

THE BEAST

*“You’re Fired
- for unethical
reasons!”*



THE ACCOMPLICE



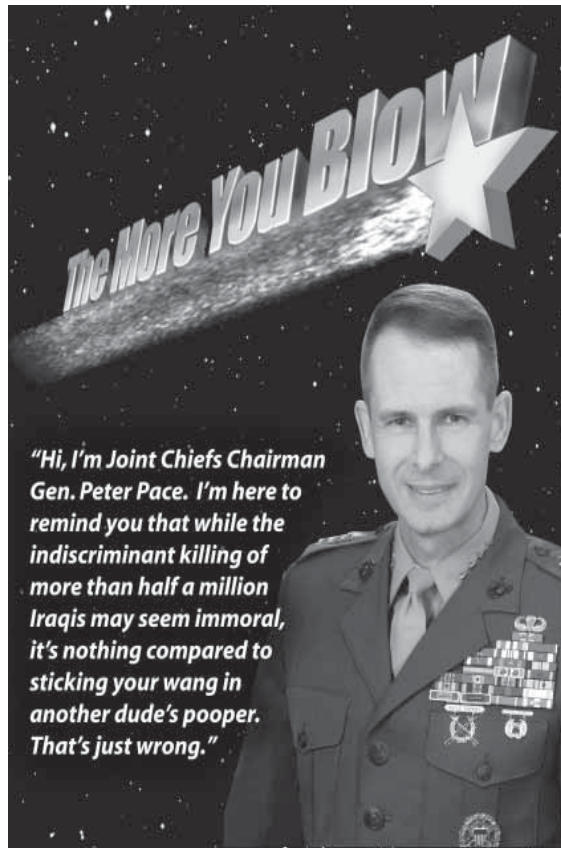
*Only
the most
loyal
Bushies
survive!*



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



You there! This is a message to our new readers across the country, & even you foreigners! The BEAST was a free tabloid in Buffalo, NY, until we noticed something: we were broke! So now we're a \$2 monthly, spreading into other cities where hopefully the people aren't so cheap! If you're not a lily-livered pantywaist, and hate the usual BS you read in other publications—and that Spiderman jerk—you should enjoy our unique blend of satire and unflinching commentary. Now get out of my office!



"Hi, I'm Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Peter Pace. I'm here to remind you that while the indiscriminant killing of more than half a million Iraqis may seem immoral, it's nothing compared to sticking your wang in another dude's pooper. That's just wrong."



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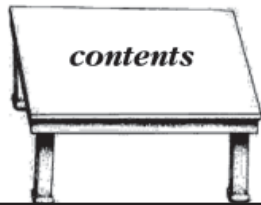
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CENSORED CHOCOLATE JESUS



Name: My Sweet Lord

Turn-ons: Tom Waits, transubstantiation, milk, art that bridges traditional themes with unorthodox media, refrigerated rooms.

Turn-offs: Bill Donohue, Rudy Guiliani, nosy anti-intellectual busybodies, all the Anna Nicole Smith coverage, carob.

How I got to be The BEAST PAGE 3 CENSORED CHOCOLATE JESUS: Let's face it people, Bill Donohue can make up all the BS he wants about how I was to be fed to the masses (not true), or that children would be permanently scarred by viewing my delicious genitals, but I think we all know that I wouldn't have bothered him nearly as much if I was a *white* chocolate Jesus. Seriously, do you think the Catholic league would really mind a white chocolate Jesus? They probably would have thought I was beautiful, the bastards. Instead, I'm "dirty." Why? Because dirt is brown? Sorry to burst your bubble, Bill, but so was Jesus.

Future Plans: I'm probably going to melt. Not looking forward to it. Here's hoping there's a special room being prepared for me in a San Francisco gallery. Also, I'm lobbying for a slot in an upcoming PBS series, "101 Fine Art Oops!" It's all politics, you know.

How I'd like to be remembered: As a simultaneous reminder of the inherent silliness of the worlds of art and religion. Also as a tasty, serotonin-enhancing alternative to those awful communion wafers.



President Rubber vs. Speaker Glue

Pelosi's scarf and GOP barf

By Allan Uthman

If you watched the news last week, then you know that Nancy Pelosi is a traitorous felon, working with her fellow Islamic fundamentalists to undermine our nation. Seriously, this is the editorial opinion of such "respected" publications as the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. She wears a goddamn headscarf in a show of the kind of respectful diplomacy so sorely lacking these days and so-called journalists are literally calling for her to be jailed.

It's becoming rather common these days for conservatives to call for their opponents' prosecution. It's not an encouraging sign, to say the least, for the future of democratic debate in America. But what's so frustrating here is the sheer volume of willful intellectual dishonesty. To each of these conservative opinion-makers, seemingly from the most exalted columnist down to the very last blogger, it just doesn't matter that for each of Pelosi's supposed crimes, there are numerous instances of Republicans doing precisely the same thing, only more so. What matters is that they like Republicans, and they don't like Pelosi. They are rubber, and Democrats are glue.

That's the level of discourse today. There is no intelligent debate anymore. Republicans and the cowed, compliant press have reneged on the most fundamental elements of rational discussion: listening to your opponents' arguments, taking them into account, assessing the facts, and responding reasonably. We all need to acknowledge reality. Reality is important. No intelligent

thought, let alone policy, can come from its denial. But the alarmingly successful GOP strategy for years now has been to deny it with great vigor. It pervades their every move and statement. Just ask Dick Cheney, who just this week once again trotted out the spurious al Qaeda-Saddam connection, as if the entire country hadn't moved past it years ago. Or ask damn near every Republican in Washington, who still insist that Alberto Gonzales and others involved in the clearly political Justice Department firings scandal have "done nothing wrong," despite clear and indisputable evidence to the contrary.

It's amazing how these guys turn everything into ersatz Orwell. When they're not naming new organizations in comically disingenuous ways, they're turning old institutions into similar jokes. The Environmental Protection Agency, for instance, goes all the way to the Supreme Court in an effort to *not* protect the environment. And then there's the "Department of Justice." Anyone who thinks that prosecuting *seven times* as many Democratic elected officials as Republicans is justice clearly has a problem with intellectual honesty. And the same goes for anyone who thinks the DoJ should be appointing "loyal Bushies" rather than competent, fair-minded prosecutors. It doesn't really matter if there's a specific law against that (although the phrase "obstruction of justice" comes to mind), any idiot can see that, whether it's illegal or not, it's just plain wrong, and it subverts the very *idea* of justice. It's shameful, disgusting behavior, and it mocks the purpose of government. Nobody from any party should be okay with it. Nobody who gives a damn about

honesty or decency would be.

Again and again, this administration has taken the position that if it has not broken the law, then it has done nothing wrong—a completely amoral position. Not to mention that, when it clearly *has* broken the law, it has gotten by arm-twisting a supplicant congress into *changing* the law after the fact, or simply relying on the same congress (and a DoJ replete with "loyal Bushies") not to bother enforcing the law.

This is further underscored by the Bush team's unanimous refusal to testify under oath. It's obvious, and should be considered unacceptable, that there is only one reason for this: they're lying. That's it. They can't go under oath, because that would make their lying a crime. Simple enough, but why doesn't it seem to bother anybody that they're tacitly admitting to being completely full of crap? This is what I don't get about Republicans. Why doesn't it bother them when their leaders lie? Why isn't honesty an issue for them? Any doubt that the administration was lying about these firings has been thoroughly removed by their own boldly conflicting statements in the aftermath. These idiots even went so far as to concoct fake memos after the fact in order to justify the firings, as if no one would check the dates. The average Republican's response: "I know you are, but what am I?"

This Justice Department is product of the Karl Rove era: every last tendril of executive power has been transformed into an election campaign instrument. Now the DoJ's primary role is to make Democrats look bad, and to enable Republican



Can you tell which of these women is a traitor to her country?

criminal enterprises. Remember one of the eight dismissals being investigated is that of Carol Lam, who oversaw the right and proper conviction of Randall “Duke” Cunningham, truly one of the Delay congress’ most vile scumbags.

But the common thread of all eight firings has to do with a prosecutorial priority I had hoped former AG John Ashcroft took with him when he left: prudery. All eight attorneys weren’t responsive enough when pushed to prosecute legal pornography on obscenity charges. Gonzales made porn-busting a “top priority” when he took Ashcroft’s job. The pressure, and ensuing complaints, came from the administration’s “porn czar” Brent Ward. Ward’s pinnacle career achievement was fining the dork behind “Girls Gone Wild.” A paragon of misplaced priorities, Ward and the agenda he epitomizes seem to think that porn featuring consenting adults is more a threat to the nation than, say, terrorism, murder or even child prostitution. He once—this is true—tried to force art school models in Utah to wear bikinis. Ward tops my personal list of Bush administration members most likely to have a naked twelve-year-old chained to a radiator at home—and it’s a pretty long list.

I really don’t know which possible motive in the firings is worse—that the DoJ hierarchy is as cravenly political and power-driven as, the people they work for, or that it is driven by sexually repressed puritanical zealots intent on preventing law-abiding citizens from achieving orgasm. More likely, it’s a confluence of such factors—investigating

Bush’s buddies, refusing to bring weak cases against his political enemies in time to hurt their election bids, and generally being sensible about wasting resources on small-time pot cases or a tight-assed campaign of mental hygiene—that led to a perception that these eight attorneys were not sufficiently “Bushy.” But the point is, either way, they are lying about it, and not even very well. I don’t see why anyone who isn’t directly involved would support such bullshit, regardless of their feelings about taxes or stem cells.

The common theme between the Pelosi hysteria and the dismissive response to the DoJ firings, leaving out a few thousand other examples from the past six years, is aggressive, willful dishonesty, not just from the politicians, which is to be expected, but from ostensibly neutral media figures, and consequently regular people. These issues are simple, and wouldn’t take long to argue out, if news people felt in any way obliged to make sense. For instance, the Pelosi debate would go something like this:

Conservative: Nancy Pelosi wore a headscarf! This is a clear message of submission to Islamic extremists!

Reasonable Interviewer: But Laura Bush, Condoleezza Rice and many others have worn the same garment in similar situations.

Conservative: Oh. Well, still, she went on a diplomatic mission against the will of the president! This clearly violates the centuries-old, never utilized Logan Act! She must be prosecuted!

Reasonable Interviewer: But Newt Gingrich and Dennis Hastert have both done the same thing. In fact, unlike Pelosi, they actively controverted the president’s stated policies during those visits. Besides, several Republicans also visited Syria in the same week as Pelosi.

Conservative: All right, well, then... but Pelosi misrepresented the Israeli Prime Minister! She said Olmert was ready to begin peace talks, but she didn’t relay his insistence that they stop funding terrorists!

Reasonable Interviewer: Actually, that’s not true. Pelosi did predicate that message on that condition, as she and others in her delegation have stated. But the jerk-offs at the Washington Post failed to mention it in their editorial, despite the fact that it was reported in the very same paper on the same day.

Conservative: Oh. Well, never mind then! Sorry to bother you.

Instead, we are incessantly barraged with flatly ignorant and unfair accusations that have already been thoroughly debunked. And as every day passes, it becomes more obvious that this isn’t due to a stunning lack of research. It’s a willful ignorance of basic facts. It’s intellectual dishonesty elevated to an art. It may be helping the Republicans, but, as it is applied to all matters of government, from the trivial to the profoundly serious, it’s destroying the country. You can’t run the world when you won’t allow yourself even to look at it. ■





Bonobos vs. Chimps:

A Debate for Lemur Philosophers



By A. Monkey

I like to call myself a monkey, and I know that's a bit of a misnomer. I'm an ape of course. But it doesn't have quite the ring to it that monkey does... There's a reason why the French are a bunch of fucking surrender monkeys, not surrender "apes."

So I'm sticking with monkey, even in this column about two of our closest cousin apes – the Chimpanzee and the Bonobo. I bet you haven't heard of the gentle hedonists, the bonobos, before. I hadn't either, until I read a copy of primate behavioralist Frans de Waal's book, *The Inner Ape* (shitty title). A separate species, bonobos are a relatively unknown very close relative of chimps.

As recently as the '60s, bonobos were caged in zoos and laboratories with chimps and no one noticed the nice monkeys that didn't hit back, that didn't go into shit-throwing rages, that kept flashing their dicks and tits at you, begging for some action.

Frans de Waal spent decades staring at the bonobos, and his point in "Inner Ape" is that these monkeys don't employ violence to get things done: they fuck, they share their food, and they spend hours playing and touching each other. Once he gets that across, he writes imploringly that if only the early literature on the man-monkey connection – like Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape* (shitty title) – had focused on bonobos and not chimps, we wouldn't use biology to justify our violent tendencies; we'd be ashamed about them. A major PBS documentary that they keep showing every other Tuesday night about the bonobos makes the same case: the '60s were no aberration; that 'free love' stuff was the real us!

It's a pretty pointless point, when you come right down to it. In the first place, approximately 0.0% of human behavior is inspired by any kind of knowledge regarding our primal ancestors – it's

hard enough to be inspired by your parents. Second, the bigger deal is that the monkeys we are most like are ourselves. I am somewhat like my cousins, more like my two brothers, but like me most of all. So why not take a good long look at me to understand what I'm like?

Desmond Morris supposedly had all of us believing that since we are chimp-based monkeys, we're violent types. Yet another crock of shit. I hung out for a day at a maximum security prison in 2005, and the wardens told me that less than half the inmates in there for violent crimes committed violent infractions at any point of their incarceration, and a mere 40% of the violent types were going to go back to jail after their terms were over. In other words, the really violent

monkeys outside of their little clique.

We do: We worship monkeys who died thousands of years ago as gods, we obey and obsessively chatter about our living monkey leader thousands of miles away from us, we know the marriage and mating habits of our brethren monkeys on every corner of the planet. And we can get so mad and greedy about what some other monkeys have thousands of miles away from us that we spend years on weapons projects designed to kill them and take their stuff.

Robert Sapolsky, another monkey watcher/wannabe inspirer to his fellow monkeys has argued about the "plasticity" of our nature – we're capable of believing and behaving in any which

Man's closest relative: masturbating loafer or violent maniac?



types in our society, the ones we lock up for being sooo violent, aren't so violent after all: They are just like us, and on very rare occasions, they get physical.

There's a good reason Desmond Morris and Francis de Waal can't quite look at monkeys like us and come up with useful answers about who we really are: Because, while chimps and bonobos have fascinating friendships and hierarchies with each other, they don't have the slightest clue or interest in the

way. That's true. But like de Waal, Sapolsky immediately makes an offering at the holy altar of Our Peaceful Natures.

After sitting in this monkey stew for some time, my advice is to think about other implications of this "plasticity." There are monkeys shaping the behavior of other ones out there – brainwashing them, telling them what to do, and you can be one of them! You can be a god for Christ sakes! It might even be – gasp! – worth fighting for. ■





It's all about the beans.

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



Delaware at Chippewa | Elmwood at Cleveland
and in the lobby of Sheridan Meadows North at Sheridan and Transit
200 East Avenue @ Matthews in Rochester



Withdrawal Symptoms



Iraq timetable's a political fix

By Matt Taibbi

In medicine they call it “drug-seeking behavior.” A guy shows up at three different regional hospital emergency rooms in the space of a month, each time complaining of severe but non-specific lower back pain. Suspiciously, he is well-versed in the various milligram dosages of commercial hydrocodone. Ask him to wait an extra hour in the exam room, he starts bouncing his knees, and his forehead starts to pour sweat ...

Does this man's back really hurt? Maybe it does. You have to give him the benefit of the doubt, at least the first time. But the moment that orgasmic smile flashes across his face as soon as you hand him his Oxy scrip, you have to wonder. Just like I'm wondering right now, after watching what looked very suspiciously like a carefully-orchestrated congressional vote-seeking charade, i.e. the recent “controversial” scheduled-withdrawal/Iraq-timetable vote in the Senate.

As of this writing, it's been less than a few hours since the Chris Matthewses of the world received the “breaking news” that Mississippi Republican Thad Cochran has fallen short in his valiant attempt to block the Democrat-sponsored vote, a measure calling for a withdrawal of all troops from Iraq by next March. Cochran's gambit failed when Nebraska Republican Chuck Hagel decided to publicly sell out the President, noting about four years too late that Iraq was basically “Bush's war” (of course, it was also very much the Senate's war back when the polls happened to support it) and

that the president's strategy was borne of “arrogant self-delusion reminiscent of Vietnam.” Taking a direct swipe at Dick Cheney, who as recently as last week emerged from his haze of coronary disorders to decry war detractors as traitors and terrorist enablers, Hagel also said that “this idea that somehow you don't support the troops if you don't continue in a lemming-like way to accept whatever this administration's policy is, that's what's wrong, and that is dangerous.”

Of course it would have been nice if Hagel had taken on the administration's shameless witch-hunting and red-baiting of war opponents at a time when such a stance would have required actual political courage, and not when the poll numbers on a firm Iraq withdrawal are running about 60-38 in favor. But that's where we are right now. Hell, Hagel's main ally in the House these days is none other than North Carolina Republican Walter Jones; the two men are the leading anti-war conservatives in their respective houses. Back in February, the two men spent an enormous amount of time blowing kisses at each other in the pages of papers like *The Washington Post*, with Jones calling Hagel “one of my heroes” and Hagel lauding Jones's brave efforts to rally conservatives to vote against the Bush “surge.” But Jones, careful observers might recall, is the same spineless dingbat who came up with the “Freedom Fries” Franco-bashing campaign when the French bailed on the Iraq invasion in early 2003.

So that's where we are: the very people who were leading the *Crucible*-like

campaign against war dissent are now chanting “Not in our name!” and refusing to be “lemmings” for Dick Cheney. We all know what's going on here. Hagel is positioning himself as the antiwar Republican in the '08 presidential race, while the conservatives from “safe” 60-40-type states, people like Cochran and male impersonator Mitch McConnell, are still beating the victory drum. John McCain gets to use the vote as a forum to bash both Democrats and Republican war traitors like Hagel (“Setting a date for withdrawal is like sending a memo to our enemies that tells them to rest, refit and re-plan until the day we leave,” he said) while Democratic caucus members Joe Lieberman and Mark Pryor (who may face a serious primary challenge from Lieutenant Governor Bill Halter in '08) came out looking electably hawkish when they broke ranks with the leadership to cast nay votes.

As for everyone else -- specifically, the Democrats who sponsored and passed the timetable measure -- they benefited from the bill most directly, riding a crest of antiwar sentiment and setting the Democrats up as the party that will look the best in the eyes of frustrated, war-fatigued voters in 2008. But lost amid all of this antiwar posturing were a series of inconvenient truths. One was that the bill was always going to be meaningless because Bush was always going to veto it, there were never going to be enough votes to override the veto, and everybody knew there were never going to be enough votes to override the veto. The second is that the timetable measure was buried in an emergency spending bill to pay for military

operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a bill that ended up authorizing \$122 billion in spending when the supposedly evil, warmongering, politically isolated Bush White House only asked for \$103 billion. In other words, the outwardly combative Democratic leadership not only refused to do anything substantive to bring the troops home, it actually tossed Bush an extra \$20 billion or for the war effort without prodding.

In my visits to Washington in the past few months I've heard different stories from Democratic congressional aides about what the party's intentions are. Some say they think the leadership is just going to stall and pass a bunch of non-binding, symbolic, Kumbayah horseshit to help propel whoever the Democratic candidate is into the White House two years from now. Others claim with a straight face that all of these non-binding resolutions are only a start, that the strategy is to really end the war via a death-by-a-thousand-cuts type of legislative grind, with the leadership sending to the floor bill after bill after bill designed to eat away at either war policy or war funding. They claim that all of these votes are exercises in coalition-building, necessary steps to gathering the support needed to pass real biting measures later on.

But I'll believe that when I see it. Right now, it all looks too convenient. With Bush a thrashing, drowning lame-duck whose endorsement in '08 will almost certainly be political poison to whomever has the misfortune to earn it, Republicans like Hagel and Oregon Senator Gordon Smith are conspicuously free to break ranks and save themselves. Moreover, the Democratic measure is crafted in such a way that the Hagels and Smiths and Ben Nelsons of the world can safely get on a soapbox about the war without having to face accusations of depriving the troops of equipment and "what they need" to fight, which just so happens to be the leitmotif/preoccupation of the Rush/Hannity talk shows of late. While Rush and the rest of the radio monsters blast Nancy Pelosi and Hillary for being army-haters ("These people are not just against victory. They are against the *military*," sez Rush), Hagel et al can say that they voted for both a scheduled withdrawal and a \$20 billion increase in war funding. That is called having one's cake and eating it too, and folks on the Hill love that kind of political diet. There's a reason why there are not many skinny Senators.

You'll know that something real is going on in Washington when either

BENCHMARKS



June 31, 2007:

Chuck Hagel to squint, purse lips and appear thoughtful.



January 31, 2008:

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to grimace uncontrollably.



March 31, 2008:

Complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.



January 31, 2008:

Harry Reid to strike self-satisfied pose and perform felicity dance on the Senate floor.



August 31, 2008:

Complete redeployment of U.S. troops.

a) the Democrats force the "antiwar conservatives" to actually cast a vote on whether or not to cut off spending for the war, or b) a dozen or so more Republicans cross the picket line to set up a possible override of a Bush veto. Until and unless one of those unlikely moments arrives, it sure looks like what we've got is one of those rare "good for both teams" baseball trades, an arranged standoff in which everybody gets to suck a little of that hot nourishing blood in the ballooning antiwar poll numbers.

My sense of this whole ballet from the start has been that with each passing season, as the antiwar rhetoric increases both among the public and in Washington, we'll see a corresponding increase in both financial and personnel commitment in the Iraq theater. The logic here is irresistible; Bush will not preside over what he perceives to be a surrender, and the Democrats will not cast a vote "against the troops" in an election season. So what we'll get is a lot of what we just saw -- non-binding antiwar votes hitched to troop increases and/or "short-term" funding boosts. It's worth noting that the same political logic that led the Bush White House to fund the war as an emergency long after it ceased to be an unexpected expenditure will now appeal to the Democrats, and for the same reason; so long as the money is in an "emergency" bill, they will be able to pretend, before voters, that the commitment is temporary.

What worries me about this state of affairs is that presidents don't like to see military losses land on their watch. If a Democrat wins in '08, bet on it, an excuse will be found to keep the troops there. The first day after her inauguration, when Hillary Clinton wakes up with a champagne hangover to hear Mark Daley (or whoever her chief of staff ends up being) tell her that 67 Marines have been slaughtered in a raid outside Ramadi, she is going to be powerfully tempted to prove that she has the stones to deal out the necessary payback. She'll ask for 10,000 extra troops and six months to "stabilize" the situation before initiating a withdrawal.

And once that happens, we'll be right back where we are now -- pretending we're against it, but without a way to actually make it happen while covering the requisite number of Washington asses. That's always what it comes down to, after all. And no matter how encouraged everyone seems to be by this withdrawal vote, I still haven't heard anyone tell me how the *real* pullout is going to work, politically that is. Because it's not enough that everyone knows it's necessary. ■

Jesus Christ!

People will believe anything

By Ian Murphy

Well it's Easter time again, kiddies; time to break out your insulin and pagan-derived Christian mythology! I can almost taste the anatomically correct chocolate Jesus now. As religious narratives go, there are none that assault reason more profoundly and magically than Easter. With the possible exception of Mohammed's (PB&J) awesome ride to heaven on the back of a man-faced, winged horse, or that time Vishnu sculpted Jeff Foxworthy out of a left over pile of monkey dung.

First of all: "Good Friday?" For me, a good Friday is leaving work early, maybe going to Applebee's for a big ol' plate of Riblets. Being mercilessly tortured and nailed to a cross by Centurions? Not so much.

And what's going on with the date? Pick a month and a day and stick with it. "I'm raised from dead! Thou shalt mark this day on your calendars!" "Actually, um, Jesus, we were thinking of doing a lunar thing. You know, pick a day based on the phases of the moon, just for no fucking reason." The moon! What does the bloody moon have to do with anything? This Jesus fella is so important that when he was born thousands of B.C. day planners and appointment scrolls went straight into the trash and had to be replaced with new-fangled A.D. models. It was an enormous strain on the papyrus and clay tablet industries. They never fully recovered. And on those new scrolls, they marked the fucking day! It makes no sense: when the dude's born he's by all accounts a Jew, yet we celebrate his birth on the Gregorian calendar; when he's reborn he's THE Christian, yet we celebrate his rebirth on the Hebrew Calendar, which utilizes lunar months. They have to shove a month in here and there to make it even out in solar years. Those meshuga Jews. I kid. I love the Jews. However, Easter is not Passover and this is not the year 5767! For an event that millions of faithful believe physically happened, the least these people could do is settle on a day, for Christ's sake.

Of course, the most insane belief that goes along with Easter is Jesus' literal resurrection and ascension into heaven. It's hard to argue with that and not feel a little embarrassed. It should be obvious that's crazy. Instead, because I'm either preaching to the choir or you're a Christian and logic bounces off you like so many stale marshmallow peeps, I shall argue that your brain is not, in fact, a jar of horseradish. Your brain is not a jar of horseradish because brains tend not to be made of jars of horseradish. Check and mate.

In all seriousness, Jesus wasn't even the first god to come back to life. Osiris was all over that shit thousands of years before the Jesus. The Roman god Mithras did it before Jesus too. Mithras, incidentally, shares a birthday with JC. He's also just another poor, defenseless deity the Romans stole, this time from the Persians. Due to the Roman occupation, Jews would have certainly been aware of this myth in the run up to Christ's life. Now keep in mind, all of these guys are redeemer types, very similar stories. Only dif is the Persian Mithra was a Sun God and Jesus is the Son of God. Osiris, on the other hand,

predates them both and was known as the Life of the Sun God. Could it be that Jesus is the bastard child, not of a virgin and a deadbeat deity, but of star-worshipping pagan sluts from the Nile valley and marauding Persian goat-bangers? More than likely.

All this birth/rebirth stuff grew out of agricultural societies (that descended from nomadic ones) whose life depended exclusively on the patterns and whims of nature. When daylight started getting longer again and spring sprung, it was exceedingly important. Awe-inspiring in the truest sense. For the whole of our evolution, specifically our more recent mammalian past, we were organisms exposed to the drastic change in seasons that comes with earth's tilted axis. Food grows in abundance, and then it is scarce. By the time we became proper primates, and a bit later farming primates, these cycles utterly ruled our behavior. Fast-forward 200,000 years and we worship this guy who was born on the winter solstice and reborn in spring. That's probably why people out in the sticks believe in Jesus—because they still plow fields and reap harvests and shit.

CREATE YOUR OWN RELIGION: Just follow these 3 easy steps!



1 Using a hammer, a sturdy Roman torture device and some 10 penny nails, die for the sins of mankind.



2 Take a 2 day death nap on a black, rectangular futon of your own choosing.



3 Pop out of your tomb and simply fly into space - make sure you get a good video to post on YouTube!



Christ, left, bears a striking resemblance to the Persian god Mithra, both in their mythologies and sheep-carrying skills.

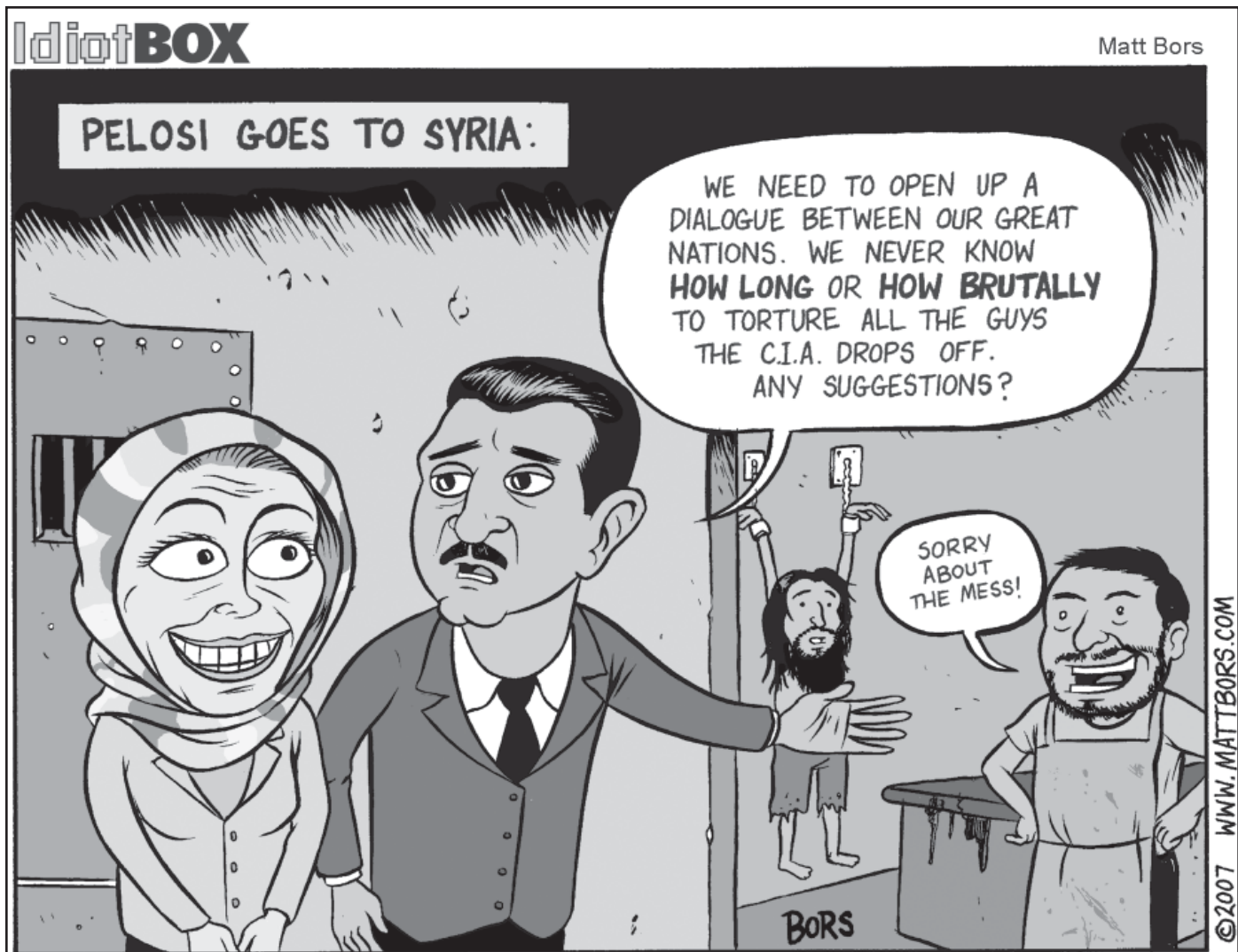
ass fat? A lot of Americans, especially, seem content to hang on to the bizarre traditions fomented during the Neolithic revolution, without giving much thought to their origins and purpose. Although there is some evidence to suggest Christ may not have existed at all, there is really no doubt that all of his superhero attributes were cribbed cold from earlier mythologies. Jesus was a latecomer to be cast in the role of undead savior. The Big J and his historical predecessors gave us a personified context with which to deal with the physically regenerative world around us and within us, as well. As Osiris was buried dead and miraculously raised in new life, so too were the seeds in ancient Nile rituals. Easter no longer holds this same purpose in the TV dinner age and its observance is no more than habit; an antiquated habit with all the functionality of a three-legged mule. You can strap a plow to him but ain't much tilling getting done. And don't even get me started on the Easter Bunny. ■

So what are we supposed to make of this perverse amalgam of nature religions in the industrialized world, where most of us have never cultivated a damned thing except copious amounts of office chair

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What, me worry?



Iranians aren't scared of a U.S. attack

By Russ Wollen

A recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll showed that 65 percent of Americans endorsed diplomacy with Iran, while 10 percent favored military action. But when asked by an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll if the US should “destroy Iran’s ability to construct nuclear weapons,” the percentage that advocated an attack rose to 43 with 47 percent demurring.

The same poll also asked if we should attack Iran if it were found responsible for exporting roadside-bomb technology to Iraq. Those in favor were now in the majority -- 55 percent -- while 45 percent opposed.

The degree to which our opinions are manipulated by the introduction of mounting threats to the equation, as if from a dropper into an experiment, suggests we’re unacquainted with the issue. But opinion polls are predicated on the assumption that the public is informed. However, as Christopher Shea once observed in a Salon article on the effects of voter ignorance: “Most people base their votes, and their answers to polls, on only the vaguest feelings about how the economy, or life, is treating them.”

Ideally, the polls would have prefaced the above questions with another: “Are you aware that the US is considering a military strike on Iran?” To many respondents, it

might have been news.

Unless you work in a foreign-policy think tank, the subject probably doesn’t come up much, if at all. Meanwhile, those aware of it are likely to comfort themselves with the thought: “We’d never do that. We’re already over-extended in Iraq.” Americans have enough trouble dealing with -- or, as the case may be, screening out --- one war.

We push the mute button on the drumbeat of war at our own peril. But it’s even more dangerous when those in harm’s way are in denial. It turns out that much of the Iranian public is tuning out the threat of an attack, too.

In his Salon article “The view from Tehran,” Hooman Majd writes that, “by and large [Iranian officials, as well as the public] do not believe that the United States will attack Iran, mostly because they cannot envision that the White House could be. . . so foolish as to attack a country where 10-year-olds have been willing to strap grenades to their waists and run under enemy tanks [as in the Iran-Iraq war].”

They believe American saber rattling and deployment of aircraft carrier groups to the Persian Gulf are a “psychological war to frighten Iran.”

Recently on Foreign Policy in Focus, Farideh Farhi wrote a piece about Iran’s political environment, in which President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the ruling mullahs are often at odds. Its “highly

contentious and fractured” nature is actually a “*source of strength* [emphasis added],” she reports, “rather than weakness, allowing for a wide range of input in the decision-making process.”

In other words, Iran already has the democracy drawn up for them by the Neocons. Furthermore, writes Farhi, Ahmadinejad’s opponents “have shown no hesitation at all in closing ranks behind the hard-line position if they perceive the Islamic Republic or its vital interests to be at stake.”

Since Ms. Farhi’s conversance with Iran is partly a result of living and working there for a time, we asked her if she thought Iranians were in denial. Bear in mind that, unlike the US, Iran (not to mention, much of the world) doesn’t base all its decisions on polls and focus groups. Ms. Farhi writes:

“Given lack of polling on this issue, it is difficult to gauge exactly what the Iranian public thinks. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that after a short period of concern, which came about when there was almost daily talk of attack on Iran in the European and American press, the Iranian public doesn’t think much about the issue.

“Iranian New Year [*Nowrooz*, March 21] is [upon them]. . . and basically thinking about what may be an impending war is not a nice way of living. So my bet is that most of the Iranian public is ignoring the issue not necessarily because there is denial but out of the necessities of



Despite being located directly east of U.S. occupied Iraq, directly west of U.S. occupied Afghanistan and directly north of 2 U.S. aircraft carrier groups in the Persian Gulf, most Iranians realize they would pretty much crush us militarily.

everyday life.

“What is significant, however, is that Majd is correct and much of the political class, particularly those with a conservative bent, thinks that only extreme irrationality would make US attack Iran. Ahmadinejad has even said in an interview that the US would not be so stupid.

“The Iranian military brass and hard-line newspapers have also talked about the assessment that most of what is going on is psychological war. I am aware of only one official that has [publicly] entertained the possibility of attack. In a long interview with the Iranian television, Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of Iran’s Expediency Council, said that George Bush is a singularly determined man and if he decided to attack Iran, he will do it no matter what the obstacles are.”

We also asked M.K. Bhadrakumar, the former Indian ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey who writes for Asia Times Online on Iran and other issues, to weigh in.

“I find myself in agreement with the assessment that the Iranian public doesn’t take seriously an American military attack as a possibility. (No one with a logical fame of mind would, either.)”

After that zinger at the Bush administration’s expense, Mr. Bhadrakumar describes what will happen

in the event of an attack. “Indeed, if the Bush administration does finally decide to do something as unwise as to strike Iran militarily, Iranian nationalism will overflow.” He explains that the “Iranian revolution’s strong social base (the further one moves away from Tehran’s middle class, the more palpable it appears to a traveler) hasn’t withered away. . . . It can be invoked by the leadership at short notice with devastating effect.”

In fact, he adds, the conceit that the regime has no public support is a “completely

myopic idea.” Consistent with Ms. Farhi’s view that the combative nature of Tehran’s internal politics is an asset, he believes that, “Iran’s vibrant political life, and the garrulous nature of the Persians are not being taken into account by those outsiders making facile judgements such as that the regime is divided and is alienated from the public.”

Finally, he cautions the administration that it’s “dangerous to take one’s own propaganda seriously.”

As Mohsen Rezaee, the Iranian official Ms. Farhi quoted earlier, affirmed, the Iranian government “is prepared for the kind of attacks the US is entertaining.” Still, it seems to us that a slumbering Iranian public, wakened with a start, might lend an American attack an element of surprise that by all rights it doesn’t deserve since it’s been “on the table” for years. Thus wounded, like the US after Pearl Harbor and 9/11, it might rally round the flag that much more quickly than if it had been living in dread for years.

In the meantime, it might help our perspective to imagine what aircraft carrier groups massed outside your country feels like. Since the executive branch and the ruling mullahs are married to uranium enrichment, it’s too late for Iranians to call their *majlis* (parliament) representatives and ask them to vote against it. In the same situation, we too might yield to the temptation to shield our eyes from the winds of war whipping up around us. ■



Landslide of Failure

The battle for election integrity is led by... the Governor of Florida?

By Brad Friedman

Florida's new Republican Gov. Charlie Crist continues to get far in front of Congressional Democrats concerning issues of Election Reform. Previously, he has called for the Sunshine State to replace all Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) touch-screen voting systems with paper-based optical scan systems (and touch-screen ballot marking devices for the disabled) and today, he succeeded in restoring voting rights for former felons to all but the most violent criminals after they've served their time.

While Democrats in Congress, and their public-advocacy group supporters such as People for the American Way (PFAW), MoveOn, Common Cause, and VoteTrustUSA, continue to dally around the edges of reform vis-a-vis Rep. Rush Holt's Election Reform Bill (HR811) in the House and a forthcoming companion bill from Dianne Feinstein in the Senate, shamefully, it's the Republican Florida Governor, of all people, who is proving to be the *true* Progressive in the fight for real reform.

There's plenty of blame to go around, of course. The GOP Legislature in Florida is hanging on to their own share of shame in fighting Crist's bipartisan proposals to replace disenfranchising, democracy-stealing DREs. New Democratic Secretaries of State Debra Bowen in California and Jennifer Brunner in Ohio are meeting their voter mandates and doing their respective best to correct dysfunctional, unverifiable, easily gameable voting systems, but they are also facing challenges from both Republicans and local Elections Officials alike who are fighting to put their own self-interests over those of the voters. As usual.

In the meantime, the currently-flawed federal bills in the U.S. House and Senate are on the verge of getting worse, not better, through the drafting, mark-up, and amendment process, as legislators bend to the demands of henhouse-guarding

Elections Officials along with the uncritical support for "Election Reform, any Election Reform, whether it'll bring true Reform or not" by powerful groups such as MoveOn, VoteTrustUSA, Common Cause, and others.

By way of example, MoveOn sent out an email to members yesterday calling for unflinching support of the Holt bill, despite knowing it to be flawed and VoteTrustUSA yesterday sent out an "All-811-All The-Time" newsletter yesterday to members without a single article, from among the mountains available, critical of the bill. That, despite recent testimony to Congress by their own policy director, Warren Stewart, asserting that "the direct electronic recording of votes to computer memory is inimical to democracy." Both the Holt and Feinstein bills currently drafted would allow for exactly such systems, and in fact, institutionalize the practice for years to come.

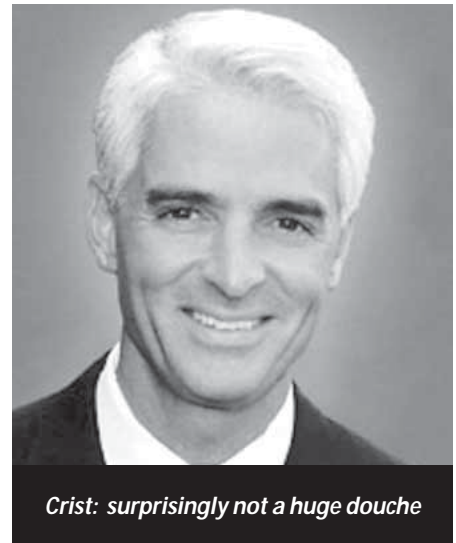
Both MoveOn and VoteTrustUSA declined to respond to our queries seeking explanation about their mailings yesterday.

So what's going on here?

Legislation that would have been smashing in 2005, but has since been shown to be desperately out of date in 2007 given the mountains of new evidence which revealed itself during the 2006 Election Cycle and beyond, is mired under the weight of bureaucratic deal-making and go-along-to-get-along public advocacy.

It's all made worse, for the moment, by the largest and most influential of the public-advocacy groups, PFAW, who continues to dominate the debate on many levels. The group, which wields great power and proxy throughout a large swath of the civil rights community, is not only currently against a much-needed ban of DRE voting systems, but — far more disturbingly — is actually advocating *in favor* of their use.

I reported recently on that point, but the evidence is perhaps more clear in PFAW's



Crist: surprisingly not a huge douche

own published analysis of the Holt bill [*emphasis mine*]:

DRE technology offers better access options to voters with disabilities and voters who have minority language needs.

Whereas optical scan technology requires the printing of thousands, if not millions, of ballots in multiple languages, the distribution of those ballots in adequate numbers for each precinct, and the training of poll workers to distribute those ballots to those voters who seem to need them, DRE technology is much more effective for minority language voters.

Similarly, DREs afford voters with disabilities an opportunity to cast an independent secret ballot—something that optical scan paper ballots cannot fully do. It is important that jurisdictions with large numbers of minority language voters and voters with disabilities have the flexibility to use DRE equipment.

PFAW's position, as expressed above, is wholly unsupported by scientific evidence, common sense, or anything else as we have learned while investigating the matter over the past several weeks and months. It also completely ignores the existence of

ballot-marking systems, touchscreen devices that print a valid paper ballot and obviate any legitimate use for DREs.

When a *Republican* governor from *Florida* has gotten ahead of *Democrats* on this issue, it's safe to say that something has gone *terribly* wrong.

If someone within the Democratic caucus doesn't stand up soon and bring the type of leadership to this issue that Crist has brought to Florida, they risk becoming the owners of a dysfunctional electoral system previously designed for disaster via the Help America Vote Act of 2002 by the now-disgraced Republican felon, former Rep. Bob Ney of Ohio.

Is there nobody in the U.S. Congress with the leadership skills and courage to stand up and do what is both right and well-supported by scientific evidence in order to make America's broken system of democracy right again?

Is there nobody who will stare down the disingenuous, fearful, ill-informed and/or self-serving factions standing in the way of restoring America's once-great shining example of democracy to the world?

As the right to vote and to have that vote counted transparently and accurately underpins every other right we have in this country, we must continue to keep digging, advocating, investigating, reporting, and hoping. The alternatives — and consequences — are far too dire to do anything less. ■

Brad Friedman covers election integrity issues and more at Bradblog.com.



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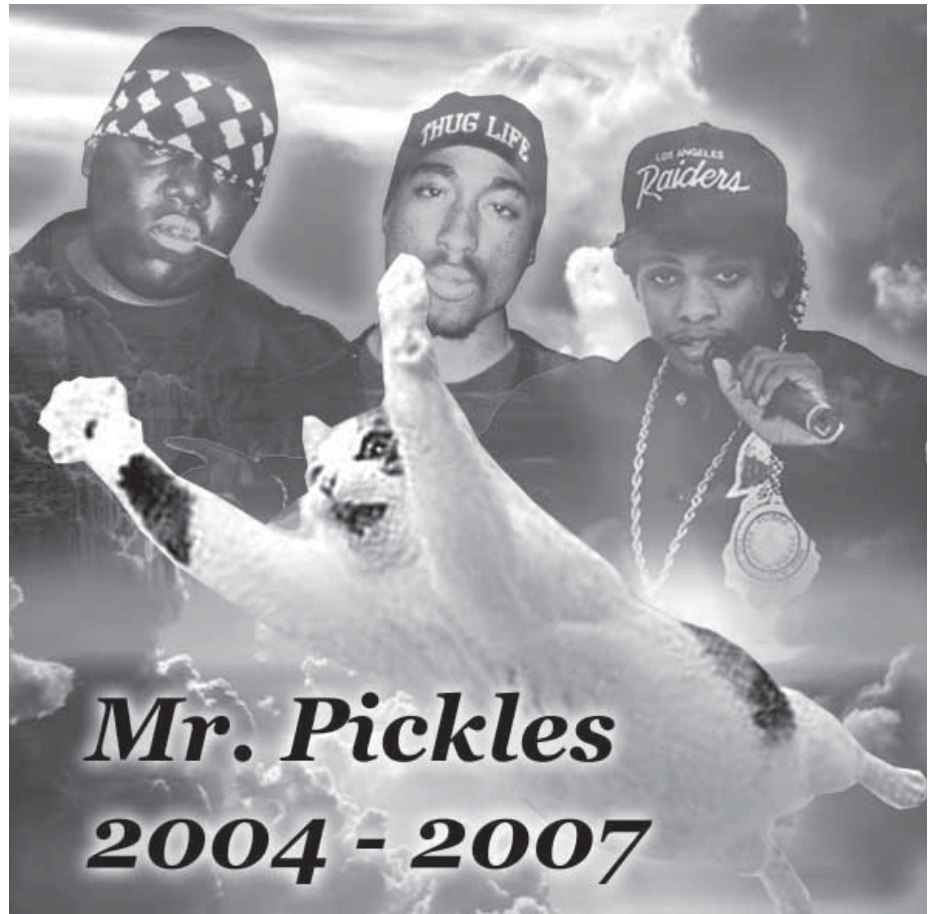
By Allan Uthman

Last November's mid-term election gains for Democrats, we were told repeatedly at the time, were all about the war. Just the war, and nothing domestic. But while all eyes are supposedly focused overseas, the Bush administration has all along been quietly destroying the regulatory systems put in place by better men to protect Americans from the ravages of capitalist extremism.

Virtually every department, from the FDA to the EPA, is a shameless mockery of its former self. The Labor Department invites the eradication of whistleblower protections. The EPA lobbies against its own obligation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. The FDA approves drugs against its own advice. The USDA's lax inspection practices allow tainted produce and Mad Cow meat to enter our food supply. And now they're killing our pets.

In every way during this pet food debacle, the FDA has served not to inform or protect consumers, but to withhold and obfuscate information, and to protect the corporations involved. At every turn, while people scrambled for information, the FDA's stance was a cowardly defensive crouch, releasing data in drips and drabs, only when forced to by external reports.

For one, while news agencies have dutifully reported that the FDA could only confirm 14 or so deaths, those deaths were only the ones that occurred in Menu foods' test labs after the contamination was discovered. Menu started testing the food a week after the first reported death, on February 20th, according to the FDA. It was March 16th when the recall started. Since then, the FDA has stuck to its "only 14 confirmed deaths" hokum. In fact, veterinary chain Banfield estimates that about 39,000 pets have died so far. Some of these deaths might have been averted if the FDA wasn't consciously dragging its feet at every turn—in identifying the companies and products involved, in portraying the threat



realistically rather than diminishing it, and in doing these things in a timely manner.

The big problem here is that the tainted wheat gluten was listed as "food grade"—that is, suitable for human consumption, and shipped to plants that make products for humans as well. Of course, the FDA says, of course, it has "nothing to indicate" that the stuff is in our food supply, but how can anyone believe that now, when they have been so slow to acknowledge the scale of the scandal so far?

This is the result of year after year of the Bush administration doing everything possible to cripple its own regulatory bodies—we are not safe from our own food, and the government is moving to *obscure*,

not address, that fact. That sandwich you ate for lunch may be poisoning you, and you may never find out about it. You surely won't if the FDA has any say in the matter.

This is deregulation. Sleeping pills that cause people to cook and drive while unconscious. Usurious interest rates that force careless youths into a lifetime of debt. An EPA that is illegally shutting down and dismantling its own libraries. Fish that give you brain damage. Pet food that kills pets. Spinach that kills people. This is the magic of the free market. This is the Reagan revolution in full ascendance. Massive multi-merged companies are in the clear. You and me? We're on our own. ■

CONTRADICTUM

Self-refuting quotations from the world of politics

“So you have the first Hispanic-American attorney general -- a minority -- under fire by white liberal racists in the Senate.”

Rush Limbaugh

“Let the unskilled jobs, let the kinds of jobs that take absolutely no knowledge whatsoever to do - let stupid and unskilled Mexicans do that work.”

Rush Limbaugh



“[L]ike a normal outdoor market in Indiana in the summertime.”

Representative Mike Pence, describing the open-air Baghdad marketplace he visited with Senator John McCain, 100 US Troops, three Blackhawk helicopters, and two Apache gunships on April Fool's Day in an attempt to justify McCain's ludicrous statement

that you can “walk freely” in Baghdad. The next day, 21 shopkeepers from the market were dead.

“I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way.”

General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commenting on the military's “don't ask, don't tell” policy. Pace is personally responsible for thousands of deaths.



“Benchmarks are very good.”

Representative John Boehner, January 23.

“The benchmarks that I see in this bill are intended to bring about failure.”

Representative John Boehner, two weeks later.

“I think they're going to try to really tamp this down and appeal to the polling, which indicates that most people think, in fact, that he should be pardoned—Scooter Libby should be pardoned.”

Andrea Mitchell, March 12. A poll released earlier the same day revealed 69% of respondents did not think Libby should be pardoned.



“I never want to suggest that, you know, there`s a silver lining to 9/11—my God, 3,000-plus people perished—but I will say that, were it not for 9/11, I don`t even think my book would have been published.”

Irshad Manji, author, The Trouble with Islam Today, speaking to Glenn Beck. This isn't really self-contradicting in any way, but seriously, what a fucking stupid thing to say.

Separated at birth?



Don Imus...

...and notorious racist Mr. Ed?



In defense of *Ann Coulter*?

Conservatives have a right to be assholes, just like real people

By Paul Fallon

The apparent widespread condemnation of an Ann Coulter joke that included an “anti-gay slur” of Democrat Presidential contender John Edwards (she insinuated he was a faggot) prompted *Newsweek*'s designated Democrat soccer-mom columnist Anna Quindlen to announce the “national snarkfest is on its way out, and good riddance.”

In her March 19th *Newsweek* column, Quindlen declared political trash talk dead, because the “public has outgrown it.” Reading that the American public had outgrown the likes of Ann Coulter made me laugh harder than I did at Coulter's surprisingly funny joke.

I believe Anna Quindlen represents a far greater danger, and a much more mendacious segment of political punditry, than Coulter. It is the segment, especially ascendant in its support for the Democratic Party, that enforces a code of bland mediocrity on political discourse. They see any quarrelsome speech as a threat to civility and public order, a notion far more protective of the status

quo than the lunatic ravings of even the most unrepentant Ann Coulter.

Don't get me wrong here—I find most of what Coulter has to say patently ridiculous and often vile. But Coulter has gotten rich saying much worse things. Where was Quindlen on these gems of political sludge?

“We need to execute people like John Walker in order to physically intimidate liberals, by making them realize that they can be killed, too. Otherwise, they will turn out to be outright traitors.”

“They're [Democrats] always accusing us of repressing their speech. I say let's do it. Let's repress them. Frankly, I'm not a big fan of the First Amendment.”

“God gave us the earth. We have dominion over the plants, the animals, the trees. God said, 'Earth is yours. Take it. Rape it. It's yours.'”

“I think the government should be spying on all Arabs, engaging in torture as a televised spectator sport, dropping daisy cutters wantonly throughout the Middle East and

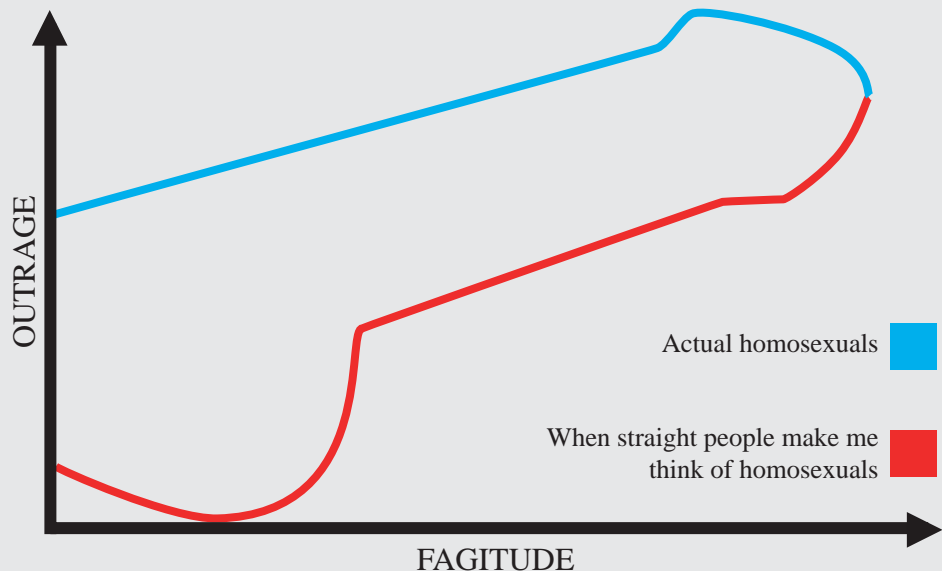
sending liberals to Guantanamo.”

“We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war.”

If these slipped by, does Coulter's “faggot” gem deserve the barrage of scorn that Quindlen and other political nannies have unleashed? First, let's examine the offending “joke.”

At the most recent Conservative Political Action Conference Ann Coulter gave a typically idiotic speech and ended it by saying, “I was going to have a few comments on the other Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards, but it turns out you have to go into rehab if you use the word ‘faggot,’ so I — so kind of an impasse, can't really talk about Edwards.” There's no doubt the gay community takes serious issue with the use of the word faggot, although its offensiveness can hardly be seen in the same league as “nigger.” When looking at Coulter's use of faggot you can't ignore that she was using

Anna Quindlen's Soccer Mom Outrage Index



it in the context of baiting the enforcers of politically correct speech. Given Coulter's fondness for invective (and the fact that virtually every liberal blogger who made a fuss about this has called her "Mann Coulter" at some point), she legitimately has a bone in that fight.

Putting Coulter's joke in that context requires that the "have to go into rehab if you use the word faggot" reference be seen in light of last year's Hollywood scandal involving cast members of ABC's hospital crapfest *Grey's Anatomy*. In the Golden Globe Awards pressroom, after *Grey's Anatomy* had won an award, a member of the press asked about an alleged incident that happened previously on the show's set. One of the show's stars, Isaiah Washington, allegedly called gay fellow cast member T.R. Knight a faggot. Responding to the reporter's question, Washington said, "No, I did not call T.R. a faggot." Whether Washington actually did or not is in dispute, but the kicker is

this: The fact that he used the word faggot *in his denial* of using the word faggot was enough to set off a storm of controversy in Hollywood and got substantial coverage in the mainstream press. Washington eventually apologized for "repeating the word," and entered anger counseling in order to exercise his miscreant demons.

So when Ann Coulter used the word faggot in reference to John Edwards, she knew she was launching an incendiary device. It was certainly launched at the protectors of banal speech and the genteel southern gentleman, but I think it's a stretch to consider it an attack on homosexuals. John Edwards isn't generally thought of as gay nor has he come out of the closet (if she had used the word faggot to describe Barney Frank it would be a direct attack on his sexuality and the gay community or anyone else would have every right to object to the use of such an epithet—but I doubt it would resonate half as much). In the context that Coulter used the word,

it doesn't merit the insane condemnation that followed.

And let's be serious about Edwards: He does have a bit of a vain, pansy quality to him. Did you see the YouTube clip where he's having his make-up applied and then spends an inordinate amount of time preening, making sure his hair looks perfect? The idea that it's unconscionable for a famous Democrat-hating asshole to call John Edwards a faggot when he behaves like a contestant on *American Idol*, or for someone to use the word faggot when denying that he used the word faggot is, well, unconscionable.

And let's be serious about CPAC: Conservatives, virtually all of them, hate faggots. Quindlen and her ilk admonish Coulter not for her numerous and documented deliberate lies, but for exposing her party for what it really is, for lifting the veil of reasonability from modern political discourse. The people



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at *Time* and *Newsweek* want to pretend that the red vs. blue divide is primarily about intellectual issues of economics and morality, but Coulter and her brethren rudely burst that bubble, revealing the unspoken but plain truth that, for them and a hell of a lot more people than we want to admit, it is about faggots. Faggots, and dykes, and niggers, and spics, and, of course, the goddamn ragheads. Even Democrats outside of places like San Francisco and Massachusetts would never vote for a *real* faggot, after all. In fact, I'd guess a lot of the outrage is not about the word faggot, but about libel—in other words, “Hey, John Edwards ain’t no faggot!”

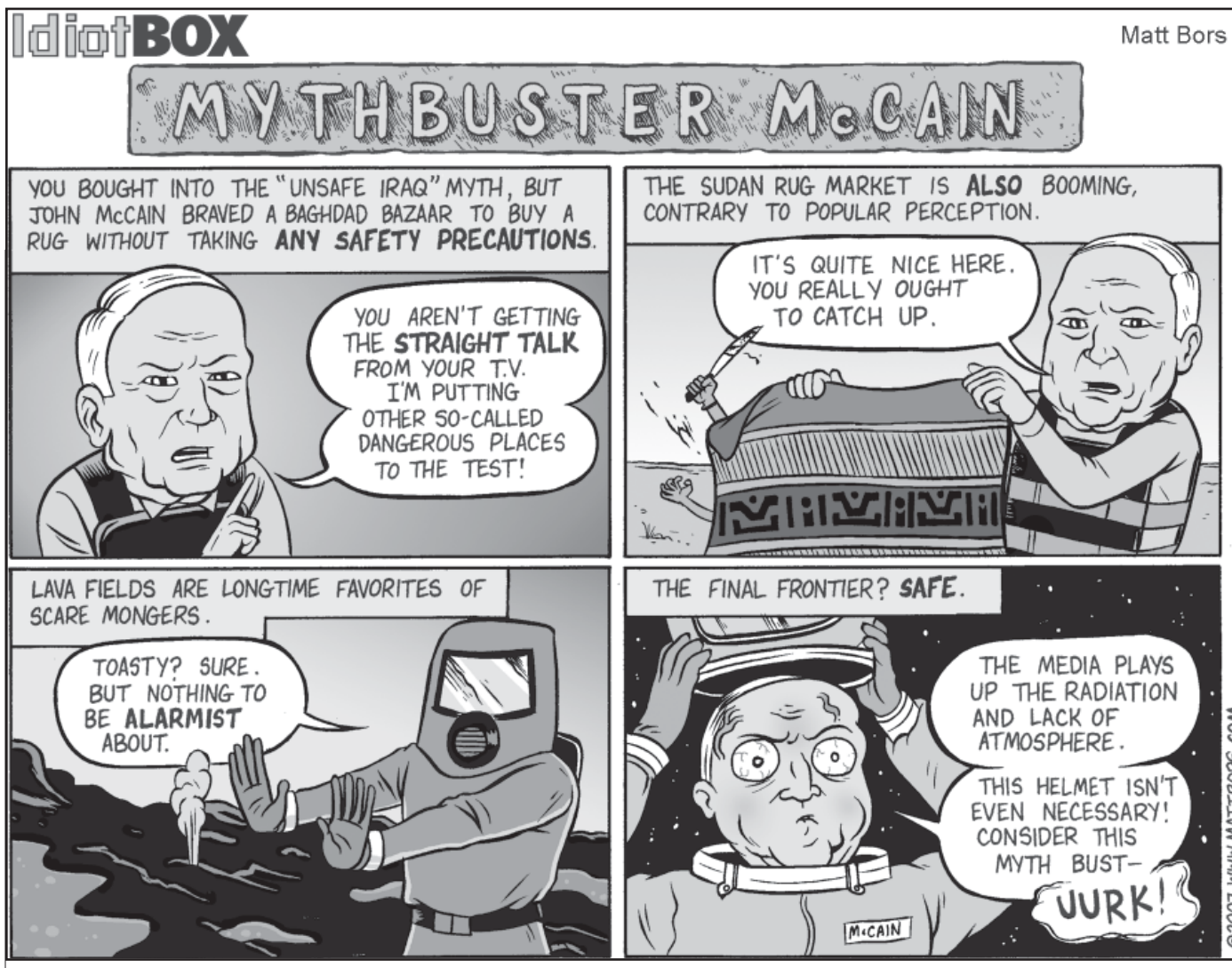
The blandistas, who work diligently to hide this fact, and who get upset about these types of reality flare-ups, are really the larger problem. Who are these people, like Anna Quindlen, who think they know what is appropriate? One is columnist and author Jane Smiley, who said,

“Fortunately, Coulter doesn’t yet have her finger on the red button, but looking at her, you can begin to understand some of the female crazies we have known—Madame Mao, Imelda Marcos. The best thing about them—maybe the only good thing—is that as they become increasingly ridiculous and frightening, they demonstrate for all to see that they are exactly the sort of persons our society needs to inoculate itself against.” Smiley, a tame denizen of the wine and cheese set, conflating Coulter’s rhetoric into a serious threat to society is fear mongering at a level that would make Karl Rove proud.

Likewise, DNC Chairman, Howard Dean immediately released this scolding: “There is no place in political discourse for this kind of hate-filled and bigoted comments. While Democrats and Republicans may disagree on the issues, we should all be able to agree that this kind of vile rhetoric is out of bounds. The American people want a serious, thoughtful debate of

the issues. Republicans—including the Republican presidential candidates who shared the podium with Ann Coulter today—should denounce her hateful remarks.” Yeah, right Howard; elections are about issues, not personal attacks like criticizing someone’s excited yell.

So where does this “Oh, my God, you can’t say faggot” demographic come from? It seems more a product of the absurd, prefab morality Madison Avenue employs to sell the American dream than anything else. It’s a lifestyle-based morality that measures faith in terms of churchgoing rather than actual curiosity about the universe. It’s the kind of morality that preaches the evils of marijuana but refuses to question the motivations or the actual devastating consequences of the war on drugs. It’s the kind of morality that says, “We voted for the war in Iraq so we’re stuck with it, and by the way, we might have to invade Iran.”



Unfortunately, Quindlen and the Democratic Party have for a long time embraced this phony ethos, and it is no small part of what has made the party a revolting farce of corporate sellouts, pandering puritans and self-aggrandizing charlatans. They are so detestably self-assured in their vision of morality and their own integrity that they can't see they've become triangulating sophists with no more authenticity than any other political striver from any era or nation.

The Republicans have long been comfortable with this hypocritical morality, and now with the Democrats becoming such cranks, it is no wonder that so many of us have been turned off by the political system as a whole. What's vexing is that Quindlen, like most Democrats of her stripe, recognizes the obvious symptoms of the country's dysfunction. The "war...a fruitless quagmire...An educational system that often seems not to educate...A criminal-justice system that is a swamp... A health-care system that leaves sick people running up chemo on their high-interest credit cards. And a future built on a monstrous deficit that could sink Social Security and any other meaningful entitlement program for coming generations."

So the solution is to clamp down on "faggot?" According to Quindlen, that's how we got into the mess. Quindlen not only thinks Coulter is "irrelevant" but also that Coulter and other "*agents provocateurs*" are to blame for the failure of the "national discourse" to inform. Quindlen believes that if we get rid of "true believer" bomb-throwers like Coulter then a justly informed public will happily join the march of Jeffersonian Democracy to victory. Of course that means electing a Democrat President in 2008. That's right, because with the situation so "desperate," the rational virtue of a Democratic President is our only chance.

So what is the mainstream, desperate-for-change political punditry doing? Far from employing any serious analysis to shed some light on a moribund political environment, the serious journalists like Tim Russert, Howard Fineman and Wolf Blitzer have already plunked their pasty asses in their ringside seats for the 2008 Presidential election and they're cheering loudly and obediently.

Like them, Quindlen thinks this "is an election that really matters" and calls

2008 "the most momentous race in our lifetime, that it's clear that the country is teetering on the cusp of something, good, bad or cataclysmic." With such dire stakes, her description of the Democrats' presidential contenders as "everyone good is running" couldn't be a better example of how fatuous this notion that we are desperate for change really is.

This blind faith in the ability of the political system and mainstream Democrats to shepherd it is inscrutable. Democrats and many self-described liberals believe that if everyone just takes their seats like good little children while the adults (them) explain the issues, then we'll realize how truly lucky we are to have them. When a goodhearted centrist Democrat (Clinton, Obama, Edwards) is elected, she or he will ride in on a white horse and save the day. Is there any dimension where such childish boosterism would be considered healthy?

In Quindlen's desperate efforts to script a politics of fairytale civility, she resorts to a favorite hack device, equating the current political struggle with the only good fight there ever was, WWII. This is probably the most overused and shameless tactic employed by mainstream hacks today. Quindlen ruminates, "Were there commentators during World War II content to mock the way Hitler styled his mustache, or the idea of Franklin Roosevelt's running (ha, ha—get it? Running?) for a fourth term? If so, they've been forgotten. These times are, in some fashion, as significant and serious as those, and the way in which voters are attending to this election and the issues makes that clear."

I love this greatest generation idolatry. It's a staple of the type of pathetic liberal that believes *Newsweek* and *Time* are authentic bastions of the fourth estate. They are so ensconced in their own piety that they can't see that the views adorning its glossy pages are simple devices of indoctrination, not a forum capable of promoting honest debate. For *Time* or *Newsweek* to cut any deeper would contradict their *raison d'être*, reassuring mildly intelligent citizens that American politics still make sense, and that our precious American way of life is still totally awesome.

It's not surprising that Quindlen believes the old schoolmarmish notion that civility will help politics achieve the electorate's most sincere wishes and desires. People

like Quindlen are so sanguine because they think they are the proper authorities on what is an acceptable way to live. Anna Quindlen, feminist, progressive, soccer-mom, lives completely within the bounds of what is acceptable to maintain the life of privilege that she was raised with. She will do anything but entertain the idea that maybe Anna should reconsider the lifestyle that got her where she is, got this country where it is and what that means for the future.

Mainstream Democrats have lost touch with a large segment of the population. I like to think about what would happen to these dead-center fundamentalists like Quindlen if they faced circumstances that really turned their lives upside down. Wouldn't it be funny to watch Anna Quindlen's reaction if her daughter Maria came home from college and informed her mother that she is quitting school to become a crackwhore?

Maria: "You know mom it's like, God, sex is totally awesome and like all the guys say that I'm like, really, really good at it, and I really love crack so it's like totally perfect for me."

Anna, "Wha, wha, whaaaaat? You little bitch, I'll kill you. You are grounded for the next century you little cunt! KABOOM! (Head explodes.)"

Quindlen is not going to get out a piece of paper and map out the pros and cons of choosing that lifestyle for her daughter, so they can "move the conversation in fruitful directions," as she calls for. Anna Quindlen and mainstream Democrats don't give a shit about where the country is going. They care about their lifestyle. That lifestyle doesn't enjoy bad words or notions that maybe that lifestyle needs drastic change. When Quindlen's kid graduates from Georgetown or wherever, she'll call her Barnard College friend whose husband Chad will line up a nice job for the kid on Wall Street, in a government embassy or some think tank where she will embark on a life of cultured wonderfulness. She'll wait for the day when mother and daughter can pick out her wedding dress, choose wallpaper together and decorate for the holidays while the government they believe in slaughters people in the name of democracy and brainwashed poor kids do the bidding of fat old greed-monsters in this horribly grotesque charade called American politics. But don't use any bad words; that wouldn't be nice. ■

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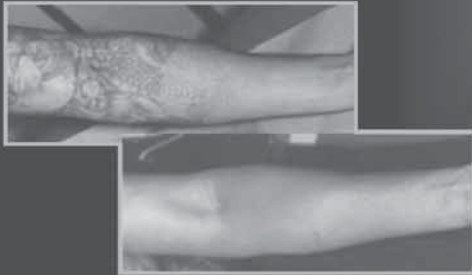
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The Whining Minority

Republican congressman turns from bully to baby

By Matt Taibbi

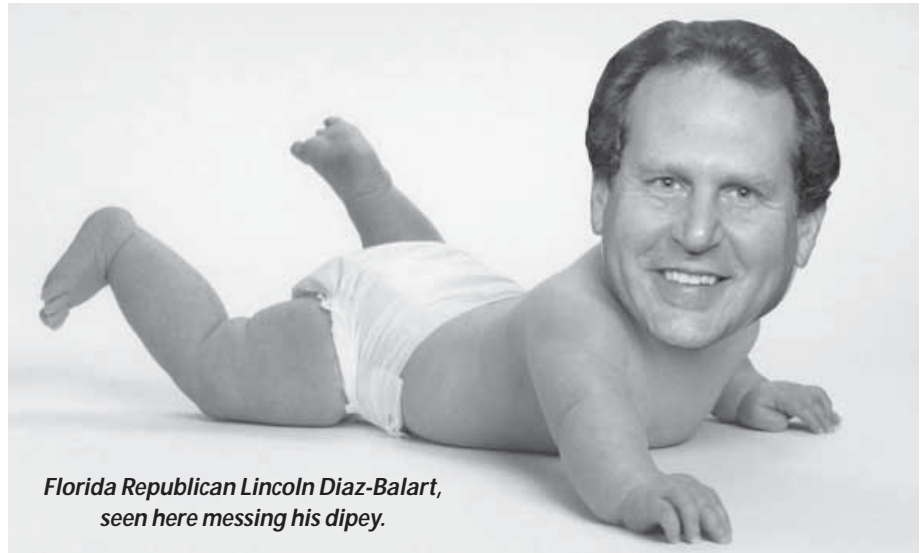
I turned on C-Span the other morning, expecting to watch the latest chapter in the purification-by-fire of Alberto Gonzales, and saw an amazing thing. It was so amazing and so hilarious that I coughed hot coffee all over my new laptop. Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Republican of Florida, was howling on the House floor about the lack of “openness” demonstrated by the new Democratic leadership.

“In bill after bill after bill,” he shouted, “the minority is closed out!”

Diaz-Balart ... you really have to see this guy to believe him. His public speaking method is something truly awesome to behold. Imagine a Mummenschanz dancer trying to pass a drunk test after downing a bottle of strychnine, and you've got Diaz-Balart explaining himself in congress. He waves his hands and head spasmodically as he talks, and sometimes actually adds words to match his twitches and gestures that make no sense and do not necessarily relate to the subject at hand.

“It's not theory, not height, not almost closed -- it's a closed rule!” he shouted, demonstrating the nonsensical added word “height” by making a “high-low” gesture with his hands.

The issue at hand -- the reason the esteemed Florida congressman was addressing the House floor -- was the failure of the Democrats to allow an “open rule” in the matter of the Gulf Coast Recovery Act, an aid package directed to hurricane victims. An “open rule” is a bill that is sent to the House floor without any restrictions on the number or type of amendments majority or minority members might want to tack on. For instance, a few years ago, when the reauthorization of the Patriot act was sent to the House floor, Vermont's Bernie Sanders submitted an amendment to restrict government access to citizens' library records. The Republicans who controlled the Rules committee at the



Florida Republican Lincoln Diaz-Balart, seen here messing his dipey.

time rejected that and other amendments, and sent a *closed rule* to the floor.

They did that a lot in those years. In the two years of the 109th congress, the Republicans allowed only one completely open rule. This was a reflection of a decades-long general evolution in congressional procedure away from bipartisanship and in the direction of unilateralism. The trend really began with the Democrats -- in 1977, when the Democrats were the majority party, eighty-five percent of all bills went to the floor as open rules. By 1994, when the Democrats were kicked out of power, that number had dropped to thirty percent. Particularly during the Reagan years, congressional Democrats had turned the House floor into something of a bully pulpit. And guess who led the Republican charge in bitching about it? You guessed it, Mr. Strychnine-Mummenschanz himself, Lincoln Diaz-Balart. This is the congressman's remarks on the subject back in 1994:

You know what the closed rule means. It means no discussion, no amendments. That is profoundly undemocratic.

The Republicans then swept into power on Newt Gingrich's coattails, pledging to usher in a new era of openness. “Instead of having seventy percent closed rules,”

then-new Rules chairman Gerald Solomon said in 1994, “we are going to have seventy percent open and unrestricted rules.”

Except it didn't work out that way. Particularly in the Bush years, under the direction of sartorial Jedi-master David Dreier -- a very mean man who wears very nice ties -- the number of open rules dwindled down literally to nothing. That's not a joke -- in the first session of the 109th congress, there were, for the first time in congressional history, no open rules. And guess who was sitting next to Dreier the whole time as the number two guy in the Rules Committee? Lincoln Diaz-Balart.

I spent a good deal of time in the Rules Committee in the past few years and I watched that cocksucker sit there with a gloating, cat-who-has-just-eaten-mouse smile as the likes of Jim McGovern, Louise Slaughter, and Alcee Hastings begged, literally *begged* to have this or that amendment allowed (or “made in order,” as they say in congress) so that it could be voted on by the whole congress. Since Dreier for the most part couldn't be bothered to show up at the committee hearings, it was usually Diaz-Balart who sat in the chairman's chair and chided the Democrats or their witnesses to shut the fuck up.

And it was Diaz-Balart who at the end of the afternoon would gently stack his papers and disappear behind the majority office door so that the bills could be bastardized, clipped and/or rewritten in the middle of the night. In the 108th congress, for instance, 78 of the 191 rules were reported after 8:00 p.m., and 21 of those were reported at 7:00 a.m. the next day. It was during those years that Rules earned the nickname "Vampire" or "Dracula" congress -- bills would go in reading one way, then come out at 7:00 the next morning with completely different meanings. In 2001, for instance, a health insurance bill reworked in the middle of the night went to the floor with a few minor changes that drastically limited the liability of HMOs who denied coverage to patients. This kind of shit was commonplace back when Diaz-Balart and his buddies were running things.

Now this guy is standing up in congress and blasting the Democrats for exactly the same thing. "Yeah, it's kind of like one of those prison converts to Jesus," a guy I know in Congress said. "You just don't know how to take it."

Just to be clear on the numbers; so far, the Democrats have allowed one open rule and three semi-open rules. There is a sort of rule that is open to all amendments printed in the congressional record, and this essentially is a time issue -- if you submit it in time, it's allowed. The Republicans in the last two years allowed two of these semi-open rules. So basically in a few months, the Democrats have been about as open as the Republicans were, in total, the last few years.

Nobody is suggesting the Democrats should get a medal for their newfound commitment to openness. Among other things, Senator Harry Reid, who pledged to end late-night shenanigans of the sort that made Dreier and Diaz-Balart famous, inserted a late-night provision into a budget bill last December that transferred a piece of Nevada federal land the size of Rhode Island to state and private interests. That's Reid; the Rules committee, however, seems to have cleaned up its act on that score, not having any late-night sessions yet.

But the most amazing thing about this Rules debate wasn't Diaz-Balart's outburst about closed rules. It was the specific *reason* for the outburst. In this particular instance, the Republicans -- specifically Georgia congressman Tom Price -- were pissed that the Democrats had rejected

an amendment to apply pay-as-you-go rules (more on that in a second) to the Gulf Recovery bill. When Price took the floor, he first made sure to praise the filthy hypocrite Diaz-Balart for his courageous stand on behalf of the principle of the open rule.

"I thank my good friend for his passion and openness and honesty," he said.

Then he moved on to criticize the Democrats' clampdown on amendments.

"What we are living in," he said, "is becoming a land of Orwellian democracy!"

I'm not sure what "Orwellian democracy" is, but whatever. What was striking was the basis for his objection. In layman's terms, the pay-go rule is basically a mechanism that forces any drain on the treasury to be offset by corresponding spending cuts. Pay-Go was first instituted in 1990 and was followed diligently until the late 1990s, when budget surpluses replaced deficits and exceptions began to be made to accommodate deficit spending. Pay-go was allowed to formally lapse in 2002, when Republicans were forced to do away with it because the Bush tax cuts would have forced the Republican congress, which ultimately *increased* spending to a massive degree, to make sweeping cuts. Pay-go, being as it was a mechanism that automatically enforced fiscal discipline, was an early casualty of the Bush era. It was almost revived in the Senate in 2006, but again, Republicans killed the effort.

Pay-go was reinstated this year in the House, not as law -- Democrats couldn't have passed it as law, because Bush would have vetoed it -- but as part of the House rules package. This is somewhat difficult to explain, but basically the House (unlike the Senate) passes a new Rules package every year, and in that package can write in various procedures that are not subject to presidential veto. They did so this year with Pay-Go, which passed in a landslide, 280-154. Among those who voted against Pay-Go in the House rules package, however, was Tom Price, the same dickhead bitching about living in an Orwellian state over spending for Katrina recovery.

Here's the deal with Pay-Go. It is designed to apply to permanent expenditures only -- traditionally, the programs that are usually called entitlements. That means Medicare, student loans, etc. Basically, Pay-Go was designed as a way to cap spending on

welfare; if you want to raise expenditures for this entitlement, you have to make a corresponding cut somewhere else. It does not apply to emergency expenditures or what is called discretionary spending, i.e. spending that is made on a year-to-year basis, in response to temporary problems.

Republicans like Price can't vote for Pay-Go as a general principle because that would mean they would have to somehow pay for the Bush tax cuts. They also can't ask to expand Pay-Go to emergency expenditures as a general rule, because that would mean they would have to pay for the Iraq and Afghan wars, which are still being paid for almost entirely out of emergency appropriations -- despite the fact that they are no longer unanticipated emergencies in the traditional sense.

So what do they do? They're left to stamp their feet and cry Orwell when the Democrats pass a relatively small appropriation for housing for hurricane victims. In other words, there's no Tom Price to be found screaming for fiscal responsibility when a \$90 billion Iraq appropriation is passed, but when \$1.175 billion goes to the Gulf Coast, he and the likes of Diaz-Balart start singing "We Shall Overcome."

I'm no big fan of the Democratic party. I think they pussyfoot about key issues like the war and they whore for their campaign donors almost as much as the Republicans. And their ethics and procedural reform to date isn't something to write home about. Even Barney Frank conceded on the House floor: "[Diaz-Balart] is right about one thing. He chides us for setting the bar too low. We only promised to do better than they did, and we met that standard with ease. But we should do better."

But Jesus, at least they have *some* shame. The Republicans ran congress like a basement cockfighting ring for more than a decade, and two months or so after they're out of power, they're already transformed into a bunch of squawking dissidents more pretentious than Rage Against the Machine. And they know how absurd it is, too. When I called Diaz-Balart's office, and asked his press aide, Victoria Martinez, how her boss could possibly complain about a lack of open rules considering his record, there was a pause on the other end of the line.

"Uh huh," she said. "I'll get back to you."

Click. Should I hold my breath while I wait? ■



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It's tax time again, and I want to maul you



By A Rabid Dog

April 15th is right around the corner, and so help me I'll tear your larynx out for no good reason – well, no reason besides the virus that's inflaming my brain and driving me to a state of unrelenting fury. I used to be a “very good dog” but I've changed, apparently in addition to advanced dementia and an extreme propensity toward violence, I've become interested in telling you how to save a bundle this tax season!

Any amateur financier knows the best mechanism for protecting your - GRRRRRRRRRR! GRRRRRRRRRR! - financial assets is a good old fashioned tax shelter. And, no, you won't need any tools to build one. GRRRRRRRRRR! It's not as daunting as you think: simply declare yourself a business. Create some stationary and a business card and you're there. You can even turn your hobby into a business. I did. GRR! Nothing says you can't have fun while saving yourself from the foaming jaws of the IRS. In addition to my involuntary and insatiable desire to maul any living creature

that crosses my path, I run a “boat in a bottle” workshop out of the garage. Not wanting to sour my reputation for incorrigible toothy madness, I registered with my county clerk and now I'm “DBA” or doing business as “Fluffy Puppy Boats-n-Bottles Inc.” As long as I demonstrate “profit motive,” not necessarily a true profit, I'll be able reduce my overall tax burden. I may even qualify for the IRS's earned income credit and get money back this year. I want to bite you so bad. So bad! Oh, man, if you were here, man! GRRRRRRRR! I would eff you up, man. I would be all on top of you and biting you and shit, man – but that's neither here nor there.

Remember to keep your deductions to reasonable business expenses, like in my case, tiny boats, glass bottles and plenty of medical gauze. As if you couldn't have guessed, the gauze is perfect for little bits of decorative clouds for the bottles' seascapes. I've tried everything and nothing has the same delicate effect – GRRR! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! Of course, the workshop is going to need an HD television to play instructional videos, and if my personal collection of classic Disney DVDs accidentally find their way into the garage – how's the IRS to know?

Now that you have the knowledge: make it happen. You won't be sorry and neither will your bank account. It may be too late for you this year but by next you'll be deducting the wounds I want, nay need, to inflict about your face, neck and chest area. Don't you get it, motherfucker! I want to fucking kill your ass! GRRRRR! I may want to bleed you dry with my devastatingly muscled bite - but with a tax shelter, you can keep the tax-man from doing the same. Happy filing! ■

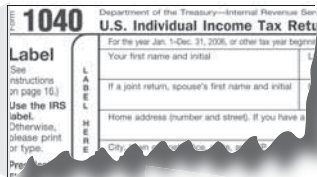
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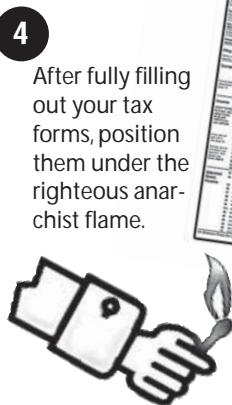
1 Logon to www.irs.gov at home or the library to print out the forms you'll need.



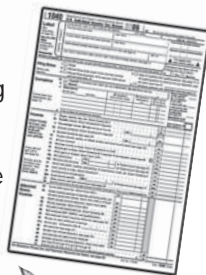
2 Now you'll need a box of anarchist matches, a stainless steel wastepaper basket and a life sized bust of Thoreau.



3 In a downward motion, strike a match on Thoreau's forehead. If he continues to stare ahead stoically, that means the civil disobedience is working! If by some chance the bust of Thoreau winces in pain or begins weeping blood you should stop immediately.



4 After fully filling out your tax forms, position them under the righteous anarchist flame.



5 Just throw the burning form into your wastepaper basket and you're done!



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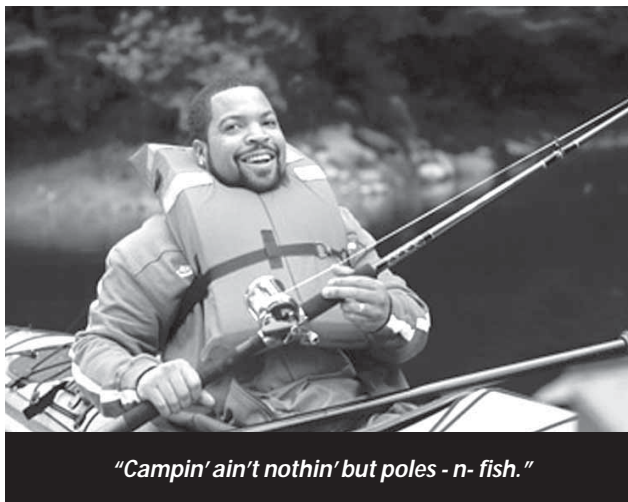


Michael Gildea

Are We Done Yet?



I had an incident recently where I put my foot in my mouth. As is usual with faux pas, I could feel myself about to screw up, then gave in to that fuck it moment where I did it anyway. And even after the fact, I just kept going, because who really gives a shit at that point? Really.



"Campin' ain't nothin' but poles - n- fish."

When I took the obligatory fifteen seconds later in the day to contemplate my gaffe, I noticed something missing: the standard regretful cringe of belated embarrassment. It just didn't come this time. And seeing Ice Cube in the trailer for *Are We Done Yet* gets my thanks for that. Let's go back to the first installment of this *Home Alone* wannabe, *Are We There Yet*. Ice Cube played some sorry sumbitch trying to get laid by agreeing to babysit Nappy Dugout's kids. They run his ass through the wringer, *Kindergarten Cop* style, and if you had an IQ below 50 you laughed your fool ass off.

Even if he does have kids that he's

supposedly making these movies for, Ice Cube is acting a damn fool. He crammed his foot down his throat with the first installment, and with *Are We Done Yet* Cube keeps remorselessly shoving it in, so deep his ass is buckling. This time it looks like a sorry carbon copy of *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, or *The Money Pit* if you prefer. Either way, I'm almost certain repeated screenings of *Are We Done Yet* will be utilized as an interrogation tool at Guantanamo. And if Ice Cube doesn't have to apologize, why the hell should I?

Grindhouse



After firing a few rounds, she'll need a chiropractor for sure.

If you haven't seen the trailer for *Grindhouse* yet, the only words I can summon to describe it are *preposterous fun*. It's two separate feature-length movies, one a zombie movie written and directed by Robert Rodriguez where the two main draws are Fergie from The Black-Eyed Peas getting killed and Rose McGowan losing a leg and replacing it with an M-16/grenade launcher combo. Oh, and zombies!

Things only get better, as the second feature is directed by Quentin Tarantino about a psychopathic stuntman/serial killer played by Kurt Russell, in yet another pseudo-comeback. Both features are a tribute/homage/nod/shout-out to '70s grindhouse exploitation cinema. As a bonus, Rodriguez and Tarantino made phony trailers to be played between the features. It'll be just like going to the drive-in, except you can't sneak your jerk friend and that hendgehog he's sticking it to in your trunk. You also won't be able to sneak two boxes of Pop Tarts, a case of beer, a fifth of vodka, a jar of Crisco, two fat joints and a tank of nitrous in. And if you get bored enough, there won't be any windows around to fog up.

But it's worth it considering you're going to be able to see a new Tarantino and Rodriguez movie. For me, this is like meeting the two most beautiful women in the world, who happen to be best friends, and for some cracked out reason happen to find me interesting, funny and attractive. Even if you've been in that situation, you know you've got to choose like you're on some flatulent '70s game show with horrid sets and a syphilitic, crispy-tanned host. But the beauty here is that you don't have to choose, *they want it at the same time* and there's no way in hell you could fuck it up. This is going to be more entertaining than that episode of *Cheaters* where the host got stabbed.

Blades of Glory



I'd like to take this opportunity to put a hit out on Jon Heder. *Napoleon Dynamite* was funny if you managed to catch it before the hype killed it, but watching his Mormon Beck wannabe ass perpetually play the same role, usually reserved for Saturday Night Live alumni, got old about 3 movies ago. But Will Farrell is around to rehash his *Anchorman* role and hopefully make the movie... not suck.

Farrell and Heder play rival figure skaters who find a loophole which allows them back into the sport after being banned—doubles skating. The whole thing sounds fruity as shit but if Farrell's in it, it could go either way. Fortunately Amy Poehler and Will Arnett are the villains. Hopefully they're not the only other roles. Usually when something's that iffy I'll just sneak a bottle of MD 20/20 into each jacket pocket, which either results in a temporary Time Of My Life or a desperate call to my attorney. Either way, my movie-going experience is definitely optimized. And optimized it shall be.



Will Farrell and Napoleon Dynamite play the same roles they always do.

Vacancy



"Should we leave and save our lives or advance the plot?"

A stream of consciousness review:

They're lost Kate Beckinsale Luke Wilson car breaks down creepy perv shitty hotel room stack of tapes roach on the floor we're all right.

Play a tape snuff film waitaminute that's this room! Camera in the vent now I'm scared guys coming this way we're trapped in here gunshot doors knocking let's roll. Someone's watching don't go we stay we're dead runningjumping lots of rats where are the cameras car won't start they have the phones runlikehell.

Anyone who looks at *Vacancy* as something other than that is a damn fool. *A damn fool!* Seriously, *Vacancy* is just another suspense thriller: creepy in the sense that this is more likely to happen than anything involving Freddy or Jason. But there's something I just don't buy about a backwoods Bond villain with such a line of credit he could afford to hunt humans at a hidden hotel he owns. Must want to use that Rambo knife he always wanted but promised he'd get himself if he ever won the Powerball with some of the guys down at the lodge.

But that's just me. I suppose if I had enough money I would buy an empty county, put up a few buildings and hunt some yuppies down there. Let some wild dogs run around down there, then eventually send some wild boar in. They get rotten in temperament; then you could feed them your enemies.

God, I need some sleep.

Continues on page 32

KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Rampant Xenophobia



Mind Fuck



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Super Models Grapple with Moral Ambiguities



Ordinary Person Pushed too Far



Impossible Science



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Betrayed By Those Who Trained Him



Simplistic Epiphany

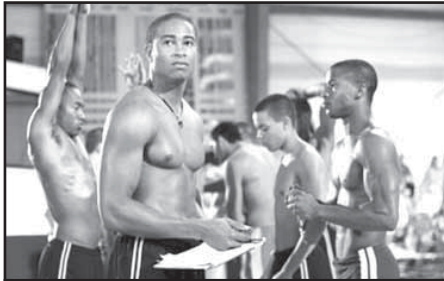


Dramatic Embellishment



Likable Thug

Pride



Finally: a movie about black swimmers!

It's funny that a movie about the trials and tribulations of a black swimming team in 1970s Philly be called *Pride*, because I'm guessing pride is the very thing you'd have to abandon in order to actually sit through such a movie. The trailer suggests that, if *Pride* were a dog, it would be the type that takes a watery shit on the carpet while staring right into your eyes, as soon as you get it home from the pound.

All I know is that Bernie Mac looked like a chocolate Easter bunny dipped in molasses with the marzipan eyes. Man scared the shit out of me! *Pride* is about learning lessons and will probably be something gym teachers show their students on the last day of school. It might be okay, I don't know. It could also be a monster story parents tell their kids to keep them from turning into assholes. Search me. All I know is that I saw Mac again at the end of the trailer crying motor oil. I closed my eyes instantly and screamed, "keep your eyes shut, Marion!" I don't even know anyone named Marion.

Reign Over Me



Sandler & Cheadle score big exploiting 9-11

With each passing day, reality is becoming more like an infomercial. It's like the blueprint for women is a smiling method-out battle hag with a Fantastic Sam's hairstyle excited about a Lillian Vernon catalog. And all guys are supposed to turn into tanned sub-alphas who try to hypnotize you by not blinking. Why is this? *Reign Over Me*, that's why. It's the story of former college roommates coming across each other years later. Adam Sandler plays the one who lost his family on 9/11 and became a scooter-riding, retarded Bob Dylan. Don Cheadle became an uptight dentist. Judging by the trailer, they start an Iron Butterfly tribute band and inadvertently learn something about themselves through each other.

Reign Over Me acts ballsy for incorporating 9/11 using a national tragedy as a way to get an audience misty is transparently manipulative, and just plain lazy. In all likelihood the flick will give us yet another reason to rue that fateful day. If I become a quadriplegic and my helper monkey hides the remote while it's on cable someday, then I'll see it.

The Reaping



"It's Swanktastic!"

If there's two things that get me excited, they're movies about the end of the world and porno with natural redheads with no apparent cosmetic surgery. I'm pretty sure the latter is a thing of the past, which leaves only computer-generated images of Armageddon to inspire a dangler in my Wranglers.

My next fix for The Final Days is *The Reaping*, in which Hillary Swank plays what I'm guessing is some kind of theologian, or better yet a Christian who's lost her faith, called in to explain a series of biblical plagues *dahn saht*. But wait...! It gets better...! There's *no scientific explanation* for these bizarre occurrences. This is *right out of the Bible!* Holy shit!

It looks like some sort of raptured *Da Vinci Code* or some hip shit that old priests will read so the young priests will think they're cool. And here's the problem with movies about The End Of The World—they're usually preachy. *The Day After Tomorrow* had a tree-hugging agenda and since *The Reaping* sticks the Old Testament in an ass-backward swamp, I'm going to take a shot in the dark and say it's going to start spouting shit about religious values or premarital sex. I didn't have enough to go on from the trailer. All I know is there'll be a picket line I can take it out on if I don't like the movie. Thank You, Jesus. You really do care.

The BEAST Salutes:



The African nation of Eritrea, for its recently enacted ban on the draconian practice of female circumcision. Better late than never!

The Lookout



This kid sans Lithgow = disappointment

Since I've switched from reviewing actual films/movies, no one's asked me why. Not that it matters because it's not a question I really care to answer and up until now I haven't really had an answer. Sure, I could've made up something glib and sarcastic involving Madeline Stowe or the Wayans brothers, but deep down I always knew I wouldn't have to search for the answer for the answer would find me.

And when I saw the trailer for *The Lookout*, I knew that the answer finally found me. This is the reason why I don't shit away two hours of my life at a time anymore: because most movies aren't even worth the two and a half minute trailers anymore, let alone the actual running time of the whole damn thing.

The Lookout seems like something some mental deficient slathered throughout a spiral notebook with a wooden spoon after it was introduced to their ass crack on a muggy and humid August day on the equator. I don't mind so much that it's the story of a once-promising athlete reduced to a bank janitor. And I'm not complaining that it takes a nosedive courtesy of the traditional cat and mouse thriller storyline when he's smooth-talked into helping the local wannabe thugs rob the bank where he works. Nonononono. What's got me ready to punch a baby in the head is the fact that I'm being asked to believe Joseph Gordon-Levitt as a leading man. The only thing this little walking vaginal skin flap from 3rd Rock From the Sun could lead is the parade to a nerkie circus.

I'm guessing by *The Lookout's* trailer that he's supposed to be a likable character. Sticking this twat in a lead role is the worst instance of miscasting since Keanu Reeves as a guy with too much information in his head in *Johnny Mnemonic*. War crimes and mass murder aside, I think Hitler had more charisma than Gordon-Levitt. Or Levitt. Or what the hell ever shit-dick is going by these days.

Fracture



Sir Anthony Hopkins doing things

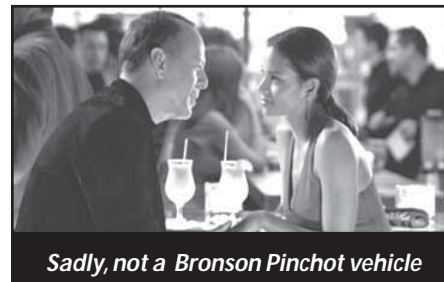
The trailer for *Fracture* is possibly one of the most ordinary trailers I've ever seen in my life. The more I think about it, it may even be *less than* ordinary, and if nothing else it's not doing its job. Movie trailers are supposed to suck you in. They're meant to be that shapely, smooth leg sticking out in the hallway saying *come on in*.

But *Fracture's* leg isn't really doing that. It's giving us a yet another bristly *I'm not even trying anymore* performance by Anthony Hopkins as a man who killed his cheating-ass wife and admits as much. Then there's the bad tattoo on that leg in the form of Ryan Gosling as the hotshot attorney who's got a job lined up at a prestigious law firm. Yes, it's all doggy-style and pot brownies for Gosling once he wraps up this open and shut case because after all, Hopkins admitted to it.

Not so quick. It just so happens that Hopkins is rehashing Hannibal Lecter through manipulation and bare-knuckle head games. Oh, and the arresting officer was the one balling Hopkins' wife. Ooooooooooooo!

So Gosling made a bunch of dumpy girls swoon when he did *The Notebook* and he got nominated for an Oscar last year. He's an up and comer—we've got it. Maybe I was just expecting a little more than a *Silence of the Lambs* rip-off minus the most interesting aspect: cannibalism. No, no. He ends up in a movie where the only possible emotional reaction you'll get is anguish, because you won't know whether to laugh at its seeming ridiculousness or cry because you just got screwed out of the better part of ten bucks. All I know is that I've had cases of constipation that were more moving.

Perfect Stranger



Sadly, not a Bronson Pinchot vehicle

"Dude, Frank's reopened and I ended up there last night. I woke up this morning in this shitty Niagara Falls hotel room next to a greasy filthy Steak Out wrapper and about a cigarette burns through my new Journey t-shirt and chest. Oh, and there was a broken Tullamore Dew bottle in my ass."

-Tom Maccio from a voicemail excerpt, March 11th 2007

There was a point where I could only imagine the horror Maccio went through that night being used as someone's personal fingerpuppet/ashtray. Judging by the timbre of his voice I was guessing the only things that could tell the story more accurately were some luminol and a backlight. Then I saw the trailer for *Perfect Stranger*, starring Bruce Willis and Halle Berry.

First off, I am Sick To Fucking Death of Bruce Willis. He's beginning to look all whittled away, like those pictures of Montgomery Clift before he died. It's like he's shrinking or something. What's a glooche hole and why won't the sheriff touch it? Willis stars in every third movie released and all he's doing is playing a burnt out alcoholic cop wearing a bad wig. I'm guessing he and Ashton Kutcher are going to make a sequel to *Brokeback Mountain* very soon. And let's talk about Halle Berry. I could get an Oscar for best actress if Billy Bob Thornton butt fucked me too. It's not that hard. She's hot and that's it for her. I challenge you to find someone who watched *Swordfish* for any other reason than to stare at her tits for two seconds. I challenge you to find anyone who actually saw *Catwoman* at all, for any reason.

In *Perfect Stranger*, Berry plays a reporter who goes after Willis' adulterous ad agency owner who may or may not have killed her friend he was definitely banging. I'm sure if I were some philistine, sexually frustrated soccer mom with more time on my hands than class, compounded with my CSI addiction, I'd love it. But since that's not the case I'd rather watch a cat eat its own shit, because seeing this would be more like *eating* cat shit myself. It's just nice to know that I don't have to eat the shit this time. ■



*****Sports blotter: "A different sort of 'making it rain'" edition*****

Welcome back Stevens



It has always surprised me that Seattle Seahawk tight end Jerramy Stevens didn't figure more heavily in the sports-crime industry after he turned pro. When he left the University of Washington, Stevens looked to be a once-in-a-generation sports-crime talent, a Willie-Williams-meets-Darryl-Strawberry off-the-field type menace. After all, not many athletes are charged with rape, smashing a guy's jaw with a baseball bat, *and* driving a truck while stoned into an old-folks' home (plus, walking away before police arrive) before the age of 22. Stevens not only managed the feat, he also won a spot in the second round of the NFL draft. I expected big things from a guy who, before catching his first NFL pass, had cruised through a pro-football crime pentathlon: the Ricky Williams bongathon (weed), the Naeole vault (bar fighting), the 4-x-4 Janikowski relay (GHB-related offense), the Michael Pittman butt (ramming/using a car as a weapon), and the Rabih Abdullah jump (leaving the scene).

Stevens mostly stayed out of the news in his early years in the NFL, attracting attention mainly for underperforming.

He did score a DUI in 2003, though, when police found two Champagne bottles in his car during a "routine traffic stop," which should be renamed the black-guy-with-nice-car stop. Stevens also gained infamy among Vegas bettors after dropping several catchable bunnies in last year's Super Bowl, which, coupled with some legendary bad calls, prevented the Hawks from covering.

This year, there were signs that bad news was on the way. A recent *Seattle Times* story indicated that Stevens's neighbors had attempted to kick him out of his building. According to the paper, "One resident woke to find his deck splattered with vomit. Another found used condoms. Others told of being awakened at 3 am by loud fights, or were startled by strangers who partook of their patios. And they have had it. The noise, the fear and the man behind it . . ."

Finally, Stevens was busted last week for a DUI in Scottsdale, Arizona. The arresting officer wrote in his report: "As [Stevens] exited the truck he dropped his cell phone and wallet on the ground, bent down to pick them up, then stutter-stepped as he started to walk in my direction . . ."

In all likelihood, the Seahawks will cut bait with this guy, who, sadly, is one of the most talented athletes in the game. Stevens picks up 32 points for his DUI/weed possession arrest — 25 for the DUI and seven for the used condoms on his neighbor's deck. That's just nasty.

Jags the new Bengals?



The Jacksonville Jags are the clubhouse leaders for this year's Bad NFL Citizens Award, a/k/a the Chris Henry Cup. Jags safety Gerald Sensabaugh became the second player on his team in as many weeks to get busted for a gun offense, after he was pulled over in his hometown of Kingsport, Tennessee. Sensabaugh was charged with speeding and "carrying arms." His arrest comes just after backup wideout Charles Sharon was busted in Tampa for carrying a stolen firearm.

But wait, there's more



As I write this very word, a woman has told police she was raped at the home of former Atlanta Falcon and new Denver Bronco defensive lineman Patrick Kerney. The unnamed woman said she accepted a ride from a bar to Kerney's house, where a number of current and former Atlanta Falcons were partying. She reported feeling sleepy and then awoke to discover she was being raped. No player has yet been named in this story, but it sounds



like someone pulled a 4-x-4 Janikowski relay job on this woman. We'll let you know when we hear more details.

In any event, this is shaping up to be a horrifying off-season for the NFL. Forget about PacMan Jones; making headlines recently alone were Joey Porter and Levi Jones (who fought at a casino, with Porter racking up an assault charge; Jones, incidentally, was robbed in that incident), as well as Tank Johnson, who was sentenced to four months in prison for parole violations and went inside this week. Cardinals assistant Richie Anderson was also arrested on solicitation charges; Steelers DB Deshea Townsend was busted for simple assault; Rams tight end Dominique Byrd was nabbed for a DUI; and a half dozen others from various teams were handed mostly drug- or alcohol-related charges. Expect things to cool off for a while, as players report to off-season workouts this week.

Our first Justin Miller Award!



This is the witching hour, folks — the sports-crime equivalent of the month before an armed robber's parole hearing. Can he keep from shanking his roommate long enough to present a clean sheet? Or will temptation win out? It's a dramatic race against time in the American penal system and the NFL draft.

About this time every year, NFL scouts descend upon big-college towns, doling out cash and favors to anyone who might have

incriminating information about major NFL draft prospects. Heard something about a methed-out tight end who punched a Sonic roller-waitress in the eye? Did you date a return specialist with 4.3 speed who couldn't get it up without weed? Anything you got, we're interested. If we're about to spend about 10 million bucks on a half-dozen or so kids from around the country, we want to know what we're buying.

This is a vicious, sometimes unfair process in which a bad word from a teammate or a coach with a grudge can cost a good kid hundreds of thousands of dollars. And yet every year, a few stone-headed prospects make it easier for NFL spies by getting themselves arrested on the eve of the draft. It's hard to see the justice in a kid taking a fall because he used to bake out and eat Ho-Hos in his dorm room. But a 22-year-old who can't stay out of jail in the month before the draft deserves whatever happens to him.

Pre-draft arrestees are honored with the Order of Justin Miller, named after the ballyhooed Clemson cornerback who was popped with a noise-and-resisting violation the week before the 2005 draft; the 6'2", 202-pounder shoved a female cop and screamed "This is my house and my party!" ("Shows good on-field leadership skills," noted a scout who observed) when police showed up at his place after a noise complaint. Considered a sure first-rounder, Miller dropped to the end of the second round, where the Jets picked him up and turned him into a big-time kick returner. Other well-known pre-draft arrestees include Ravens pass-rusher Terrell Suggs (for a street basketball fight), Saints wideout Talman Gardner (boilerplate weed bust), and Eagles D-lineman Jerome

McDougle (trying to prevent police from towing a friend's car).

This year's Miller award winner has already made himself known. Tarell Brown, a cornerback from Texas, was busted for weed possession last week, two days after the university's pro day. The bust was a rare triple-cliché: a "routine traffic stop" meets "strong odor of marijuana" meets "but it was my cousin's joint, not mine" arrest. (Brown's cousin was driving.) Brown's lawyer seems to be planning a defense based on a theory of innocence, an interesting strategy given that his client was involved in a similar incident last summer, in which Brown was found asleep in the back seat of a car with a loaded handgun on his lap. The tough thing is that Brown's a pretty good player and his arrest will wreak unusual havoc on his draft status, as teams in the post-Pacman Jones era will be wary of picking a cornerback with multiple arrests. It says here that he will go to Dallas or Arizona in the fifth round.

Ex-Pat nailed



You gotta hand it to the Patriots. When it comes to arrest-prone athletes, they know when to hold 'em, and know when to fold 'em. Safety Dexter Reid, one of the more undeserving players to win multiple Super Bowl rings (one with the Pats and one with the, ugh, Colts), was nailed last week for a weed-and-gun arrest. Reid's trademark play as a deep centerfielder for the Pats was a diving miss in which he wrapped nothing but air with both hands, landing mug-first on the turf as slow possession receivers blew by him for long gainers. He really sucked, and now he's also been arrested.

He gets 30 points for his crime. As for the rest of this NFL season, I'll have a full preview of draft-eligible criminals in the upcoming weeks.

Incidentally, keep an eye out for Florida and Arizona busts. The last week of baseball spring training is usually a target-rich environment for highway patrol cops who are light on their quarterly DUI quotas. Last week saw Tony LaRussa and Gustavo Chacin rung up, but it isn't really a season until a New York Met is in the pokey, reeking of Jager. ■

Sports Blotter Legend

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

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[sic]

sic@buffalobeast.com

A VERY THIN HOPE

I thought that was dead on [Matt Taibbi, "The Britney Budget," issue 114]. The paragraph screwing an 8 year old was priceless. And you are right, we probably deserve exactly what we get. Americans don't know their own history or their Constitution, they vote (just not for president). Most americans beleive in god, and continue in futility to demand that everyne respect their beliefs, even as they make fun of a cultist like Tom C. We need to invade ourselves and divest ourselves of our WMD's before we end up blowing ourselves up out of stupidity.

PS Keep writing, your paper is the only thing still giving me hope for the future of America.

How are we supposed to write now, with that kind of pressure? Gosh!

OOPS, I LEARNED SOMETHING

This was a very good and informative article. At first I just wanted to read some scathing humor on Britney Spears, but when the article turned towards our budget and how corporates are taking advantange because our government allows it, I stopped laughing. I felt anger towards ou government and I feel compassion towards the poor we live with. I think sometimes life is too good here in the U.S. That's why we have so much free time to follow stupid stories just to keep from getting bored. I am going to show this article to my kids (minus the profanity) because we need to watch this kind of thing. Thanks for this article. I hope you guys are not really evil.

Carlos M. Morales

*Dear Carlos,
That's cute that you can still hope for things.*

NOT AS HOT AS YOU THOUGHT

Re: britney's shaved thing

Fellow Scholars, Um, could you, you know, send me a j-peg of Britney's shaved, uh, huh,

huh, Bush Estate?
umburto echo

*Dear Umburto,
Not wanting to be arrested for distributing pornography to a minor, we'll just tell you to follow this simple three-step process:*

1. Go to any Internet search engine page.
2. Type "Britney pussy" and hit enter.
3. Shudder with horror.

CLASSY

Thanks for putting Anna Nicole and Britney on the cover of your March issue. I know you were trying to convey a point about the vapid nature of our society's interests, but for me it sparked a different sort of thought. Just 6 months ago, the chances of me having sex with either one of these hot broads was nil. Now I could probably have my way with either of them. In Anna's case all it would take is a shovel and a bottle of Old Smuggler Scotch to help me not think about what I was doing. With Britney, I could probably just lend an ear and a wig. She is so lonely and isolated right now that even my low-levels of charm and persuasion would probably cause her nipples to harden and panties to soak. How much money do you have in the bank now that The BEAST is two dollars? I would imagine that you have several million. If that is the case, please fund an expedition in journalism by sending me to wherever Anna Nicole Smith is buried and the rubber room Britney Spears is locked up in. I'll take pictures.

--
Chris Riordan
Totally Awesome Magazine

*Dear Chris,
Dude, yuck! You want to have sex with Britney Spears? Just... ewwww, man, gross.*

BELATEDLY BUSTED

It's true that the airport and any other Homeland Security department for that matter are all bureaucratic cesspools that serve as convenient ways or bushie to keep

the unemployment numbers down [Michael J. Smith, "Menace in Seat 36F," issue 114]. I've gotten a lot of things through security at the airport (Accidently of course-except that bag of weed)
PracktoMite

*Dear PracktoMite,
They can read your e-mail, you know.*

MILE HIGH CLUB

Who knows what evil can be done with a Swiss Army Knife. The take over of Airport passenger screening by the TSA has become a nightmare for flyers and another public relations fiasco for the Government. That should have been expected. Washington can not run a one car funeral either efficiently or economically.
James E. Fish

*Dear James,
What's with the attitude? Take off your shoes, citizen; we have to see if you're smuggling hair gel.*

DUUUUUHHHHH

"wipe" IS transitive [Allan Uthman, "Sweet Nothings," issue 114.]
Alan Angel

*Dear Alan,
Right. But the Persian word that was translated as "wipe"... isn't. So yeah, there you go.*

EQUAL RIGHTS HARASSMENT

great article by a great writer [Matt Taibbi, "Obama," issue 114].
btw, why are there no women on your staff? just being evil, depending on your point of view - however, it IS Islamically correct, which goes pretty far...

re celebrities - you could do what I did for years - simply read something else - or live somewhere else - so I have this huge chunk of celebrity knowledge completely missing.

the bad news is, half our language is based on celebrity-referencing, so people always think I'm from Surinam or St. Martin ...

Gee, and I always thought Obama was a great guy ...
Why don't one of you guys run?

Omyma

*Dear Omyma,
We love to have women on our staff. Why don't you come by and we can fill you in? We're sure to find an agreeable position. Also, sex.*

NO-CHANCE McGEE

Dear Sirs,

Taibbi calls Obama out on a lot of things, but leaves out some important sins that he has committed. He voted for the Patriot Act and also the military commissions act, both completely traitorous acts of legislation that have no positive aspects for anyone who enjoys liberty. You should look into Ron Paul for president and do an article. He's a congressman in Texas who voted against the war, against the Patriot Act and every other bill that goes against the constitution. There is a media blackout on his campaign and it would be cool to see a story on his bid for prez. He is running as a republican, but nobody is perfect. He comes close though and is the best candidate for changing our present condition. sincerely,

Henry Krinkle
Austin, TX

Dear Congressman Paul,

Let's dispense with the false identity, shall we? While you are no doubt a true believer and not the usual huckster, your strict libertarian ideology is little more than an elaborate way of saying "poor people can suck my balls." Have a good day now, sir.

FIND = FIND

Just found your website and it was indeed a find. No right wing dogma or left wing delegation of responsibility, but as Jack Webb use to say "Just the facts" Keep up the good work.
Ton

Dear Ton,

Hey man, we're not making any promises, but if we don't keep it up, it's society's fault. Remember 9/11!

ANOTHER DAY TO SKIP VOTING

It is long past time for a "STAND ALONE FEDERAL ELECTION" [Brad Friedman interview, issue 114].

This must be done to keep our democracy clean. It must only be about "President and Vice President", "Senator", and "Congressman".

It should be paper ballots, hand counted, and totally funded by the Federal Government.

Other countries do this in their elections with no apparent problems.

Let all state, county, city and local problems be taken care of at another time and concentrate on a single purpose election.

All ballots in all states would be essentially the same without any confusion.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Ilkleymoor

Dear Ilkleymoor,

That's a great idea! That way, we can clean up the presidential vote, while keeping all other elections suspect and vulnerable to tampering! Genius!

THE SINCEREST FORM OF IDEA THEFT

Hey Beast! Fallon! Uthman! Taibbi! Whoever Reads This Shit!

This is Paul Smith, the editor-in-chief of Insubordination Monthly. We just premiered a depraved political satire rag here in Pensacola, Florida and I thought you guys might want to give it look. I think the Beast is easily the best political satire magazine in the country and there is absolutely no question that we are totally ripping you guys off... that is, when we're not picking the bones of Hunter Thompson's corpse. But we don't mind being hacks. Shit, we relish in it! I believe it was Josh Billings who said, "The most originality that any writer can hope to achieve honestly is to steal with good judgment." So, at least we are literary bandits with exquisite taste!

But, I think you guys may enjoy some of our stuff. We're all in our early to mid-twenties and we're all total political junkies. Also, we're

all despicable awful people... just like you guys!

Well, keep up the important work you guys are doing. America needs the Beast! ... Fuck the whales! Save the Beast! ... And hopefully you'll give us a look and maybe pass us around the Beast offices, eh? Thanks for your time... take care.

-Paul

Dear Paul,

Florida, huh? Hope you're armed. Good luck.

THERE GO THE JUDGE

Dear Mr. Paul Jones and the editors of the Beast,

I find myself very touched by the troubles Rachel Bevilacqua has had with this despicable judge [Paul Jones, "The Persecution Rests," issue 96]. While I don't have the financial resources to try to aid her myself, I wonder if any of the larger media outlets have deemed this story worthy of their attention. I think if we had a little more public exposure of this story, the American people as a whole would see that she's done nothing worthy of losing her child. It seems the very American concepts of freedom of speech and religious expression



are being challenged by this judge. I can only hope that now that he's recused himself from the case, sounder minds can prevail.

Personally, I never quite got the joke behind the Chuch of Subgenius. ...but that certainly doesn't it isn't valid satire and therefore must instead be somehow harmful devil worshipping. Besides, don't even devil worshippers have the right to custody of their children as long as they're capable of raising them well?

Carl Benzino
Long Beach, Calif.

*Dear Carl,
Bevilacqua still doesn't have her kid. But she was really asking for it, expressing herself like that and turning on a repressed sexual deviant judge in a way which disturbed his conflicted conscience. She's just lucky Judge Punch has a dominatrix on call 24/7, or he might have had her executed. In case this is too subtle for you: Judge James Punch of Orleans County Family Court is a fucking worthless asshole who deserves to be sodomized with a broken bottle. But hey, that's just our opinion.*

KIWI FRUIT

Dear Beast

So you want to invade and overthrow the democratically elected government in my country do you? You would first have to understand that our 12,000 (man, woman) strong Defence Force (we have no army, sorry) would need to be subdued; quite an easy task, as more than one third are university graduates, so at the first whiff of hostilities they would collectively head for the board room. Next our air defences would need to be penetrated. As we have recently (1999) sold our attack wing (25, A4 Skyhawks, Vietnam vintage) this might prove easier than

attacking the Defence Force. However several Hercules and Orion transports remain, as do a significant number of Iriquois helicopters. Before you invade I could e-mail you a list of the exact locations and numbers of said air defence forces, if this would be helpful.

The Navy (well, coast guard really) should cause the most worries. It consists of Three frigates, quite new (1995), but they spend their time catching illegal Chinese, Taiwanese, Russian, and Japanese fishing boats. They also save stupid American and European yachtsmen who believe that the 'Roaring 40s' in some way resembles that PUDDLE between Land's End, and the Eastern Seaboard. All this military information now makes me a traitor to my nation which in NZ law means I will suffer three weeks of home detention, followed by a course in civics and social awareness; I might apply at this time, because of severe stress, for a prescription of medicinal marijuana to ease my discomforture. Please remember you are invading a country which in 1997 sold its entire rail infrastructure, bridges, tracks, stations, the lot, to a Canadian company for \$11,000,000NZ (\$8,000,000US): Overpriced I thought.

You also state that you would attack with armed marsupials; now you're just being simple. As any fourth grader in Hicksville USA will tell you NZ has no native mammals; except a bat, which flew here 10 odd million years ago: Are you perhaps confusing us with that shit hole next door, which is jam packed with marsupials and other assorted primitive mammals? We broke off (cut the umbilical) 200 million years ago, became an island of birds and never looked back. Finally consider the wider strategic goals: After NZ what next? Antarctica?

Your rag gives me great satisfaction. The idea that free thinking, and criticism are still alive and well in its nominal birthplace is gravy for my brisccett.

Thanks. And I apologise if my previous mail in some way caused you to believe that I don't value human life, where ever it is spawned, I do. It is simply disgust at this pompous war that makes me a little terse. Matt, your writing is very enjoyable; Beast your rag is also enjoyable.
Rob.

*Dear Rob,
Pish posh! Our marsupial "gaffe" was no such thing. We were merely insulting you Moa-killers by illustrating your hopeless fate, doomed to eternal obscurity in the shadow of a larger, cruder, better-known neighbor. You're Australia's Canada. Tell Xena we said hi.*

ANTI-GOD AGENDA PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY

I noticed that this year Jesus replaced his dad on the list. Does that mean that the Holy Ghost will be on the 2007 roster? 'Cause, I really fucking hate that guy.

Cheers,
Eric

*Dear Eric,
Lucky for you, Hell is just a fictional deterrent to antisocial behavior, or you'd surely be going there!*

LAZY BOY

Your reviews are based EXCLUSIVELY on the trailers? Come on now.
Matthew Arnold

*Dear Matthew,
To be honest, we're not even sure Gildea has the patience to sit through a whole trailer anymore. He's really not the same since the stroke.*



BEAST-O-SCOPES

As divined by Andrew Gullerstein

Aries (March 21-April 19)

If there were ever a case to be made for karma, Aries, it's your diseased colon. Toeing the Republican line over at FOX News was bad enough, but becoming press secretary? You can only sit on the truth so long before it crawls up your ass and kills you, Aries.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, if you say the word "Sanjaya" one more time, I'll be forced to consult my book of spells and have you struck by lightning. If that doesn't work out I'll just run you over with my car.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

What happened to you, Gemini? In the late seventies and early eighties you really knew how to mistreat and hold on to your hostages. You'd keep them for years without flinching, but now you give them tea, force a confession, parade them in front of the cameras and let them go as an "Easter gift?" Weak, Gemini.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Way to go for standing up to O'Reilly, Cancer! Being able to delineate between immigration and drunk driving issues almost redeems you for gluing that poor hamster to your upper lip.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Leo, you need to calm down and face the facts. Your cat's kidneys are not failing because of tainted Chinese wheat gluten; it's failing because it drinks heavily when you leave the house.

Virgo (Aug 23-Sept 22)

Virgo, your recent tour of a Baghdad market caught you a lot of flak because the 100 troops, 2 Blackhawk helicopters, gun ships and Kevlar vest protecting you made your claims of "progress" laughable. But did you know the day after you left insurgents murdered 21 grocers from the very same market? Way to go, putz.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Your recent proclamation to become "the Robert Mugabe of the soprano saxophone" will turn out as badly as the time you aimed to be "the Kenny G of Zimbabwean politics."



Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21)

Your mother isn't really that hot, Scorpio, and even if she were, that's a really creepy thing to say.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Sagittarius, although you may be inclined to support a Fred Thompson bid for president because of the credibility he projected on Law & Order, it's important to remember he was also in *Aces: Iron Eagles III*.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Capricorn, all those whale fat sandwiches aren't fooling anyone. Everyone knows you're not a real Inuit. Poser.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18)

I've consulted the stars for you, Aquarius, and they recommend you try converting hydrogen into helium through the process of nuclear fusion.

Pisces (Feb 19-March 20)

Pisces, I don't care how much money you raised; there's no way in hell we'll ever elect a Mormon president. Envisioning yourself bathing in worms to quell masturbatory urges is just weird, and don't get me started on the "magic underwear" thing.

PLEASE READ RESPONSIBLY.



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