done.*

## DATELESS

It would as a practical matter be helpful to me and, I think, to others, and might also strengthen your own credibility, if you would include the date of publication on the same page with the article -- I find none on this one. Thank you.

*Dear Eyepatch,*  
*Well, it’s not surprising you couldn’t find it, what with us hiding up in the upper right corner of the page and all. Toodles!*

## PWND!

Dear Beast,

You have a typo on your front page: “A FRIENDLY WARNING \*FORM\* THE

AMERICAN DOLLAR.”

Get an editor who knows what the h--- they are doing.

Respectfully,

Tim Hadley  
Springfield, Missouri

*Dear Tim,*  
*Thats spelled “hell.” Please make a note of it. And the guy who typed it is a web designer. And the fact that he’s also our editor is irrelevant. Or is it irrelevant?*

## PUBLIC SERVANTS

New Idea

On a different (non-election) subject: Billions are being wasted to keep millions of jail inmates in dangerous retirement. I propose that they be put to work, in prison, at the productive, meaningful tasks that will benefit society. Producing useful products or providing services of general use. Use American ingenuity to turn lemons into lemonade.


Charles Dunaief

*Dear Charles,*  
*We’re sure you mean well, but you’re talking about forced labor. We’re sure that it wouldn’t lead to a pattern of wrongful convictions in order to increase the prison-slave workforce, but... actually, yes it would. This is already happening, by the way.*

## GREAT WHITE? NOPE

hey gang, I just want all you faggots to know that my cousin Joe is the greatest guy in the world and you should vote is greasy ass into office! I mean, he was a boxer for Christ sake! He narrowly defeated residents of several fine Erie County nursing homes before finally getting his bell rung by a sneaky bastard who is just shy of being old enough to collect social security! Just remember a vote for Joe Mesi is a vote for doing coke and punching bar patrons in the face!

Jim Mesi

*Dear Jim,*  
*Well, now we’re sad he lost. A slogan like that would go a long way with us.* 

# BEAST-O-SCOPES

**This issue:**

## INSANOSCOPES!

**Your horoscope in the form of the stupidest election-related lines we've read all month!**

### Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

"I like Sarah Palin... I can see how smart she is... There is a powerful clarity of consciousness in her eyes. She uses language with the jumps, breaks and rippling momentum of a be-bop saxophonist." -Camille Paglia

### Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

"Big Brother had nothing on the Obamas. They plan to herd American youth into government-funded reeducation camps where they'll be brainwashed into thinking America is a racist, oppressive place in need of 'social change.'" -*Investor's Business Daily* editorial

### Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

"The people who believe Obama is the Antichrist are perhaps jumping to conclusions, but they're not nuts..." -Lisa Miller, *Newsweek*

### Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

"The feminists have continued their campaign against marriage through Joe Biden's favorite legislation, the Violence Against Women Act, which provides a billion dollars a year to feminist centers



**BY ANDREW GULLERSTEIN**

to promote divorce and oppose reconciliation." -Phyllis Schlafly

### Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

"What is the answer, then, for conservative Evangelicals who are rightly concerned about...the living arrangements of same- and opposite-sex couples?" -Cal Thomas

### Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

"Palin offered something different... Many consider her a refreshing citizen-politician in the old mold, one that Thomas Jefferson would be proud to meet." -Kathryn Jean Lopez, *National Review*

### Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

"Obama wants to gas the Jews, like the PLO wants to gas the Jews, like the Na-

zis gassed the Jews." -Bill Cunningham

### Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

"The Obama recession is in full swing... This is an Obama recession. Might turn into a depression. It's—he hadn't done anything yet, but his ideas are killing the economy." -Rush Limbaugh

### Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

"First woman Vice Presidential candidate [Sarah Palin]." -*Time*

### Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

"No matter what law they pass, do not --repeat, not--ever register any of your firearms." -G. Gordon Liddy

### Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

"There is a gay and secular fascism in this country that wants to impose its will on the rest of us, is prepared to use violence, to use harassment. I think it is prepared to use the government if it can get control of it. I think that it is a very dangerous threat to anybody who believes in traditional religion." -Newt Gingrich

### Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

"...the vast majority [sic] of white Americans didn't give a fluff about skin color and enthusiastically pulled the voting lever for a black man... All those 'black studies' programs must now teach kids to thank Whitey. And I want that on the final." -Tom Adkins, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

## RAW PORK

pus-moistened loincloth

from the unsolicited manuscript of  
**Sex Cretin**



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