

THE BEAST



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**"KICKING
ASS!"**

Separated at birth?



Richard Branson...



**...and mutated
Ron Perlman?**



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Fred Certain

Conservatives hate new ideas, so they love Fred Thompson

By Allan Uthman

“A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

An amusing study published September 10th helps to explain America's red/blue political divide: our brains are different.

The study, led by NYU political scientist David Amodio, was simple—tap a key when you see one letter on the computer screen, and don't tap a key when another letter appears.

According to AFP: “The researchers examined activity in a part of the brain—the anterior cingulate cortex—that is strongly linked with the self-regulatory process of conflict monitoring.

“The match-up was unmistakable: respondents who had described themselves as liberals showed ‘significantly greater conflict-related neural activity’ when the hypothetical situation called for an unscheduled break in routine.

“Conservatives, however, were less flexible, refusing to deviate from old habits ‘despite signals that this ... should be changed.’”

The *LA Times* said that “liberals were 4.9 times as likely as conservatives to show activity in the brain circuits that deal with conflicts, and 2.2 times as likely to score in the top half of the distribution for accuracy.”

Of course, it's just another study which proves something everybody already knows from their own experience. Conservatives will likely simultaneously deny and confirm the study by dismissing it as “liberal bias” and pretending they don't exist, just as they did with another study last year which revealed

conservatives to be more racist.

So, conservatives are hard-headed. Not a big shock. But how does someone who doesn't like new information choose a new president? Easy—they get a guy who won't give them any information. A guy they can endow with whatever qualities they want. A guy like Fred Thompson.

Regardless of the brain study, conservatives like to flap about how they “think” and liberals “feel.” But the strangely robust support for Thompson seems to be entirely based on feelings. Thompson is six foot six, has a deep, folksy drawl and a leathery, masculine face, and he is reassuringly familiar due to his many roles on TV and in movies. He has already *played* the president three times. Some think he waited too long to get in the race, but by hanging back, Thompson has let conservatives and the media form an image of him in his absence. This is truly what the press loves to do, and it has paid off. Thompson, who seems a lot less cocksure and virile live than he does on a soundstage, was branded the new Reagan before he gave his first stump speech.

In the time it took Thompson to enter the race, Guiliani's daughter endorsed Barack Obama, and Romney equated his sons' work for his campaign to serving in Iraq. McCain fell off the face of the earth, and Tom Tancredo advocated bombing Mecca. All the while, the absent Thompson grew in popularity. Last Thursday, while the rest of the GOP contenders debated, Thompson announced on the Tonight Show. Again, his numbers went up, while pundits fretted that he was too late, too lazy. But Thompson's got the right idea. With conservatives, the less you challenge their preconceptions, the better you'll do. The less he says, the better.

It doesn't matter that he's lobbied for an abortion rights group in 1991 (something

Thompson first denied, then faked amnesia about) and lobbied for Libya and former Hation president Jean Bertrande Aristide. It doesn't matter that he doesn't go to church—Reagan didn't either. Like Reagan, Thompson has been labeled “authentic” in the press precisely because he is the *opposite* of authentic. He is an actor, whose personal ethics either are not what he claims them to be, or are subservient to his profit motivation. He is not anything he pretends to be—not working class, not particularly religious, not much of a social conservative at all, really. But he can fake it pretty good. Combine that with the conservative voter's tendency to stubbornly cling to comfortable beliefs in spite of reality, and you've got a winner.

In fact, if you look at the way the GOP candidates are ranking, it's easy to see that reality—even the limited version of reality Republicans acknowledge—is irrelevant. Genuine social conservatives like Huckabee and Brownback suck eggs, while the three frontrunners have all supported abortion (Romney won't last, due to the Mormon thing, plus he's too phony even for Republicans). Guiliani would stand no chance whatsoever if he hadn't happened to be around when the WTC disaster occurred. What do Rudy and Thompson have in common? They're both TV stars.

But religious issues aside, both Thompson and Guiliani satisfy the real motivations of conservative voters: simple, rigid thinking, affirmations of “we're always right/they're always wrong” tribal identity, and fear of change. In fact, as the study underscores, fear of change is the primary force behind conservatism—as William F. Buckley, Jr., put it in issue 1 of the *National Review*, “standing astride history, yelling: ‘stop!’ “ Any changes conservatives want are simple rollbacks

of policies and societal standards, usually back to the '50s in terms of social mores, and before the '20s in fiscal policy and labor rules.

All Thompson has to do now is ride around in a pickup truck and bluejeans (that's how he won his senate seat). He is the hollow candidate, the one voters can color with their own projected father-figure yearnings. He has to keep it vague, say "America" and "freedom" a lot, and this thing is his to lose. And then what? Who wins the vote between a triangulating Democrat, trying to straddle the antiwar


left and the mushy middle, or a down-home cigar-chomping good ole boy who tells you you're always right?

The truth is, Conservatives are the ones who are driven by feelings rather than logic. It's a sin to them to try to understand opposing viewpoints. This helps to explain the still dizzying number of people who insist that WMD were found in Iraq. You've probably heard it before, but think about it: This is not a seriously disputed issue. WMD were never found, period. It just didn't happen. But most conservatives *still* refuse to let that fact

in. To them, learning is a form of defeat. If you didn't get it right the first time, well, pretend you did anyway. Anything to avoid the dreaded prospect of having to adapt your ideology to new information.

Take global warming: In the face of an ever-growing scientific consensus that serious, human-caused climate change is coming sooner than later, all conservatives can think to do is laugh it off. Silly scientists, what do they know? Because the alternative would be to change—change their minds, their behavior, their attitudes toward environmental regulation. So forget it—take a picture of the polar icecaps and buy some real estate in central Greenland, because conservatives will be hip deep in water on their front porches before they admit they were wrong. Probably even then they'll blame it on Michael Moore somehow.

Of course, conservatives aren't the only ones susceptible to the soothing certainty of dogma. But it's their virtual inability to change their minds, regardless of the facts, that makes them so much more dangerous. We see it manifested in the ridiculously drawn out disaster in Iraq—rather than adapting to what's actually happening, Bush clings to his original, demented hallucination of a shining beacon of democracy. Another man might have reassessed and revised his goals by now. But Bush refuses to learn anything. Just this past week he was in Australia, talking about how we're "kicking ass" in Iraq. And conservatives love this about him. He is steadfast, firm, resolute—all synonyms for "doesn't change his mind." This is a shitty, stupid trait to be exalting. This sick, authoritarian vision of "leadership" that worships unthinking stubbornness is a true danger. The idea that a leader of people should think about something once, make a decision, and then never reconsider it, is simply insane.

But that's where we are. And now here come Thompson and Guiliani, ready to pick up the mantle for ill-considered forcefulness and self-serving bullshit, ready to talk about "kicking ass," and more convincingly than Bush ever could. It doesn't really matter if they're good Christians, as long as they make Christians feel good. As long as they don't challenge us. As long as they don't ask us to adapt, evolve, learn, or think, because that's not what conservatives do. 

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Near-Apocalyptic SNAFU

Name: Nuke-laden Boeing B-52 Stratofortress

Turn-ons: Lucky breaks, 3-level activation systems, living on the edge, getting my nuke on



Turn-offs: Internal Pentagon investigations, bomb-ophobes, the North American XB-70 Valkyrie

How I got to be The BEAST PAGE 5 Near-Apocalyptic SNAFU: So, okay, probably I shouldn't have flown from North Dakota to Louisiana with six nuclear warheads attached to my cruise missiles. But look, I've been doing this shit since '55, mmkay? You think I'm just gonna go "oops" and drop an H-bomb on my beloved nation? It's not like we flew over San Francisco or something. Joking; just joking, people.

Future plans: For the next few years, I'll be inspiring a broad array of conspiracy theories, from "the nukes are meant to be dropped on Iran" to "al Qaeda was attempting to get nukes from their moles in the Air Force." Who knows? The warheads sat on a runway in Barksdale for ten hours before anyone noticed. Maybe there was more than six of them. Am I freaking you out yet?

How I'd like to be remembered: As a hardworking bomber who made an honest mistake. Let's not forget all the foreigners I've killed, now. I'm going to be in service at least until 2040, making me the longest-serving military aircraft ever. Take that, English Electric Canberra!

POLITICAL PLUTONIUM



The End Begins in Iraq

By Stan Goff

“This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper.”

-T. S. Eliot

So President of the United States George W. Bush “diverted” a flight to Australia to a desert base in Anbar Province, Iraq (Sure he did.). Anbar Province is now being effectively run not by US occupation forces, but by the armed Iraqi nationalist forces that fought the US to a standstill there — with the cooperation of the same US forces. This is being spun as a successful “counter-insurgency” campaign.

Many who opposed the war in Iraq, and the many more who just disliked the Bush administration, certainly had different expectations of what forms the end of that war might take. And this is certainly the

beginning of some kind of end. That is not a call to complacency. Fight against this war like lives depend on it. They still do. I just feel compelled to counter-spin it. With El Presidente on this “surprise” trip, as it happened, were the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. Meeting them on this remote base between Baghdad and the Syrian border was none other than Bagwan Petraeus, the current Vivekananda of counter-insurgency doctrine and the latest in a long line of Generals who will be dragged into historical ignominy by this Commander-in-Chief.

The Ba’athists of Anbar seem to bear no grudges, even for the genocidal revenge that was visited on Fallujah. This bespeaks a political sophistication (or Realpolitik, choose your term) that is miles ahead of the power curve in Washington DC. Only lately, it seems, as the mad mandarins of The Project for a New American Century chirp with bellicosity at Persia, has it occurred to the administration that the *raison d’être* of US policy in the region since 1979 — containing the surprise independence of Iran — has been judo-

flipped into an Iranian Era, in the same moment that the privatized Islamist militias of the Afghanistan operation (also cranked up courtesy of the CIA circa 1979) have metastasized into a popular movement that threatens the US-obedient rulers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Pakistan.

The generalissimos of the New Crusade didn’t consult enough scripture.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall.

—Matthew 7:26-27

Now the whole US National Command Authority is sitting together with former enemies surrounded by the sands of Anbar.

Someone is cutting deals.

Someone else is preparing to spin a victory, just as they are spinning the surrender of Anbar as the success story of the invasion and occupation.

In his public statements yesterday, Bush opened the window out of which he (or more properly, his Party — he can soon settle back into golf, cocaine, and bass-fishing) will jump.

If the Generals “tell me that if the kind of success we are now seeing here continues, it will be possible to maintain the same level of security with fewer American forces. I urge members of both parties in Congress to listen to what they have to say. Congress shouldn’t jump to conclusions until the general and the ambassador report.”

Got it, George.

The opposition to the war has not only decimated Republican power, it has driven the Democrat establishment into a retrograde operation against its own left wing. The war is political plutonium. And the outcome — even as Sadr challenges the pro-Iranian SCIRI and reaches out to Sunni nationalists, as the aspirations of the Kurds provoke the Turkish Army, as Pervez Musharraf watches his own security forces fracture and shift against him, as the Russians court Central Asia

with the promise of a Gas OPEC, as the Sino-Russian Shanghai Cooperation Organization (the “anti-NATO”) threatens to undo the strategic outcomes of the Cold War, and as the fictional-value crisis triggered by the sub-prime nosedive creates alarming tremors under the global economy — will be that Iran is now and will remain a significant political actor on the world stage. This is inevitable, even with the occasional ill-considered shenanigans of President Ahmadenijad.

This meeting in Anbar is part of a last-minute bid to prevent the inevitable by exploring a realignment with what the administration has convinced itself are the “Sunnis,” one of three categories in its simple-minded social taxonomy of Iraq.

Many believe that the administration will resort to strikes against Iran, but I have said, from the time this particular chicken-little rumor started, that I don’t believe it will happen.

Before the Iraq occupation, the administration could harbor delusions about Iraq, about liberation parades across the Al-A’imma Bridge and cocktail parties at the Oil Ministry. Their information came from crackpot academics (Feith, Perle, Wolfowitz, et al) and an Iraqi confidence-artist (Chalabi).

But the recklessness of that decision cannot be mapped onto the current administration. Regardless of their

staggering apologetics from the podia, this administration has a lengthening list of political casualties on the one hand, and four-and-a-half years of bitter experience in actually-existing Iraq now. The interpreters of that experience are the Generals.

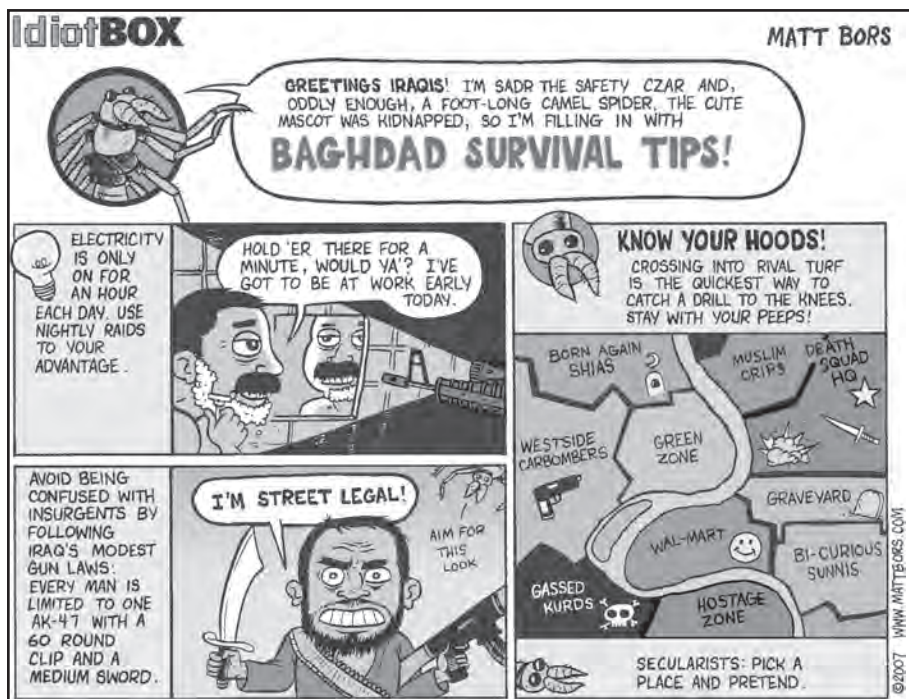
In those quiet enclosed spaces where they dare speak the truth, there is one truth that none of the Generals can withhold. An attack against Iran would spark a general uprising in Iraq that would extend from Baghdad to Basra; and the US would find its already tenuous position in Iraq untenable. The only thing that might be worse than an American attack on Iran would be one launched by the Israelis, who are rightly identified by Iraqis as an American forward base in the region.

The outcome would not be the destruction of Iranian influence. In the wake of a certain and final US defeat in Iraq, such an attack would be the guarantor of Iranian ascendancy in the context of a catastrophic standoff with China and Russia, the former of which has the capacity to shatter the US economy by selling down dollars, and the latter of which can absorb that sell-down in conversion to rubles in the growing fossil energy economy of Russia.

How this war will end has never been a decision that can or would be made by the leadership of either American political party, any more than the defeat in Vietnam was the result of politicians and protesters. The occupied people made the decision. It was not revoked in Vietnam. It will not be revoked in Iraq.

The puzzle that will preoccupy both parties now, since neither knows who will inherit this dilemma, is how to salvage what is left of waning American imperial power. You won’t be able to slide shim-stock between Rudy or Hillary on this question... and neither of them will have the power to stand before the historical macrotrend of US power dissolution.

The first that acknowledges and learns to deal with the fact of Iranian ascendancy will be the one that will suffer least... but that’s about it. In less than a decade, we will see Russia, China, and Iran at the head of a re-set Central Asian chessboard, and they will contend with a descendant American empire.



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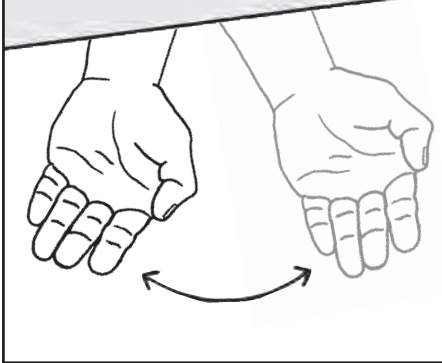
BEAST GUIDE TO INVOLUNTARY MEN'S ROOM HAND GESTURES



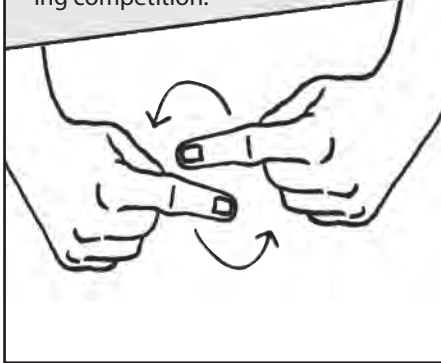
When not soliciting gay sex in a public restroom, just like I didn't, make sure to take a wide stance for safety's sake!

By Senator Larry Craig

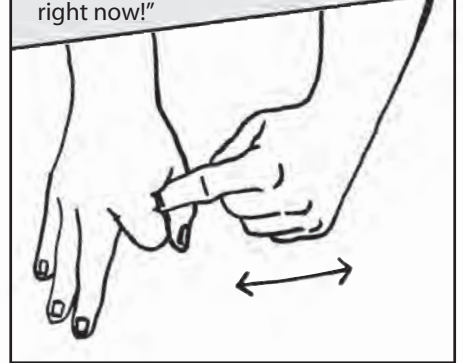
1 Using your left hand, make a back and forth swiping motion under the divider of the stall to your right. This tells your neighbor: "Hey there, fella, I'm in here making a BM! I'm scanning your area for toilet paper, and I will continue searching with a series of abstract and completely involuntary hand gestures."



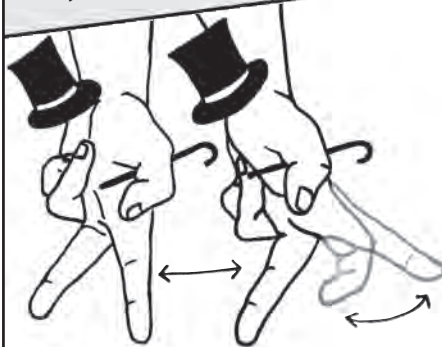
2 Though you won't recollect doing so afterward, bring your right hand below the divider. Extend both index fingers as pictured, and proceed to twirl them in a disco fashion. This tells your bathroom mate: "My defecation is going as planned, and I'm not the slightest bit interested in an unseemly cock-jousting competition."



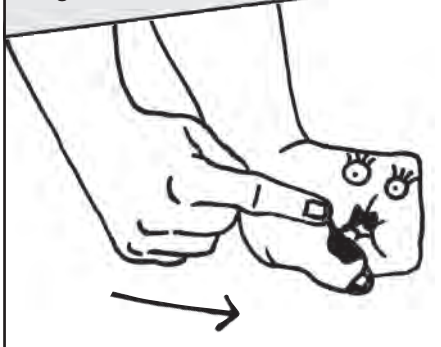
3 Make the international "OK" symbol with your right hand and vigorously probe the space between the index finger and thumb with your still extended left index finger. This tells the man in the next stall: "I voted for the Defense of Marriage Act, and I abhor the mind-bending homosexual intercourse we could be engaged in right now!"



4 Don a fancy miniature top hat and dandy cane on your left hand. Using your knowledge of Vaudevillian choreography, wow your neighbor with a flamboyant and exciting show! He won't soon forget it, though you will. It tells him: "I appreciate theatre, and I'm comfortable with my heterosexuality." Kick like you mean it!



5 Using a Sharpie and whatever shade of lipstick you have on you, make up your left hand to look like an elegant lady of the evening. With your extended right index finger, penetrate its mouth hard and fast. This sends a loud and clear message: "I'm keen on women, and all the vaginal intercourse we have together!"



6 Pump your right fist in and out of the now violated mouth on your left hand, as if to say: "Pay no attention to my Senatorial hands; they know not what they do! And if you happen to be a plainclothes police officer: I'd like to plead guilty of all charges, so all this ugliness will just go away! I mean, I didn't do it."



The end of all empires is inevitable. The Great City always exhausts the rural soils and eats the seed-corn, and its debilitated, dependent rulers will always be usurped by “the barbarians” who were formerly bent before the Great City’s plunder. As Dr. King, once himself called a barbarian, said, “The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.”

History will record that a decisive misstep in the crash of the American Empire was taken on March 19, 2003. September 3, 2007 will be a historical place-holder for a kind of death-gasp of empire ... former guerrillas sitting the Prez down as an equal across the table at Al Asad.

We haven’t reckoned the body count yet, because it is still rising. That’s the sinful part.

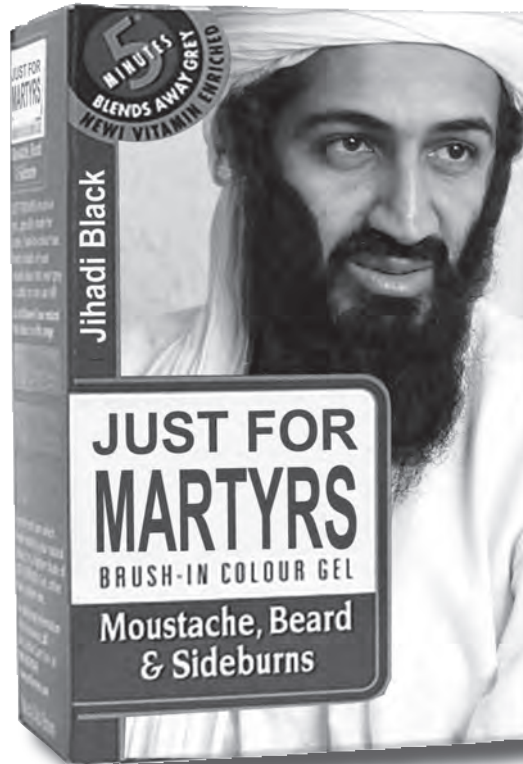
It’s over. Admit it. Get over it. Get out.



Stan Goff is the author of “**Hideous Dream: A Soldier’s Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti**” (Soft Skull Press, 2000), “**Full Spectrum Disorder**” (Soft Skull Press, 2003). He is retired from the United States Army. His blog is at www.stangoff.com.

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QUIT YER HITCHENS!



Flinging Feces at Hypocritical Hominid Chris Hitchens

By A. Monkey

In some respects, I am a well-connected monkey. Not put into print before is this little story about Christopher Hitchens, which I allege is a secondhand 87% accurate account — I'm not sure about the exact sequence of events: Christopher Hitchens knocked up his mistress-turned-girlfriend-turned second wife when she was in the girlfriend stage and he was still doing the divorce paperwork from the previous hitch. He paid for the abortion himself, with his ex-wife's credit card.

Imagine that. Imagine opening your monthly bill and seeing that item from a medical clinic for \$800 or so for an "unwanted pregnancy procedure." Not an opportunity to restage Kay Adams's ultimate Fuck You to Michael Corleone: "Oh, Hitch. Hitch, you are blind. It wasn't a miscarriage. It was an abortion. An abortion, Hitch. Just like our marriage is an abortion. Something that's unholy and evil!" No, the marriage is over, and that particular Fuck You is yours to keep, and yours to pay off.

I can't offer too much sympathy for the former Mrs. Hitchens because she must be a nasty piece of work to have enjoyed his company for the years they were married, nor can I the current Mrs. Hitchens for her marital predicament — I met her once and she was a snotty bitch.

Passing the buck on that abortion must have been tough on old Hitch, because he recently wrote in Newsweek, "Every Catholic is supposed to regard abortion as an abomination (and, if it matters, I concur)." When Hitchens gets in ink fights with respectable journalists, his main employ is pedantry -- his explanation for this quote given his personal experience would likely be

that he meant what he wrote: that he concurs that Catholics are supposed to regard abortion as an abomination.

It's sad in a way about that abortion, because it means my kids won't have the pleasure of mocking and snarling at a Hitchens-by-lined piece like I get to. His two children with his first wife show no promise of success at the family business. And Hitchens has a young daughter with his current wife, but female journalists just do not rise to the kind of prominence he has. And something tells me the canceled baby was going to be a boy, but -- ha,ha -- not a goy as you might have supposed. No, no: Hitchens is a Jew!

This is something that serious Hitchens fans have known for some time, but it was revealed to me in a recent *Times of London* cozy interview with the man: "He discovered late in life that he was Jewish, his mother's family having changed their name from Levin." Levin, Hitchens, what's the difference, right?

It really shouldn't matter to the author of *God Is Not Great*, but it does. He told the *Times* that he observes Passover and that he is pushing that shit on his daughter, so she knows "what the tradition is." This means in one little nutshell that despite spending his time attacking religion quite rightly as an occupation for "slaves and fools," his own understanding of the implications of this are virtually nil — about as naive as the *Welcome to the Dollhouse* Wiener Dog girl's voluntary and punctual appearance at the dumpsters after school to "get raped." It means that despite writing pro-evolutionary statements like "we have common ancestry with apes," Hitchens doesn't understand that he's a fucking monkey himself.

There's a rhetorical fallacy identified as

the "undistributed middle"—cases where the arguer states a claim and then draws a conclusion about the claim without justifying why the conclusion is valid.

The undistributed middle between Hitchens observing Passover and my conclusion that he's not aware of his own monkeytude is that self-aware monkey humans couldn't possibly laugh at religion yet still participate in its traditions. If Hitchens knew he was a monkey he wouldn't just be appalled at the Jewish Faith, he'd be appalled at its rites, because notwithstanding their religious connections, rites are what monkeys use to affirm tribal affiliation — just as loathsome and destructive as God worship.

Of course, traditions like the fantasy baseball and astrology play their tribal ID role in the same way that Passover does. But we come to discern our own tribal delusions in degrees and Passover is a big bright red flag; it's directly tied to that dangerous religious thing. And it's the relative ideological strength of tribes, not their ever-evolving gods, that underwrites much of the world's worst skull-piling sessions we see today. Hitchens is something of a student of the occupation in Iraq, a tribe-underwritten conflict if there ever were one, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

There are unlimited examples of tribal rites surviving as gods die or get replaced. Within the White Tribe, we have the Mormons, who do practically everything a good Christian is asked to do during Sunday services, with the only substantial departure being that the Mormon god's approach to the "be fruitful and multiply" side of things makes the Pope sound like a virginity

Continues on page 13



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

THIS BEAST IN SCIENCE

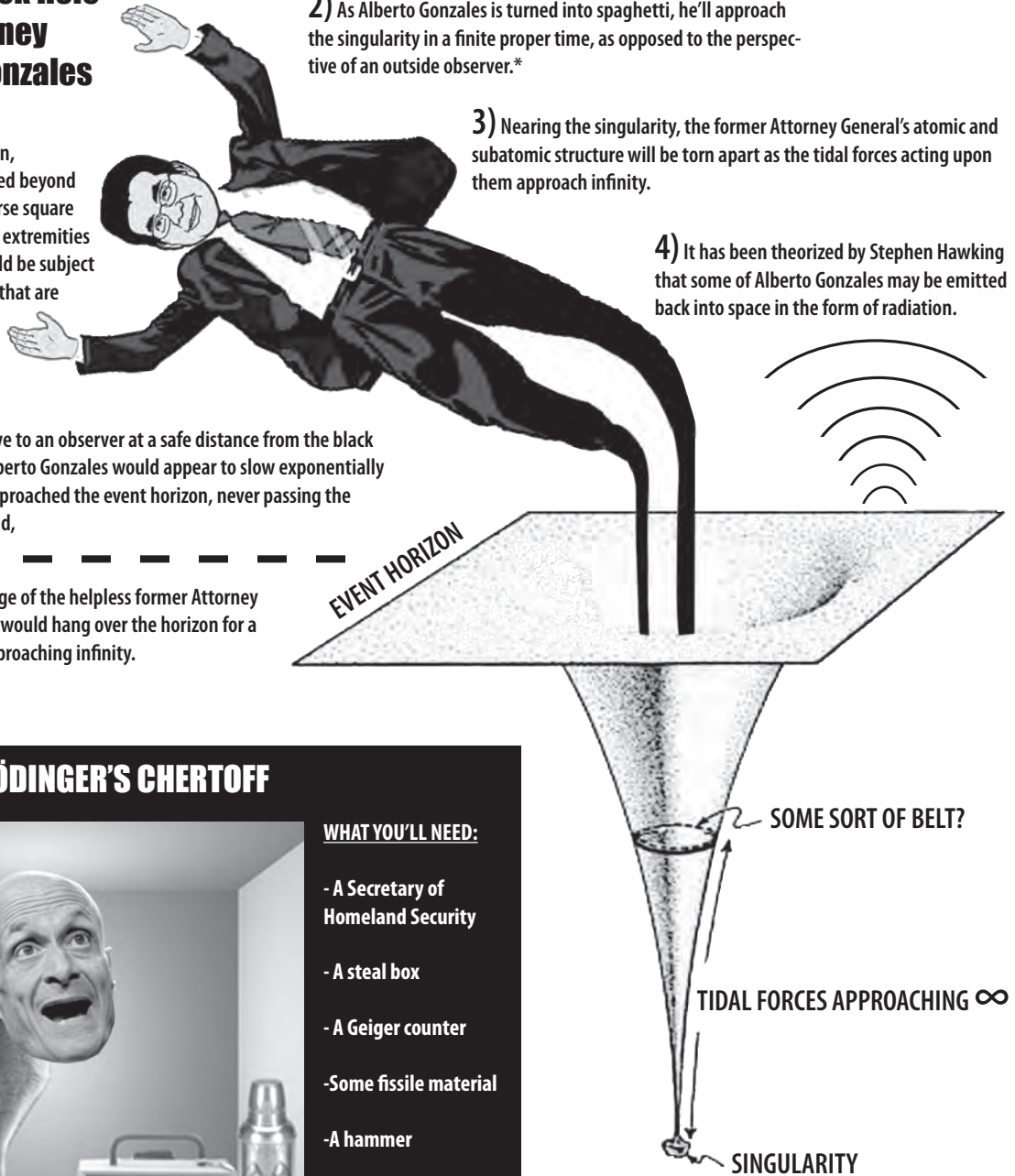
The effects of a Black Hole on former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales

1) Upon crossing the event horizon, Alberto Gonzales would be stretched beyond recognition. This is due to the inverse square law. The former Attorney General's extremities that are nearer the black hole would be subject to stronger tidal forces than those that are farther away. Scientists call this process "spaghettification."

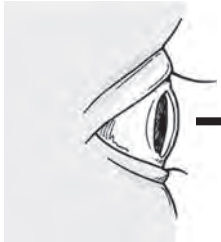
2) As Alberto Gonzales is turned into spaghetti, he'll approach the singularity in a finite proper time, as opposed to the perspective of an outside observer.*

3) Nearing the singularity, the former Attorney General's atomic and subatomic structure will be torn apart as the tidal forces acting upon them approach infinity.

4) It has been theorized by Stephen Hawking that some of Alberto Gonzales may be emitted back into space in the form of radiation.



* Relative to an observer at a safe distance from the black hole, Alberto Gonzales would appear to slow exponentially as he approached the event horizon, never passing the threshold,



The image of the helpless former Attorney General would hang over the horizon for a time approaching infinity.

Next issue: SCHRÖDINGER'S CHERTOFF



WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A Secretary of Homeland Security
- A steal box
- A Geiger counter
- Some fissile material
- A hammer
- A vile of poison
- And a sense of fun!

Do not attempt without parental supervision



A. Monkey, continued from page 10

pledge team leader (Have you seen those portrait photos of the 80 grinning dumbfucks that make up Mitt Romney's "immediate family"?)

Or take what happened when Western missionaries went to the Philippines and tried to sell Christ the Redeemer to a bunch of blood-loving animal killer-worshippers. They weren't having any of the miracle-in-the-manger material, but the crown of thorns, the crucifixes, and the blood! That got them. The missionaries sent letters back home requesting paintings of Jesus after he'd been through the wood chipper and overwrought renditions of disemboweled martyr apostles, and it worked. The Jesus they worship in the Philippines today looks pretty much the same.

Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is that it's rites like Passover and Easter that are at the forefront of strengthening this idea that the monkeys have some deep association with each other, which are even worth dying or killing for to protect "our way of life."

There are always moments where the

god that the tribe was worshipping no longer jibes with the times — ordinary experience clashes with God's Word, and people start to jump ship looking for something new to believe in.


This is that moment for a growing number of monkeys who make up the Grand White-Jewish Tribal Alliance (yeah motherfucker, that's what this thing is). You have Jews in Berkeley who go through the motions of Yom Kippur and spend the rest of their time testing out Hindu chants and Hatha postures to find a viable replacement, whites in L.A. sniffing at the luxury complexes that house L. Ron Hubbard's sci-fi-based faith, and lots of others hanging on as best they can to the white-knuckle rollercoaster of Enlightenment thinking, even if they haven't fully caught up with where it's taken them.

Hitchens is on that rollercoaster, taking occasional gulps of Manishevitz when the ride gets too hairy. Hitchens popularity as an author marks his stance as representative of a lot of the rest of us on that rollercoaster. They can see that religion is BS, but they don't want to opt out on the other narcotic effects that tribal membership confers them. And oddly — delusions don't have to be intellectually consistent to function — members' annual fees still include somewhere from reluctant

to unquestioning acceptance of the "value" of religious traditions and occasional participation in them, even though they recognize religious contexts as meaningless at this point.

Proof that Hitchens only sees an inch past his atheism is everywhere with him — that Passover shit is enough to put him away forever, but his sincere attempt to gin up fear and hatred for Muslims in America gives him away just as easily.

There was a militant Muslim bakery in Oakland that had some crooked dealings behind the scenes; small stuff like racketeering, some payback murders and tax evasion. A reporter started snooping and the Muslim bakers shot him too. Hitchens didn't see it for what it was: just some thugs. For Hitchens it was another iteration of this looming civilizational clash. I'll give him the last word:

"If I had stood outside that hideous bakery with a sign saying "Black Muslims Are Racists and Fanatics," I think the cops would have turned up in a flat second and taken me into custody. I might well have been charged with a hate crime. As I have written before and am sure I will write again: This has to stop, and it has to stop right now, before sharia baking comes to a place near you." 

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WHO WANTS TO BE AN IMPERIAL OCCUPIER?

By Steve Gordon

What an underappreciated quagmire, this Iraq clusterfuck. It's increasingly safe nowadays to say, without any substantial background statistics, that "[insert previous month] has been the most violent month since the war began." Fortunately, the war is easier than ever to ignore, and a rising consensus of its overall retardedness as well as the slippery slope of waning newsworthiness are replacing genuine public concern. So for those of us who have been maintaining a proud indifference, here is a quick recap of Iraq-related news items that might have slid right by you (quantified for attention-grabbiness by way of the Ignorability Scoring Index).

NOW MORE SUBJECTIVE THAN HATE CRIMES!

Veritable Lee Ermei look-alike Gen. David Petraeus is expected to testify before Congress (if you are reading this after September 10th, pretend like it's in past-tense) about the subterfuge of decreasing violence in Baghdad. Dick Durbin is expected to be mean to him in a largely meaningless and inconsequential exchange.

Petraeus is to report on the effect of recent security efforts in Baghdad and essentially sell them as, well, effective. The Bush-Petraeus report was called into question, however, based on its intrinsically misleading methodology. For instance, an Iraqi shot in the back of the head is counted as victim of sectarian violence. Shot in the face, though? Natural causes.

According to CNN, the U.S. military reported a mere 165 murders in Baghdad in August, or the emotional equivalent of about zero Americans. Iraqi Interior Ministry statistics put the number at 428, which, fortunately, is still the emotional equivalent of zero Americans.

This whole incident garners five Ignorability Points, because it really doesn't affect you or the nice things you own.



"My friends call me Penny."



"What's in your burka?"

MICROCREDIT: GOOD FOR EVERYONE, EXCLUDING MOST

The Trade Bank of Iraq has recently determined that Iraqis would be good enough at making late payments to justify the distribution of credit cards in the country.

Microfinance, a practice deemed "basically malicious" by everyone besides the filthy rich and the filthy, filthy poor, has been picking up momentum in Iraq as banks have been distributing plastic to a whole new market of people unable to "remit minimum payment immediately."

Hotter than hot money, microcredit is a more direct way of funneling money away from struggling communities. And credit card companies are able to save money because they force borrowers to peer-pressure each other into paying the money back rather than having to make angry, long distance phone calls to cardholders every month.

While the card issuers have so far been reluctant to extend their services beyond pre-paid cards—what we know of as gift certificates, though likely more useless—the expedient growth of credit rating agencies in developing countries ensures a smooth transition into crippling debt.

This item warrants the maximum of ten Ignorability Points (because, let's face it, who cares?) for every wily entrepreneur that cashes in big because his fruit stand was able to invest in an '89 Macintosh, but loses three for every published, scholarly-reviewed critical theory article that contests the practice of microfinance.

EVERYBODY MUST GET STONED

In an uplifting story from northern Iraq, a 17-year-old girl was viciously kicked and stoned to death for dating a boy who practiced a different religion. The girl, Du'a Khalil Aswad, allegedly converted from being Yazidi to the slightly less archaic religion of Islam. This set her family into a typically retarded religious fervor.



*Precious Memories:
Iraqi family photos*

Du'a was dragged from her place of worship by nine male relatives and killed in the center of town as a large crowd of onlookers—including uniformed, armed, and indifferent Iraqi police—onlooked.

All of this occurred in the town of Bashika, which is near Mosul, an area quickly putting America's worst projects and ghettos to shame in terms of indifferent police presence.

According to Tahsin Saeed Ali, head of the Supreme Yazidi Spiritual Council, "they brutally killed a young Yazidi girl in pursuit of out-of-date tribal rights." No kidding. The truly stupefying part of this statement, however, is the phrase "out-of-date." Apparently at some point in time, stoning a girl to death for switching religions was a reasonable course of action. And here's Ali, shrugging his shoulders and admitting, "Well, I suppose we're a little backwards sometimes." No fucking kidding.

This story briefly scraped our collective attention spans back in April when the all-mighty YouTube started circulating the gruesome clip. I had the pleasure of catching it the day CNN deemed it marginally attention-grabbing; sitting on my couch, the footage of Du'a stoically accepting her fate passed my Faces of Death/rotten dot com-addled eyes without so much as a cringe in response.

But here's the uplifting part of the story, and the part that made my internal LP screech to a cinematic halt as my lips formed a silent "Whaaaaat?!" The YouTube clip was videotaped by family members with camera phones.

I didn't know Iraq had books, let alone landlines. But cell phones, and camera phones nonetheless? "Things have really turned around in Iraq," was among my first thoughts.



But no, cell phones and the tenacity of viral video have become such an integrated part of our culture that no one is left astounded when some ignorant zealot scumbag in northern Iraq is watching his sister get slaughtered in the sand and his only worry is, "I hope I get reception." Tom Friedman must be ecstatic.

Speaking of Yazidis, who are considered devil-worshippers by their neighbors, over 400 of them got blown up in August by suicide bombers, a direct result of the Iraq-a-mole game we call the Surge.

This story is a bit stale, but it scores a whopping eight Ignorability Points, because *you* heard the story. And ten seconds later you forgot about it because it wasn't about celebrities or sports.

WESTERN CONCEPTUAL SOUND ART INTRODUCED IN IRAQ

The very, very appropriately named Corporal Donald Payne recently became the first British soldier to be charged with a war crime. At all. Not too impressive, though, considering that the British helped set the rules for these things a half a millennium ago.



*Sadly, the Blue Man Group
has not been tortured*

Payne was dismissed from the British army and sentenced to a year in jail for the mistreatment of prisoners at a detention center in Basra. According to the *Guardian Unlimited*, the soldier lined up detainees and struck them sequentially, creating a symphony of agonized screams and human misery. The resultant musical instrument was referred to as "The Choir."

This messed-up, Mel Brooks-inspired war atrocity gets three points, four if not for the significant boost in the ratio of British war criminals to Iraqi war criminals.

...AND TAKING NAMES

After an apparent respite from colloquial faux pas in the media, Bush came back in full force when he told Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile that we are "kicking ass" in Iraq. This doesn't warrant much discussion,

but if every American had heard about the comment, we'd totally be "wicked pumped" about the war again. Only one point; this was a big deal. 

John Solomon: MEDIA ASSASSIN



Can a Single Reporter Knock Off a Presidential Candidate?

By Alexander Zaitchik

Earlier this summer, the *Washington Post* ran a profile of Joseph Torrenewa, a Beverly Hills Democrat better known these days as John Edwards' barber. The article, which led the paper's "style" section, has achieved minor infamy for the author's solemn assertion, "It is some kind of commentary on the state of American politics that [John Edwards'] hair seems to have attracted as much attention as, say, his position on healthcare."

Has it now? The truth is nobody knew anything about Joe Torrenewa before the *Post* article appeared. Miniscandals about politicians' haircuts are more like Chia pets than human heads of hair. They don't grow on their own. They require reporters to water them with investigations into the practices and prices of high-end barbers; only then is national attention focused on who and what presidential candidates pay for their monthly snips. The Torrenewa profile didn't offer "some

kind of commentary" on the state of American politics so much as it offered insight into the peculiar priorities of its author, *Post* money and politics reporter John Solomon.

If Solomon were some deadbeat alt-weekly columnist with a grudge against Edwards, the haircut story would make for mere humor. But the *Post* has reach far beyond its own pages -- it's one of a handful of media outlets that can establish diehard narratives about politicians that can dog them for decades. The *Post* in Solomon's hands is a weapon that can almost single-handedly force Edwards or another candidate off their campaign focus. In the case of Edwards, that means a total distraction from trying to start a national discussion on poverty issues.

No one who has followed Solomon's controversial reporting career was surprised to see his byline on the Torrenewa profile. When he jumped from the Associated Press to the *Post* at

the end of 2006, Solomon took his well-known obsessions with him. Among these are the personal finances of prominent Democrats and, apparently, their boyish bangs.

The only thing that likely surprised Solomon watchers about the Torrenewa profile was its placement in the "style" section. This may have even surprised Solomon himself, as the article appears written with more prime *Post* real estate in mind. How else to explain Solomon's newsy tone, as if the words of Joe Torrenewa, stylist to the stars, could unleash another season's worth of Hairgate exposes leading all the way up to and through the door of the Edwards' campaign bus?

"Torrenewa's account of his long relationship with Edwards -- the first he's given -- probably guarantees ... the whole issue [won't] go away," he writes. Or so John Solomon can hope!

If Solomon expected placement of the Torrenewa article in the news section, it's understandable. After all, one of his very first stories for the *Post* set a precedent for landing his petty and misfiring Edwards hit-jobs on A1. Back in January, fresh to the job, Solomon penned an article with Lois Romano that announced the sale of Edwards' Georgetown home for \$5.2 million -- or \$1.4 million more than he paid for it in 2002. Although practically dripping with innuendo that Edwards had been involved in a sleazy land deal with known criminals and then lied about it, the article noticeably failed to contain any dirt. The article basically reported that Edwards had bought a house in D.C.'s booming real estate market, fixed it up and sold it three years later for a profit. The banality of these facts did not stop *Post* editors from placing the article above the fold, alongside the latest news from Iraq.

A couple of weeks after Solomon reported on the unremarkable sale of Edwards' Georgetown mansion, *Post* ombudswoman Deborah Howell conceded that the story was controversial in the paper's own newsroom for being "accurate [but] misleading ... 'gotcha' without the 'gotcha.'"

Howell wasn't the last *Post* employee to publicly side with readers concerned with the sound of their new hire's axe grinding against the expensively coiffed skull of

John Edwards. When a *Post* online chat participant described Solomon's July 5 profile as a one-sided "waste of time and newsprint," *Post* political reporter Anne E. Kornblut replied, "I hear you."

Solomon's record of glancing hit-jobs on John Edwards stretches back to 2003. While at the Associated Press' Washington bureau, he investigated the sale of Edwards' last home with similar results. "When I saw a [2003] 'style' section blurb that the Edwardses had sold another home, I simply set out to learn who the buyer was," Solomon would later recall. It turned out that the house had been purchased through a company by a lobbyist representing the Saudi Kingdom. The nut of Solomon's story, which went nowhere, was that Edwards was aware of the name of the buyer in this legal sale, but did not tell Solomon when he first called and asked.

Despite the *Sounds of Halloween* soundtrack that the *Post's* new "star reporter" put behind both of his haunted house stories, both resulted in the sounds of laughter and chirping crickets. Solomon claims to merely be holding Edwards to Washington's standards of transparency in financial dealings. But in a current presidential field filled with such unseemly fortunes as Rudy Giuliani's, it is curious that a money and politics reporter would be gunning after Edwards, whose supposed "crimes" appear more newsworthy only when held up to his populist rhetoric and, it should be said, policy prescriptions.

Take two Solomon stories from April and May of this year. The stories highlight the consulting work Edwards did in 2005 and 2006 for Fortress Investment Group, a New York-based firm with a \$30 billion hedge fund basket, all of them incorporated in the Cayman Islands, the famous tax shelter. As a presidential candidate, Edwards has decried offshore tax shelters, and Solomon's April 23 story (co-written by Alec MacGillis) "Hedge-Fund Ties Help Edwards Campaign; Firms Increase Political Gifts" was justified in highlighting the discrepancy between Edwards' statements on tax shelters and his lobbying efforts on behalf of Fortress, which included a May 2006 meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

But even as the piece noted that Edwards was hardly alone in his ties to the hedge fund industry-- Rudy Giuliani raised nearly

as much as Edwards for his campaign from hedge fund Elliott Associates -- the article pointedly returned to the object of Solomon's obsession, Edwards, and ended by implying that Edwards was not, and perhaps could not be, an honest advocate for the poor as he claimed. To drive the point home, Solomon again mentioned the \$400 haircuts. Four months later, he would track down Joe Torreueva and get the whole story, increasing the chances that, in his words, "the whole issue [won't] go away."

Solomon followed up the hedge fund story a couple of weeks later, on May 11, with another hit-job employing a more subtle weapon: The revelation that Fortress expanded its subprime lending business -- selling high-risk mortgages to people with bad credit -- while Edwards was a paid consultant. Since subprime lending has been linked to predatory lending practices and increased home foreclosures among for Americans living at the poverty level, Solomon and MacGillis again called into question Edwards' commitment to improving the lives of the poor.

"Fortress's growing role in the subprime lending market provides a second contrast between the firm's business practices and the positions Edwards has taken as the presidential candidate who has made poverty a major campaign theme," they wrote.

Later that week, on May 16, Solomon defended his story by asking whether "a candidate who says he opposes offshore

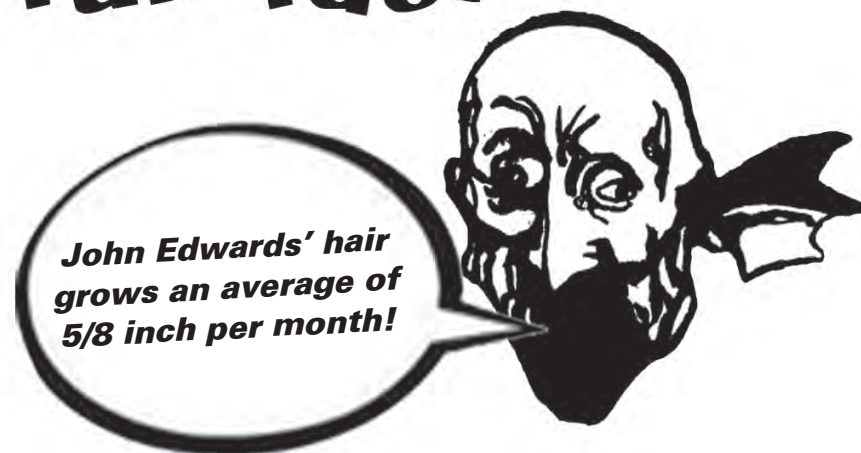
tax havens and subprime lending should have worked for a firm that engaged in both practices." But as Media Matters quickly pointed out, Edwards' campaign website refers to subprime loans as "a valuable alternative for families with poor credit." He never opposed them.

But Solomon didn't earn his rep as a Dem-chaser who strikes out a lot going after Edwards. That honor falls to Harry Reid. In 2006, his last year at the AP, Solomon made a name for himself on liberal blogs and media watching sites with sustained and poorly researched attacks on Harry Reid, who survived the assault to become Senate majority leader in November.

In a Feb. 9, 2006, article co-written with Sharon Theimer, Solomon charged Reid with links to Jack Abramoff centered around two pieces of pending legislation: a vote concerning the approval of a Michigan casino, which Reid had long opposed; and a bill that would raise the minimum wage in the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory, which Reid had long favored. The article focused on meetings between representatives from Abramoff's office and Reid but omitted two crucial facts: On the casino vote, Reid's position had long predated the meetings with Abramoff's staffers, and on the minimum wage bill, Reid in fact *voted against* Abramoff's position. In the latter case, Solomon's journalism turns a darker shade of yellow because Reid was a co-sponsor of the minimum wage bill.

When Josh Marshall of Talking Points

Fun Fact



Memo contacted the Abramoff aide in question, Ronald Platt, about whether Reid had taken any action against the minimum wage bill following their meeting, he replied, "I'm sure he didn't." Platt, whom Solomon never contacted for comment, also stated that Solomon "distort[ed] the context of my 'contacts,' with Sen. Reid's staff ... The allegations and implications in Mr. Solomon's story are false."

But Solomon saw blood in the water and wanted a kill. A few months later, he was back nipping at Reid's heels with two stories accusing the senator of ethics violations in accepting "tickets" to boxing matches from the Nevada Athletic Commission, with legislation pending regarding the future of the body. As Media Matters pointed out at the time,

Solomon failed to report the outcome of [the NAC's] efforts -- information seemingly relevant to a determination of whether Reid was improperly

influenced by the NAC. In fact, more than six months after [the fight], Reid allowed the [law opposed by the NAC] to pass the Senate by unanimous consent on May 9, 2005.


What's more, Reid, along with John McCain, had not received tickets, but had merely been credentialed. In any case, a Senate ethics committee cleared Reid of any misdoing that December. But Solomon just kept coming. In October 2006, he published a detailed three-part series that in retrospect looks a lot like a more convoluted version of his January *Post* nonstory about John Edwards' Georgetown home.

For these and other sins of omission and shading in his attacks on prominent Democrats, Solomon has been eaten alive by liberal news sites over the last couple of years, with Media Matters and Talking Points Memo leading the way. When asked about the attention he's received from the sites, Solomon claims to have

welcomed it.

"Many readers might be surprised by this, but I welcome the bloggers and their free exchange of ideas," he said in a Washingtonpost.com chat with readers. "Journalists shouldn't fear this."

But one suspects all of the attention by Marshall and others has gotten to Solomon. Notice the not-so-sly distinction he cuts between "bloggers" and "journalists," as if citizen journalists like Marshall, who helped knock the stilts out from under Solomon's Reid stories, aren't journalists. "In Harry Reid's case," Solomon continued, "the AP extensively reviewed all of the bloggers' allegations and determined, independently of me, that my stories were accurate, fair and balanced."

If Solomon can keep getting away with his brand of "fair and balanced" journalism, John Edwards and the rest of the presidential candidates are in for some trouble as the primary race heats up this fall. 

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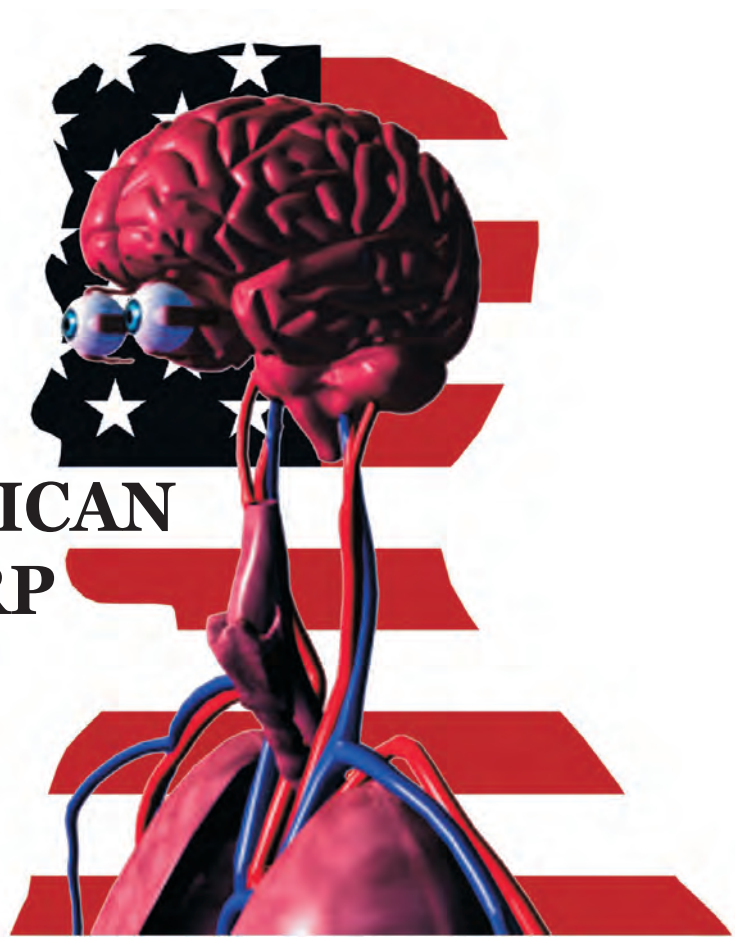
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THE GREAT AMERICAN MEDIA MIND WARP

A Feast of Bullshit and Spectacle

By Joe Bageant

On televisions you see police cars surround the car of a “terror suspect.” ... When you learn he is a neurosurgeon whose wife and baby were in the car with him, you might think he probably just pulled over when the police seemed to want him to, but only if you were still capable of using your own brain. After all, his name is Mohammed and his wife wears a headscarf. ... So maybe you’ll just ignore what your brain was trying to say, which is that neurosurgeons have a lot invested in their careers. ... But the media are so hard to ignore. Even when you make a point of ignoring them, they are always there, flickering around the edges, burning impressions you can’t quite get rid of. ... But it was all so tidy and comfortable in that TV/mainstream news site world. Meanwhile, though no evidence of guilt has been offered, the discussion zooms ahead. Why can’t everyone else see it?
— Jennifer, in Los Angeles

Needless to say, the Middle Eastern doctors accused of terrorism in Scotland may be guilty as hell. Mohammed Asha may be another one of your standard terror wogs who, as we all know by now, relish the idea of prison or perhaps blowing his wife and baby up for Allah.

But having been in the media business one way or another for almost 40 years, and having watched it increasingly take

on a life of its own, I know that nothing of significance in the news is what it appears to be. This is not the result of some media conspiracy, mind you, but rather that the people working in the media have internalized the process so thoroughly they do not even know they are conditioned creatures in a larger corporate/state machine. Put simply, Katie Couric and the dumbshits grinding out your local paper actually believe they are in the news business. In today’s

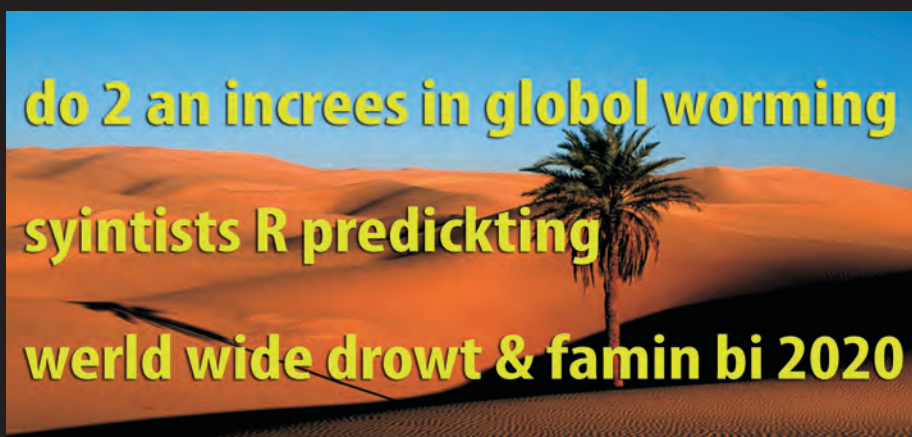
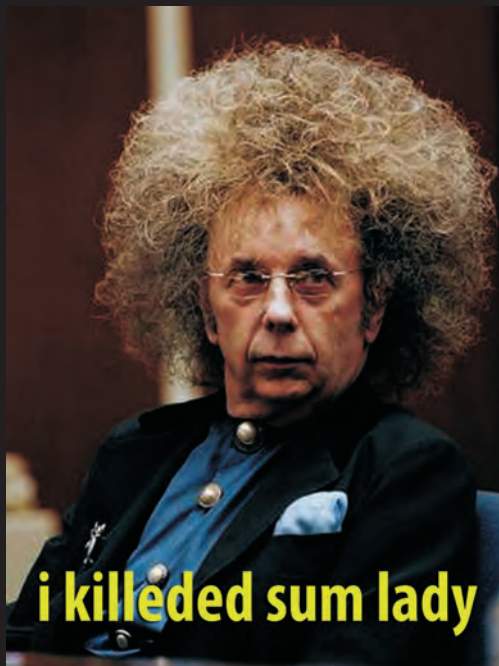
system, everybody is a patsy for the new corporate global order of things — the well-coiffed talking head, the brain dead audience, even the terrorists themselves. All play out their parts in our holographic image and information process.

All Americans, regardless of caste, live in a culture woven of self-referential illusions. Like a holographic simulation, each part refers exclusively back to the whole, and the whole refers exclusively back to the parts. All else is excluded by this simulated reality. Consequently, social realism in this country is a television commercial for America, a simulated republic of eagles and big box stores, a good place to live so long as we never stray outside the hologram. The corporate simulacrum of life has penetrated us so deeply it now dominates the mind’s interior landscape with its celebrities and commercial images. Within the hologram sparkles the culture-generating industry, spinning out our unreality like cotton candy.

Continues on page 12

Internet Meme News

The Illiteracy of the web in a convenient paper format



The American media hologram forms our subconscious opinions immediately and without our rational participation. Particularly when it comes to generating terrorist outlaws. Read Gore Vidal's *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*. Again, nothing significant is as presented by the American media. Watch television in countries with supposedly primitive media, and after a while you will be shocked at the technologically mediated and shape-shifted image of the world presented to Americans — how the hologram makes incongruous parts suddenly fit together and make sense in its own parallel universe.

For instance, a while back I saw a video clip of an ethanol-fueled automobile driving past waves of grain with the Rockies in the background and a rippling American flag ghosted into the sky. These four elements of the clip, food grain fields, the automotive industry, the natural beauty of the Rockies and the national emblem have not much to do with each other in the natural world, but they have everything to do with one another in the context of corporate empire. Together, they indicate the national ethos. We accept such an image as naturally as the baby accepts the tit, and the idea of burning the earth's food to create gasses that will turn the snowcapped mountains into desertified mountains is greeted happily as something newer and better than the old system of destroying the atmosphere and environment. Mentally we can identify separate elements, isolate things into categories. But the hologram nevertheless remains seamless in its interconnection of all things that benefit the corporate state generating it. Parsed, divided and isolated, any part contains the entire logic (or governing illogic) of the whole — consuming.

Ineffect, the economic superstate generates a superhologram that offers only one channel, the shopping channel, and one sanctioned collective national experience in which every aspect is monetized and reduced to a consumer transaction. The economy becomes our life, our religion, and we are transfigured in its observance. In the absence of the sacred, buying becomes a spiritual act conducted in outer space via satellite bank transfers. All things are purchasable, and indeed, access to anything of value is through purchase. Even mood and consciousness, through

psychopharmacology, to suppress our anxiety or enhance sexual performance, or cyberspace linkups to porn, palaver and purchasing opportunities. But most of all, the hologram generates and guides us to purchasing opportunities.

Propaganda is dead

Through advertising and marketing, the hologram combs the fields of instinct and human desire, arranging our wants and fears in the direction of commodities or institutions. No longer are advertising and marketing merely propaganda, which is all but dead. Digitally mediated brain experience now works far below the crude propaganda zone of influence, deep in the swamps of the limbic brain, reengineering and reshaping the realms of subjective human experience.

Yet we are the hologram, because we created it. In a relentlessly cycling feedback loop, we create and project the hologram out of our collective national psyche. The hologram in turn manages our collective psyche by regulating our terrors, cravings and neurological passions through the production of wars, whores, politics, profits and manna. Like legions of locusts, we pray before its productive engines of commerce and under the shifting Aurora Borealis of the hologram's drama and spectacle. It is us. We are it. The psychology of the individual becomes irrelevant as the swarm relentlessly devours the earth.

Meanwhile, those bloody terrorist wogs are still up to no fucking good, that's for sure. They're everywhere these days, so somebody needs to keep an eye on that Palestinian meat dealer down the street. As one reader responded, "The terrorists all look normal. That's the first thing you hear when one of them is caught. 'Oh, but he looked so normal,' his neighbors say. You'd never have guessed." Now when so many apparently normal people, students, doctors, merchants, teachers, family men with ordinary lives find themselves being accused of wickedness and evil, some even locked away in secret prisons and tortured, maybe it's time to start looking at the accusers more closely. When we do that, familiar terms come to mind, terms such as mass psychosis, along with some less familiar ones such as political psychosis.

Happy in the heart of darkness

Terrorists aside, the hologram offers us, and we have come to accept, plenty of now standard-issue American fears, such as identify theft and child molesters. My

home in Winchester, Va., is located on a corner where neighborhood kids catch the school bus under a large maple tree. Thus some neighbors have asked me to keep an eye on the kids during the mornings. In addition, I leave the back door unlocked so they can run inside and call home should a predator accost them under that maple tree. Matters are not made any better by the fact that a guy in the apartment building across the street is on the Internet sex offenders list. Nobody is safe in a country where, according to at least one "study," about 40 percent of adult men have sexual fantasies about children." It's a damned sick country. Hence the hundreds of child protection organizations, TV shows and pieces of legislation, all of which constitute a billion-dollar industry in this country. Just what are the chances of the kids at the bus stop being abducted by a stranger for sexual abuse or ransom? The truth is that a child is far more likely to be struck by lightning or slip on a rug, breaking his or her neck and dying instantly, than being kidnapped by a malevolent stranger. Last year there were only 115 cases of kidnappings for the purpose of ransom or abuse (Hampel, 2007). About 200,000 kids are snatched away from one parent by the other in the never-ending custody wars that clog the courtrooms and buy summer homes for lawyers. But the odds of pedophilic monsters or ransom artists grabbing your kid are not even worth worrying about, considering that there are nearly 300 million people in this country.

As for the registered sex offender across the street, I came to learn that he is a pothead and a pain in the ass as a neighbor. But he's not a child molester. He got on the list for mooning while drunk one night, which should be a lesson for anyone considering hanging his or her butt out a car window after a rock concert.

Still, it's a sick damned country all right. The government says so. The news says so. Cold Case Files says so. The Today show says so. Oprah says so. Without a Trace says so. In other words, the hologram says so. In the time it took you to read this paragraph, and while millions watch the cathartic media projection of their deepest nightmares, several dozen children died of famine or disease outside the hologram.

Mommy, there's a robot in my pants

If the big picture is ominous, the little picture is comedic kitsch. In the 1970s the hologram offered us "killer bees," a curiously "Africanized," aggressive

species that “bred with every other kind of bee” as it moved up from the South — remember that seeping red area on the U.S. map indicating the spread of the insect in its killer apiary jihad to sting a nation to death? In truth, the bee’s sting was no more toxic than any other bee’s.

In the ‘80s and ‘90s we had the decade-long day care sexual abuse hysteria in a dozen states wherein children were reportedly used for prostitution and pornography, tortured or, as in Kern County, made to watch snuff films. According to testimony, they were crawling through hidden tunnels toward Satanic worship chambers while witches soared overhead in hot air balloons at the McMartin Preschool in California, and they were being abused by clowns and robots in a secret room at the Fells Day Care Center, even as peanut butter was being spread on children’s genitals at the Wee Care Nursery School in New Jersey. Numerous people spent years in prison before their cases were finally overturned, and they were set free to enjoy their bankruptcy. Again, no one stopped to look at the accusers more closely, or ask, “Does anyone else on the jury think this is too goddamned weird to be plausible? Aw, come on, folks — robots and clowns?” Such is the power of the media hologram. The most expensive jury trial in American history was about subterranean devil worship and witches in hot air balloons.

Another standard media holograph favorite is the case of The Missing Pretty White Girl, in which a young white woman is either missing, murdered or maybe faking her own abduction. The hologram’s finest hour may have been when it blended nationalism with armed feminine sexuality fantasy via the brave blonde, Jessica Lynch, in a projection of her going down with automatic rifle blazing, then daringly rescued — oh, poor, wounded, little bird of our desire — by GI Joe action figures. If she had been an overweight lesbian, she’d still be in that hospital, and if she had been black, the media wouldn’t have bothered to take the lens covers off the cameras. If the syndrome’s appointed white girls turn out to be murdered, then we get the memorial websites, charity foundations and maybe some sort of law passed, based upon the circumstances of the case, and named for the victim. However, you’ll never see one called Tawanda Robinson’s Law. Hologram don’t sell no dark meat. Make a YouTube video, bitch!

And when the hologram gets hold of a

real event, whoopee! We get portrayal of a nation marked by school shootings (school shootings of teachers and fellow students took place in the 1800s too, they just didn’t have the firepower we have today, not to mention the media), campus shooters or the estranged killer husband or wife (a timeless favorite). None of the above are lurking around every corner, or any corner so far as I can tell. Then too, I don’t get out much.

Let us now be administrated

It never ceases to amaze how the hologram can sell even our own identities back to us in such tantalizing fashion. Regardless of politics, no one escapes it: “Ladies, buy your wardrobe at Target, and you too will be a slim, sexy humanitarian like Susan Sarandon.” My eyeballs are in my lap every time that woman twists her stuff against the orange Target backdrop in the TV ad, while my wife growls from her armchair, “Buy me a quarter-million-dollar eye job, chin and butt tuck, and I’ll shake all the damned booty you want, buster.” I’m seriously considering her offer.

Of course the entire American consumer shiteriee is unsustainable. One day soon it will go bust, and the hologram will sell us the bust as a lifestyle. Renunciation of consumer goods and a monastic lifestyle will become a fad and then a major trend in America. Then it will be co-opted by the system and made expensive. The ozone hole will be so big we’ll all be pedaling teensy cars that come with iron lungs as standard equipment. Renunciation will become a status symbol. All the beautiful people will be doing it.

Not that it will be the first time a worthwhile idea got at least some small traction in the savagery of the American marketplace. Healthful organic foods and hemp fiber clothing were once merely a holistic hippie thing, but we’ve see them endure, even grow. And become expensive, of course. (Organic foodwise, I just bought a quart bottle of lemon berry juice with echinacea for nearly eight bucks, though I doubtlessly screwed up it’s healthful benefits by mixing it with cheap Aristocrat vodka — \$9 a half gallon. I named the drink “The Echinacean Whore.”) And hemp fiber clothing is a low-cost, practical solution to dozens of ecological problems. Just the other day I saw a \$60 pair of hemp fiber, bibbed play shorts for the morally superior baby. Market capitalism can co-opt virtually any low-cost alternative and sell it right back at ridiculous prices.

Ah, for the good old days before the hologram and its hyperstimulation of “consumer affluence,” the days of “America’s teeming masses,” that sweat-soaked, beer-farting mob of ordinary working Americans who didn’t have a pot to piss in by today’s standards, much less a credit card, but still knew bullshit when they saw it. Guys that looked like William Bendix and were unapologetic about earning their bread by their mitts and never heard of the word lifestyle. Women in curlers who would have laughed Martha Stewart off the map. Them was Americans, bub!

Now, as walking advertisements for Nike and the Gap or Jenny Craig, and living by the grace of our Visa cards, we have become the artificial collective product of the corporately “administrated” modern state economy. Which makes us property of the government. One that is currently coughing blood in its last gasps, helped along toward its end by the rich white boy hubris of a gang of cowboying petro-crooks: “Put some purty muzak on the fog machine, Dick. We don’t want the herd to stampede while we’re packing up the loot. And, fer god sake, turn down that Baghdad gunfire noise in the hologram.” Deploying 250 million televisions which absorb 11 years of the average American’s lifespan, the hologram regulates the nation’s neurological seasons. Football season is delivered with its competitive passions, political election seasons, Christmas shopping season, but especially marketing seasons. It regulates the national mood, stirring our patriotic passions during wars and anxious vigilance against the threat of unseen terrorists who look absolutely normal. Together, we live within a media-generated belief system that functions as the operating instructions for society. It shows us how successful people supposedly behave, invest, and relate to each other. Through crime shows, it demonstrates what happens to us if we don’t behave. It shows us who we should hate (Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro, for starters). Anything outside of its parameters represents fear and psychological freefall.

Well, we can’t have that happen, can we? So let us all close our eyes and let the one voice speak to the many. Take a deep breath, and exhale very slowly. ... Let the soft electrical buzz engulf your mind, let that auroral drapery of flickering light play across the inside of your eyelids.

“This is the hologram speaking ...” 

José can you see?

Patriots Trounce Padilla

What's a bigger threat to justice than a secret military tribunal? For Americans, it's a jury of our peers.

Since 9/11, our collective appetite for cowardice and paranoia has officially turned inward. This is evident from the August 16th conviction of Brooklyn born José Padilla on conspiracy to harm people overseas and provide material support for terrorism.

Padilla was arrested in June, 2002 because—as the patriotic narrative goes—he was hell bent on detonating a radioactive “dirty bomb” in an American city. There has never been any evidence to support that claim, but perhaps you can't unring the bell that sets Americans drooling for vengeance.

The dirty bomb charge against Padilla was eventually dropped because it was ridiculous. No matter, on the nightly news he was a “SUSPECTED DIRTY BOMBER,” and it wouldn't be difficult to nail him on a lesser, vaguer charge. Who exactly Padilla conspired to murder or maim was never explained to the jury, but they knew he was inherently a bad man.

It hardly matters that “dirty bombs” don't work. There have been only two nations deranged enough to test such a device in the '80s: the U.S. and—our then ally—Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The tests showed that the devastation caused by a “dirty bomb” was limited to the size of the explosion radius. So that one day the “dirty bomb” would mythically evolve into the proverbial media boogeyman, the U.S. skewed the radioactivity exposure results to reflect a situation where victims *didn't move from the blast sight for an entire year*. Your peers can hardly conceive of that scientific fact after consuming thousands of Fox News Alerts. Nor does it matter that constructing a “dirty bomb” is exceedingly perilous, and well beyond the expertise of a reformed Chicago gangbanger. The dirty bomb narrative has been pitched to the American consumer ad nauseam, and we've swallowed it hard for the past six years.


The prosecution in the Padilla trial merely had to point to him, tell his peers he was using “code words” in recorded—and ostensibly

innocuous—telephone conversations, and play unrelated video of Osama bin Laden calling for Jihad against America. The case was weak. The best evidence the prosecutors put forth was an alleged Mujahideen training camp application form bearing Padilla's fingerprints. There's no evidence Padilla ever went to the camp, just a piece of paper with his fingerprints on it. It's like being convicted of accessory to genocide after the fact because authorities supposedly found your band's demo on Pol Pot's iPod. It shouldn't wash in our legal system, but it has.

Nineteen assholes with box cutters managed

to render us so terrified that our judicial system has become one of their weapons. In bin Laden's wildest dreams, he couldn't have fathomed a success so overwhelming it would have the infidel enemy torturing its own people and ruining their lives based on the overactive suspicions of its brand-loyal populace. “In blind taste tests, five out of five patriots prefer brand With Us® to brand Against Us®!” On at least one occasion during the trial, the Padilla jury literally wore its allegiance on their sleeves, with one row dressed in white, one in red, and one in blue. They clearly knew their role in this ritual.

It looks like the Bush Administration didn't need secret show trials to convict Americans of terrorism, after all. Marketing geniuses they are, all they needed was to sell Padilla with the Al-Qaeda brand. Case closed.

Our “peers” are no longer up to the task of impartiality, and in the case of José Padilla, they have proven this case beyond a reasonable doubt. 



Have You Seen This Millionaire?

Steve Fosset, America's fastest dead guy

By Eric Shulte

Three years ago, I begged the heavens to spit the fresh corpse of millionaire, pretend-adventurer Steve Fossett back to earth. It was meant as a humorous article and I never expected that this human being would actually die while at play. Now that he has, I feel mirthful. My only regret on this front is that I have not picked him in my local dead pool.


I haven't bothered to read up on the specific nature of the stunt Fossett was pulling this time. All I know is that he was in the air above the Nevada desert piloting some sort of contraption—be it a wish powered blimp or a hand glider framed with the bones of John Marrick—and now whatever parts of him the scavengers didn't want are strewn about the Nevada dessert. I'm the type of person who generally avoids rotten.com, but the idea of a coyote and a vulture pulling on opposite ends of Fossett's intestines is genuinely funny to me. It's not a case of celebrating the death of a hated villain, like Jerry Falwell. My feeling is more akin to amusement at the predictable death of a cartoon character. I wish *The Simpsons* still had the brains or balls to base an episode of Itchy and Scratchy on Fossett.



American newsmen will surely mourn this death: "Steve Fossett, we hardly blew thee." Fossett was one of the kings of the slow news day. We have corruption morphing into theft in our own, wish-powered, Iraq adventure, a prison population exceeding China's, personal and public debt looming disasters and so forth, but none of that is fit to print. Something, then, must fill the gaps between opportunities to feel superior to celebrities and solicitations of illicit, gay sex on Capitol Hill. Fossett, perhaps benefiting from political connections of his own, seemed to know just when these spaces would open. Note that he probably would have touched down this time just between Senator Craig's outing and resignation. Usually he would attempt to be the first man to circumvent the globe in a long obsolete mode of transportation.

Each endeavor would receive days of news coverage, although it is difficult to pin down exactly why. At any given time, some imbecile is attempting to ride a Segway up Mount Fuji or break the world watching-300-without-laughing-derisively record. So Fossett's projects were not at all unique. And Fossett was racing into the record books against no one. Few, if any had an interest in competing for the preposterous titles he invented and accumulated and so, luckily for him, there was no qualitative measure of his achievements. The man was no Joey Chestnut.

Fossett's stunts and the media attention they received did, however, effectively lampoon the values favored by the mainstream of power. Here was a very rich man who chose to invest his wealth

and energy in acting out diluted versions of boyhood fantasies. He is on record as having done nothing in the way of charity towards the less fortunate. His contraptions, although he could easily afford them, were underwritten by sponsors so that the hype could draw attention to beer manufacturers rather than, say, medical research. Few have ever done so little with so much so actively, yet Fossett was celebrated as a man of courage. He brings to mind Rex Rexroth, from the Coens' most underrated film, *Intolerable Cruelty*. A bloated "silly man" whose wealth fueled his passion for model choo-choos; the biggest clown in a farce. Now, the time has finally come to openly laugh at Rexroth's real-life counterpart. The selfish millionaire has at last contributed, at least a joke. 

Stuff I did

This issue: The haves, the have-nots and an American Mayor's chapped asshole

By Ian Murphy

A week ago, I was sipping Mimosas with Haitian hookers on the seventy-foot yacht of a Belgian diamond dealer in Fort Lauderdale. Through no cunning of my own, I'd found myself on a depraved, drunken safari of utter opulence. The Filipino crew steered the ship down the Intercoastal Waterway, intermittently refilling my thirsty glass. I even had the opportunity to board a truly egregious display of wealth: a hundred-foot, ten million-dollar vessel which was owned by the widow of a former Texaco CFO, an acquaintance of the diamond dealer. We sampled fine scotch from a miniature Texaco pump on the bar. Someone pointed out a mansion belonging to Wayne Huizenga, owner of the Miami Dolphins, Blockbuster, and Waste Management. Badly sunburned and soured by a repugnant envy, I cursed myself for not pursuing a career in garbage collection. I slept soundly that night.

Tonight, I'm drinking coffee with labor activists in a "tent city" in front of city hall in Buffalo, NY. I haven't slept in over a day. The Coalition for Economic Justice has set up camp in the large circular median that marks the city's center with a hundred-foot obelisk dedicated to William McKinley. No one in this town will ever forget where they were on that fateful morning in September of aught-one when they heard news of McKinley's assassination at the Pan-American Exposition. We were all touched by his now infamous last words: "Fuck you, Buffal—oh!" It's all gone downhill economically from there. We had a steel industry for a while, but it up and ran off.

Recent news that my hometown ranks second nationally in poverty—a hair

behind Detroit—was met with little surprise locally, and some amount of frustration over our perennial loser status. Four Super Bowls, and now we can't even beat Detroit. Pitiful.

But I digress. This dozen-tent "city" has been erected by the CEJ to demand a living wage for city workers. EMTs and seasonal—laid off for one week a year—sanitation workers; two-hundred grunts, in total. Buffalo's Mayor Byron Brown will take notice, we hope.

*Mayor Byron Brown's
puckered anus*



Artist's conception

About seventy-five people showed up earlier for an interfaith pep rally. "What do we want? Fill in the blank! When do we want it? At some future point!" One Rabbi quoted Leviticus as an ethical foundation for worker's rights. If only we let the wisdom of Leviticus guide us, there'd be plenty of quality jobs killing fags, I believe was his point. Holy-rollers have been cherry-picking scripture to champion social justice since abolition in this country. Despite their delusions, they have the capacity to be good people. However, hearing such an abhorrent and contradictory text praised as moral authority, I vomited a little in my mouth. I'm not a well man.

I was heartened when another Rabbi took the mic, blew into the shofar—a hollowed ram's horn—and someone in the crowd chimed, "Ri-co-la!"

The plan is to remain entrenched in front of city hall until the Mayor responds to a letter composed by the CEJ and signed by fifty religious leaders, which was delivered yesterday. There's talk we'll be arrested if need be. Being dragged out of a government building in handcuffs on camera is every protester's dream and nightmare. In America we have a special "protester class." A clique of largely white, financially-secure college kids, who've the luxury and time to keep a hobby "fighting the man." Like all Americans, they vainly yearn to be on the TV, but the prospect of a night in the clink is a fright too authentic. One kid kicked out the jams from his iPod station. We played tag, drew slogans on the sidewalk in colored chalk, and ordered pizza. It was, like, pretty cool, I guess, or whatever, and stuff.

Lying on the concrete in a camouflage sleeping bag next to a trash can, I wonder, "What the hell am I doing here? I don't make a 'living wage,' not by a long motherfucking shot!" I once again found my self envying trash collectors. Lazy bastards get to sit around all day, working hard for a lavish \$8.15 without benefits, and they can't find the time to protest their own dreary lot. These people are busy "working," I'm told, and many fear retaliation from their employers if they organize. It's better to keep a low-wage gig than to lose a higher-paying one. To stand in the workers' place is the sole value of the protester class, aside from lurid tent sex, which can happen at any time. And did; high-five!

Dawn creeps up on us. I've been awake for fifty-five hours. As I've said, I'm not well; all the protester-coitus in the world could not assuage my nerves. Coffee and bagels rile the ten-or-so troops that stayed overnight to be showered with rain and timed sprinklers. The religious folk are due to return in the afternoon to force a confrontation with the Mayor. There's a long day of waiting ahead. Two city workers wash off the colorful slogans with a hose. Empathy or not, everybody's got a job to do. We meet the same attitude inside city hall. The blue-shirt posted at the door to the Mayor's office is sympathetic and affable, yet clings to the Nuremberg defense. He won't tell us where the mayor is, or if

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* Maze may only work in theory

he intends to meet with us. The activists divide their day sitting patiently in front of the Mayor's office, and hounding him at meetings, to no avail.

By three-thirty, about twenty religious leaders and activists have amassed in the hallway before his office. CEJ Project Coordinator Micaela Shapiro-Shellaby whacks me forcefully on the top of my head. I apologize for falling asleep. Across the hallway, I see the image of Eugene Debs feverishly tap dancing in the swirls of the marble floor. He's wearing loaves of bread for shoes. I give him a thumb's up. Debs reciprocates knowingly.

At sixty three-hours without sleep, I've hit pay dirt: a lucid state of REM consciousness; dreaming while awake. And as any rogue journalist will tell

you, this is the perfect frame of mind for engaging in civil disobedience, especially when one is too impoverished to procure proper narcotics. Times are tough; we all have to make do.

The Mayor eventually emerges from his office. He lurches curiously, facing away from us, bent at the hips. "I'd like to speak with you all," he tells the small crowd, using his hands to mouth the words with the cheeks of his buttocks. "But I'm already late for another appointment." It was amazing; you couldn't see his lips move when he spoke, and the hallway was at once filled with the delicate scent of rose and jasmine.

The activists persisted, and the Mayor was left with no option but to give them audience. Brown was reminded that it

was he who, as an ambitious councilman, helped write The Living Wage Ordinance in 1999. According to the ordinance, city workers, and those contracted by the city are legally entitled to \$9.59 per hour with benefits, or \$10.77 without.

"It's not my fault! I can't be expected to enforce every single law I've written! Come on, dudes, give me a break!" The Mayor's ass deflected in a shrill falsetto. The righteous crowd pushed for a meeting with the Mayor's head, but his cheeks demurred: "I'm the Mayor's advisor and liaison on this matter. The Mayor is willing to enter into a dialogue, but it has to go through me!"

The Mayor's ass was mad with power, possibly possessed.

"The power of Christ compels you!" commanded Deacon Jim Anderson, splashing holy water across the Mayor's backside. "The power of Christ compels you! Devil be gone from these governmental buttocks!"

The Mayor's pants steamed, and an unholy guttural moan emanated from within. "You fool!" scolded the Mayor's angered ass. "Guards! Show this man who he's dealing with. Chop, chop!"

"Yes, Sir!" cooed the two guards, eagerly rushing to the doubled-over mayor, undoing his belt, and taking down his trousers.

"Bwa ha ha ha ha! The Mayor's unclothed posterior spoke freely, without aid of the Mayor's hands. "You can't stop me! And soon I'll be more powerful than the Mayor himself! Bwa ha ha ha ha!" The religious leaders stared ahead stoically, as if they'd seen such a sight a thousand times, perhaps during choir practice. I moved closer for a photo and a better audio recording.

Head of the CEJ Allison Duwe hid her revulsion, and pressed the Mayor's bare ass for cooperation.

"You there!" the Mayor's wind-blown orifice cut her off, fixing its puckered eye on me askance. "Why are you recording me?"

"I'm with the press," I explained.

"What news organization?" the Mayor's ashy cheeks flapped with suspicion.

“The BEAST,” I responded with some fear of physical harm (I did, after all, attempt to solicit sex from the Mayor’s wife by phone).

“Oh, I’m definitely not having that,” the Mayor’s ass whined. “Byron! Wake up, man, we’re out of here!”

“No wait,” the crowd of determined protesters yelled in unison. “What if he shuts off the recorder?” offered one.

And I did. I slunk away, back into the margins, where I belong. After sobbing softly for a moment, the Mayor’s buttocks composed itself. “What you people don’t understand,” said the Mayor’s frustrated cavity, “is that poor people are stupid, and they don’t deserve money because they’re so stupid! We’re in a global competition, and if these dumb people want a better job, they shouldn’t be so dumb!” The Mayor’s privileged bum was starting to make a lot of sense. “Like, go to college, or something, dude!” the haughty asshole directed to the one seasonal sanitation

worker present named Dwayne. “Dwayne is a stupid fuck—I mean, seriously, he picks up garbage for a living. Why should I care about someone who’s stupid enough to be poor? Poor people are just gross!”

“But, Mr. Mayor,” plead a man from the Working Families Party.

“OK. We’re done here, people,” spewed the Mayor’s gapping lower bowel. “Um, I’ll have my people call your people, or something. Guards!” A security officer swiftly draped the Mayor over his shoulder.

“Where to, boss?” he whispered into the Mayor’s flabbergasted butt hole.

“Steam room! I’m tense! Chop! Chop!” We all left voluntarily soon after.

Through much perseverance, Allison Duwe finally managed to finagle, by phone, an official meeting with the Mayor himself. As of this writing, the

meeting has yet to take place, nor is there any indication that a meeting will garner concrete progress. There will undoubtedly be a good deal of further bloviating and obfuscation on the Mayor’s part. And the forces of good will keep pressing the issue.

It’s now seventy hours since I last slept. All I have for dinner is a can of tuna fish and a mealy orange. I peel the orange. It tastes of champagne, and I recall my brief Floridian tryst with the ostentatious trappings of concentrated wealth. I sit on the front porch of my apartment, which devours most of my income. I peer up and down the street. I close my eyes, hoping to envision a grand yacht with scantily clad islanders beckoning me aboard.

Splayed across the porch’s concrete steps, I wake the next morning to the pneumatic racket of a garbage truck idling a few houses down. Sore and foul smelling, I wearily drag the trash bin to the curb. 🗑️



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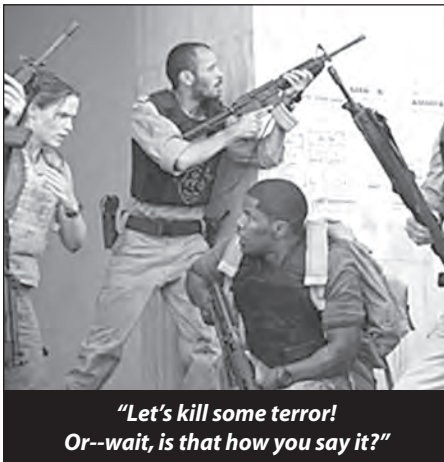
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Michael Gildea

The Kingdom



If you were one of us suckers who saw *The Simpsons Movie*, you saw Homer in the opening calling the audience idiots for watching something in a theater when they could watch it at home for free. The irony was I watched it neither in a theater nor after paying money to do so. But in upsetting the natural order, karma decided to run rampant and stick something else on a screen that I can easily access on TV at home: The war on

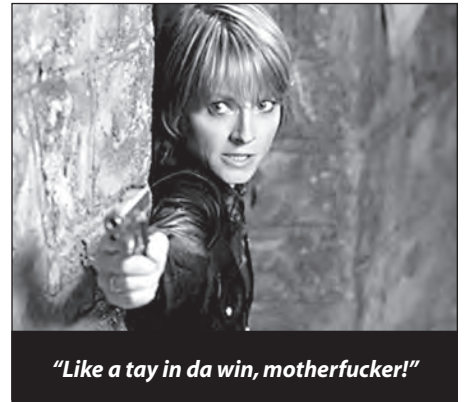
terror.

Movies and real life are like church and state. Assholes and elbows. Sharon Stone and *The Light of Day*. Larry the Cable Guy and a consistent supply of oxygen to him. Things that don't go together! When these things meet, it throws off the natural order or balance of things and generally does nothing except piss me off and cause irrelevant discomfort until they go away.

So riddle me this—why would I pay to bury my head in the sand when I can stick it up my own ass? Because there's a distinct possibility that Jennifer Garner, Jamie Foxx and Jason Bateman are going to get killed in this. The only thing that kept *Daredevil* from legally being declared a war crime was the fact that Garner's pointy and otherwise boring skull was done in. But still, what about *The Kingdom* could possibly lure me to a theater after a heat wave will likely have passed?

Another clusterfuck of a terrorist attack lures a special FBI team to the Middle East. And of course they're met by resistance from the locals, and they don't know who to trust, and—I'm going to go douse myself in gasoline and pray I didn't soak the matches now. Bye!

The Brave One



I'm guessing the title of the new Jodie Foster and Terrence Howard movie would be in reference to its audience if it were plural. But since its singular it sounds like crap already.

Foster plays a woman whose husband or gay best friend or whatever is murdered when the pair is attacked. She recovers and inadvertently becomes a vigilante when someone tries the same shit again. Her hoodie and her butchy haircut should tell these clowns she means business. The trailer also looks like she's going after whoever looks like they've got it coming.

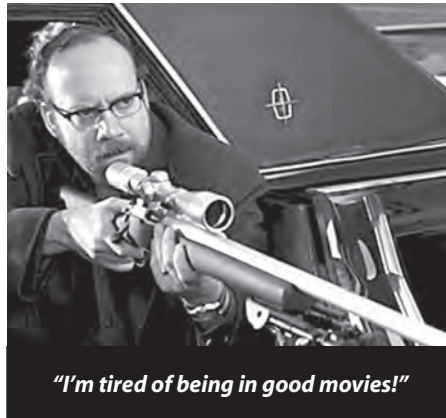
The Brave One also seems to make an attempt at making the audience think by turning a 2-hour movie into an ethics class. 1) Is Foster justified in her action if it's self-defense? What if no immediate threat is posed? 2) In utilizing the methods shown in the trailer would you say she's under or overdoing it? Do you feel the right amount of force is being used? 3) What would you do? 4) At what point is Foster becoming the very thing she is trying to stop? 5) If someone nabbed your dog, would you shoot them as Foster is seen doing in this trailer? 6) What are your feelings concerning her hairstyle? Discuss.

Assignment for next issue: Watch the trailer for *The Brave One* and pick either the odd or even numbered questions. Send them to michael@buffalobeast.com for extra credit or for only my or your amusement.

3:10 to Yuma



Shoot 'Em Up



A friend of a friend gets uncontrollably horny whenever she watches the movie *Becket* with Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole. She doesn't have any particularly strong feelings toward either actor or any other cast member for that matter. It's like with me—whenever I see a Russell Crowe movie after *LA Confidential*, I almost instantly fall asleep.

The same generally holds true for remakes in my case. And that's what we've got here. *3:10 to Yuma* is a remake of the 1957 movie of the same name with Glenn Ford and Van Heflin, with Crowe and Christian Bale starring in the respective roles.

Crowe is the captured head of a sadistic gang of outlaws. Bale is an idealistic schmuck rancher who thinks he's doing the right thing by taking Crowe's character in. In the meantime, Crowe's gang is killing a path to their boss's freedom, with Bale and his idiot son clearly stand right in the middle of. Oh, and head games along the way.

It's directed by James Mangold, who's given us some great movies like *Walk the Line*, *Identity*, and *Cop Land*. But, aside from some decent cinematography and what I'm sure will be yet another great performance from Bale, I really don't care. I mean, I've already seen *High Noon*, you know? It's one thing to catch it on Turner Classic in the middle of the night, but I'm not putting forth an effort.

One of the many things I liked most about *Sin City* was Clive Owen's character, Dwight McCarthy. He was basically Gallahad who protected distressed damsels with pistols instead of a sword in a film noir comic book world. And he had a cool leather trench coat.

Clive Owen decided to do it again, this time with over the top action, way more guns, seemingly elaborate action sequences and a smoking-hot Monica Belucci. Paul Giamatti shows up as his

usually creepy self, this time a hit man. Everyone belts out well-delivered yet terrible dialogue that would normally make eyes roll or entire bodies cringe. In the preview, Giamatti answers phone calls from his apparently nagging wife as he's in the middle of unspeakable acts. And Clive Owen's doing all this to save a baby for crissakes! And according to the trailer, he's dangerous! Wonk, wonk...

Because of the considerable testosterone overload from the trailer you don't care. And why the hell should you? Owen fires probably more than three times his body weight in ammunition in two clips alone. He also gets into a gun fight in mid-air after jumping out of a plane! Let me repeat: *He also gets into a gun fight in mid-air after jumping out of a plane.* He buys bullets with food stamps! He effortlessly picks up a machine gun off the road during a high speed car chase with a black van full of automatic weapon-toting nondescript bad guys shooting at him! He makes impossible shots with a clever and briefly-mentioned plot device! And Motley Crue plays during the trailer!

I'd like to think it's Belucci in all her Italian, voluptuous and ridiculous beauty that gave me that diamond cutter of a boner, but I don't really care at this point. I'm going and that's all there is to it...

KINO KLEE-SHAY LEGEND

	Downtrodden Loser Triumphs Against Odds		Mind Fuck		Noble Retard
	Evil Genius		Talented Actor Makes Bad Choice		Ordinary Person Pushed too Far
	Impossible Science		Glorification of Law Enforcement Bodies		Chick Flick
	Special Effects Circle Jerk		Sexpot Battles Demons, Zombies, Some Crap		Nauseatingly Cute Children
	Wisecracking Cartoon Animal		Gratuitous Christ Imagery		Rampant Xenophobia
	Simplistic Epiphany		Crappy Remake		Likable Thug

Mr. Woodcock



"I'm king of the dweebs!"

Okay, I fucking hate Fucking Stifler. I hate Fucking Stifler to the point where I won't even address the pointy-faced dick weasel by his real name. He looks like he sniffs his own deuces every time he takes a crap and then posts a picture on ratemypoo.com. He reminds me of the lowest kind of used car salesman and if he didn't work out and chow the right kind of box, he'd likely be selling used Kias to junior prostitutes and people with bad credit.

That being said, *Mr Woodcock* looks hilarious. I know the title's redundant, but that doesn't mean it's not funny. The word *cock* is in it and it's not a porno for crying out loud. For a plot we've got Fucking Stifler as a self-help guru/douchebag who worked past a painful and humiliating childhood at the hands of his gym teacher...*Mr. Woodcock!!!*

So now he's not a fat little kid anymore and when visiting his mom he discovers that Mumsie is getting *The Woodcock*. So to rescue his mom from the clutches of *The Cock* all kinds of 95% humor-free candy-ass dogshit ensues (the other 5% comes from SNL's Amy Poehler as Fucking Stifler's cantankerous assistant/publisher/what-have-you.)

Billy Bob (what kind of world do we live in where a 52 year-old man goes by *Billy Bob*? I don't mind him, but pick one or the other already! Billy or Bob. Billy Thornton sounds reasonable. And so does Bob Thornton. Or William. Or William Robert Thornton, but that's getting a bit pompous. Does being as rich as

he is mean not having to give up your redneck sensibilities or that you don't have to apologize for being a douchebag? Probably.) Thornton rehashes the funny asshole part that's got him a pube away from being forever typecast. It's getting to the point where if you've seen *Bad Santa* and he's doing another comedy, you can save your money. And Susan Sarandon plays either a dirty car port rug, a huge piece of silly putty or Fucking Stifler's mom. I couldn't really make the distinction.

The Brothers Solomon



"We're worse than Pat, even."
"Yeah, Pat makes us look like shit."

When I saw the preview for *The Brothers Solomon* I thought I was in Bizarro World for a minute. I mean after all, isn't the shitty SNL skit supposed to precede the shitty movie based on the characters?

We've got a typical pair of idiot man-child brothers. They're socially awkward in every way. Their dad ends up in a coma, and in an effort to give him something to live for, they try to get some chick pregnant. Pam from *The Office* turns down Will Arnett and I think Will Forte's problem is that he's Will Forte. So they find a surrogate mother and her boyfriend, or pimp. These trailers don't give you a lot to go on.

In the plus column, Bob Odenkirk from *Mr. Show* is directing and *Let's Go To Prison* was actually pretty damn funny. At the same time watching 2 minutes of Arnett and Forte was a lot like what I imagine having half a dozen Adam Sandler clones try and run a train on you would be like.

Resident Evil: Extinction



Jovovich's performance is marred by excess clothing

To which I say, "Milla Jovovich isn't *that* hot." So based on the *Mummy*-ness of this trailer, I'm guessing there was some kind of cliffhanger ending that went down in *Resident Evil 2* because Las Vegas looked pretty fucked up. I couldn't say because I didn't care enough to bother seeing it, contrary to what I may have written previously.

Yeah, yeah. Zombies. Milla Jovovich dressed like a desert-dwelling survivalist whore. Guns, lots of guns. Action, lots and lots of action. A few surprises. And I couldn't be less interested if someone woke me up at 8 in the morning to watch this.

The Game Plan



"Do you smell what The Rock is steeping?"

How do you make it stop?

This one's worse than watching Avril Lavigne sing about stealing someone's

boyfriend on SNL. Let's stick Harvey Keitel in a Gatorade commercial while we're at it.

I haven't been interested in wrestling for almost 20 years, but I would have loved to see Stone Cold Steve Austin show up in the trailer for this Rock movie and beat his ass stupid. The Rock actually used to be cool. He was funny, likable, ridiculous. And his favorite movie is *It's a Wonderful Life* (true—cries every time he sees it), so how bad can he be?

Then he shows up as some jag off overpaid pro football player who's got it all. Including a daughter he never knew about! Oh boy, I wonder if his life is going to get turned upside-down! I wonder if she's got a dog that eats everything and if she's going to eventually ask why he didn't find her before! How's a commitment-phobic bachelor going to take to having his wings clipped! And all the girl stuff he's going to have to do now! Eeek!

All I know is it's got the Disney name on it. I picture Dwayne (as I'm sure he now goes by) sipping tea with his pinkie finger out with Vin Diesel and Ice Cube as they

all talk about their investment portfolios and the contents of their wine cellars. Maybe The Rock will start wearing a scarf and take up pipe smoking.

Good Luck Chuck



Chuck's luck is so bad, he is Dane Cook.

Every once in a while I'm presented with a choice when seeing a movie. I get the carrot of an incredible looking woman in a movie at the price of having to witness not only a grade-A douchebag with her,

but he usually gets to dry hump or at the very least make out with her.

And that's the case with *Good Luck Chuck*. It's about a (I'm guessing) supposedly likable guy who has some kind of curse put upon him so that every woman he dates, sleeps with, or gets a stinky pinkie from falls in love with the next guy they see. Or date. Or something. The trailer was a little vague here. This superstitious rumor about him gets spread to the point where he sees more ass than a toilet seat.

So naturally he eventually falls for a super cute marine biologist and doesn't want to pass her off to some other choad. Sounds kind of interesting in an *I've been huffing paint all weekend* kind of way, if for nothing else than to see how this curse thing pans out. Oh, and we've got Jessica Alba getting her skirt ripped off by a car door and there was a crotch close-up with penguin panties.

Ohh, ooh! Tell me more, tell me more!

Dane Cook's in it! (I'm not going to take the time to describe the sound of a needle slowly yet violently scraping off the top of a record or chronicle the sounds of carnage coming from two glass trucks moving at incredibly breakneck speeds toward each other only to simultaneously reach some kind of painful orgasm of hate whose only respite comes from the bone-shattering depression brought on through the buckling and cringing that will undoubtedly leave you in a fetal position and cursing the day you were born--try to picture that.) Dane Cook is the top 40 radio of comedy. He's that song you didn't mind and may have even liked the first 4 or 5 times you heard it. Kind of catchy, put you in a reasonably nice mood and hell, you may have even have bought it.

Then those 6th, 7th 8000th times come and if you have to look at his greasy male skank head one more time you're going to fucking murder something. If you have to watch him act like a frat boy's coked out older brother and spaz out wearing a piss-stained pair of jeans and something a 19-year-old who works at American Eagle would wear, something's going down. And for fuck's sake if you have to listen to him regurgitate the same fucking material *one... more... time* you swear you're going to open fire from a rooftop. *A cashew off the tip of your penis, Dane. That's so priceless, dude.* On that note I'm no longer interested in talking about this movie, so this is where I leave you. 🐻





Slash 2 my Lou



Let's play a game — it's called "Celebrity Take-the-Hint." Our contestant today is Houston Rockets point guard Rafer "Skip 2 My Lou" Alston, the first And-1/streetball hero to get a real run in the NBA. Skippy's got a mad handle, a sick crossover, and two arrests in this past month alone. Let's see if he can . . . take the hint!

Rafe started 82 games this past year, averaging 13.3 points and 5.4 assists per game for a team that made the playoffs. He played more minutes than anyone else on his squad. He doesn't totally suck. And yet, when the Rockets' season ended following yet another early, ignominious playoff exit, one of the team's first moves was to trade forward Juwan Howard for point guard Mike James. The previous season, Houston had traded James to get Alston. Then, after reacquiring the man Alston originally replaced, the team used its first-round draft pick to take another point guard, Aaron Brooks — like Alston, an undersized offensive specialist with subpar court awareness. But after adding two players at Rafe's position, the team still wasn't done. Late in the summer, it signed newly waived ex-Knicks Steve Francis, another former Rocket. Now the team had added three point guards.

Now, you or I probably wouldn't respond to three new threats to our job by running out and spitting on/assaulting the first parking-lot attendant we could find. But

that's exactly what Skippy did. On August 5 in Houston, Alston got into it with a lot manager after his car got towed. He allegedly shook and spit at the man (a nice combination of Tyson-esque lot-attendant abuse and Pacman-esque spitting), and then afterward, when the case became public, insisted that the incident had been blown out of proportion by "individuals who stand out of profit." Charged with misdemeanor assault and public intoxication, Rafe was now free to head north, to New York . . .

. . . where some weeks later, Alston was at it again, this time with 41-year-old Wilbert Ashman, at a trendy club called Stereo. Police say Ashman got into an altercation with Alston and eventually had to call police after driving himself to the hospital with a slash wound in his neck. Alston, however — just as he had with the parking-lot guy — proclaimed his innocence right away. Moreover, a bouncer who worked at Stereo vouched for Alston, saying he'd walked the player out of the building without any knife play.

Still, it doesn't look good for Alston. Rockets GM Daryl Morey had this to say about the man whose on-court play inspired the addition of three new starting-caliber point guards in the same half-season:

"We became aware of the incident early this morning. Obviously, it is troubling that Rafer was again in a situation involving the police. We take these matters very seriously — the Rockets expect all employees to represent the organization in a first-class manner. Until more facts are gathered from all parties, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further."

Can Rafe take the hint? Is he aware that this statement actually means As soon as we figure out how, we're launching this Rocket out of our hair. Tune in later to see how Houston gets rid of last year's starter.

Fifty points for Rafe on the scale, maybe more depending on how this plays out. Two busts in a month, one involving a knife and a neck — if Alston's guilty. That's pretty hardcore.

The worst part was the skateboarding



Believers in déjà vu might want to brace themselves — this week we have a rare perfect-repeat situation with an athlete-criminal. These are far from common; only the true sports-crime lifers, guys such as Lawrence Phillips and Cecil "the Diesel" Collins, have the gumption to get arrested once for a thing and then go out and do exactly the same thing in the same place later on. We can now add QB-phenom-turned-complete-bust Todd Marinovich to that list.

The former USC Trojan/Oakland Raider quarterback has been arrested six times since the end of his non-career, usually on drug raps. In August 2004, cops in Orange County, California, busted Marinovich for skateboarding in a prohibited area. After chasing him down, police searched Marinovich and found syringes and a small

quantity of meth.

This past week, exactly the same thing. Marinovich was rolling down the Newport Beach boardwalk, where skateboarding is illegal, with syringes and meth on his person. Police caught him, searched him, and popped him. A parole violator two years back (he walked out of a halfway house), Marinovich is probably in for real time now.

Give Todd three little points — zero for the actual crime, three for stupidity. What's he going to do, skate someone to death? They better find something else to do in the OC.

While Boston slept



We get one of these about once a year, the jock-asleep-in-car-with-engine-running story. The most recent, of course, was St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa, who fell asleep at the wheel at an intersection during spring training with his car in drive and his foot on the brake. He didn't even wake up when police in Jupiter, Florida, tapped his window with their big, heavy, wake-up-you're-under-arrest flashlights. LaRussa ended up failing a breathalyzer and entered his World Series title-defense season with a big swinging Yoke of Shame around his neck.

A similar fate befell one-time Detroit Lions linebacker Donte Curry, who fell asleep at the wheel in Covington, Georgia, in 2002. Curry also fell asleep with his foot on the brake and could not be woken up from outside the car. Police had to park an SUV in front of Curry's car to prevent it from rolling into traffic; they then sent an officer in through the rear window to wake up the sleeping Lion. When finally roused, Curry said he thought he was

in Milledgeville, Georgia, which is 60 miles away from Covington.

And there have been plenty of others. Remember Bruce Smith, Virginia Beach, 1997? Smith pioneered the famous "Sports Illustrated Defense," in which one explains away being asleep at the wheel at an intersection at 6:30 am by claiming fatigue from posing for SI photographers the previous day. Police were later left to wonder why Smith didn't fall asleep during the 18 holes of golf he played after the SI photo shoot.

This week's culprit is none other than David Boston, the erstwhile former Cardinals/Chargers/Dolphins wideout with the huge bulging arms who turned out to be a steroid user with slightly smaller arms, then turned out to be a free-agent bust, then a terminal-injury case. After being released by Miami before the start of the 2006 season, Boston was attempting a comeback, this time with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Boston was found asleep at the wheel of his car at a Pinellas Park, Florida, intersection. When police woke him, he said he was on his way from Orlando to the Tampa International Airport. After a field sobriety test, Boston passed a breathalyzer, but the results of a urine test for drugs are not yet known.

Another busted DB



This week it's South Carolina Gamecocks safety Emmanuel Cook, who got popped August 23 after police caught him in a car, near campus dormitories, with a pistol. It seems the gun belongs to a friend, a James Gore III, who was in the car with Cook and was seen to be "hiding something" when police approached the car and asked him to

show his hands.

The car didn't belong to Cook, either, but police nonetheless charged him with unlawful possession of a gun by someone under 21, leading to his immediate suspension from the team.

Gamecocks coach Steve Spurrier, still sipping \$14 Piña Coladas paid for by Dan Snyder, stood by Cook on Friday, saying "He's a good young man and obviously was at the wrong place at the wrong time." But the "Old Ballcoach" has had a tough run at South Carolina. Just a day before the Cook incident, Spurrier suspended three players — including starting quarterback Blake Wallace — for the team's first game of the season because of poor summer-school attendance. A few years back, his team pioneered the laptop-theft-ring story. And Spurrier and the university administration recently became embroiled in a nasty dispute when the school cited academic reasons in its decision to refuse admittance to a pair of players the coach had recruited. "Academics? This is the SEC!" was more or less Spurrier's response. The ensuing piss-fight garnered a tremendous amount of notoriety for the school.

But a good cigar . . .



We haven't had one of these in a while. Arkansas defensive end Marcus Harrison was suspended indefinitely this past week after police arrested him for possession of a controlled substance, speeding, driving with a restricted driver's license, and not wearing a seat belt. This basically was your boilerplate strong-odor-of-marijuana/SUV offense, with a couple of small twists.

One, Harrison admitted to having "one little pill" on him when he got busted. The pill turned out to be X.

Two, Harrison was busted for having "one partially smoked marijuana cigar" and "one unsmoked marijuana cigar" in his car. Which is pretty interesting, since we haven't had a blunt arrest since . . . well, I'm not sure we ever have. Kudos to Harrison for being a "Sports Blotter" ground-breaker.

I'm loath to give any of our three criminals any points at all for this week's arrests. Harrison caught a felony charge, but shouldn't defensive linemen be allowed to do Ecstasy in college too? Just because they weigh 300 pounds, we should discriminate against them? He who is without sin, throw the first syringe full of anti-meningitis medication. . . .

The tally, then, remains as before.

Sports Blotter Legend

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

DAS BOOT IN YOUR ASS

Oh really? We are too sensitive to false terror attacks [*"The Avalanche Threat," issue 118*] ? You mean like the one in Germany that was just stopped? The one that the German gov't said would be bigger than any before with the possible exception of 9-11? Looks like the timing of your article was poor....the proof is in the pudding folks. We need to wake up and fight this fight so that we can truly move on. Samuel

Dear Samuel,
Oh yeah, you mean the one that German authorities were on top of for the past six months? The one that was picked up using the old, unrevised FISA law? Wake up yourself, Sam. Every time they find a frog with a firecracker up its butt they say it would have been the worst thing since 9/11. But hey, keep fighting that fight! After all, it's not like our continued killing and domination of Muslims could exacerbate the situation.

WE CONCUR

You guys are just too good. Your topics, your logical analysis, the scathing and sarcastic-to-the-bone language you use all makes up a bomb of an article. Keeps me wondering if a Beast-after-Beast will at some point in time lead to a revolution !! Keep doing it into them guys. Milind Palsule

Dear Milind,
We appreciate your appreciation, but revolutions are so 230 years ago. We'd be happy if we could just get Glenn Beck canceled.

MANSER

I like the sexually frustrated theory. Makes total sense at the biological level. I agree with you that if a man does not get his love drink out of his body within a week or so, we tend to get angry at the world like a woman on her period. Karl

Dear Karl,
KILL YOU! MUST KILL! AAAAAHHHH!

A SHARP ASSESSMENT

you need to be famous so you can explain to people in this country why they are being such morons. the avalanche threat article was great. sakura

Dear Sakura,
Wait—we're not famous?

[sic]KO

Michael Moore is an irrelevant fat ass [*"Slippery When Wet," issue 118*]. Sicko was a flop compared to Fahrenheit and it's because everyone decided to look at the man behind the curtain. That man is nothing more than a blow



hard who likes to give it but hates to take it.

Pollack

Dear Pollack,
You know, "man behind the curtain" implies a hidden person behind the scenes. Michael Moore narrates and stars in every movie he makes. How does it make any sense to call him that? Besides which, Moore received much more intense criticism for Fahrenheit 9/11, because jackasses like you get ornery when someone insults your Imperial Daddy. Also, a blowhard is someone who brags excessively—like Donald Trump, say. Are you getting all this, Pollack? So, aside from these nonsensical statements, you argue that Moore is fat, and that Sicko didn't sell as well as his last movie. We're going to go out on a limb here, and guess that you just don't like Moore because he's smarter than you. Probably better looking, too.

IT'S DARK UP MY ASS

I applaud you on your ingenious comeuppance of the intellect deficient Ken Ham [*"Let There be Retards," issue 117*]. However, I must question your use of the word "retard" to describe Mr. Ham. Would not "hottentot" be a more fitting slur?

Lord Monboddoo
Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, Scotland

Dear Lord,
No. No it really wouldn't.

YO HAM

"retards like the zoo"
Watched Rocky last night just to see that quote. Laughed my ass off. Jay Malloy

Dear Jay,
Okay then.

RETARDY

One of the funniest/true articles I've read in a long time. Best line: We were about to bear witness to a magnificent abortion of reason—and we were late. I've never felt more American in my life.

Simply amazing, keep it up.
Julia

Dear Julia,
Keep up being late? We can probably do that for ya.

HAM ON THE BARBIE

Dear Beast & Contributor Rich Miles, firstly, why is Beast surprised Australians are dumber than Kentuckians? Rich, you seem the full quid.

I think the article, aimed at every half poached egg that ever dragged their knuckles on the planet, was not slamming the great state of Kenfetti so much as proving to the world that the country that gave us the 'Crocodile Hunter' has just reached a new low.

Cheers for the article, and chin up Rich. Rob.

Dear Rob,
You've never been to Kentucky, have you? There's a reason the Australians put the museum there, and not in Sydney.

HOT PHILOSOPHY

No, no, no--nitwits- Why do you have to get so complicated about why Harris is popular [*"Why is Sam Harris a Best-selling Atheist?" issue 116*] None of the answers you come up with are right.

The truth is that many people have taken an interest in religion lately because they are bothered by the radicalism of Islam. Most books written by atheists are captivating at first but people just haven't got time to read and read and read to find out what the author is saying, and the other authors always write huge long books. Sam Harris's books are shorter and to the point. People can understand what he's saying because they can take it in and not lose a lot of precious time.

Second, Harris himself is an attractive writer; an attractive person. The same goes for politicians--the most appealing candidate gets the most attention. It's simple--unfair, but human nature. Simple, simple, and don't make a big argument about it. Just like in business, what sells is the most attractive thing. Business, candidates etc.

D. Ward

Dear D.,
So you like Sam Harris because his book is short and he's a hottie. Gotcha. Maybe he'll make a music video and you can skip reading altogether, you goddamn intellectual giant.

CAPTAIN TEDIOUS

please note; 911 was an intel-op. see below for proof

<http://www.ae911truth.org/>

Larry Axelrod

Dear Larry,
Oh shut up. Like we never heard that shit before. Please note: you're more gullible than a Mormon.

SO OVER IT

I have noticed that you are no longer going after local politicians & general scumbags.

Is this because they have all cleaned up their act and no longer have anything for you to work with?

I have taken to picking up my copy of The Beast at my local liquor store (On The Rocks), and handing over my 2 bucks to be placed in an otherwise empty envelope.

We still have a mayor that you can convince that he is being considered for the lead role in the upcoming debut of an updated "Good Times"(Dyn-o-mite).

Anyway, I hope to find some scandalizing a little closer to home in future editions.

Keep up the good work,
al w.

Dear Al,
Since this broke-ass town refuses to support us, we are now selling in different cities. For some reason, people in other cities don't give a rat's ass about Buffalo. Go figure. We will fuck with the locals from time to time, though. We wish we could quit you, Buffalo! No, really; we do.

CABLEVISION

Has anyone else noticed that John Rigas has

this freaky Klaus Kinski look in his eyes? All that's missing are the screeching monkeys.
David Group

Dear David,
With any luck, his eyes are even wider now that he's in the "pokey." Good luck Rigas; guess you should have given more money to Republicans.

WHEN TAGGERS ATAK

I live south of the city, and whenever I come to buffalo, looking at the graffiti is one of the main attractions. I think there is more Atak, Hert and Jet pieces in this city than most people even realize. Most of them are on long forgotten freight cars, the sides of abandoned warehouses and buildings that are, well frankly, half destroyed. You know what one question everyone has forgotten to ask? What's so great about a drab gray concrete bridge pillar? Why do we cherish such blank, boring buildings? There is now public outcry when there is a graffiti piece done in an alleyway somewhere behind the bars on Chippewa. Take a look around. High unsolved murder rate, shootings every other day, arson, drugs, Unbelievably high TAXES! There are bigger problems. Our representatives lie and cheat and don't pay their taxes, let their wives run up expensive lunches on the expense account, and the people on Elmwood are saying oh, lets prosecute these kids. Rubbish.
Mary Kay

Dear Mary,
But all the graffiti makes the city look like it's... poor or something! And that's just not true. After all, we're richer than a whopping one American city. Honestly, we'd be more inclined to defend these guys if they'd paint something interesting. The real forgotten question here

is, "What's so great about writing your stupid name all over the place?" Seriously, give us something: stick figures, a smiley face, anything really.

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

I think Gildea should try something new. He could do a couple album reviews, for instance. That way he could write about a few things he likes and still shit on a few people.

I think it might do him a little good and I am interested in what he listens to. On the other hand, Gildea does seem like the type of guy who wants to be depressed, so maybe someone else could do it.

Monkey can do his little book review, Gildea can review two-minute segments of movies, and someone else could do a little music review.

I need something more since you put out so few beasts. It would be nice and wouldn't force you to lose too much of the laziness you so love. Just a thought.
Adam Feser

Dear Adam,
Fine, here's your music review: Everything that came out this year sucks. Satisfied? We thought not.

EASIEST MARK EVER

In the article ["The Secret to Attaining Awesomeness," issue 117] you made the following proposal:

"Visualize that you're awesome." Because you are. Also visualize sending me \$9.95 to receive a certificate stating: "Cleopatra agrees: 'I'm totally awesome.'"

I have visualized all of the above, however to complete the transaction I require an address to which I will send the required \$9.95. As hard as I try to visualize, I for some reason can't visualize your address, please help. Also this requires an urgent response as I wish to apply for a new job in the near future and would very much like to include a certificate of awesomeness as one of my life's accomplishments. Thank you.
Anton

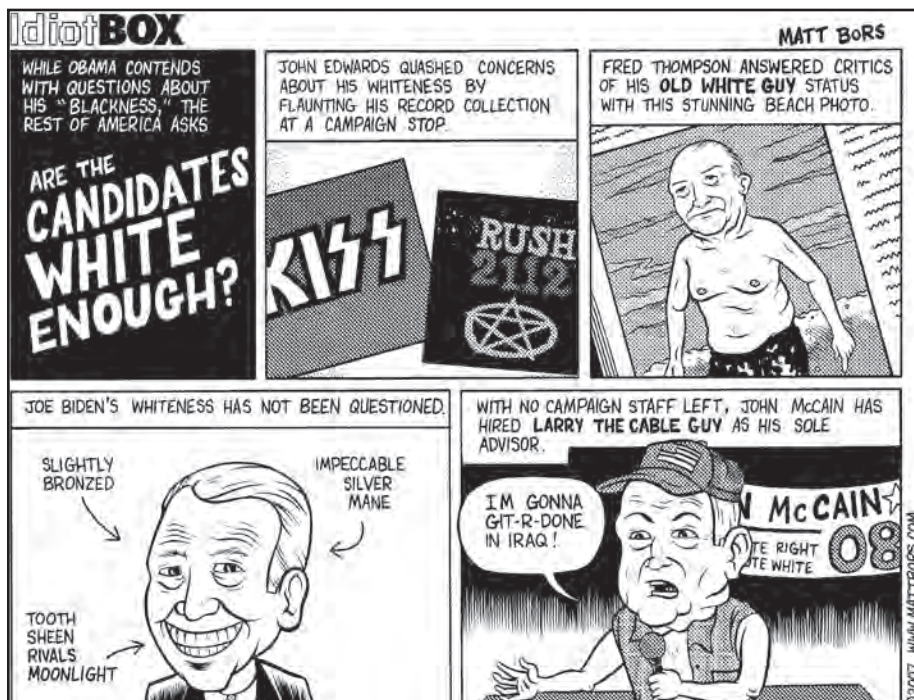
Dear Anton,
Okay then, send the money to:

The Beast
712 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14202

And we'll uh... print something up for you.

OBAMA GUY

My name is Bryan Barash and I'm a 24 year old marketing professional from Long Island,



NY. Please consider publishing this small piece I have written, which I feel will help clarify the question of experience in the Presidential campaign for people who may not be well informed:

"I think it's worth noting, and this gets left out often, that Senator Obama has held elected office for longer than either Senator Clinton or former Senator Edwards, he was just a state Senator for much of that time.

As a state Senator, he worked more closely with the people and their day to day problems. He also taught constitutional law and worked as a community organizer to help those who were disenfranchised. Who better than a professor of constitutional law to restore Habeas Corpus and our rights to not be spied on without a warrant. He has championed open government, ethics reform, and campaign finance reform throughout his whole public life, and was made the point man on ethics in the Senate in his first year. And he is the only candidate to have the foresight to be against the war from the beginning.

Now, you tell me who really has better experience for leading this country? I think the answer is clear..."

Thanks for taking the time to consider my request. I hope to hear from you about whether you plan to use this small piece or not. If there is anything else you need from me, or if you would like me to provide sources for the facts presented in my argument, I will gladly oblige.

Regards,
Bryan Barash
Selden, NY

*Dear Bryan,
Sorry, but we don't do dull bullshit. Run along now, you little scamp.*

FELT COOL ONCE

Hey,
Just read your "most loathsome" -- haven't laughed that hard since I was kicked out of sophomore English in 1973 for playing the Firesign Theater's "Child's Garden of Grass" LP. Joan Wahlmeier's mother came to school the next day and lectured me on the dangers of pre-marital sex. It didn't help. Indeed, it was already too late for me.

Thanks for needed belly laugh. Your work is masterful --

Best regards,
Doug Harvey
Lawrence, KS

*Dear Doug,
Thanks for the sadly braggadocious anecdote.*

TYOLOGICALLY CHALLENGED

Are you f-er's still out there, I know I am computer illiterate but the web issue is from april, should I subscribe, or are you selling us swamp land in florida! ? Is that buffao adress foney & why the hell dont you have a G.D. phone # for subscription, get with it already, we are trying to give you some money for an f-ing order & you dont even have a decent way to be contacted! A-holes! Please e-mail me back if you idiots exist, so I can start paying for something I used to get for free!, You may have a good " paper" but Dammmm, thanks alot you dweebs. You lowlifes are my kind of people.
Mark C.

*Dear Mark,
Quit bitching and give us your money.*

ATKINS DISTRIBUTION

WTF you stopped shipping your issues to frankie's donuts in NF. I'm leaving to go on the road for a year and you have already deprived me of 2 issues (likely 3 but we'll only count since the last drop). Come pick up your six or eight bucks there and drop off the next issue. The old men there love to berate your shit and it's honestly the only thing giving them meaning.
John

*Dear John,
Yeah, we heard about that giving old men meaning thing, so we had to stop sending issues there. Subscribe, cheapo.*

GOOD GRIEVANCE!

It's been a while since you guys announced the bitchy Mayor Scorpio's attempt to disbar Paul Fallon.

I thought that you guys would update us with more information about what happened, but as of yet I haven't seen or heard anything from any media venue about what the hell is happening.

Has anything happened to the Evil Publisher and indicted accomplice to a hilarious gag? Or is the legal process even more ridiculously slow than I think it?

Finally bothering to ask

P.S. I think the nightlite you gave Gullerstein last issue burned out, the 'scopes were out of order.

*Dear Finally,
Unsurprisingly, the grievance was dismissed and all is well. The committee found there was "an insufficient basis for a finding of professional misconduct." It was in the Buffalo News and everything. Our revenge is still pending.*

UNIVERSITY OF FEE-NICKS

Hey, how come you guys don't do an expose on the education industry in the Buffalo area?

Next to big oil, banking, and pharmaceuticals, these arrogant parasites have a sellers market with echo boomer kids ready to shell out their parents' hard earned 529 plans.

By the way, you guys have a temp job for me? I'm semi-literate having been educated outside of this country. (An advanced degree from UB just doesn't cut it, man. The education industry's a sham!)
James H. Burnette

*Dear James,
Again, we're leaving Buffalo to the wolves, bioinformatics and all. And anyone educated enough to understand such an article would already know what a dismal racket education is here. And anyone who didn't know wouldn't read it. Maybe we could make a music video...*

BASSHOLES

The following appeared on the Buffalo News website, I didn't see the paper itself but it looks like it's the opinion of the newspaper. The piece is about the Bass Pro store.

"Calculations are that the store would also generate some \$3 million a year in sales taxes, as well as draw other businesses that would also help fill the public till."


I want to point out, by way of simple math, that the store, assuming it is ever built, would need to have sales of around 33 million dollars a year. This works out to roughly \$690,000 per week in retail sales or almost 100,000 dollars a day. This should strike anyone familiar with downtown Buffalo as absurd on its face.
jean claude dehmel

*Dear Jean-Claude,
But all it takes is for one person to buy \$100,000 worth of fishing accessories per day, and we're all set!*

DISPLACES MUCH WATER

Re: Billy Fuccillo

We are really catching it here in Rochester with Billy's unending ads. I am so grateful for your telling the truth about this obnoxious bully whois stressing people out in the most insensitive way. Right on!
Jay D

*Dear Jay,
You keep him for a while; we were just starting to forget about him. It would be really... massive of you.* 

BEAST-O-SCOPES

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

Virgo, Your story about stepping in Arlo Guthrie's poo is less impressive than you think.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)

Your career as a suicide bomber will be ironically cut short when you are blown up by an IED en route to your target. Try to act surprised, Libra.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

You wouldn't have as much trouble with men leering at you if you covered more than 20% of your body at a time, Scorpio. Also, you should know that butt tattoos and pierced tongues are universal symbols for "easy." Not that there's anything wrong with that.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

We must never forget the terrible events that took place on September 11th, 2001, Sagittarius. Your severe anterograde amnesia is no excuse.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Your obsession with Jessica Simpson's breasts would be fairly normal, Capricorn, if only she weren't your daughter.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Pulling a rabbit from a hat is not a bad trick, Aquarius, but it's important to make sure it's still alive. You're going to have to move to another state if you plan to continue working birthday parties.

Pisces (Feb 18 – Mar 20)

You'd be a serious MILF, Pisces, if the F stood for "fumigate."

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

I know you're an outspoken Christian conservative homophobe, Aries, but after Jeff Gannon, Ted Haggard, Mark Foley, Bob Allen, and now Larry Craig, don't you think it kind of makes you look gay? Maybe it's time to become a closet homophobe. I'm sure your "racquetball partner" would appreciate it.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

An elephant never forgets, Taurus but your great grandmother thinks you're a guy she had an affair with for 35 years.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

You may enjoy CSI and Crossing

As divined by Andrew Gullerstein



Jordan, Gemini, but becoming an autopsy specialist is not actually a good way to meet babes.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Come off it, Capricorn. If "the Matrix" were real, don't you think you'd be better looking?

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)

Your wife is right, Leo: even though the film inspired his conception, no judge is ever going to let you name your son "Asian Buttsex."

THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP BY NICHOLAS GUREWITCH

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NY Depew Sit and Spin
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