

THE

# BEAST



ISSUE # 118 ~ August, 2007

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AMERICA'S BEST FIEND



## AVALANCHES: *Are We Safe?*



*Americans  
Manage to  
Lower Level  
of Political  
Discourse*



*Clinton  
Cleavage  
Blamed for  
Sagging  
Polls*

# Separated at birth?



**Rudy Guilliani...**



**...and Colonel Klink?**



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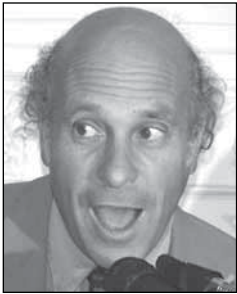


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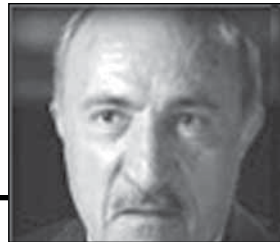
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# *The Avalanche Threat*



**No one is safe**

**By Allan Uthman**

“Someday soon, you might wake up to the call to prayer from a Muslim muezzin. Millions of Europeans already do. And liberals will still tell you that ‘diversity is our strength’ – while Talibanic enforcers cruise our cities burning books and barber shops... the Supreme Court decides *sharia* law doesn’t violate the ‘separation of church and state’ ... and the Hollywood Left gives up gay rights in favor of the much safer charms of polygamy.”

- Promotional text for Mark Steyn’s *America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It*.

9/11 really changed everything. Before, the news covered some events of genuine importance. Now, Americans are subjected to a constant deluge of holy crap-style terrorism coverage. Our heightened anxiety over 9/11 has been cultivated and stretched out over the

past six years, to the point now that any event which even superficially resembles a terrorist attack, no matter how briefly, gets week-long national coverage. A steam pipe blows in New York? It’s “especially frightening, considering what happened on 9/11.” Some rich douchebag crashes his helicopter into an apartment building? “A chilling reminder of the events that took place on 9/11.” We’re so pathetically traumatized that an entire city can now be brought to its knees by an ad for Aqua Teen Hunger Force. It hardly speaks of America as the proud, tough nation it imagines itself to be.

Of course, we’re all a little tense, having been waiting, vigilant, muscles clenched, for the next inevitable strike. Any day, now, any minute, and... BLAMMO! It could happen to you, we’re told repeatedly. It could happen anywhere. But really, how serious is the threat of domestic terrorism?

More Americans have been killed in the war in Iraq than have ever been killed by terrorism in the history of the country. A *San Francisco Chronicle* piece puts

the odds of being killed by terrorism as slightly lower than *dying in an avalanche*. How much are we spending on avalanche prevention? Why is there no counter-avalanche czar? How many news stories have you seen about the threat of avalanches? Think about it: “Avalanches: Are we safer than we were?” Or “Democrats: Soft on avalanches?” Why does the liberal media ignore the avalanche threat?

You get the idea. From a purely rational perspective, we are spending a ridiculously disproportionate amount of time, money and attention on what amounts to a tiny threat. Not only that, but we have failed miserably in even reducing that threat, despite the astounding scope of our backwards approach to it.

It’s truly amazing: we spend more on defense and security than the entire rest of the world, and the enemy is a shabby assemblage of repressed losers. Yet somehow the media manages to effectively convey the feeling that the country is some soft, white, utterly vulnerable blob of flesh, a giant, defenseless belly with

no arms or legs, practically begging to be punctured and devoured by a teeming mass of impossibly disciplined super-criminals.

In fact, looking at the attacks that have occurred and the plans that have been discovered, there's been a marked downward trend in terrorist competence since 9/11. The last few have almost been comical: Four guys concoct a plan to attack an *army base* dressed as pizza guys (and hadn't even gotten any weapons by the time they were busted), another handful entertain physically impossible fantasies

of blowing up an airport by lighting a pipeline miles away, and two doctors in England set themselves on fire and crash their car into a wall. We're not dealing with Bond villains here.

The truth, when it comes to what motivates suicide bombers, is a lot easier to understand than you think: sexual frustration. In the harsher varieties of Sunni Islam, polygamy and strictly observed rules against extramarital sex combine to produce grown men who have never touched a girl (and possibly never even beaten off, thanks to rules against

masturbation). They are total losers in the game of life. This is, for any multicellular organism, an intolerable condition, and frankly inhumane. Let's not forget that the mainly adolescent American males who shoot up their schools usually aren't big winners with the ladies either. Add to this smoldering frustration the promise of an eternal super-orgy upon death, and anyone dumb enough to believe their local radical mullah would be itching for a shortcut to paradise.

Obviously, there's some serious resentment of the West involved, but again, these guys have *never been laid*. If I go more than a week without some kind of orgasm, I'm fantasizing about killing people who drive a little slower than I do, and none of them bombed my village. Scoff if you like, but to me this explanation makes a lot more sense than "they hate us for our freedom." Envy us, maybe. Of course, addressing this aspect of the terrorist problem would require that we acknowledge some universal truths about human biology that American society isn't adult enough to face, so we're going with the "mindless alien zombie" theory of terrorism. Sensationalism beats reason once again.

But if what we're led to believe is true, that many millions of people are dedicated to causing mayhem, loosely networked in a clever array of independent cells with access to massive funding and bomb-making expertise and equipment, and many of them are in America as we speak, salivating at the thought of our destruction, then what the hell are they waiting for? The unpopular fact is that no matter how much money you spend or panic you foment, there is just no way to protect against this scenario. With the advance of affordable weapons technology, the ability of any motivated individual to kill others has irrevocably grown. A few centuries ago, all one murderous psychopath could do was whip out a sword and start hacking people—dramatic, but not very effective. How many people could you kill before a crowd took you down? Two or three maybe? Nowadays, any skinny loser can buy a gun or build a bomb and wipe out a whole crowd before they can get out of their chairs. This is a hard truth to swallow, but you really can't prevent terrorism through government ass-kicking, no matter how lavishly funded. You just can't

# THE BEAST PAGE 5

## *Headless Pharmaceutical Mascot*

**Name:** Johnny "Snake Eyes" Mirapex.

**Turn-Ons:** Restless legs, Parkinson's, vaguely defined "syndromes," abstract forms, deregulated drug advertising, the FDA, disconcerting side effects, increased gambling, and compulsive sexual behavior.

**Turn-Offs:** Exercise, meditation, heads, torsos, healthy living, monogamy, savings accounts, and my child's future.

**How I got to be the Beast Page 5 Headless Pharmaceutical Mascot:** It was just another all-night poker marathon at my buddy's place. Maybe you know him—Pedro the Nasonex bee? Everyone else was out; it was just me and him. Pedro's numerous legs were twitching. Not me. I played it cool. I had 2 aces showing, and 2 in hand. I went in for my house, my car—everything. I was tapped. So this "BEAST" guy across the table from me says he'd bank me, but if I lose the hand I have to do his "bidding." Needless to say that clear-nosed Mexican pollen-sucker was holding a goddamned royal flush. I'm a headless pharmaceutical mascot of my word, so when The BEAST called on me to collect the debt, I made good on that word.

**Future Plans:** Oh you know me, baby—I'll be looking for that big score. Luck's got to shine on this headless pharmaceutical mascot one of these days. That, and I'll be shagging anything with legs.

**How I'd like to be remembered:** As a maverick—one part P.T. Barnum, one part Uri Geller, and one part Aldous Huxley. As the product of a graphic designer who's clearly out of ideas. And above all as a guy who didn't twitch in his sleep.



watch everyone all the time. If there are even twenty people right now in America plotting different attacks, at least a couple will be successful.

There are two choices in the face of such threats: Address the terrorists' stated grievances—in other words, leave the Middle East alone, a highly unlikely scenario—or resign yourself to the occasional massacre. Obviously, you don't give up trying to catch people, but let's not pretend Bush has made it impossible to blow things up in America. If nothing has blown up, it only stands to reason that there aren't many people trying. In fact, the FBI said in 2005 that there were "no signs" of terror cells in the US. Didn't hear much about that on the news.

There are many more serious threats than terrorism. From 2001 to 2005, less than three thousand Americans died as a result of terrorism, virtually all of them in one day. In the same span of time, 102,000 died from drunk driving, 108,000 died from lack of health care, while another 264,000 died from medical errors. Nearly half a million died from diabetes. 2.3 million died from cancer. Over 3 million more from heart disease. Guns kill 32,000 a year. Cigarettes kill as many Americans as 9/11 did every week.

These are just a few examples. If I listed every cause of death that presents a bigger threat to the average American than terrorism, there'd be no room for me to write anything else. Seriously: car crashes, wet floors, food poisoning, binge drinking, fireworks, et cetera. So why aren't we spending those untold billions on better health care, or food safety standards, or gun control?

Of course, most would say we have no choice, that if we let up for a second in spending obscene sums "fighting terror" at home and abroad, the terrorists would... what? Really, what would they do? Let's look at what most would call a worst-case security scenario: We surrender. The US pulls all of its troops out of all military engagements around the world, stops funding Israel, shuts down the DHS and reverses all security measures taken since 9/11. What would really happen? Would an Islamofascist horde really emerge from the ocean and occupy the nation? Of course not. We're talking about a few

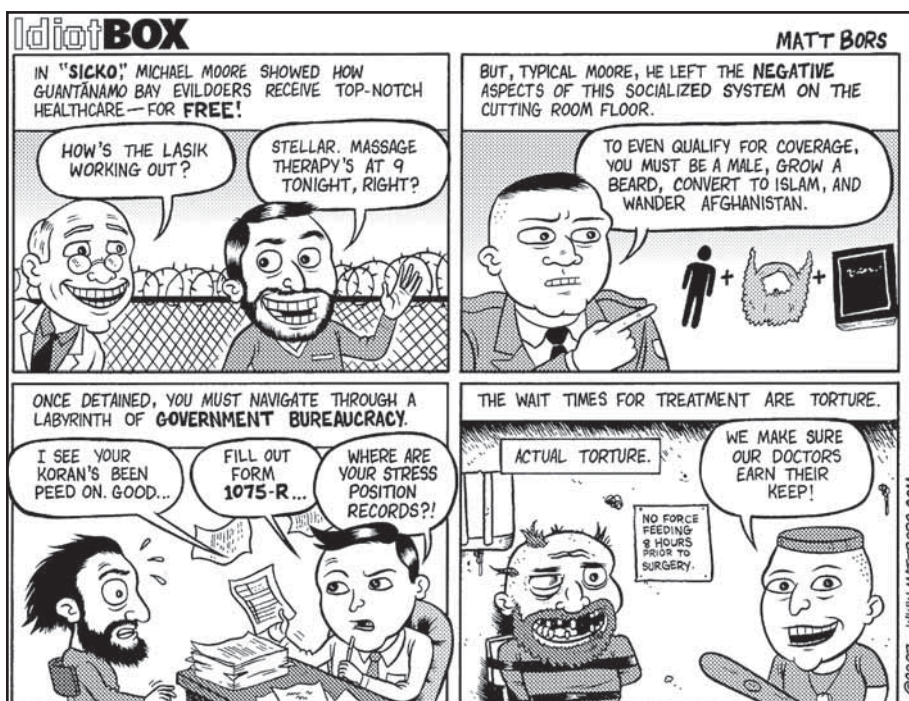
thousand bearded dicks on the other side of the world. What *might* happen is that every once in a great while, someone blows up a Pizza Hut. That would suck, but if we were spending all that money addressing problems that *actually* kill large numbers of people, we could more than make up the difference. Not to mention that if we really did these politically impossible things, Islamic terrorists would no longer have a reason to attack us.

The British, who have some experience with weathering the occasional bombing, are showing signs of stepping back from the threat-hyping practices which have become quasi-religious rituals in America. In April, they announced they were shelving the exquisitely Orwellian phrase "war on terror," in part because it strengthens terrorists. As International Development Secretary Hilary Benn said, "We do not use the phrase 'war on terror' because we can't win by military means alone, and because this isn't us against one organized enemy with a clear identity and a coherent set of objectives. It is the vast majority of the people in the world—of all nationalities and faiths—against a small number of loose, shifting and disparate groups who have relatively little in common apart from their identification with others who share their distorted view of the world and their idea of being part of something bigger." That is, by overestimating the threat of terrorism, we

make terrorists feel more powerful than they are, and make joining their ranks more alluring for disgruntled Muslims. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. Pretend they're powerful, and eventually they will be.

There is one truly dangerous possibility I'm leaving out, of course—the mushroom cloud. But the idea of al Qaeda as a tech-savvy, sophisticated operation is overblown. Their most clever attack to date involved flight school and box cutters. It was a stunning success, but a far cry from acquiring, smuggling and detonating a nuke. As far as dirty bombs go, they don't actually work—look it up—and judging by the "sophistication" of the enemy, they'd probably die of radiation poisoning before they finished making one. "Cyberterrorism" is purely an invention of the media, on a par with Y2K as a legitimate threat.

Still, the one significant way in which terrorism could really threaten this county would be a nuke. So how do we deal with that threat—the only threat that warrants serious national anxiety? Well, one way would be to spend a lot on nonproliferation programs—from coordinated efforts with other countries to secure vulnerable nukes and fissile materials, to simply buying black market nuclear technology outright. But the Bush administration has refused to sign an international nuclear nonproliferation treaty and is cutting



back funding on these programs, which were already only in the millions, not billions, over strong objections of people in the field. Obviously, they don't think the threat is very serious, and they'd rather spend the cash on invading countries which don't contain any terrorists, as well as continuing to keep you freaked the hell out. The actual terrorists who committed the crimes of 9/11 remain ensconced in Pakistan, don't forget. Apparently, they're such powerful geniuses that we just can't catch them, no matter how many Iraqis we kill.

The reality is that, by inflaming our fears and exaggerating the threat, the government and the media are exacerbating the real damage of terrorism: the terror itself. Few of us have died, but boy are we scared. That fear is exactly the effect intended by the terrorists, and it's also pretty useful to a president who flouts constitutional law.

But the fear is completely out of proportion with the threat. We're doing Osama's job for him. So we subject ourselves to more and more outrageous security measures, surrendering our rights, our reputation and our dignity for precious little real gain, and putting other policy issues, which are in reality more important, on the back burner "until the threat is defeated" —in other words, forever. We're like a promiscuous junkie who shuns condoms and clean needles, but spends all his time engaged in elaborate plans to avoid being hit at random by a falling piano. It's just plain dumb.

The press could do the nation a real service if they confronted the simple mathematical folly of our terror obsession. But rational analysis doesn't get good ratings; sensationalism does. You'll watch CNN more if they manage to scare the shit out of you. It's what the White House wants, anyway—a win/win. So if Barack Obama or Mitt Romney stepped on stage today and said, "We would do a lot more good for the country if we shut down the Homeland Security Department and used the money to fund quality universal healthcare," they'd be angrily shouted out of the mainstream, if not killed by a mob. At this point, after years of shock propaganda, telling the truth about the paltry terror threat is just not an option.



**EZ GUIDE 25¢**

# IT COULD HAPPEN ... SCARY PREDICTIONS OF THE FUTURE IN BUFFALO !!

**1**



## HUGE ELECTRIC & GAS BILLS

IMAGINE.. WITH ALL THAT FREE WATER POWER IN OUR BACKYARD, AND GIANT NATURAL GAS RESERVES.. WE GET SHAFTED WITH HIGHEST RATES IN THE COUNTRY...

**IT COULD HAPPEN ...**

**2**



## LOTTERIES AND CASINOS

IMAGINE.. IF GOVERNMENT AND CONGLOMERATES CAN LEGALLY PRETEND TO ENHANCE US... ONLY TO MAKE MILLIONS FOR THEMSELVES & LOSERS OF US...

**IT COULD HAPPEN ...**

**WHERE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN YESTERDAY, TODAY, & TOMORROW**



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# RA RA SIS BOOM BAAAAAAAH!

Text "Dead Cheerleaders" for Unrelenting Media Saturation

By  
Steve  
Gordon

*"But do you know why we are always more just and more generous with the dead? The reason is simple. With them there is no obligation. They leave us free and we can take our time, fit the testimonial in between a cocktail party and a nice little mistress, in our spare time, in short. If they forced us to anything, it would be to remembering, and we have a short memory. No, it is the recently dead we love among our friends, the painful dead, our emotion, ourselves after all!"*

-Albert Camus

In what could arguably be considered one of the less funny news stories of this remarkably unfunny summer news season, five teenage girls were killed when they lost control of their vehicle and collided head-on with a tractor trailer.

The five young, attractive, Caucasian women had just graduated from high school in Fairport, New York, a relatively affluent suburb of Rochester. They were traveling to a cabin in one of their parents' SUVs. Also, they were cheerleaders.

The news media smelt blood: five attractive, young, Caucasian women from Anytown, USA killed in a tragic and spectacular accident. Also, they were cheerleaders.

Regional papers and television stations were on it right away, given the incident's local relevance—first with the standard

"tragic accident claims lives" coverage, followed by "a whole town mourns" follow-ups. Rochester's daily, the *Democrat & Chronicle*, generated the first of what would eventually spin off into about fourteen news items related to the accident. Associated Press reports then began to spread to national news outlets.

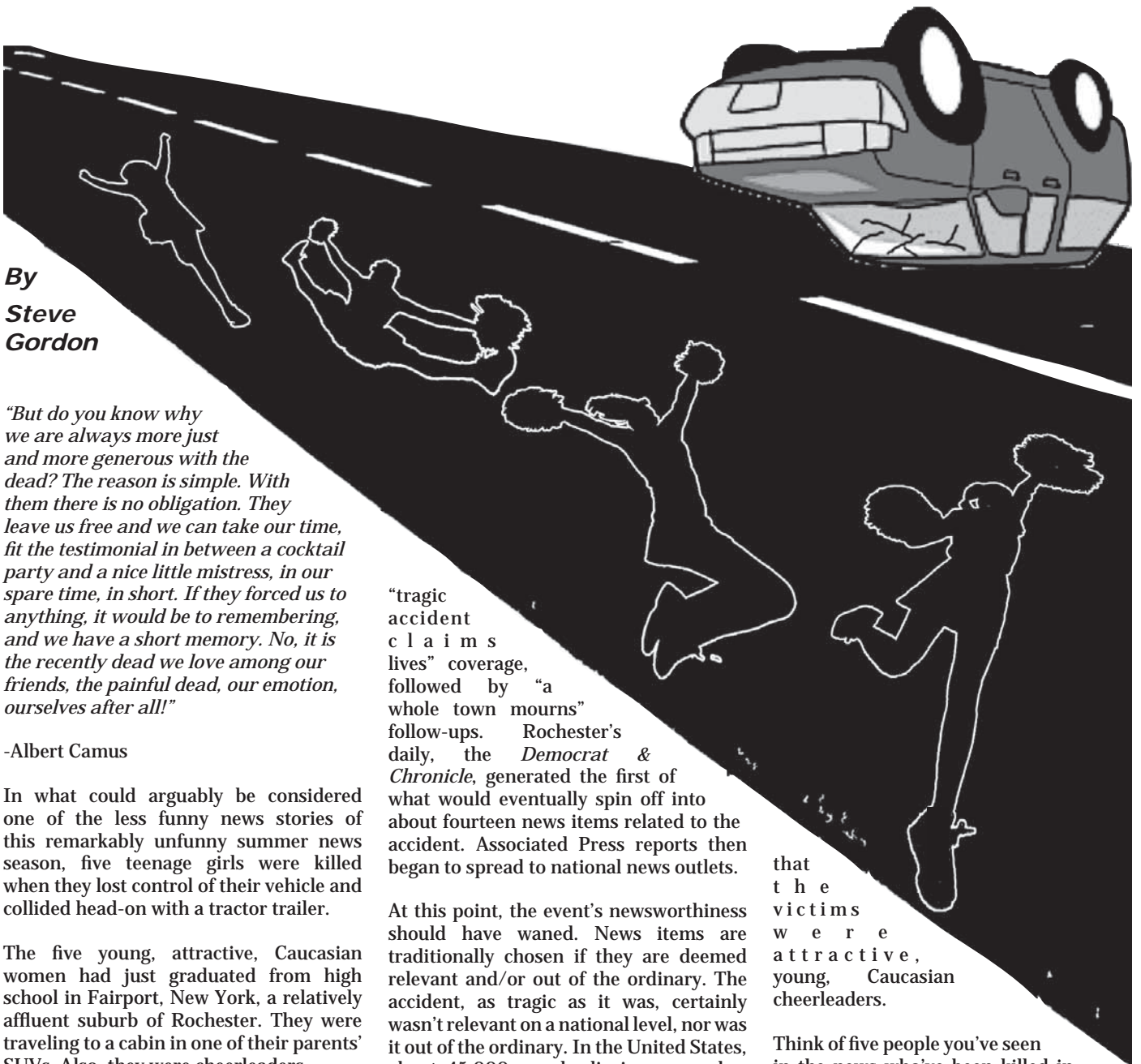
At this point, the event's newsworthiness should have waned. News items are traditionally chosen if they are deemed relevant and/or out of the ordinary. The accident, as tragic as it was, certainly wasn't relevant on a national level, nor was it out of the ordinary. In the United States, about 45,000 people die in car crashes every year. If a vehicle crashed because Iranian missiles were raining down on a highway, it would be a relevant story. If one of the victims got up and started chomping on other people's throats, that would be out of the ordinary.

The majors managed to carry this story for its duration, but it didn't really exhibit any inherent newsworthiness besides the fact

that the victims were attractive, young, Caucasian cheerleaders.

Think of five people you've seen in the news who've been killed in totally pedestrian ways for pedestrian reasons, or simply disappeared in the past five years. What are their physical characteristics?

The loss of five attractive, young, Caucasian, young, attractive women is without a doubt tragic. However, you have to wonder how many middle-aged, obese African-Americans it would have taken to



warrant the same kind of coverage. Fifty? Probably not. More like 200. And it's sad, because you'll never fit that many obese people into an SUV.

At around the time the "a whole town mourns" pieces hit the local news stands, the national outlets were already proclaiming that the small community had the entire country's support. There were attractive, young, Caucasian cheerleaders involved, after all, who all happened to be quite attractive. And quite young. Now, a whole nation could begin to mourn.

The community turned out in droves to publicly display their compassion. Like the opening act of Gianni Schicchi, it was an unctuous public outpouring of sympathy. And not unlike the opera, the sympathy had a deranged source. The five attractive, young, caucasian, attractive women are the deceased Donati, and the mourners—most of whom likely didn't even know the departed in life—conceal a deeper motive beneath their ostensible tears. Whoever sobs the loudest wins the prize.

Here, the masses that assembled at the funerals sought not only to memorialize the five young, attractive, Caucasian, Caucasian girls, but, on some level, to memorialize themselves as part of a spectacle of sympathy. It was a grandiose display of "the community's closeness and compassion," which was apparently not important enough to demonstrate until some hot chicks died.

These are the same people who went all turgid with fury after the WTC fell, and outlets like CNN and ABC News kept them

fed by pumping out tear-jerkers at the expense of truly edifying content.

The spread of the internet and the deregulation of media have increased the competition for attention spans, and the lines between information and entertainment have blurred. News programs became flashy and dramatic as sitcoms evolved into reality TV and then into scripted reality. America craves a new hyper-realistic drama that unfolds in real time in order to fulfill a collective desire no longer satiated by the serialized novel or the soap opera.

Even after hundreds and, according to some reports, thousands of people turned out for the heavily-publicized funerals, the newsworthiness of the story hadn't declined as it should have. It had become, in essence, a TV show that people could fit in and follow at five o'clock every night, and the pilot was a hit.

The public still wanted to wrestle some sense from this capricious event. People wanted a villain: someone to help them subvert their anguish into wrath. Fortunately, there was an angle for this yearning.

Two weeks after the crash, at the tail end of an incessant stream of "so-and-so remembers..." pieces, reporters began to disseminate a new revelation. Apparently the driver of the SUV was driving with a junior driver's license, which made it, technically, illegal for her to be driving at that time of night or with that many minors in the vehicle. But it would appear that this little detail wasn't very satisfying.

I mean, when you're looking for someone to blame for the senseless death of a young, attractive, Caucasian, attractive, young woman, it's kind of a turn-off to have blame the young, attractive, Caucasian, attractive, young woman herself—who was a cheerleader after all.

A few days later, this emotional morass let up. A new report from local police stated that the driver may have been distracted by text messages sent to and from her phone within seconds of the accident. Finally, the story had a villain: not the dipshit texting while driving, but those awful text messages. A human-shaped villain would have been great, but at least it was something, and it had the extra appeal of affirming technophobic over-forties in their instinctive mistrust of the newfangled gadgets their kids are obsessed with. And finally, the story made its excursion, beyond national neo-newsworthiness, into opinion-worthiness.

Two days of "text messaging may have been responsible" pieces followed, and the bloggers and talking heads had penned the season finale. The five attractive, young, Caucasian, Caucasian women were innocent all along, and a lesson was learned: pack your kids some clean underwear, and remind them not to text and drive.

We should congratulate ourselves, America. We worked together and turned a simple, horrible, meaningless car accident into one of the most compelling television events of the year. I wonder what the writers will come up with next.



# THE SECOND SCOOP%



## Reflogging Palast & Perkins

By A. Monkey

Every human enterprise has its share of hucksters, and why should it be any different in the small world of independent media?

Take Greg Palast, a self-promoter/reporter who writes a story and then writes a hundred stories about that story he wrote. Palast is currently in the midst of a three month re-re-re-re-flogging of an article he wrote in 2004 about a Rove peon who tried to steal 70,000 votes from the negroes.

It was a popular story when it came out, and Palast's face was on every single American screen that would take him – which, in the sad world of independent media means you saw him bragging next to Democracy Now!'s grim-faced Amy Goodman on channel 137 at 2 am. When you learn about how Palast got his hands on this story, it's a wonder that he'd take any credit for it: a goofy email error had Rove peon Tim Griffin's update on the vote theft efforts go to Bush-hating goofball John Wooden of georgewbush.org and not to Bush-manipulating schemester Karl Rove of georgewbush.com.

And here's how Palast got his big scoop: Wooden forwarded the emails to Palast.

Turns out, the peon re-emerged in the U.S. attorney scandal as one of the "loyal Bushies" who got himself some extra-thick padding on his resume with a gig in Arkansas. And of course, out like a lion, a solid three years after filing the report, without a single scrap of new reporting, Palast was back on Amy Goodman, telling it all over again, with passion, how Wooden forwarded him the email – or in his brain, how he broke the fucking story wide open.

Palast also reflogged the 2004 story on his website:

"In October 2004, our investigations team at BBC *Newsnight* received a series of astonishing emails from Mr. Griffin, then Research Director for the Republican National Committee. He didn't mean to send them to us. They were highly confidential memos meant only for RNC honchos."

A pretty tidy way of insinuating that Palast got the emails on his own, don't you think? Only later does he write that Wooden "sent them."

Palast wrote an article that got me thinking about another bad huckster out there, John Perkins. Palast started, "I remember John Perkins. He was a real jerk. A gold-plated, super-slick lying little asshole skill for corporate gangsters; a snake-oil salesman with a movie-star grin, shiny loafers, a crooked calculator and a tooled leather briefcase full ... [of] high-blown bullshit."

That sounded exactly like the John Perkins I've pieced together, but it turned out that Palast was joking. The rest of the article is a paean to Perkins and his new book, *Secret History of the American Empire*, a rehash of his best-selling work, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*.

I'm going to take a page out of Palast's book and do a bit of flogging myself. In the Beast's April 12, 2006 issue I wrote a column on reader fantasies and in it explained why thousands of poor fools out there bought a copy of Perkins's *Confessions* book. I wrote,


"That liar fraud John Perkins who wrote *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* is like the 400th author who tried to peddle

the story of conspiratorial international bankers and wealthy nation states conspiring to suck the developing world dry. Where the previous 399 would-be Perkins failed was that they didn't throw in a James Bond backdrop like Perkins did – secret loan plans schemed out on satin sheets with attendant Swedish babes, intrigue at nightclubs.

"The other 399 tried other tricks: wonkery, hamming up the Jewish banking world as sympathetic dupes to more sinister Papist plotters, telling morality tales, hundreds of other things. But the readers didn't want that. Turns out they wanted Bond. So after the initial low risk, small print run with Perkins's book, the sales numbers came in, and the publishers saw they had the catnip that got the 70,000 banking conspiracy lovers going and committed to marketing his book."

One night this summer, there I was at 2 am, flipping between ESPN and channel 137, and there was John Perkins... on Amy Goodman, flogging his new rehash. And what came out of his mouth?

"[I]t's interesting that in the few instances when economic hit men fail, what we call 'the jackals,' who are people who come in to overthrow governments or assassinate their leaders, also come out of private industry. These are not CIA employees. We all have this image of the 007, the government agent hired to kill, you know, with license to kill, but these days the government agents, in my experience, don't do that. It's done by private consultants that are brought in to do this work. And I've known a number of these individuals personally and still do."

Pretty tidy too. Remember, John Perkins isn't Bond. He said so. 



**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

# An Inconvenient Douche

## Al Gore: Slippery When Wet

By Paul Fallon

Why does Michael Moore support Al Gore? Moore's movies bravely take on the media establishment, piercing false assumptions and telling unpopular stories that need to be told. Predictably, he is vilified for doing so. Nevertheless, he attacks when given a chance, as when he recently laid it on the line with Wolf Blitzer on CNN, asking, "why don't you tell the truth to the American people? I mean, I wish that CNN and the other mainstream media would just for once tell the truth about what's going on in this country, whether it's with healthcare -- I don't care what it is. I mean, you guys have such a poor track record. And I'm just curious when are you going to just stand there and apologize to the American people for not bringing the truth to them that isn't sponsored by some major corporation?" Right on, Mike!

But then Moore starts blabbering about how he hopes Al Gore will get in the 2008 presidential race. "Of course, Moore said, "there's one candidate who isn't even in the race yet. I don't know if he will be. But he was right about the war before it began and he's right about global warming and he's right on this (health care) issue, too."

Does Gore deserve the kind of respect he's been getting from the left, or is he more deserving of the contempt that Moore leveled at Wolf Blitzer?

Aside from being the victim of an electoral tragedy in 2000, Gore's global warming platform gives him instant credibility with the left. Should it? He's supposed to have been talking about the environment for a long time (30 years he has said), but has he been walking the walk? Will Al Gore, like his supporter Moore, attack when given the chance? The answer is no, he won't. Eric Pooley's homage to Gore in



*Time* magazine, "The Last Temptation of Al Gore," points out that it wasn't until after the 2000 election disaster that Gore got back into the environment:

"It has been five years since Tipper first urged her husband to dust off his slide show. The couple was still climbing from the wreckage of 2000, and she was convinced that his survival depended on reconnecting with his core beliefs. He assembled the earliest slide show in 1989, while writing *Earth in the Balance*—carrying an easel to a dinner party at David Brinkley's house, standing on a chair to show CO<sub>2</sub> emissions heading off the charts. She wanted him to find that passion again. They were living in Virginia, and the Kodak slides were gathering dust in the basement. So he pulled them out, arranged them in the carousel and gave his first show with the images mostly backward and upside down."

So what happened to Gore's "core beliefs" and "passion" when he was fucking right next to the sanctified bully pulpit in the White House? He went AWOL on climate change while he was Vice President, and

as much as tells why in a recent Associated Press article, "On Board the Acela Express." The piece notes that "Gore, whose slide show on global warming was the subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth,' said the presidency alone can't necessarily bring about the changes he's calling for." The story quotes Gore: "I was in the White House for eight years and I saw the limitations of even the power of the executive branch when the people and their elected representatives in the Congress were not ready to contemplate the big changes that are necessary." So exactly what are those limitations, and what was Al Gore doing to overcome them? Did a corporate fat cat get your tongue Al?

It should be noted that Gore is himself a corporate fat cat. He is currently a senior advisor at Google (and apparently owns a large chunk of its stock), is on the board of directors at Apple and is co-founder of an investment company called Generation Investment Management. The investment company has holdings in the Johnson & Johnson health insurer AFLAC and

General Electric. And take a peek at the corporate sponsorship list for the Live Earth concerts if you want to see who Al hangs with in the corporate world.

So Gore may have been talking about the environment for years, but while he was VP he kept his mouth shut. Why didn't he use his position to get out in front on the issue? Isn't it a bit hypocritical now to chide the political class for not being able to get the message out about climate change when he failed so miserably in doing so? No, you see, it wasn't Al's fault; it was the system. But hey, now he's authored a new book to explain that, too. His new bestseller carries a title as mighty as it is derivative of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*; it's called *The Assault on Reason*.

"This book bubbled up because of my growing concern that in order to solve the climate crisis, we are going to have to address the problems in the foundations of our democracy that have kept us from acting on the basis of clear evidence that this crisis is real," Gore told Larry King on the same channel. "And when I was out talking so much about the climate crisis, and trying to get what I thought was the appropriate response, the country had a discussion, not really a debate, about the invasion of Iraq, a country that did not attack us. And what the climate crisis and the invasion of Iraq have in common, Larry, is in both cases the policies are badly

mistaken, and in both cases the evidence is available, overwhelming evidence to convince any reasonable person ahead of time that we should have done the opposite of what we did. And so this book addresses the question, what is it that so many millions of Americans feel has gone wrong with our country? How can we fix it? How can we bring the people back into our democracy and start making better decisions on the basis of the evidence at hand?"

So Gore's book not only tells us of the failure of the country to seriously assess the truth about Iraq or global warming, but implies that the failure of Al Gore to open his trap while he was vice president wasn't his fault. The flawed people responsible for our democracy made him do it, or not do it as the case may be. Our democracy is broken, and Al Gore wants to fix it by getting people to tell the truth. Wonderful.

So when King asks about the Democrats' failure to force a timetable to withdraw troops from Iraq, you'd think as a newfound critic of politics as usual Gore would comment on how they chickened out politically—that they could have defunded the war. You'd have thought wrong. In defense of the Dems Gore said, "You know, the tools that are available to the legislative branch of government are not always very precise. They are often blunt instruments. And they passed a measure

that would have required a timetable. The president vetoed it. They were not able to override the veto. So their options have been sharply limited." Sure, limited to refusing to pass the appropriations bill, which would have required backbone.

Gore continued, "I have a lot of confidence in Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid and rest of the leadership in the House and Senate now. And I'm sure that they have made some good decisions here." Gore can scold his readers about failing to get the truth out, but when asked a question on national television, when he had an opportunity to be the role model for unintimidated reason we desperately need, someone to be honest about what is going on and what is not, he defaults to the tried and true talk of a party operative. Gore is so wedded to the political buddy system that when King asked if he was "disappointed" that his former running mate Joe Lieberman supported a war that Gore found so blatantly dumb and wrong, Gore said, "Well, why would you use a word like that where a friend is concerned? We have had our disagreements and I have stated them. But I would not apply that to a friend."

Take that, all people who think Gore gives a shit. What's a little middle east war among friends? Hey, Gore's such a good friend that you can senselessly wipe out almost a million people and the word "disappointed" is too strong for him. So when Gore has to tell Larry King what

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is really wrong with the system, it's not the fault of the *people* involved; it is that system that is corrupting them. He panders to King and the mainstream media in general, saying, "I think that both politicians and journalists are now the best-educated, the best-prepared of any prior generation with the exception of the generation of our founders, which was just an extraordinary collection of individuals that were true geniuses. But I think that there are among the politicians today a lot of good people trapped in a bad system. And what they find is the necessity to rely on these 30-second television commercials and the manipulative emotion-based messages instead of a reasoned argument. And when you combine that with the media's emphasis on things like the horse race and how somebody combs his hair or whether some word was used in an awkward way, the net result is that the American people don't have a chance to join the conversation and what they get thrown at them is trivialities and banalities." While the idea that the American public is obsessed with the trivialities that the entertainment industry shits daily, Gore should recognize the chicken and egg dynamic of this hypothesis. Yet the idea of the public being duped into this media fog is absent. He seems completely unable to conceive that our system of selling consumers a lifestyle that is directly linked to corporate America is at all complicit in the loss of a democratic forum. I find especially odious Gore's fawning worship of our founding fathers as "extraordinary" and "geniuses." What kind of intellect could make that argument with a straight face? It's a fucking childish vision of infallible parental love.

The bottom line is that when asked on television to challenge the status quo, Gore can't. He may write some challenging things in a book, but big fucking deal! What book has had an impact in the last 20 years? This is America. What is a book going to do that years of living in this society and just seeing what is in front of your face every day in every aspect of your life, has not been able to change? What counts is what he does on TV. What's he going to do in the media ring of public approval?

Then there was Live Earth concerts – now that's supposed to mean something. I could only stomach watching bits and pieces, like The Police doing a god-awful "Message in a Bottle" with overrated

brat John Mayer making it sound worse. Then Lenny Kravitz running through the crowd while playing "Let Love Rule" (or something) making a spectacle for no apparent reason other than to stroke Lenny Kravitz's fat ego. The whole thing was a pathetic display of feel good activism and spoiled narcissism.


The bottom line is that Al Gore is still playing the political game. He might be complaining about global warming and the lack of logic in the political system, but he is still sucking up to the people that run the world and that means he thinks more about his career, his pocketbook and possibly his place in history that he does speaking truth to power. He's nothing more than a self-promoting preacher trying desperately to justify some favorable assessment from the court of public opinion. Gore is no doubt a fan of the "greed is good" ethic afflicting the masters of the universe, who he aspires to be in league with. I bet he has conceived of posters for a distant election when he runs for president of the world.

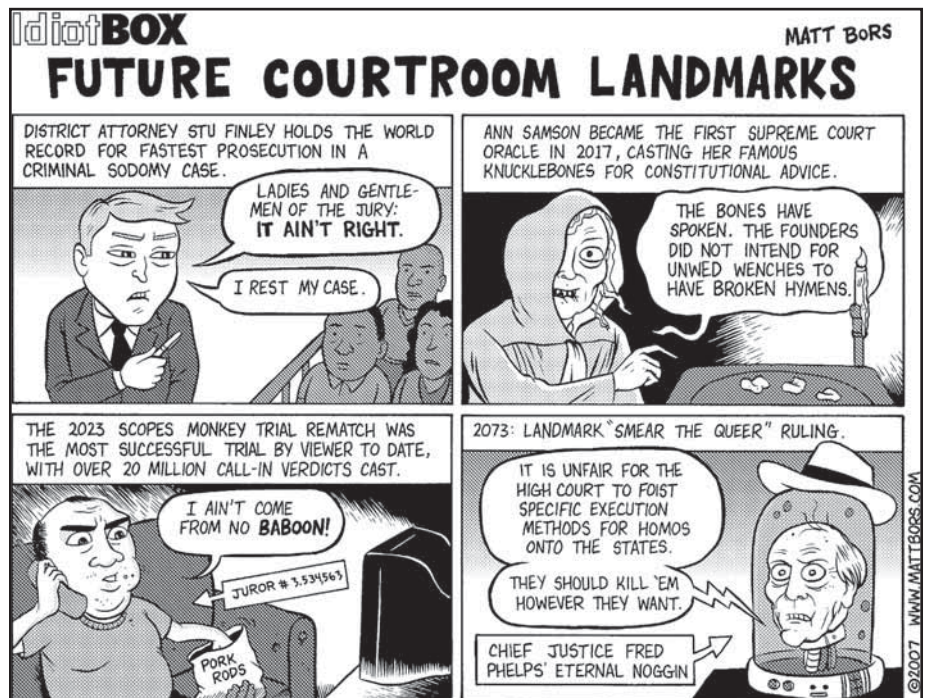
I've despised Al Gore since before he bailed after the 2000 election and failed to demand that the disenfranchising of African American voters in Florida in the 2000 election was a crime that needed to be investigated and prosecuted. The fact that he comes off as an annoying duffus might be a problem for some but it isn't really relevant. The fact is that he is a fucking

humongous hypocrite (figuratively and literally). So what if he thinks he is a lot smarter than he is, most of us, especially politicians, suffer from that delusion. At this stage in his political career, however, he should be pissed off and act the part. Instead he seems to be little more than a suck-up to the status quo even if his issues are slightly more appealing to the left of the political spectrum.

From a particularly gag-inducing section of the Time *magazine* feature, there is one more bit of damning evidence:

"Al Gore and I settle down on the patio, near the swimming pool and the barbecue. 'Did some grilling last night with my friend Jon Bon Jovi,' he says. 'His new record is great.' He props his black cowboy boots on a brightly painted folk-art coffee table, scratches his mutt Bojangles behind the ears and talks about *The Assault on Reason*."

A guy who likes Bon Jovi cannot be trusted. Al Gore likes to play it safe, even with rock and roll. It's fine to play it safe with the environment, but he seems more concerned with Al Gore than any environment. And in times like these, we need somebody willing to take real tough action: and put himself in a position that will truly get the attention of the public that means kicking ass and taking names, not kissing ass and dropping names. 



Great Moments in

# Fascist Punditry



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**July 20, 2007**—Conservative radio host Melanie Morgan braves MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Mathews* to reiterate her love of the Homeland, and her disdain for its enemies within:



"Chris Matthews, on this very program, about a year or so ago, asked me about what I thought of—should be the penalty for whoever leaked the valuable Swift database program to "The New York Times," and I said I wasn't aware of what the—the treason charge would carry. And it turns out it carries the death penalty."

So, I said, yes, I agree if he were—if Bill Keller of "The New York Times" were to be tried of treason, I would have no problem whatsoever with him facing the death penalty. "

**Now that's flexing your Braun!**\*

**April 30, 2007**—Glenn Beck uses his national radio program to forewarn American citizens of the grave peril that awaits them at the hands ecological monsters:



"And I read this one part on global warming about how they got -- what was the first thing they did to get people to exterminate the Jews. Now, I'm not saying that anybody's going to -- you know Al Gore's not going to be rounding up Jews and exterminating them. It is the same tactic, however. The goal is different. The goal is globalization. The goal is global carbon tax. The goal is the United Nations running the world. That is the goal. Back in the 1930s, the goal was get rid of all of the Jews and have one global government.

You got to have an enemy to fight. And when you have an enemy to fight, then you can unite the entire world behind you, and you seize power. That was Hitler's plan. His enemy: the Jew. Al Gore's enemy, the U.N.'s enemy: global warming."

**Stick it to 'em, Glenn!**\*

*\*Say aloud in quick nasal cadence*



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# SAY UNCLE!

## BEAST Negotiates Iraq Withdrawal



*A lifelong Kurdish politician, Dr. Mahmoud Othman is now a leading member of the Iraqi National Assembly. He is also our editor's uncle.*

**Do you think it's wrong that the PKK is listed as a terrorist agency?**

Of course it's wrong, because I think Turkey is waging a sort of state terrorism against them for the last century. So when they defend themselves, you can't call it terrorism. Even if it's terrorism, the big terrorist is Turkey and the small one is these people. So I think it's wrong to call them terrorists, because if Turkey recognized Kurdish rights, basic cultural and human rights, then people fight, you can call them terrorists, but now they have no rights. So they are just demanding their rights, defending their rights. You can't by any means call them terrorists. The only two countries that call them terrorists are Turkey and America. Even Europe, they removed them from the list of terrorists last year. So it's only America that supports Turkey and calls them terrorists.

**Do you think America should leave Iraq?**

Definitely. There should be a timetable. I have been of this opinion for two years. Because at the end, you know, people should see a light at the end of the tunnel. And this is occupation. People don't like occupation. America itself calls it occupation. In the resolution of the security council 1483, they asked to rule Iraq directly. And the UN told them, "Well if you want to rule, you have to say you are occupying, you are an occupational force." They say, "Okay, call us an occupational force." And it's written in the resolution. So they call themselves occupiers. So... they are behaving not in a good way I must tell you, inside the country. So people, they'd like this sort of occupation to end—not immediately, of course, but through a timetable, an agreement, so that gradually Iraqi forces could take over, and Americans leave. Because Americans in Iraq now, they are not achieving much. There are a lot of Sunni-Shiite killings and so on. They are policing inside the towns and I think the more they do it, they can't achieve much. So I think there should be an end to it.

**What happens when they do leave?**

If they leave just suddenly, there will be more problems; that's very true. But if there is a timetable agreed on by the Iraqi side and the American side, that would be much better. Of course many people, as you have heard many times, they say if America leaves Iraq, it will play into the hands of terrorists. Yes, I agree with them, terrorists benefit. But Iraqi people will benefit more. Because first of all this is occupation—it has to end, people don't like it. And secondly when you have a timetable, and you say, "America will leave in one and a half years," then you could easily talk to people who have carried arms and are fighting America, and say "Well look, this is the end, politically it could be ended, so why are you leaving armed?"


You could persuade them to leave their arms and come to the political process, and that's very important, that question, which they don't usually talk about.

As far as the America and al Qaeda conflict is concerned, we don't like it to be in Iraq because Iraqis are suffering for it.

**Yeah, it seems to me when Bush says "We have to fight them there or we'll fight them here," that doesn't seem very fair to people who are there.**

It's not fair, and he should never say that. He keeps saying it! And that means "Let Iraqi people be killed so American people are safe." It's a very bad way to put it. It's not nice at all. "We sacrifice you people for us."

**What about the Shiites and Sunni Arabs? Is the situation there too far gone for reconciliation?**

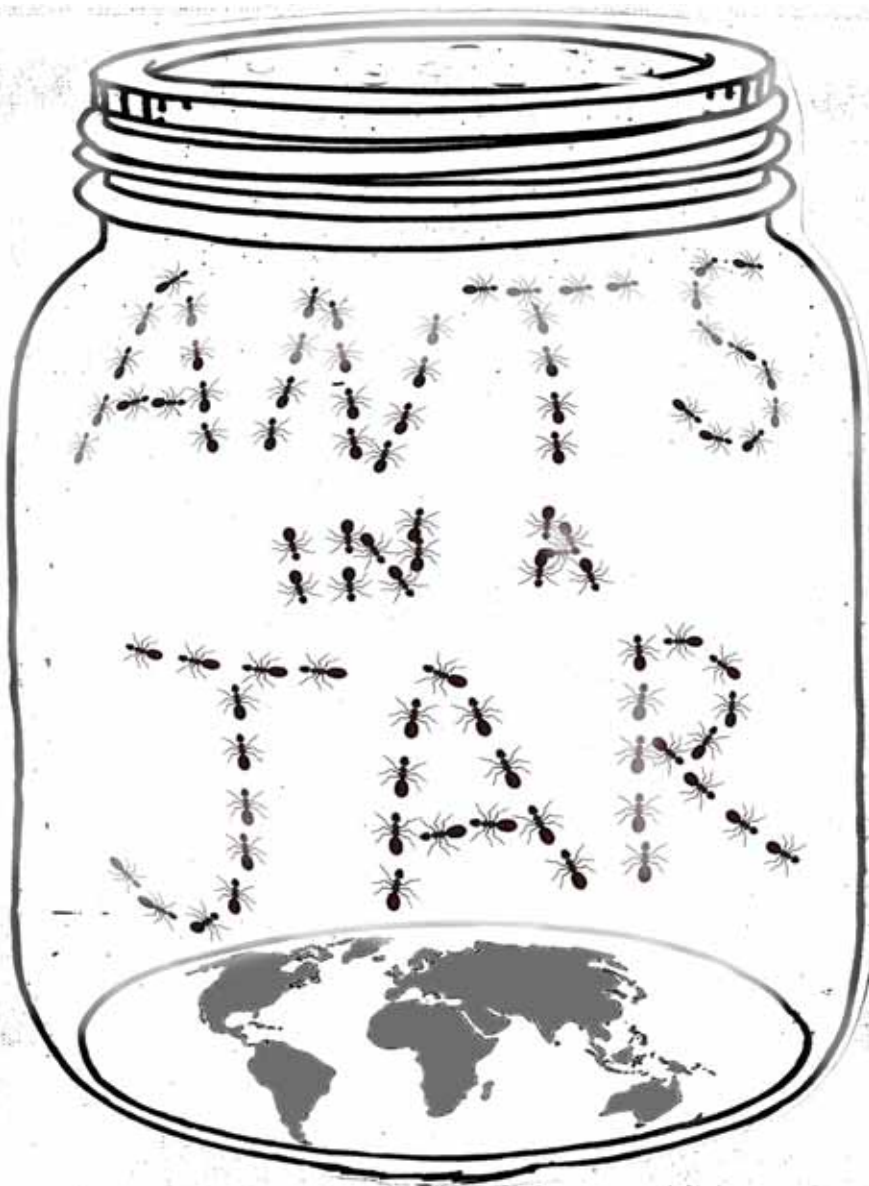
Well, it's a political conflict. It has a religious face but it's really because the Sunnis have been ruling Iraq, Arab Sunnis, for hundreds of years. The Shias were, well, oppressed. Now the Shias have got power. You don't ever want to leave it. And they don't make Sunnis their real partners. So Shias want to keep to the power, Sunnis want to gain some of the things they have lost. So this is a political conflict, over authority, but of course it has a religious face. I think it will go on for some time, because... never there has been a Sunni-Shia conflict in Iraq. Never have Sunni and Shia killed each other, even during Saddam. But now it is a matter of power. I'm ruling, and you want to regain your rule. So it's more a political conflict. I mean, look at Northern Ireland. It's Catholic and Protestant, but in practice it's political. It's similar. 

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## It's only the end of the world, so quit your bitching

*By Joe Bageant*

*"The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction, and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and tens of thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world."*

*– Thomas Malthus, 1798*

**A**s a small boy, I once transferred most of an anthill population from its natural digs in our front yard to a gallon jar of fresh dirt, sprinkled it with a little sugar (in the cartoons, ants are always freaks for sugar, right?) and then left the ants on their own. Of course the day came when all I had was a jar full of dry earth, ant shit and the desolation of their parched little carcasses. I'd guess that it was the lack of water that finally got 'em.

But the most interesting thing in retrospect – if a jar of dead bugs can be called interesting – is this: Up until the very end they seemed to be happily and obliviously busy. They constructed an ant society with all of its ant facilities, made more baby ants and did all those things ants do that the proverbial grasshopper is famous for not doing. Obviously Christian predestinationists to the last ant, they met the grasshopper's grim fate by another route, and did not look at all surprised in death.

Now you'd think that the lesson of the ants would be obvious as hell to any non-intoxicated individual with a grade school education. Never mind that many people since Malthus, as my sainted daddy would have put it, "Done drove the point in the ground and broke it clean off." Never mind that Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* was a best seller and remains a classic. Never mind that James Lovelock, the nerdish forward thinking Englishman who 99% of Americans never heard of, delivered unto us yet one more time the worst truth in human history, the Gaia Hypothesis. Which is a fancy way of saying we cannot continue to devour our planet forever because it amounts to self-cannibalism.

Lovelock also convincingly argued that, due to the side effects of this species expiration, now acknowledged as global warming, the equator will look like Mars at some point relatively soon, with the surviving 20% of humans now alive, or perhaps in the next generation, living near the North and South Poles.

As to be expected, the few very comfortable elite folks on this earth said of Lovelock: "This guy is full of shit, a nutcase being adored by a bunch of naked tattooed pagans and gloomy intellectual types," both of which number among my favorite kinds of people.

Those pagans who allowed themselves to

feel and not just intellectualize about the earth's condition, and those scientists who did not require computer modeling to do simple subtraction, recognized that these are the most challenging of times in human history, "challenging" being a polite term for the fact that that humanity is gonna die off big time, if not sooner, then later. Call it the secular version of *The End Times*.

But not much later, in light of the brief span *Homo sapiens* hath shat, frolicked, killed and exceeded their MasterCard limits upon the earth, which is less than a second in geological time. Already we are on the way out because we did not have the common sense of lizards, which lasted tens of millions of years longer without so much as a calculator, much less computerized eco models.

A bunch of DNA molecules gave us this aberrant evolution of brain and consciousness that enabled us to dominate everything else and get into the totally fucked situation in which we now find ourselves. The monkey got so smart he took over everything, ate most of it, drove over the rest, then stuck the roadkill on his own dick as a nuclear warhead, and after having threatened what was left around him, set out to destroy even that small remaining scrap of his ruined earthly turf. Is this God's cruelest joke?

#### **Global warming as mange medicine**

If mankind were discovered on a dog's hide the owner would give the dog a mange dip. Or if the earth were a Petri dish, we would be called pathology. Problem is though, mama earth tends to shed pathogens off her skin, which for us pathogens, is the ultimate catastrophe.

When forced to look at catastrophe on this order of magnitude, we either go numb in shock or look in delusion to something bigger, or at least something with more grandeur than Mother Nature flushing humanity down the toilet. Otherwise, one must accept the both ugly and the weirdly beautiful prospect of oblivion. Meanwhile, we begin too late to "make better choices." Grim choices that do nothing but postpone the inevitable, which are called better ones and sold to us to make ourselves feel better about our toxicity. Burn corn in your gas tank. Go green, with the help of Monsanto. But not many can be concerned even with the matter of better choices. Few can truly grasp the fullness of the danger because there is no way they can get their minds around it, no way to see the world in its

entirety. The tadpole cannot conceive of the banks of the pond, much less the wooded watershed that feeds it. But old frogs glimpse of it.

Still, there is choice available, even a superior choice – the moral one. Accept the truth and act upon it. Take direct action to eliminate human suffering, and likewise to eliminate our own comfort. We can say no to scorched babies in Iraq. We can refuse to drive at all and refuse to participate in a dead society gone shopping. We can quit being so addicted to the rationality and embrace the spirit. Rationality simply turns back on itself like a mobius strip. Too much thinking, too much cleverness on the monkey's part leads it to believe it can come up with rational solutions for what ration itself hath wrought.

All the green energy sources and eating right and voting right cannot fix what has been irretrievably ruined, but only make life amid the ruination slightly more bearable. Species gluttony is nearly over and we've eaten the earth and pissed upon its bones. Not because we are cruel by nature (though a case might be made for stupidity) but because the existence of consciousness necessarily implies each of us as its individual center, the individual point of all experience and thus all knowing. The accumulated personal and collective wounds fester and become fatal because there is no way to inform the world that we must surrender our assumptions, even if we wanted to. Which we do not because assumptions are the unseen cultural glue, the DNA of civilization. If we did so, the crash would be immediate.

So we postpone transformation through truth, and stick with what has always worked – empire and consumption. And we twiddle our lives away through insignificant fretting about mortgages and health care and political parties and pretend the whole of American life is not a disconnect. Hell, all of Western culture has become a disconnect. Somebody needs to tell the Europeans too; progressive Americans give them entirely too much credit for the small positive variation in their cultures and ours. We both get away with it only so long as the oil and the entertainment last.

The front page of today's newspaper tells me that 41 million motorists will gas up and hit the road today, July 3rd. Another five million will sip drinks and read magazines while zipping through the stratosphere, in 747s that burn the day's oxygen production

of a 44,000 acre rainforest in the first five minutes of flight just getting off the ground and gaining altitude, adding to the more than 110 million annual tons of atmosphere-altering chemtrail gasses, some of which will remain to hold heat in the upper atmosphere for almost 100 years.

Below it all are the spreading pox-like blotches of economic and ecological ruins of dead North American towns and city cores, such as downtown Gary Indiana, Camden, Newark, Detroit – all those places we secretly accept as being hellish because, well, that's just what happens when blacks take over, isn't it? Has anyone seen downtown Detroit lately? Of course not. No one goes there any more. Miles of cracked pavement, weeds and abandoned buildings that look like de Chirico's Melancholy and Mystery of a Street. Hell, for all practical purposes it is uninhabited, though a scattering of drug addicts, alcoholics and homeless insane people wander in the shadows of vacant rotting skyscrapers where water drips and vines crawl through the lobbies, including the Ford Motor Company's stainless steel former headquarters. (See the works of Chilean-born photographer Camilo José Vergara.) It is the first glimpse of a very near future, right here and now for all to see.

The hearts of even our most avowedly thriving cities are just a dead, reduced to nothing more than designated spending zones, collections of bars and banks and overpriced eateries lodged at the center of a massive tangle of overpasses and freeways designed for a nation of soft people hurtling themselves through the suburbs in petroleum powered exoskeletons in search of fried chicken, or into the city for the lonely monetized experience called urban nightlife. Which is no life at all, but rather posturing in lifelike poses amid simple drunkenness and engorgement.

We allow ourselves to imagine the worst is somewhere in yet another future so we can continue without owning decision. Love of comfort being the death of courage, we continue the familiar commoditized life, the only one we have known. Is it not true that our entire understanding of courage as we know it is about braving some unknown? About making the socially unaccepted and dangerous choice? Stepping forward in the face of the wars and evil mechanics of our own particular time?

Empire and its inevitable permanent state of warfare flourishes not because evil men are at the helm, but because the men at the helm are even weaker and more in denial than we are. (Look at Dick Cheney. The guy is a nervous wreck wrapped in arrogance and denial.) And so their uninformed and crude confidence is assuring to both them and us. We elect the worst among ourselves in increasing avoidance of ourselves and they are validated by our endorsement. Evil men seeking empire did not make us or the world this way. We made their existence possible through our denial, love of ease and non-accountability.

### **The most dangerous question in the world**

Yet, I dare say that comfort is not the most important thing in most American lives. It is just the only thing we are offered in exchange for our toil and the pain of ordinary existence in such an age. Consequently, it is all we know. Meaningless work, then meaningless comfort and distraction in the too-few hours between sleep and labor. But we settled for that and continue to do so. The day will never come when we stand around the office water cooler and ask one another: "Why in the hell are we even here today?" It's the most dangerous question in America and the Western world.

Some few of us are in a hellish limbo, simply waiting for total collapse because it is easier to rebuild from nothing than to change billions of minds not even remotely concerned with the looming catastrophe. A minority of the world, the six percent called America, suffers the mass self-delusion of endless plentitude. A much larger portion is less concerned with the moral aspects of consumption because they are brutally engaged in trying to find enough to eat and a drink of clean water. So plentitude on any terms looks damned good. Escape to America because those fuckers over there don't seem to be suffering at all.

### **Manifesto of the Damned**


I thank the stars for younger men, writers such as Derrick Jensen and Charles Eisenstein. They say what we cannot yet say to ourselves and what the media will never say because media survives by the corporate numbers game. Consequently, the iron rules of being allowed to communicate with significant numbers

of people within our empire tend to call for glibness, fake optimism, and the wide net of inclusion of even the silliest sorts of people. Fuck only knows I've participated in the sham over the years. But the truth is never politically or socially correct.

What's left of my own aging hippie optimism dies hard. And as an older guy who has seen both interior and external horror in this life, I often assure those who will deal with this world after I am worm chow that "to have seen a specter is not everything." I've often repeated this theme because it is important to know that many more specters lie ahead of the next generation, the survivors of which will be the new "brave happy few," links in the chain of reason tempered with art. No one yet knows with absolute certainty the outcome of our terrible common plunge toward truth. But even in the worst of times, there is glory in the sheer electricity of life, the expression of its juiciness, those moments when the eternal fecundity of the flesh struts by in a tight skirt, or perhaps sporting the perfect unshaven jaw, offering everything and nothing. Life is never completely joyless.

Younger men and women will live to rule or rule the day. So seize it for god's sake! And listen to the cellular wisdom of the flesh. I did and do and am damned glad of it. Despite what a police court Jehova, Yahweh or Allah may have told us, the only holy thing existent is this the flesh in which we now walk. It leads us toward both good and evil, but it leads, and most probably will bleed if we are on the right path. Yet, what could be better than a meaningful life during meaningless times? Which is everything, whether we be artistic, queer, altruistic, an unheralded ox in the fields of labor – or one of the invisible ones out there with a stone cold determination to kill the supposedly deathless machinery in which we are expected to supplicate daily and call that a life.

I am not a wise man, but I dare say that's about all you can hope for. A splash of small glory, or perhaps even a canteen filled with meaningfulness in the desert. It is no small thing.

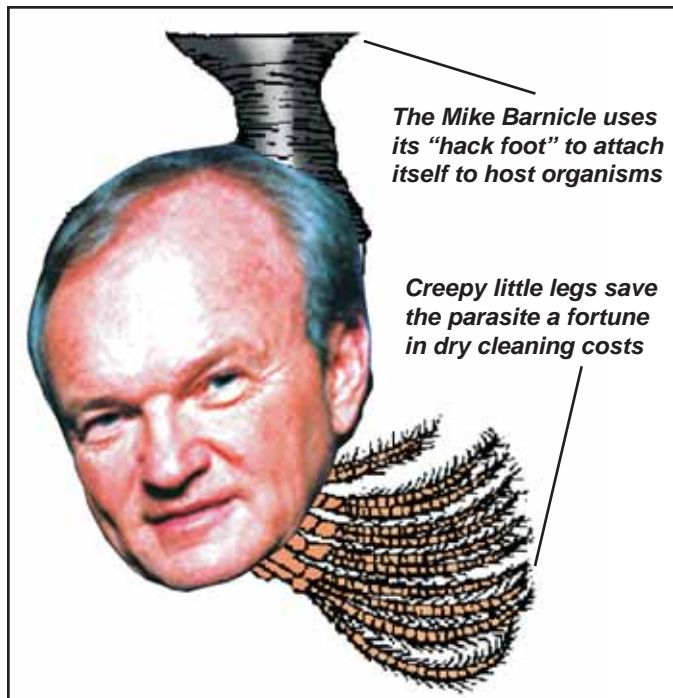
So here we are. You and me. Let us hang all our laundry out to dry in this tiny corner. I think it is entirely possible that we can be honest bards in an unpromising age, possibly even noble amid the ruins. 

### This Issue's Specimen: Mike Barnicle

**Overview:** The Mike Barnicle (*Quoteous Fabricatus*) is a type of journalistic parasite belonging to infraclass General Electric in the subphylum NBC, and is hence distantly related to Brian Williams and The Russert Sea Louse.

**Habitat:** Indigenous to the Boston area, Barnicle was preyed upon to near extinction by an invasive species of Ethical Editors in the '90s. Its numbers have rebounded since, with this adaptable creature filling the empty niche left by vacationing television pundits. Mike Barnicle sightings are still considered rare, and usually occur only in the vast taint regions of Chris Matthews or Joe Scarborough.

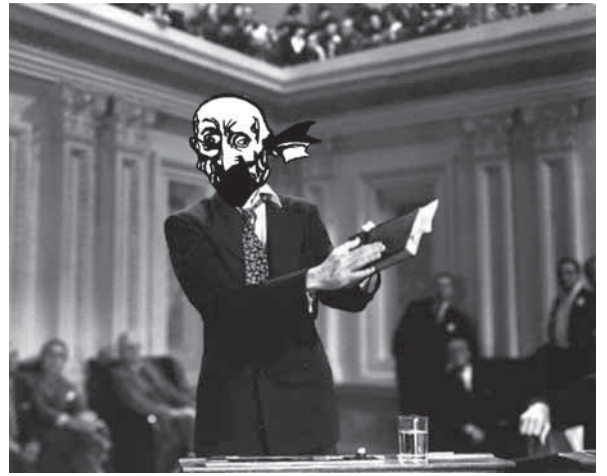
**Trivia:** Mike Barnicle is capable of latching on to other writers' material using a sticky bilious secretion and an upside down suction appendage, referred to as a "hack foot."



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# MR. BEAST GOES TO WASHINGTON



*Power to the people, or something like it*

*By Ian Murphy*

Midnight in Buffalo, NY—two dozen patriots have collected in the university parking lot, awaiting an American Civil Liberties Union chartered bus to D.C. They're your typical cast of liberal players—lispng fags, tough as nails lesbians, smelly hippies, and the odd war vet—true Americans. I've been assigned to travel with them. We pick up half a dozen more in Rochester. It's a dangerous mission. Any one of us could be snatched away by the Gestapo, deemed an enemy combatant, detained indefinitely without charge or trial, and legally tortured to the point of "organ failure"—even the white people. No bullshit. It's a Brave New America under The Military Commissions Act of 2006. Somebody brought vegan granola bars.

"A show of force" is necessary, commands our "bus captain," local ACLU chapter

head John Curr, contemplatively tapping the cane he acquired in Gulf War I on the bus' carpeted center strip. Ours and scores of other buses are descending on the nation's capital to restore our right of habeas corpus—or be disappeared. Those who have sleeping pills take them.

Our delegation of citizen-lobbyists is cordially met at Washington's Union Station by an old slumbering homeless woman. She wears a filthy pink and purple track suit. Her jet black face is dotted with flies, and bakes in the brutal sun. Her splayed arms and open mouth seem to say "welcome to D.C." The long ride has aggravated my sciatica. I consult my pocket pharmacy, and down 3 large, pink Vicodin and chew up my first OxyContin of the day. Thank goodness for street corner health insurance.

Billed as "a day of action to restore law and justice," this isn't going to be the same old ineffectual protest—we're going to ineffectually lobby both houses of

congress. We have an appointment. We're pushing two bills: H.R. 1415, the Restoring the Constitution Act of 2007, and H.R. 1416, the Habeas Corpus Restoration Act of 2007, both of which would fully reverse the Military Commissions Act of 2006—the nasty bit of legislation that's made our collective disappearance and torture at Guantanamo Bay a legal possibility. All of us dressed in identical t-shirts, thousands of activists swarm the station. We leisurely filter outside and march toward Capital Hill. It's hot as hell.

We meet up with Andrew Schaefer of the *Buffalo News'* Washington Bureau. He's a sad looking hack with a buzz cut and a wrist brace. His clothes hang on him like he's just lost fifty pounds. Schaefer was listed as a contributor to the resulting *News'* article: "30 from area join protest at Capitol"—211 words that summed up the day thusly:

*The main object of the demonstrators' outrage was*



*the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which strips captured foreign enemy combatants of their habeas corpus right to challenge their imprisonment in U.S. courts.*

The only problem is that the Military Commissions Act doesn't contain the phrase "foreign" enemy combatants. The bill does state, however, that any person "engaged in hostilities or who has purposefully and materially supported hostilities against the United States" qualifies as an "enemy combatant." That could be you. That could be Andrew Schaefer. Well, probably not Schaefer.

The rally follows the usual script: easily forgotten folk band, television "personality," event organizers, politicians,



**D.C. is filled with lazy people**

torture victims, religious types. The MC is Greg Proops's hair. It stands at full attention, stoically enduring Greg Proops, the bespectacled, nasal comedian best known for his stint on the unendurable improv comedy show, "Whose Line is it Anyway?" Nearby, speaking of improv comedy, kids in orange jumpsuits play at being tortured—bound and gagged in the hot sun. The rotund sponsor of the bills we're lobbying for, Brooklyn Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D) waddles to the microphone and admonishes the previous speakers for saying how "glad" they were to be here; a little bit of sanity.

Every so often, a tightly-packed gaggle of suits swarms the back of the stage, splits down the center, and births a sweaty bigwig senator like Patrick Leahy or Chris Dodd. Leahy, the senior senator from Vermont and current Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee is met by howls of "impeach Cheney!" Dodd, the hopeless presidential hopeful, steals a move from the Kucinich

playbook and waves his pocket constitution at the crowd. Dodd scurries off stage; I pursue. He moves quickly, but I cut him off. Totally unprepared, brain floating in pain-killer soup—I snap a photo, and ask him the first relevant question that comes to mind:

"What do you like better—cats or dogs?"

"HA!" Dodd literally spits in my face while bolting past me. He stops briefly as a minion opens a waiting car door, turning back to me. "I like both!" he says with a carnivorous smile. I can see the headlines: *Dodd Noncommittal on Contentious Pet Issue; Cats, Dogs Both Dissatisfied with Waffling Dodd.*

Kucinich takes the stage. "We must

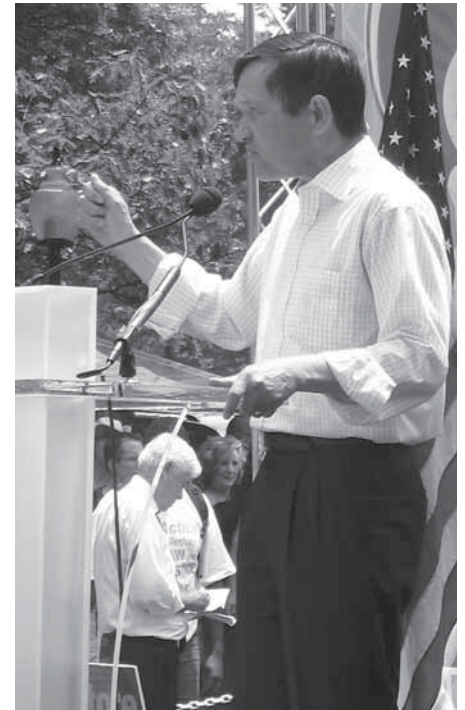
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Itag along with head of the ACLU Rochester division Todd Plank, and a handful of others, to the office of Congressman Randy Kuhl (ironically pronounced "cool"), a Republican representing New York's 29<sup>th</sup> district. "Life isn't fair all the time," he tells us unsympathetically, reclining in his chair, hands clasped casually over his right knee. His desk is adorned with a small bust of Lincoln, matchbox cars, a snow globe and some hand lotion. A former litigator, Kuhl clearly enjoys playing devil's advocate—only he's not playing. He voted for the Military Commissions Act. "Can any of you think of a time when it might be OK to suspend certain rights?" he asks us with a self-satisfied grin.



**Dodd spit on me**

reinstate habeas corpus!"—and the crowd goes fucking wild. I offer some black market OxyContin to the tie-dye clad photographer next to me—it's a real party scene. I stumble around in a pharmaceutical daze, fending off heat stroke, placards, and socialist literature. The rally winds down with depressing firsthand accounts from torture victims and the obligatory outrage of religious weirdos. I fight a strong urge to heckle them. On this issue, the supernaturally deluded and a drugged-up atheist agree. The crowd of some 3500 splits up into states; we plot our lobbying visits and break for lunch.



**Kucinich rocks Capital Hill**

"No," says a woman from our group. "Historically, it has never worked out," she adds. "It has always led to abuse." She's right—even Lincoln regretted suspending habeas corpus.

Plank and the others calmly express their concerns—they believe that the U.S. government shouldn't have the authority to detain people without trial and torture them—it seems like a no-brainer. Kuhl's face lights up like a sadistic Christmas

\*\*\*

tree at the mention of torture, and he recommends a “really great” book on the subject. Say what you will about Kuhl—he’s a drunk who threatened to kill his ex-wife with a shotgun, he voted unconscionably to terminate your right of habeas corpus, or that he likely uses the lotion in his office to masturbate to torture books—at least he took the time to meet with us.

We meet back up with John Curr’s group outside of Congressman Brian Higgins’ office. Higgins, a Democrat representing New York’s 27<sup>th</sup> (which includes most of Buffalo), has cultivated a reputation as a man who brings home the pork. Unfortunately, he’s gained the people’s praise by selling them out—a little trade off with the now defunct Republican majority. He voted in favor of reauthorizing the Patriot Act, the credit industry’s heinous Bankruptcy bill, the hilarious Terri Schiavo bill, and of course the Military Commissions Act. The local press worships him.

Higgins is a no-show; we’re forced to confront his aides. It’s a scene being played out simultaneously all over town—heavily perspiring citizens in matching t-shirts being placated by slick-talking underlings. Higgins’ Senior Legislative Assistant assures us that “the Congressman shares your concerns.” He spends the bulk of our visit making uncomfortable faces, looking up at the ceiling, and being scolded by a no-nonsense dike named “Ms. Kitty.”

“9-11 was the Bush administration’s Reichstag!” says a livid long-hair named Mike.

Higgins’s office is crawling with Jews, and the Nazi metaphor evokes a quasi-seizure in one of his staff. Mike self-recriminates—all is well with the world.

“We need to investigate the physics behind 9-11,” chimes in another. And we lose whatever credibility we never had.

As we say our goodbyes, I amble over to Higgins’ desk. On it is a nearly empty bottle of Pepsi One, a plate speckled with crumbs and a wadded up paper napkin. Nothing says “I’m too scared to meet with my constituents” like the remnants of a recent meal. Affixed to the computer monitor is a yellow Post-It note that reads: “maryjane78.” There are a few lines crossing over the seven, possibly representing that an asterisk should be used in its place. How very cryptic.

There’s a different mood on the bus as we head home—a sense of community, camaraderie. Walking around the capital all day in the tremendous heat has melted away our isolation—our uniquely American alienation. Alone, we can do nothing to reverse tyranny; together, we feel like we’ve made a dent. But I wonder if the feeling is a mirage—a concoction of raw, unjustified optimism, and euphoria-inducing pain medication.

“What do you think about what we did here today?” asks a middle-aged meditation guru settling into the seat ahead of me. “Do you think it had any affect?”

“No,” I reply.

“Me neither,” he says with a paradoxical smile. “It’s a done deal. No matter what we do—it’s a done deal.”

Out of youthful naivety, and psychological necessity, most on the bus don’t share our grim assessment. We all agree on one thing, however—doing nothing is no longer an option.

This little lobbying junket was a first for the ACLU, Amnesty International, and the other groups that sponsored the event. Lobbying is big business in America. It’s how things get done—mostly terrible things. On any given day there are approximately 65 highly paid lobbyists for every legislator on the Hill. In our pay-to-play political environment, does an impoverished citizen-lobby have a snowball’s chance in a hell? We weren’t lobbying on behalf of some obscenely moneyed industry. We couldn’t whisper promises of campaign contributions from company X, Y, and Z if our legislation were enacted. We wouldn’t be here tomorrow, or the next day to follow up with free meals, vacations and blowjobs. We had absolutely no clout. For the lawmakers with a conscience, our trip was a gratuitous pat on the back. For the lawmakers who didn’t already recognize the folly

in killing habeas corpus and legalizing torture, our trip offered them nothing in exchange for their vote. Squat. It’s safe to say that half a dozen angry constituents didn’t exactly have them shaking in their loafers—that is, once they heard about the visit from their aides. Everyone on the bus is content, riding high on a vague sense of victory. Yet I’m skeptical—did this “day of action” do a damn thing?

“It’s a good start,” says a bleary-eyed John Curr. We stand in a Denny’s parking lot somewhere in Pennsylvania, stretching our legs and smoking cigarettes.

“Wouldn’t it be more effective to just bribe them?” I ask.

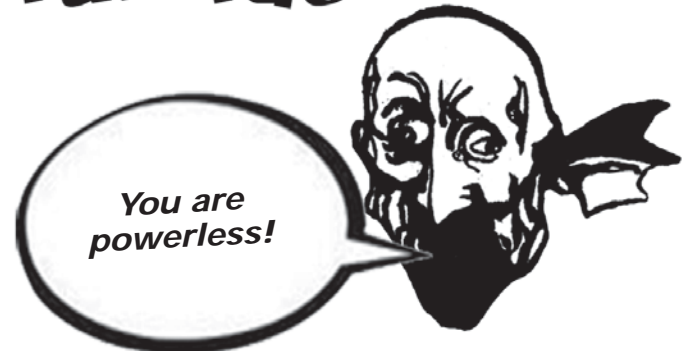
“We don’t have that kind of money,” he answers pensively.

Still, there’s an undeniable sense of possibility on this bus. Maybe in a country where we’ve all been conditioned to feel like we can’t make a difference, it’s that sense that gives our actions meaning—empowerment for its own sake. It *is* a “good start,” I think to myself as I pop one last pill to sooth my crooked spine.

“Next time,” I think to myself, drifting off to sleep. “We’ll have millions, not thousands. We won’t come armed with slick folders full of talking points—we’ll have torches and pitchforks! We’ll clog the streets, the sidewalks, the subways, the very halls of Congress! We’ll shut down this whorehouse of a town! And we won’t leave until our demands are met!”

I may have already begun to dream, and not even realized it. 

## Fun Fact





**“It’s Totally Adequate!”**

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# DOG DAY

## Wiener-Binging at Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Contest

By Andrew Blake

Everyone I knew got a phone call that week. "I got 'em," I said, with the enthusiasm of a man with fifty-yard line tickets to the home opener. But this was not football, and I was surely not a man. "I got the passes; press passes, man. It's fucking hot dogs!"

I was going to Coney Island for the Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Contest, an annual competition held by the wiener chain in conjunction with the International Federation of Competitive Eating (IFOCE). It a late night trek from Toledo to get there. My car might not make it, and I couldn't afford it, but I had been joking about attending this not-so-gourmet gala since last summer, and goddammit, I will risk both safety and solvency if it means I get the last laugh.

Coney Island sneaks up on you like a birthday. I expected some illustrious amusement park on the sea, with clowns, dancing and the whole shebang. Instead, I got the shithole of Brooklyn. The park, a scattering of ring-toss games, fried dough stands and the occasional ride, lies just adjacent to the ramshackle boardwalk. among bumper cars and lemonade shacks, one finds a souvenir stand with fifteen-dollar disposable Kodaks and sweatpants with touristy phrases stamped across the ass.

At the corner of this monstrosity is Nathan's. The cameramen at the Travel Channel must be cinematic geniuses, because for the granddaddy of all hot dog stands I was expecting a bit more. Regardless, I had just finished a 700-mile pilgrimage. I wanted a hot dog.

Today was *the* day for Coney Island. The corner of Surf and Stillwell had hosted the Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Contest for years. The legend goes that two immigrants

held the first dog-off at this stand in 1916 to see who was more patriotic. Back then, the record was thirteen in twelve minutes. Odds were that that figure would be outdone by a factor of five today. Truly, our nation's progress is something to behold.

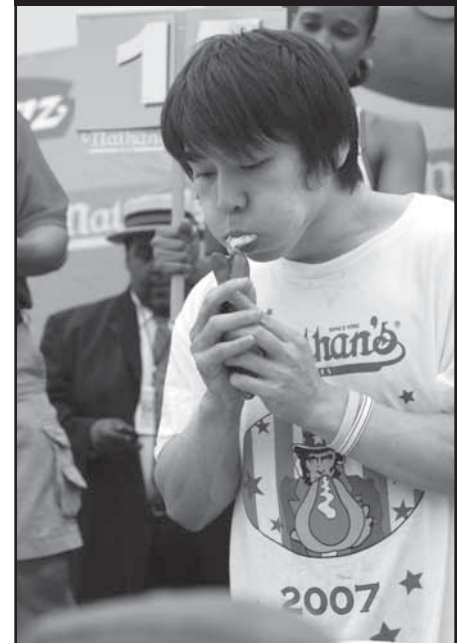
For several blocks, traffic was halted and rerouted. Hundreds of New York's finest were centralized over a few square blocks to keep everyone in line. I had arrived a good two hours before festivities were scheduled to go underway, and if twelve straight hours of driving was not enough, it was going to be at least another hour to land affordable parking. But the enthusiasm exuded from passersby made up for the lackluster amusement park. Sporting homemade T-shirts and American flags, the throng made its way to the stage. Worrying that I might have misread the press invitation, I ran to Nathan's to see what I was missing. It was a hot dog—a man in a hot dog suit, that is, dancing a hot dog dance to a man playing guitar and singing a song about hot dogs. I drove twelve hours for this, and today was my country's two-hundred-somethingth birthday. I almost shed a tear.

We made our way to the Nathan's counter, but protestors and picketers cluttered our path. PETA members needed to remind us that meat was murder. Watching vegans rally for their cause at a hot dog contest reminded me of slamming on my horn in front of a school for the deaf. The difference was that when I did it, I knew I was being a dick. Not to mention that hot dogs are little more than a byproduct, just a way for the meat industry to sell off the garbage that's left after stripping a pig of all its delicious muscle tissue, using every part of the animal just like the Indians did. PETA also seemed to think that if people cannot afford to eat, it is just silly to let people gorge themselves for sport. And there is that whole meat is murder

thing, again. Well, meat is awesome, and it wasn't long before the gluttonous mob tore down their signs and chased them out. We didn't need them to tell us we were pigs. Gross, decadent excess was the reason we were there.

I was greatly in need of some vitamin M to offset the caffeine that had kept me afloat since Binghamton. For around three dollars, I bought one of the most mediocre wieners I'd ever had. The bun was stale, the dog tiny. How someone could chow a few dozen baffled me. I counted over forty employees on the clock at 10am, most under the age of twenty. There is nothing quite like seeing four dozen teenagers serving hot dogs in the morning. It had been mere moments, and I had already found something weirder than a thousand people watching a man dance in a hot dog suit in front of a big fucking roller coaster.

This happened





And so did this

Things really began to heat up after hot dog man left. A young male/female duo took center stage and tapped for the growing crowd. The group, Clogtastic, had nothing to do with hot dogs, or pretty much anything. Regardless, they received much more applause than anything else that morning. "Write that down!" said my fellow BEAST staffer. "Clogtastic! You don't want to forget Clogtastic."

The professional eaters were introduced a while later. They had all met strict qualifications and were for the most part veterans in the field of competitive eating. Sadly, most veterans were under the age of forty—apparently, mass hot dog binging does not lead to a longer life. It seems that most vets are retired, dead, or have taken on more lucrative careers in the competitive eating field. "Hungry" Charles Hardy still holds records in sushi and cabbage, but today he was on hand as IFOCE Commissioner. Eric "Badlands" Booker, the first American to do 30 HDBs (that's IFOCE lingo for Hot Dog and Bun) was on the stage today too, but he was there to rap. He performed a handful of tunes, most about food, repeatedly plugging his website. These two men

proved that there is life after satiety, even if it's just rapping about soup. Badlands had been my favorite in the sport for a few years, and he is probably yours too: If his hot dog hip hop does not make him a household name, you can just search online for "black guy in a helmet eating a hamburger." Yeah, that guy.

IFOCE cofounder George Shea introduced each participant to the crowd with the flair of a circus MC. Each one seems to have some sort of gimmick. Tim "Eater-X" Janus wears face paint that must be a straight up homage to the Ultimate Warrior, while world bacon champ Crazy Legs Conti claims to be the "Houdini of Cuisini."

As the competition grew closer, the introductions got longer. Reputable men with plentiful titles dealing with every food imaginable took the stage, and the last two were clearly the reason 50,000 people had assembled in front of Nathan's. As the Who's "Baba O'Reilly" blared loudly enough to be audible for half a mile in all directions, Shea introduced Joey Chestnut, "The disciple to a new prophet, a prophet to a new god, a new god whose

only commandment is dominance!" San Jose native Chestnut had broken the world hot dog title just a month earlier with 59 ½ HDBs, but that meant little today. World-famous Takeru Kobayashi of Japan still held the Nathan's yellow mustard belt, and it was this contest, the one held in the same spot on Coney Island on Independence Day for practically a century, that mattered.

The crowd booed and cheered at roughly equal volume when Kobayashi took the stage. Some wanted nothing more than for America to reclaim the title, while others cheered the man's impressive, inhuman record. Kobayashi is the Gretzky of eating. He once finished nearly 18 pounds of cow brains. As far as hot dogs go, the only beast to ever go face-to-face with Kobayashi and win was a 1,089lb Kodiak bear. I wanted to hate Kobayashi, but it was just too hard. I discontinued my cheers of "U.S.A! U.S.A!" when the humble Japanese boy smiled to the crowd. He was all muscle despite his small frame, and his persona hinted at the heart of a lion. Kobayashi can barely speak a word of English, but his dominance of the American crowd was uncanny. They ate up every shimmer in his teeth as he

smiled over the crowd. He flexed his abs, waved, smiled. I remembered why I was there. Fuck the troops; I was there to support Joey.

Kobayashi had cited his mother's recent passing as an excuse for lack of training this past Spring. Even more recently, within the past month, he had claimed arthritis of the jaw. He had said days earlier he could not fit more than two fingers into his mouth, but with the aid of an acupuncturist he was ready. Chestnut, who needed to hold his world title as well as claim the belt for America, did not buy into the hype. He said he knew his opponent was going to give one hundred percent, and he was ready for it. In preparation, Chestnut had not eaten in two days, but drank a gallon of water a few hours before the competition. Despite Kobayashi's "condition," Chestnut knew he had some serious eating to do.

Chestnut took the lead almost instantly, first by a dog or two and then by more. A third of the way into the competition he was up by five HDBs, but it was not long before Kobayashi caught up. While Japanese flags were brandished over the crowd, supporters of Chestnut, keeping true to the American stereotype, were loud, retarded dicks, myself included. Chestnut had already cracked the Nathan's record at 54 HDBs with three minutes left, but seconds later Kobayashi caught up and tied the match. Into the final minute, both competitors were tied with 60HDBs apiece and not an eye moved from the pair, standing only inches apart at center stage. Some had given up more than five minutes earlier, hanging their shameful heads. With the chance of bringing the belt home for the first time in nine years, Chesnut and Kobayashi were the only two that mattered.

Before Kobayashi there was Kazutoyo Arai, also of Japan. It had been years since an American's name graced the hall of fame billboard outside of Nathan's, and with a running chance of giving the title to Chestnut this time, the possibility of returning the yellow belt to America was entertained as being "the greatest moment in American sports" by ESPN as the final seconds of the contest were broadcast live. Finding the strangest possible simile for the event, Shea related the event to Bowie's 1969 hit, "Space Oddity":

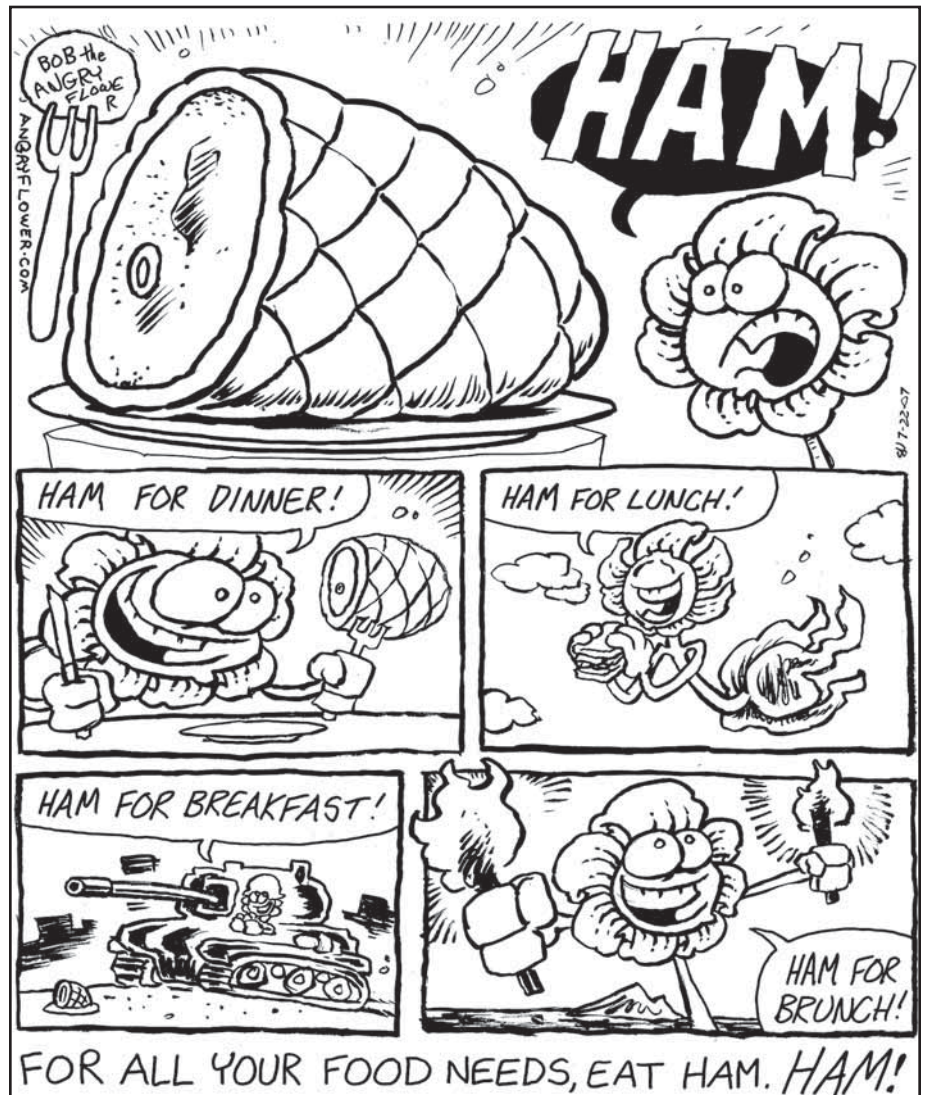
"You're enjoying it, then suddenly you realize how sad it is—Major Tom is not

coming back, he is out in that tin can... he says to his wife, 'I love you very much;' she knows, but it is very sad... Major Tom is not coming back, but the belt *may be* coming back to Brooklyn."

The contest was so close that it was hard to tell for oneself who was winning. The scores were displayed to the crowd via cards held up by the "Bunnettes" (think Coney Island girls who failed the Hooter's interview), who by far surpassed my expectations by being able to count past fifty. Sure enough, the girls scattered and struggled to hold up correct scores as the final seconds came to a close. From a spectator's point of view, the match was even as the whistle blew at 63 each, but from watching from home knew otherwise. Kobayashi had spewed the equivalent of no less than three post-chewed wieners into his hands with less than a second left on the clock, and as per the rules, began

to slurp the slobbery mess out of his tiny palms. Shea yelled to Kobayashi, "Thirty seconds! You have thirty seconds to get it down!" but to the judges, a penalty of at least a few HDBs was in order. Once they'd taken into account Kobayashi's "reversal" and tallied up the detritus off the table, a victor was chosen.

After twelve long minutes, Chestnut was declared the winner of the 2007 Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Contest. After 66 HDBs, Chestnut continued to entertain the crowd, posing for photos, doing interviews and never even sitting down for a breather, let alone heading for the restroom—a true titan. His 66 beat Kobayashi's final tally of 63, and set a new world record. I left the hot dog zone to check out the circus sideshow. Kobayashi and Chestnut would be battling it out just days later to see who could eat the most Pizza Hut P'zones. God Bless America. 🇺🇸





**By Alexander Zaitchik**

First-time author Daniel Brook doesn't waste any time in introducing his first case study in privileged post-college compromise.

On Page Two of "The Trap" we meet Pam Perd. She is chatting with the author in her local cafe in New York's East Village, half explaining and half bemoaning her lot in life. Pam has liberal politics, you see, and would like to work in the nonprofit sector. But the rising costs of East Village rents and cappuccinos have forced her to join a Fortune 500 PR firm. The reader is forgiven for not requesting a Kleenex as Pam explains, "the nonprofit world is not going to pay me what I need to make me feel comfortable."

Pam is just one of the book's examples of people who have "sold out to stay afloat" in post-Reagan America. "The Trap" practically bursts with sympathetic portraits of such "sellouts" -- from an aspiring civil rights lawyer who joins a union-busting corporate law firm, to an aspiring queer documentary filmmaker (Yale '03) who takes a job at Google before running back into the relative security of a doctoral program.

And, yes, we're supposed to feel for these people. While not exactly heroes, they aren't the book's villains, either. Brook, who is in his mid-20s, paints a picture of his generation in which the defining dichotomy is the sad choice between toil in saintly penury and pulling six-figures at some corporate monster. At times Brook waffles on whether today's young graduates even have a choice at all. Citing rising home and education costs, he remarkably asserts that for educated young Americans, "the nation is fast becoming the land of compulsory

yuppiedom."

These unfortunate middle-class kids never wanted to work for Goldman Sachs -- society made them do it! Practically turned them into a bunch of Patrick Batemans!

How did once-aspiring labor lawyers and social workers become reluctant (but willing) whores for corporate America? Brook's explanation starts with the conservative onslaught against the redistributive economic policies of the New Deal. As income tax rates were slashed and the rich became exponentially richer in the 1980s, the cost of housing and education skyrocketed, placing huge debt burdens on middle-class students and pricing young parents with public service salaries out of good school districts. Meanwhile, the growth of the finance sector created thousands of "high-pay/no-experience jobs" that flooded formerly bohemian neighborhoods with yuppies, squeezing out writers, painters, public defenders -- basically everyone making a modest income doing something interesting that they loved.


This analysis is hard to argue with, as far as it goes. But Brook's conclusion -- that educated young liberals have practically no choice left but to don a suit and become everything they loathe -- is almost as obscene as the system that makes people fear the alternative. It is simply not true that anyone has ever been forced -- or ever will be forced -- to become a yuppie. While the size of the material sacrifice needed to stay true to one's ideals is indisputably larger than ever, educated Americans still have life choices beyond living on food stamps or writing copy for Burson-Marsteller. Anyone who says otherwise either has no imagination or values material comforts

**The Trap: Selling Out to Stay Afloat in Winner-Take-All America**  
By Daniel Brook  
Times/Henry Hold; 274 Pages; \$23

and prestige ZIP codes more than they are willing to admit.

It's a shame that "The Trap" is littered with so many unlikable characters, because if you can get past the Pam Perds squirting out their two Ivy League tears into an East Village bucket, there are some really good chunks of social and economic history here. Brook manages to breathe some life into the oft-repeated story of America's three-decade swing to the right. With a jeweler's eye for the juicy anecdote and the donkey-kick statistic, he offers a fine recap of how the ongoing concentration of wealth at the top came to be and has made life more difficult for everyone but the super rich. Brook highlights -- and is right to get indignant about -- the plight of public school teachers priced out of their own districts and unable to cut annual tuition checks for their children. Those among us on the losing end of the last 30 years can only join Brook in bemoaning the passing of America's brief golden age of the middle class.

We should also join him in his call for a pushback. Brook's laundry list of solutions is hardly radical, adding up to the welfare state known to millions of Europeans. Its main elements are universal health care, progressive taxation and heavily subsidized higher education.

In the meantime, Perd in the East Village should know that it is still possible to live in New York without selling out. It's called Bushwick; they're called roommates. But I suppose we all have our priorities. 



**Michael Gildea**

### **The Bourne Ultimatum**



**Experts agree, amnesia is totally cool**

I've come around to *The Bourne Supremacy* since I harshly reviewed it back in 2004. Admittedly, I was more than likely pissed off because I only got to gaze upon Franke Potente for the first 15 minutes. Then the Parkinson's car chases/kettle-whistle tour through the most haggard spots on the other side of

the world didn't help.

But since the initial viewing I've come to appreciate *The Bourne Supremacy* as one of the better spy movies, actually surpassing many James Bond movies. Not exhibitionist, reasonably modest and still fun.

*The Bourne Ultimatum* seems to be offering some more of the same. Cryptic yet swift sprinting and other movements from the movie's star, Matt Damon. Paul Rudd spoke for us all when in *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* when he said, "Y'know, I always thought that Matt Damon was like a Streisand, but he's rocking the shit in this one!" about the man in *Bourne Identity*, and Damon hasn't disappointed yet.

As Damon works his way up the Asshole Government Official Involved With His Amnesia food chain, he finds more clues about his past and gets closer to David Strathairn as the man who trained him. Joan Allen is back as Landy, and what would a *Bourne* movie be without the dumpy face of Julia Stiles? Plenty of trickiness and seizure and nauseous car chases also. The best part is that Bourne does it all in New York City. So yeah, looks good. Sorry, I'm actually kind of looking forward to *The Bourne Ultimatum*. I could say something about Damon being a Howdy Doody look-alike with street cred but it's just pointless now.

### **The Ten**



**Annual convention of the Jack Tripper fan club**

I'm a big fan of *The State* and *Wet Hot American Summer*, so my opinion probably isn't going to count for shit here, but Paul Rudd narrating the trailer for *The Ten* (in which he also stars) and the quick random bytes of imagery weren't doing a hell of a lot for me. Rudd explains we're going to see a vignette for each of the Ten Commandments.

We see Winona Ryder, Adam Brody stuck in the ground, a doctor who leaves a pair of scissors in a patient, Liev Schreiber buy a cat scan machine *only* because one being delivered to his neighbor's house, some naked guys, Rob Corddry in prison, Oliver Platt rolling around on a pair of young black guys and Gretchen Mol get a rickshaw ride from a one-legged man. Some stuff was funny, but some stuff was *whatever*.

Then Rudd starts alphabetically naming off *The Ten's* cast with an accompanying shot of the respective star. Rudd stars off with Brody's name dramatically and as he goes on he sounds progressively and incoherently more drunk with each name and when he gets to his own it sounds like teenage lions hissing at each other. He hocks up a loogie for Justin Theroux's name. Then lastly he drops Jessica Alba's name with the utmost of articulation. I am going to go see *The Ten* for that reason alone. I watched that part of the trailer 5 times and it didn't get old. I admit I would've gone to see *The Ten* anyway, but this just means that I'll be that much more pissed off when it most likely doesn't open around here.

## Underdog



Where's William Wegman when you need him?

We've got a trailer for a live action version of a reasonably decent '60s cartoon. Underdog will be created through some really creepy CGI and voiced by Jason Lee. And it's horrible.

Granted, it was only 90 seconds of my life, but it was the way that it opened with that whole buildup like it's got something to do with Superman or someone cooler than Underdog. I can only help but wonder why I'm supposed to care about a live-action version of Underdog. The cartoon was okay but beyond acting as a capsule to another time no one gives a shit. Hong Kong Phooey was way better.

The average schmuck is going to watch the original cartoon of Underdog under a very specific set of circumstances: It's 2AM, you're baked out of your gourd, and nothing else is on TV. Nobody goes out of their way for Underdog. So between the anticlimactic buildup and the creepy-looking computer-generated dog voiced by a Scientologist who isn't really a redneck but plays one on TV, I'm out. I fold. Done.

2 out of 3 of those things apply to me now and I truly couldn't care less. The trailer for *Underdog* is so incredibly bad! None of the quasi fun or charm from the cartoon. Just bad quips geared towards the special ed crowd. Bah!

## Captivity



Torturing hot chicks is all the rage in Hollywood this season

When the trailer began and I saw Elisha Cuthbert I got a little bit excited. Someone slipped her a roofie and further down the rabbit hole I went. She still looked good but she started whining. Admittedly if someone slipped me a mickey and shanghaied me off to some deserted warehouse I'd probably be a bit *that way* too.

But as the trailer for *Captivity* (which stars Cuthbert and Some Dude as people abducted by some Evil Genius) went on she just started looking more and more like some spent truckstop hooker that lives off Red Bull and Red Dog. Whoever

this Evil Genius was he just kept doing shit without taunting Cuthbert and Some Dude. It was a creepy attempt at a David Fincher masterpiece that's more lame than anything.

When *Captivity* comes out on DVD, it'll probably have a commentary track rife with pretentiousness as it's writer, director, or writer/director wax ominously about how Kafka's *The Trial* heavily influenced them while they created this. I expect it to end up on some Onion AV list.

Look, if you plan on seeing *Captivity* intentionally (not coincidentally or just happen to be along for the ride or end up at a drive-in some night) there's probably something you should know: you're dating the wrong people.

That guy from work? You knew that wasn't going to work out before you got his dick in your mouth. The fact that he didn't reciprocate afterward should've raised a red flag. When you're not dating, you're either recycling exes or buying new vibrators. I mean, come on! This isn't Bridget Jones we're talking about here! For Christ's sake! God! Fuck!

So that's my advice for the ladies this month—don't let yourself go and don't be afraid to make the first move.

## KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND



Embattled Loser Triumphs Against Odds



Mind Fuck



Noble Retard



Evil Genius



Super Models Grapple with Moral Ambiguities



Ordinary Person Pushed too Far



Impossible Science



Glorification of Law Enforcement Bodies



Chick Flick



Special Effects Circle Jerk



Washed up Hero gets Second Chance at Glory



Stockholm Syndrome Romance



Wisecracking Cartoon Animal



Gratuitous Christ Imagery



Vampires/Wizardry as gay/AIDS Metaphor



Simplistic Epiphany



Crappy Remake



Likable Thug

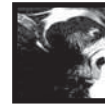
## Hot Rod



## Rush Hour 3



## The Invasion



America's next Jimmy Fallon



"Can you understand the predictable dialogue comin' out of my mouth?!"



Kidman's marriage to Tom Cruise helped prepare her for the role

If you're pissed that you have to wait the better part of two months waiting for the new season of SNL, you can watch Andy Samberg play a wannabe stuntman in *Hot Rod*. It looks kind of funny, but more in that *who gives a shit* kind of way, you know? It's just bad comedy that, given the cast, is a notch above or below another bad SNL-based movie.

We've got the bad Jackass-like stunts thrown on some mildly funny physical humor. The asshole from *Deadwood* shows up for some Clouseau and Kato shit, there's that cute redhead Ali G knocked up, good times for all. We'll make fun of red states and it'll be awesome. Yippee.

Maybe on cable. Possibly from Netflix if I can ever get off my lazy ass and set an account up. Maybe sooner if a few miracles happen. Whenever.

It's going to be another *retard with a heart of gold* story and so what? I guess it all comes down to how long you think you can stand to look at Samberg's face. Personally I'm surprised I managed to get through last season between that kid's head and Tina Fey leaving. Maybe this is the paint thinner talking, but I'm thinking I'll see *Hot Rod* sometime in the distant future. I know as much as I care—not much either way.

There's a really good reason why I haven't seen any of the other *Rush Hour* movies. Because Chris Tucker annoys the shit out of me and I'm from the action school of the kung fu movie, not the slapstick shit. Nothing beyond *Dead Presidents* or *The Fifth Element* and the occasional Bruce Lee or Jet Li flick.

So I'm looking at a third one where Tucker and Chan go to Paris. So we'll be irritating, pick on the French, go after a Bad Guy, get in some fights, look at some chicks, blah blah blah. So what?

Maybe it's fun but who really gives a shit? Some people think this is *The Best Shit Ever* and some people consider the *Rush Hour* movies a guilty pleasure. And some people drink a lot. For me it's neither of the first two. It's just really annoying. Shrieking, loud noises, explosions, Jackie Chan doing awful Mushmouth-from-Fat-Albert impressions. I just don't care at all and if I were still reviewing the movies instead of their trailers, I'd blow off *Rush Hour 3* in a second to do something more constructive. Like reading to an old and/or blind person. Maybe wash the car. Take the dogs for a walk. *Anything else..!* All I know is that the *who's on first* rip-off made me want to go look for Jesus. I'm not sure if I'd want to follow him or beat the shit out of him for letting not one, not two but THREE *Rush Hour* movies happen.

I'm thinking one of the only things worse than a remake of a horror movie is a remake of a remake of a horror movie. Third generation make any sense? But if you're going to make the same movie (in this case *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*) for the third time you better have a pretty wicked ace up your sleeve. After all, the story doesn't quite have the exact same relevance as it did during the McCarthy era, does it?

I know, I know! We'll get icy-eyed European types on the cast list. And instead of some raving loon shrieking "you're next" into the camera, we'll get Nicole Kidman as a woman fighting to the death to keep these things from getting to her child.

*The Invasion* is bad. Not bad because it's a story about aliens taking over the world by taking over our bodies, but bad because Daniel Craig is in it. And if Daniel Craig's here that means he's not making another James Bond movie. Craig was so great in *Casino Royale* that I think he should be locked up somewhere and should only be making James Bond movies. I don't like that! I plan on bashing *The Golden Compass* movie coming out later this year for the very same reason.

So we change up the dynamic, offer up an explanation (a space shuttle crash brings alien spores, radiation, something

or other) and add a touch of creepiness. And no emotion whatsoever—hence the overseas casting because they do it better. Nicole Kidman is so pale that she's to a point where she looks like some twisted zombie vampire if her eyes get even the slightest bit red. (I'm not saying I wouldn't, I just might feel like it was necrophilia or something, but still.) Watching someone fall off a building in the trailer was cool, but no thanks. Really.

## Superbad



Fat kids are hilarious

*Superbad* brings with it one of those *good for me bad for you* types of situations. It's good for me because I get yet another opportunity to let my own personal biases get in the way of good, old-fashioned objective journalism. I don't care because it doesn't matter one way or another for me *to care*. It's bad for you because you may have to wade through some pious bullshit courtesy of me. Or not, your choice.

I think *Superbad* is going to kick ass. At the website there's an R-rated trailer that's funny as shit! At least worlds better than that minute-long one that tries to lure you to the website. The super dorky kid drinking with the idiot cops, the creepy round one trying to get laid. I think I heard one of them was on *Arrested Development* and the other was in *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* for a minute. But this trailer was pretty dirty—not in a bestiality kind of way but they're talking about mom's tits and Seth Rogen sports a pretty mean Hulk Hogan moustache. And they're rocking out to Panama by Van Halen. I can't really explain why but I'm already sold.

## Halloween




A limited special effects budget hindered this production

Rob Zombie is like the Willie Nelson of our generation. He's got great taste (just going by what I see him play when he hosts TCM's Underground on Friday nights) and from interviews I've read with him he seems like a stand-up guy who'd probably be great to talk to and hang out with. *But I don't really like anything that either of*

*them have really done.*

Willie Nelson is a cool guy. He's a wise old hillbilly who's cool to the environment and smokes weed. The cool old uncle everyone wishes they had. *But I don't really dig on his music. I can listen to it, but I'd never really buy it.*

Then we've got *Zombie*. He's a film nut, he's well read and he's got the same birthday as I do. *But he makes crappy Mario Bava-Chainsaw Massacre hybrids that I can kind of watch but would never buy.*

So now *Zombie* makes a *Halloween* remake. It just looks like a slightly creepier version of John Carpenter's original. Malcolm McDowell plays Loomis, it's more gritty and blah blah blah. Don't get me wrong, I'm more interested in *Zombie's* take on *Halloween* than his other stuff, but I wasn't aware that the original had necessitated a remake. But there I go forgetting that *Psycho* was remade almost a decade ago and all bets were off at that point. Maybe this will be *Zombie's Red Headed Stranger*. 





**Too high**



One wonders, at times, if there is some kind of Norse God of sports crime — some half-drunken minor deity, ejected from Valhalla for arson and zoerasty, allowed to keep his job on a probationary basis while living in a men’s shelter in Oslo.

Most days he busies himself getting Sean Williams baked and booking Atlanta hotel suites for Otis Nixon — easy work, even for a wasted Norse flunky. But sometimes you get a week when you have to indict Mike Vick on dogfighting charges, and all the logistics and hand-wringing and letters from Peta get to be too much, and so you start to get a little sloppy. No other way to explain what we saw in Ames, Iowa, earlier this month — when a one-time Iowa State quarterback known as “T-High” was busted for dealing heroin.

T-High, better known as Terrence Highsmith, was a backup quarterback and punt returner for ISU from 2004 to 2005. A JUCO transfer from someplace called Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Highsmith threw exactly one pass in his D-I career, a seven-yard out late in a 49-3 blowout of Illinois State in ’05. He

was arrested earlier this month in Ames, when police there raided an apartment and found T-High and a woman named Monica Irving with a middling 5.5 grams of H. He was charged with possession and intent to deliver.

Ames police chief Jim Robinson suggested that there might be more arrests in connection with Highsmith’s case. “This is probably something that is not the norm,” he said mysteriously. No word yet on whether Highsmith is going to change his nickname before trial.

**Bad Gophers**



In other disgraceful Midwest college-football news, four players at Patriots running back Laurence Maroney’s alma mater, the University of Minnesota, have been dismissed by Gophers coach Tim Brewster for their alleged involvement in a rape that is said to have taken place on campus back in April.

Brewster suspended three players — running back E.J. Jones, defensive end Alex Daniels, and defensive back Keith Massey — from the team following the incident. When new evidence emerged that led to the arrest of a fourth, cornerback Dominic Jones, Brewster

decided to punt the whole quartet. All four were allegedly involved in an incident with a woman who had been binge-drinking on campus and had an astonishing blood-alcohol level of 0.30 percent. Dominic Jones (no relation to E.J. Jones, though, confusingly, Dominic is the half-brother of Massey) allegedly had non-consensual sex with the drunk woman while Daniels filmed them on a cell phone.

Moreover, the party where the assault took place was allegedly organized by another former Minnesota football player named Robert McField. McField had previously been kicked off the team when it came to light that he had two felony armed-robbery convictions in St. Louis. McField has since begun serving prison time for his robbery counts.

Media reports indicate that it was McField who brought the victim and her friend to the party, and that it was McField who gave the woman eight consecutive shots of vodka. There is also some confusion as to why McField was living in campus housing despite being kicked out of school back in November.

Police hesitated to file charges until forensic specialists restored the video clip from Daniels’s phone. The video had been deleted, but police managed to reconstruct enough of it to see that the woman was unresponsive and incapable of giving consent.

Meanwhile, Brewster issued what may go down as one of the great understatement in the annals of sports crime: "The conduct alleged in this case does not reflect the expectations and aspirations that the university has for its student-athletes." So you *don't* want your football players committing violent gun crimes or plying chicks with spud juice and then taking turns having sex with them, with or without their consent? Wow, glad he cleared that up.

This is one of the uglier cases to come up this year — Jones earned himself a 90 on the crime score. Regarding McField and the other three, let's wait until charges are filed . . .

### Husker did



Meanwhile, out in Lincoln, Nebraska, a big-time wide receiver has quietly been murdering his NFL draft status with a series of arrests leading, now, to an opening-day suspension.

In what has been a really shitty week for college administrators in fly-over football states, the Nebraska Cornhuskers announced that star wideout Maurice Purify will miss the team's opening game after being arrested twice in the space of a month. Purify, the Huskers' receiving-yardage leader in 2006, was busted on May 5 for a myriad of charges, including assault and trespassing resulting from a fight at a bar. In early June, he was pulled

over and charged with suspicion of DWI after failing to signal. As a result of the charges, Purify was given one year of probation and fined \$1250. Look for these arrests to be mentioned by ESPN analyst Mel Kiper Jr. exactly 4396 times between now and next April's pro draft.

### Crimson pie



Yamene Coleman, a basketball player for the University of Alabama Crimson Tide, bought \$200 worth of pizza at a Tuscaloosa Domino's with some chick's student credit card. That is the whole story. Except also that Yamene got caught, forcing campus police to arrest him for eight counts of fraudulent use of a credit card, in turn forcing Tide coach Mark Gottfried to issue a lame-ass, contorted, only partially sensible statement halfheartedly defending his player. "As the facts get here and we learn more about it," said Gottfried, "I'm very confident this will not be as it appears to be at this particular time." Here's an interpretation: this will turn out not to be a player buying \$200 worth of Domino's pizza with someone else's credit card; it will turn out to be a Tide player buying \$200 worth of pizza with the credit card of someone who will end up with her \$200 back and maybe even some help on her org-chem grades. Or maybe not. Coleman only averaged 1.8 points and 2.4 rebounds this year, so discipline isn't out of the question. As for the rating system, give him 12 points for eating bad pizza.


### Reaching new Hites



















Attentive basketball fans might have noticed an unusual name gracing a roster in the Orlando NBA summer league this past month. No, it wasn't the return of Celtics' draft bust Kedrick Brown (may Allah curse his name). The name in question was Robert Hite, formerly of the Miami Heat and patron saint of Faulty Sports Arrests.

Hite, who was then on the Nets' summer roster and might yet make someone's team, was arrested earlier this year for a DUI while a member of the Miami squad, and was promptly kicked off the team by Pat Riley, despite playing well in a few regular-season games. But tests later showed that Hite was not in fact intoxicated, that his blood alcohol was well within the legal limit, and that he was unfairly held by police. Unfortunately, this little-known player missed a Heat game against the Mavericks because of the arrest, and his subsequent dismissal forced him to spend the rest of the year with Sioux City, of the NBDL.

Hite had an interesting quote about his fate when he resurfaced as a Net in Orlando. "No hard feelings at all," he said. "It's the business of the NBA."

Getting kicked off the team for a DUI is the business of the NBA? Maybe that is true, if you only averaged 4.3 points and 1.3 rebounds per game. 

## Sports Blotter Legend

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

### LEADER BOARD TOP 10:

**PACMAN JONES** (TITANS) | multiple offenses, leaving dude paralyzed, having rocks in his tiny head | 110  
**LAVON CHISLEY** (PENN STATE) | murder (case pending) | 99  
**JIMMY LEON WILSON** (MONTANA) | murder (case pending) | 99  
**LOREN WADE** (ARIZONA STATE) | murder, second degree | 98  
**STEVE SWINDAL** (YANKEES) | DUI | 98  
**RON ARTEST** (KINGS) | starving Socks, domestic violence, intimidation | 95  
**DOMINIC JONES** (MINNESOTA) | video rapist (case pending) | 90  
**ELIJAH DUKES** (D-RAYS) | stalking, threats, weed, multiple busts, being a dick | 82  
**TOM PARROS** (RETIRED, RAIDERS) | creepy teen sex assault | 80  
**JULIO MATEO** (MARINERS) | punching, biting wife | 80

## SPECIAL TIMES SUBSCRIBER

Wow. That was a wonderful article [Jan Murphy, "Let There Be Retards," issue 117]. I had to stop reading it five times due to outbursts of uncontrolled laughter. It just goes to show that your average retard is smarter than a creationist. You all would be going to hell if it wasn't a fictional deterrent against behavior which does not conform to a religion's code of conduct.

I know that many people need to believe in something to validate their existence and not take a swan dive off a tall building, and that when some people follow the message of their religion some good can result along with the bad (for example: the Crusades, Spanish Inquisition, suicide attacks, Gospel Music, etc.), but when common sense and scientific fact are ignored, it unleashes a mind-fuck upon any society of rational thought.

Keep up the good work.

- Fellow companion in hell if it wasn't a fallacy created to enforce religious codes of ethics

*Dear Fellow,*

*You sure that swan dive thing is such a bad idea? Think outside the box, man.*

## ANOTHER INSENSITIVE JERK

Ian Murphy's article on the Creationist Museum was the funniest and most profound piece of work since Hunter Thompson's Fear and Loathing! Absolutely loved it and sent links to everyone I know!!!

Bob Kaplan

*Dear Bob,*

*How dare you, sir? How can you laugh at jokes about the mentally disabled people who will never read or hear about this story? For shame! What would John Cleese do?*

## HST'S THE GUY TO BE

Fucking hilarious, guys! I found your site via FARK, and I'm adding it to my favorites.

I've recently read "The God Delusion" by Dawkins and "God Is Not Great" by Hitchens, and this article was the perfect desert to accompany that two-course meal. You used Thompsonesque style to great effect in this "Fear and Loathing in Ohio" piece, and I salute you. Keep it up!

Thanks,

Christopher Dobney



South Sioux City, NE

*Dear Christopher,*

*Great, now Murphy's the new Thompson. Taibbi will be so relieved.*

## EVERYONE'S A CRITIC

Hey beast,

I gotta admit, after you changed formats this year, I found the new content a little heavy on politician-bashing and light on entertainment (trivial things make me giggle, especially when it's about Buffalo, and I guess I don't waste enough time on shitty national news to care as much about satire of it.)

All complaints are erased by the atheist-Ham-and-retard sandwich on your new issue's cover. Please, make "the Special Times" a regular feature?

Pat

*Hi Pat,*

*We thought you said "all complaints are erased?" We can still see them, Pat. You lied. The complaints are not erased and have irreversibly damaged our confidence. Expect a letter from our lawyer.*

## CHUCKLE-CHOKING

Your essay, "Let There Be Retards", almost had me spewing my 6" turkey sammich all over my monitor. Thanks for the intensive investigative journalism at the Creationists' den of dullery. Some years ago, I attended a "Back to Genesis" meeting at what we locals refer to as "6 Flags Over Jesus", the newly built fort called Lakeview Baptist Church. Ham and a "creationist geologist" were presenting their creationist drivel to those who would come. At one point on Night 1, Ham's partner was showing a Power Point diatribe that featured pics of artist-rendered dinosaurs and asking the crowd if they knew what the creatures' names were. Child after child in this University town yelled out the scientific names instead of the common names for the beasts. The presenter hurriedly got to the textual slides after that. And that's when I left, grinning and beginning to calm down.

Now, I'm sure your journalistic prowess can penetrate the halls of Congress as Michael Moore never dream of. I look forward to more essays.

Go Dougie!

Thomas Hodges

*Dougie responds:*

*Yaaay! I like dinosaurs! DINOSAURS! I like congress too! And senator Vitter! They call him "Vitter the shitter!" Uh-ohhh!*

## HAM SEES ALL

Just so you know, just in case you thought you were sneaky or below the radar, we let you come through the museum and conduct your "retarded" interviews. In fact we watched you the whole time you were here. Obviously we did not approve but being opening day and all we had bigger fish to fry. Just be advised that if any of these three show up again, they will be escorted of the premises.

Joe

jniemeyer@creationmuseum.org

*Hey Joe,*

*If this were true, wouldn't it just make you seem even stupider? What "bigger fish" were distracting you while an atheist fake-retard was loudly disrupting your ribbon-cutting ceremony and force-hugging your CEO? And don't you fret, Joe—we'll be back. This time the retard will be someone else. Scrutinize the retards closely, Joe. To be safe, maybe you should adopt a "no retards" policy.*

## GORILLA THEATER

Brilliant, just fuckin' brilliant bit of guerrilla theater. I wish I could have at least been there to watch, if not to have somehow joined in.

I live in KY, 80-some miles away from the Mew-zee-um, and I remain appalled and embarrassed at the fact that such a thing could be created by supposedly intelligent creatures, and that it's right here in my home state.

Kick ass. Take names if you wish, but above all - kick ass. Especially when dealing with morons like Ham et al.

Rich Miles

*Dear Rich,*

*We're not as surprised by the Kentucky location as you might think. But we do find it depressing that Australians are even dumber than you people.*

## THE KINDNESS OF STRANGENESS

Give Ian Murphy a raise because he's a genius.  
Give him anything he wants. He's a genius.

Pauline

*Dear Pauline,*

*He wants an all-expenses paid trip to the back of your throat. Give it to him; he's a genius.*

## CANADAGORIPHOBIA

Sir,  
I laughed until I urinated! Thank you. If I were brave enough to cross the border into your country I would love to see this museum for myself.

Ronald Reid

*Dear Ronald,*

*For God's sake, don't do it, man! Here there be dragons! Dragons which are comically misinterpreted as evidence that men lived among dinosaurs. Really, that's what they think here. Dragons. Stay where you are.*

## DEBATING MR. STUPID

I only have one question for you "Mr. Logic" Use your logic to prove how the earth was created and get back to me.

Sean Guillory

*Mr. Murphy responds:*

*Dear Sean,*

*I dig the moniker. "Mr. Logic" sounds like a superhero – more powerful than Jesus even!*

*From what I understand about the universe, and our solar system to be more precise, Sean, the earth and the other planets were created roughly 4.57 billion years ago, when the heavier elements that formed in the violent birth of our sun coalesced into huge spinning masses that followed the gravitational pull of the new star. Eventually, and naturally, the lighter elements, like the atmosphere we breathe, were attracted to the new rocky masses. And to think our sun is a third generation star, meaning there's been two previous cycles of stars. It took 3 generations to build up the wonderfully heavy and complex elements we experience on the earth. This stuff takes time! Anyway, once you have an atmosphere, hydrogen and oxygen, it just takes a little more time, well a lot of time,*

*and before you know it, there's these little self-replicating forms of proto-life, a purely chemical process, and water too! Add a few billion years and you have your hero, Mr. Logic, availing you of your ignorance.*

*Hope this helps,  
Ian Murphy*

## A TAD SENSITIVE

Wow. I've been trying to say this for sometime but Mr. Uthman did such an eloquent job, I am truly humbled ["Those Lazy Iraqis," issue 117]. Kudos for stating the obvious so baldly and so well.

Catherine

*Mr. Uthman responds:*

*Listen here Catherine, I may be thinning a little on top, but I am NOT bald! I do nothing "baldly," madam; to the contrary, I am eminently hirsute in all matters! Retract your erroneous statement immediately, Catherine, or you'll be hearing from my barber!*

## HONEST

I am one of the gullible fools who read the quotes at the top and said wholeheartedly "I agree!" However, by the end of your article I had to say "Those Mother-\*\$\*\* got me too!" It's good to hear the other side of the story. It reminds me that I have also heard how "grateful" and "hopeful" the Iraqi's have been to have us there. Many of whom are afraid we'll leave and be back to square one.

Ali

*Dear Ali,  
Glad we could help. Too bad about the stupidity.*

## BLAME IRAQ FIRST

I get your point and it's pretty sad to see Dems making a 180, but Iraqi's do hold responsibility for this mess. They let their country get out of control in the first place and an outsider had to come in to intervene. It would have happened sooner or later and quite frankly it was time.

Now that we are there and giving them plenty of opportunities (including logistics/SSS/expertise), it's/blood) it's time that they start taking control of their destiny. What's the alternative wise guy? We leave and then what?

If it were up to me, I'd have blown that crappy

country to hell more than two years ago when we first saw that things were spiraling out of control. Lucky for everyone, I'm not in charge of this of course ship.

eff Bush too. he's no friend of mine

Lintball

*Dear Lintball,*

*1. Go to the garage. 2. Find the biggest hammer you have. 3. Strike yourself on the head with as much force as you possibly can. 4. Repeat step 3 until you are unable to continue. 5. Lie there and die.*

## NAIVE

Great POV on this issue. I'd expect this from the republicans, but I certainly did not see it coming from the likes of Hillary and company. It's pretty sad and pathetic to see our "Leaders" doing this

Mark

*Dear Mark,  
Whose leaders?*

## MAGICAL SINKING

Excellent article.

My overall thoughts on the invasion and occupation are complex, as can be expected, but it's ridiculous to even begin to think the Iraqi's can make things happen on their own after all that's happened to their country in the past 25+ years.

Here's an idea, Washingtonians - how about you pull your head out of your butts and understand that no matter how noble our intentions may have been (and I'm an optimist, so I truly hope the myriad reasons given for the war are partially correct), Iraq is now a giant cluster-f\*\*\*, and it's incumbent upon us, as the occupiers, to either set things right or get the hell out and let it devolve into whatever it's going to do anyway.

At this point, given the mismanagement from the senior political and military leadership, I'm leaning towards getting the hell out, since nothing else we're doing seems to be working.

Erik

*Dear Erik,  
Hate to break it to you, bud, but your thoughts are not that complex. You can "hope" all you want that the reasons given for invading Iraq "are partially correct." That's not optimism dude. That's praying for a reshuffling of space-time.*

## CORRECTIONS

The real reason we went into Iraq was because Saddam was selling oil for Euros instead of Dollars. That would start the downfall of the fiat dollar and could not be tolerated. Now Iran wants to start trading oil for Euros. That also won't be tolerated. The president is doing his best to get us to invade Iraq. What we need is someone in the Whitehouse that isn't beholden to the corporations. We need to elect Ron Paul in 2008 if we want to keep our republic. He is the only one running in either party that is honest and trustworthy.

Joseph

*Dear Joseph,*

*You mean "Iran." And "White House." And "beholden." And "unelectable."*

## JUST A LIDDY LOOK

joe bageant's ghostly memoir is great [ "*Ghosts of Tim Leary and Hunter Thompson,*" issue 117]. wonderful. thanks for that.

incidentally, i attended the leary-liddy show when it came to new york. they just ran through what they already had done many times before and they took questions from the audience.

i just wanted a close-up look at the little heroic weasel.

ken rinciarì

*Dear Ken,*

*Did you happen to catch the name of his mustache dye? We're refinishing one of those Japanese lacquer cabinets.*

## I TOO AM AWESOME

After reading his preposterously pessimistic article I have decided that clearly phillip kolba is just another cynical denouncement-junkie [ "*The Secret to Attaining Awesomeness,*" issue 117]. i've been positively visualizing getting a snotty response to this posting and goddamn if it doesn't work! p.s. if my positive thinking is not sufficient, I am more than willing to escalate to petty and then significant threats. Look for fires/dead prostitutes in your slumpartments/trips to the Lincoln bedroom with mandatory Laura Bush snuggle time (you could get an electrical burn if one of her wires bursts loose after you ejaculate demon spawn onto her immaculately-maquillaged visage). Pps you'd also have to pay her dry-cleaning bill

tremble in fear!

margaret

*Dear Margaret,*

*That's a pretty name. You should stop by the slumpartment sometime with a live prostitute and we'll give you all the snot you need. Hey, it works!*

## QUE?

in my point of view im mexican i have been watching your program many times (even i don't understand 100% english)but i think you are a racist lou dobbs you are no standart in your opinions like other news person like 360" that guy i dont remember his name he present the 2 points of this inmigration ereform the good point n the bad point but you never do this so i desagree with your program )i don watch it any more you are out [Lou Dobbs, "Foreign Flags, Holidays Threaten America," issue 97.]

ramsex domin

*Dear Ramsex,*

*First of all, awesome name. In English, that name kicks ass. Secondly, we're not Lou Dobbs. But Dobbs is always hanging around at our parties, trying to act cool in front of the chicks. It's pretty sad. We contacted Lou with your message, and he responds thusly:*

*This no doubt illegal alien is at least making an effort to learn English, the great American language. But his error-riddled text is a good example of the serious crisis in English literacy in this country, which is being greatly exacerbated by the constant stream of brown, odorous native-types who speak Spanish. Why, just the other day, I overheard a group of young white men talking about "tacos" and "burritos" just as if they were speaking proper English. One even mentioned "fajitas" and suggested they go to the house of some fellow named "Don Pablo." Surely this Latino gentleman was the one assaulting their grasp of their proper language. Such foreign words, as well as Chinese phrases such as "ping pong" are becoming ever more common in this country, and I hesitate to imagine the compromised, dirty mongrel tongue in which Americans will one day speak, if we don't line our borders with mile-high electrified titanium walls equipped with laser-guided dog-cannons that fire abused pit bulls at anyone who approaches without their government-issued citizenship transmitter.*

*Go back to the dirt farm,*

*Lou Dobbs*

## MORE RAMSEX

Dear A. Monkey:

Kudos, sir! Spoken like a true Buddhist [ "*Why is Sam Harris a Best-selling Atheist?*" issue 116]. If you see the Buddha on the road, ram his head in your asshole.

Love,  
Satan

PS: Your secret transcendental meditation mantra is "douchebag".

*Dear Satan,*

*Namaste! As an obviously accomplished Buddhist we have an important question for you: Why are you such a dick?*

## ATHEISTS FOR RELIGIOUS ACCURACY

You are calling Christianity the white man's tribe, ignoring the majority of American blacks who profess Christianity.

Oh, as well as like expanding parts of Africa.

Your connecting belief in particular types of bullshit with any person's ethnicity is PRECISELY the problem Harris, Dawkins, Hitchens are trying to deal with.

Tyler Bass

*Dear Tyler,*

*That's funny; we thought the problem those guy were trying to deal with was the fact that people are idiots who believe twisted fairy tales to be literal truths. But we agree: black Christians are just as dumb as white ones, and they should get their due. PRECISELY.*

## WE THINK SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

Paul Fallon's column "In Defense of Ann Coulter?" [issue 115] is one of the most insightful columns I've ever read. I think he's on target 100% It's nice to know there are people out there who can still think independently

Michael Kleen

*Dear Michael,*

*You should try it yourself sometime.* 

# BEAST-O-SCOPES

## Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

It's not that people don't notice you're special, Virgo. It's that you're special in a really creepy way.

## Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Trees are cool and all, Cancer, but they don't really have feelings. Except the one outside your bedroom window, but only at night when it grows a hideous, twisted face, and those feelings are limited to wild hatred and murderous rage. Keep the shades drawn, Cancer.

## Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

It's not your fault you're a schizophrenic, Scorpio. Turns out it was all the weed. And no, this isn't really about you.

## Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Mitt Romney's favorite book is Battlefield Earth, Sagittarius. Seriously, I'm not saying don't vote for a Mormon, but a Mormon that loves Battlefield Earth? Hell no you don't vote for that!

## Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You're simply not yelling at the TV loud enough, Capricorn. How do you expect the Yanks to win the pennant if they can't even hear you?

## Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

I'm not saying you shouldn't be a cop just because you're five feet tall, Aquarius. I'm just saying getting shot with your own gun isn't as dignified as it sounds.

## Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

I know you think you were a cat in a past life, Pisces, but now that you've been human for thirty years you should understand that people just don't generally think of wounded birds as good gifts.

## Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

You're just going to get more bug bites if you insist on coating your legs with sugar.

## Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

You know, burning SUVs might not be the smartest way to protest pollution, Aries. And there are better ways to get laid, man.

As divined by  
Andrew Gullerstein



## Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Taurus, You are a very fat man and you wear a ridiculous hat.

## Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

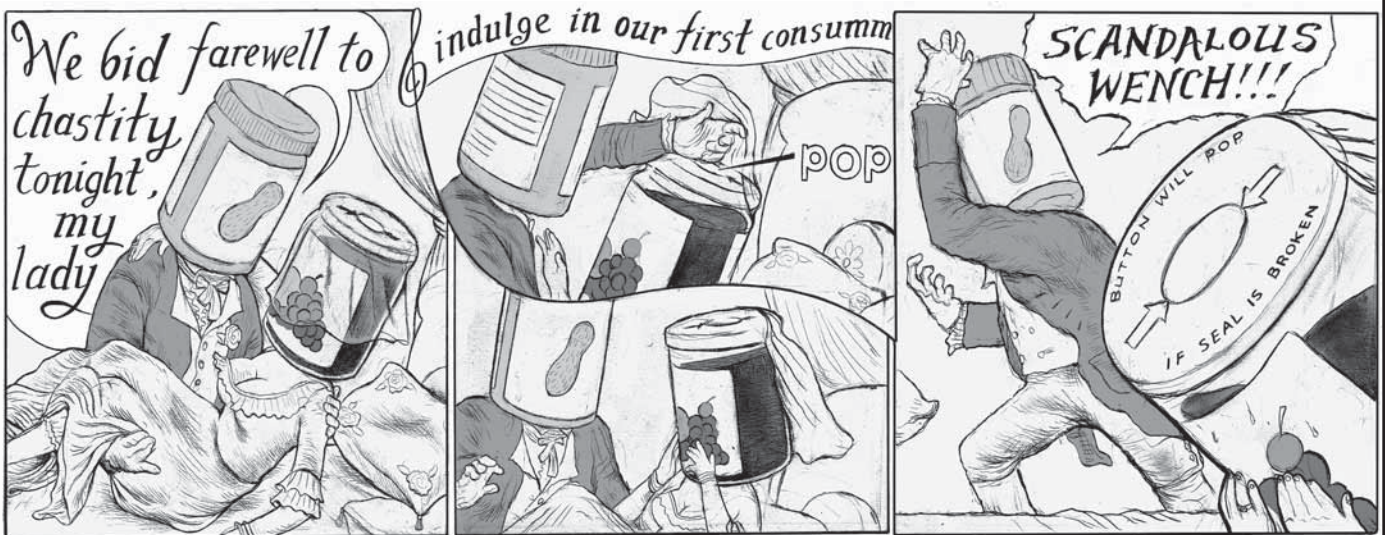
It's not fair to compare the Republicans to Nazis, Gemini. Nazis knew how to get shit done.

## Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

It's okay that you were hoping for the death of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Leo. Just hope for it in a year and a half.

## THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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