

On Writing

October 2004

Volume #20

Published by
The Writers Guild of America, East, Inc.

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On Writing

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A Note from the Editor

Phyllis Franklin, writer and former Executive Director of the Modern Language Association, once said, “I am not averse to stretches of peace, but I also don’t mind stirring things up in a good cause.”

Writers learn that, whatever political loyalties they have personally, as writers, their professional loyalties are to story and character.

But while personal opinions shouldn’t cloud a writer’s judgement, there is still a place for them in a writer’s work—which can be as engaging or entertaining as it is meaningful.

In this special pre-election issue, we are publishing political essays and cartoons by Guild members. Each piece reflects the point of view of each writer and not necessarily of the Writers Guild. Also in this issue, documentary writer Jack McDonald talks with political consultant James Carville.

—**Arlene Hellerman**

Front and back cover illustrations
Herb Gardner.

James Carville and Jack McDonald

Alexandria, VA August 24, 2004

ON WRITING: I was watching *The American Experience* documentary on Ronald Reagan, and I noticed that when Lyn Nofziger talked about the evolution of Reagan's cowboy image, it was in terms of creating a character almost in a way that a screenwriter creates a character. So as a political consultant, as a campaign manager, when you see someone who's going to be running for office, what do you see? What do you start with?

CARVILLE: Well, first of all, Lyn Nofziger was with Reagan from the beginning. Most of the time, when I see a candidate the election is six months, eight months away. So we can't engage in that kind of a creation, or whatever you want to call it, myth making. But there are a couple of principles that are really important in political communications. And basically, the main thing to remember is: it is the only endeavor I know of that you multiply by subtracting. In other words, it's actually the less you say the more you say. Everything else, the more you say the more you say. And it's so difficult to get people to understand that. Another thing is that people who come into politics—and maybe Democrats more than Republicans—often have a bias toward democracy, community decision making, a lot of smart people at the table. That's an asinine way to do politics. A political campaign is an autocracy, or tyranny. And it has to be, because it moves so quickly and you need fewer people doing more and making more decisions.

Now, in terms of the idea of myth making, storytelling is important, and as I understand it every writer since the dawn of time has understood one thing: you have set-up, conflict, resolution. A guy at NYU who reads a film script throws it in the bucket if it doesn't have that element. Every book, every play, everything. There's a way that we think since childhood—I used to read my kids *Winnie the Pooh* and it was always the same kind of thing, Pooh couldn't find the honey and the Owl and all these characters would come into play, and then Christopher Robin would come in and figure out where it was. So Reagan actually had a story to tell: we were a great country with these individualistic cowboys who were self-sufficient and then all of a sudden the government got in the way and started these regulations and taxing people and we lost the spirit of individualism. And it's very simple, all we need to do is get rid of the government and we can return to this. You had the set-up, the cowboy. You had the conflict, the government—and the resolution. So it was a pretty good story.

MCDONALD: How did you do that with Clinton? What was Clinton's story?

CARVILLE: Well, the Clinton story line—because it was a shorter period of time—was that the country had kind of lost its focus, it lost its priorities and there wasn't a strategy to deal with making America economically strong again. So therefore, it's the economy, stupid. I'm going to focus on the economy like a laser beam.

MCDONALD: How do you figure out what the story is going to be?

CARVILLE: Well, first of all, the story has to fit the person. And it has to fit the times. It doesn't always work, it doesn't always come out perfectly. There are a lot of times when you're running a campaign and your story conflicts with the times.

MCDONALD: You mentioned Reagan's story was in development a long time—

CARVILLE: Right. Usually, the average political consultant or strategist gets in a campaign eight months, a year maybe before the election. You have to take an existing story and adapt it to current circumstances.

MCDONALD: Could you talk about Robert Casey's run for governor in Pennsylvania?

ON WRITING: This was in 1986.

MCDONALD: He was down, I don't know how many percent—

CARVILLE: Right. The line on Casey was that he was the "Three-Time-Loss from Holy Cross."

ON WRITING: He was a professor at Holy Cross.

CARVILLE: Yes. He had run for governor three times and had lost three times in a row. And the aura the opposition was trying to create about him was that he was a loser. So our story was, "They want you to believe that I'm a loser and that you're a loser because you're having a hard time. We're a tough state. We come back. Bob Casey's coming back, and so is Pennsylvania."

ON WRITING: And the resolution is—

CARVILLE: —We're both coming back together. Our campaign slogan was: Bob Casey's coming back and so is Pennsylvania. You can't make

Bob Casey an Ivy League lawyer, or you're not going to make him the most modern-thinking Pennsylvanian. But what you can do is have Bob Casey as a kind of hard-scrabbled, tenacious, never give up, loves Pennsylvania and Pennsylvanians—whose stories are much like his story.

MCDONALD: What about Harris Wofford?

ON WRITING: Wofford was also a Pennsylvania campaign. He ran for the Senate against former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh in 1991.

MCDONALD: When you came in, what was the situation? You had this well known attorney general, what was the story on that one?

CARVILLE: Well, that story was, here were all of these people who didn't understand what was going on in your life. Thornburgh said that he understood the corridors of power. And Harris Wofford was saying, if a criminal has the right to an attorney, why doesn't a working person have a right to a doctor? And this is not an election about understanding the corridors of power, this was an election about understanding the concerns of people.

ON WRITING: And what is Bush, George W.? What is that story?

CARVILLE: Well, it's hard for me to be objective here. But I'll try, as a gag. I think they've built this myth that he overcame a problem with alcohol, grew up as the son of privilege but came to embrace the tough individualistic nature of West Texas. And he is this man of supreme conviction who doesn't spend a lot of time agonizing over things. And it's just exactly what you need in a world of good and evil abroad, in a world where our cultural values and way of life are under assault at home.

MCDONALD: He made it through the Valley of Darkness.

CARVILLE: Right.

ON WRITING: So it's touting simplicity?

CARVILLE: It's saying he's a simple man and that's what we need.

ON WRITING: I want to ask about language. One thing the right has been able to do, it seems, is appropriate language. For instance, liberal has become a dirty word.

CARVILLE: What difference does it make? It is. So why have an election about whether liberal is a bad word or not? That's a battle we've lost.

ON WRITING: But as a campaign strategist, is there a way to appropriate the language? For instance, the phrase "partial birth abortion," is a procedure that doesn't exist.

CARVILLE: A campaign strategist has a job: to try to win the campaign for his or her candidate. His job is not to change the political nomenclature. My loyalty, when I did campaigns, was right to that candidate.

ON WRITING: But isn't part of that changing the political nomenclature?

CARVILLE: Not in a campaign. If I take a poll and 63 percent of the people think that liberal is a bad word, well I'd be an idiot to tell my candidate to go out and call himself a liberal.

ON WRITING: So you don't deal with the larger issues, you deal with the—

CARVILLE: No, no. I think for people in Pennsylvania in 1991, health care was a large issue. What's big in people's minds is not whether the word liberal is good or bad. What's big in people's minds is that the country has been plunged into debt, we can't create a goddamn job and we're stuck in a foreign entanglement that we have no idea how to get out of. And you really don't

want to have a debate as to whether liberal is a bad word or not or whether partial birth abortion is nonexistent.

MCDONALD: But if the opposition has successfully redefined the word liberal and recharacterized abortion, haven't they created obstacles you have to get around? Don't you have to redefine those things again and get at them at another angle where—

CARVILLE: But you have to be skilled. You have to be skilled as a candidate.

ON WRITING: And what does that mean?

CARVILLE: It means you say, "Jerry Falwell and your crowd call it that. I think there's a better word. But that's really not what this election is about, President Bush, this is really an election about fundamental decisions that you can make. This is but one of a number of decisions where you and Mr. Falwell are in lock step. I think I'm more in lock step with the American people—" Why not just tag him with obviously unpopular people. And you come back to, "Why is it that 43 percent of the people don't have health insurance in this country? Why should health care costs be going up 40 percent under your watch, Mr. President? I think that you're more worried about what a narrow band of the extreme Right of the Republican Party cares about than what the average American cares about."

MCDONALD: What about this Swift boat controversy?

ON WRITING: You're talking about the group of veterans who are attacking John Kerry's military service and raising questions about what happened when he commanded a Swift boat in Vietnam.

MCDONALD: Yeah. Isn't it kind of

like setting the agenda or defining the terms of the story?

CARVILLE: You know, I think the Swift boat thing is one of the most overblown things I've seen.

MCDONALD: But as a campaign manager, how do you deal with that?

CARVILLE: You know, what they ought to do—and what I've told them they ought to do—is just have John Kerry looking in the camera, saying, “Now we know the facts. They lied about my past record and all these people have come forward. Now you would ask, why would George W. Bush and the Republicans lie about my past record? For one simple reason. They can't tell you the truth about their record today. But I will. Health care costs, up 40 percent. Deficit, over \$5 trillion when they inherited a surplus. We're in a war in Iraq that we had no plan for what we'd do in the aftermath, and no idea how to get out of. I'm John Kerry. I won't just tell you the truth about my past, more importantly, I'll tell you the truth about your future. And that's what this election's about.” And get out of there.

ON WRITING: When you're doing a campaign, any campaign, do you have to keep things oversimplified? Can you use nuance?

CARVILLE: What is nuance? Let me tell you something. You're a writer, right? You read all these books about child rearing and emotional intelligence in children, and human relationships. How about I'll raise my kids on a sound bite. Try this one: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” “Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.” I'm out of here. The idea that somehow or another the simplification of things is in itself inherently bad is ludicrous. Again, this is the only endeavor in the world that you multiply by subtracting.

Everybody in the world wants to multiply by multiplying.

ON WRITING: I remember that during the Clinton campaign—the '92 campaign—some interviewer was trying to pin him down about whether he said something was this and then said it was that.... And he finally just said, “Some things are not black and white. Some things have shades of gray. Some things are not that simple.” And to me, that was the simplification.

CARVILLE: Perhaps it is. But you would prefer in a political campaign to deal with things—look, everybody instinctively knows two things, they call it “contrasting pairs” and “groups of threes” in framing a choice. The first person to ever run for election, in Athens, said this election presents a choice between my view which is this, and my opponent's view which is that. That's a contrasting pair. The human mind works that way, and I don't know why we're considered to be simple people because our minds work that way and always have. I'm going to say “It's the economy, stupid. Change versus more of the same. It's the economy, stupid. And don't forget health care.” It's the way we think. It's set-up, conflict, resolution. What is wrong with that? Why do we feel the need, when politicians come out, to say that they oversimplify things?

ON WRITING: Because some things are complicated. And I think that what's happening is, information is more and more—

CARVILLE: What is complicated that cannot be reduced to something simple that people can understand?

ON WRITING: North Korea. They're a horrible country, but we have to be nice to them. It's not simply good versus evil.

CARVILLE: What people can understand is, the United States, as a result of

its policy of unilateralism, is disengaged from North Korea. And now we're telling North Korea that we're moving troops off the Korean Peninsula. This is the wrong way to deal with North Korea. We deal with North Korea by rejoining the community of nations, by telling the rest of the world we're once again citizens of the world. And this is a problem, not just in North Korea, this is the problem in the Middle East, this is the problem all over the world. And you would be stupid to get into a protracted history of what plutonium grade is this and when they did that and what the Clinton agreement was. What I'm telling you is, you ought to stay away from campaign strategy because you want to argue—

ON WRITING: —The nuance.

CARVILLE: The nuance.

ON WRITING: So campaigns are not the place for nuance at all. You have to distill.

CARVILLE: Again, again, let me go back. Because the only thing in the world I know is that you multiply by subtracting.

ON WRITING: The less you say, the more.

CARVILLE: The less you say, the more you say.

MCDONALD: When did that hit you? Or how did you learn that?

CARVILLE: It's just learned through brutal years of experience in seeing it again and again and again, and having everybody come up and saying we've got to do a position paper on historical restoration, or we've got to have an opinion on this and we have to fill this questionnaire out and etc. At some point you become so bogged down and nuanced, if you will. And decision makers, obviously, have to deal with

nuance and its consequences. Communicators don't.

MCDONALD: And as far as this presidential campaign, they say when you've got an incumbent, the campaign is much more on the incumbency.

CARVILLE: Whenever you have an incumbent run, the story line of the election is, do you want four more years of what you've got, or do you want something different? Now clearly the Bush people have figured out that's not really the question they want people to ask. Because if you ask people, do you want four more years of what you've got or something different, by a good, probably 12 to 15 point majority they say they want something different. Which is not very good numbers if you're in politics. So what they say the story line is: you think you want something different? Do you want this "www" guy—waffling, weak and weird? And, you think you want something different, but do you really want a Massachusetts liberal who can't make up his mind about the war in Iraq? And you may not like everything we do, but you know who we are and what we do. So that's a simple story line.

ON WRITING: What's Kerry's story line?

CARVILLE: I think it's in progress.

ON WRITING: Isn't it late for it to be....

CARVILLE: No, it can come around. Now, what I think his story line is that he's the patriot who has a different view of the country. He's thoughtful and more international—nuanced.

MCDONALD: Is the nuance getting in the way?

CARVILLE: I think they have a slogan that they will translate into a message and it's, "Strong at home, respected abroad," which is a good one.

And I think their story line is, we have two missions here: to make us stronger at home through health care, education, lowering the deficit, and we have to be more respected abroad.

ON WRITING: Aside from a campaign, once you're governing, there's the nuance in the governing, but you still have to communicate. What did you say earlier? A decision maker is concerned with nuance, a communicator isn't. So is the process of presenting a policy initiative similar to that of campaigning?

CARVILLE: You know, what did Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill have in common?

MCDONALD: They were great communicators.

CARVILLE: Of course. So one of the real qualifications to be president—and particularly in this age—is to be able to communicate. It actually matters. There's a view people have that real leadership and strength is doing unpopular things in spite of what the public wants. And that's stupid. That would be a very stupid thing to do. Real leadership and strength is getting the public to do what needs to be done. Lincoln had to be a communicator because support for the war was awful. It was awful in the summer of 1864. We tend to remember Lincoln as a great communicator, but for a long time the war was horribly unpopular. Roosevelt took over during the Depression and had to try to inspire people to rally into his program. And Churchill had, obviously, dark hours in Britain. And they had to be inspirational. They had to get people behind what they were doing there. The Bush people would say that he rallied the nation after 9/11. Well, the nation was rallied. He sort of stepped in, and he probably missed a lot of opportunities.

MCDONALD: What do you do if you have a candidate who's not a particularly good communicator? In a documentary, if your main character is not all that articulate about his own story line, you create a sense of importance by having other people establish it for him—the narrator, various witnesses....

CARVILLE: You know, everybody comes to me and says, "How do you create all of this? You come in and you tell people what to say. And that's what consultants do." And that's a story line. That there are these kind of semi-vapid, ambitious people out there and they raise money and figure out somebody to come in and tell them what to say.

ON WRITING: Like an actor.

CARVILLE: Yeah. Now I'm going to tell you what the truth is. The truth is this: I have spent my life in political consulting—particularly after I figured it out—I've spent 85 percent of my time trying to tell people what not to say as opposed to what to say. I spend most of my time emptying full vessels as opposed to filling empty vessels. Because my story line is this: political communication is the only endeavor I know where you multiply by subtracting. One of the things I always tell my candidates is, it is okay to have an opinion on everything, it is just not okay to render said opinion.

I worked for a man who was a Prime Minister of another country and he would give his opinion on movies. And one day I said, "Prime Minister, people want your opinion on the school system—" or whatever the issue was. He said, "You don't understand, these are very power-centric people here and they like to hear from their Prime Minister on a variety of subjects." And I was sitting there and knew they decidedly didn't. They were sick of hearing his opinion

on everything in the world because they thought he was out popping off about stuff other than them. And it's so hard, it's very hard—you'd be surprised—to get candidates to understand that. It's hard to get the people who work in campaigns to understand that. It's hard to get the commentariat to understand that.

MCDONALD: I agree, because it's not all that different from what I do. I take somebody's biography and have to eliminate 95 percent of their life and get a clear story line. So it is reducing something down. And people think, well, they also said this, and they also did that. And you get this mess of a life. You want to get some clarity to it. And that's what I'm seeing you do, coming in and saying, okay, what is the angle? This is unnecessary. We don't need this. And you keep a clear story line. Because you get right to the heart of it, and you're effective.

CARVILLE: I would say, looking back on my career, that I have been effective periodically but ineffective many times. And sometimes it's a matter of, hey look, two people run against each other, somebody's got to win. And too often somebody runs off when they win a campaign and they think they've cured diabetes or something. And no, they just happened to be there.

MCDONALD: What about pacing? Like, the Swift boat thing's being talked about now, by the time this interview comes out there's going to be something else. Looking at, how many weeks, six weeks away—

CARVILLE: Again, you'd be surprised how difficult it is to be simple. It's the hardest thing in the world to do. Look, it's as easy as falling off a log. I defy you to stand on a log and fall off. Just go stand on a log and try to fall off the goddamned thing. You can't do it. Being simple is hard. But there are

some underlying truths in this election. And what's there is that this administration has essentially made two big gambles. One, that the war in Iraq would be a success. Well, not only has it been a failure, but the rationale that they gave for it was a failure. Now if you listened closely, what they said was history rewards winners. And if we win and it's successful, the world will little care what we thought Iraq had. Most intelligent people were very doubtful in March of 2003 whether Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. There were also enormously serious doubts as to the connections between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. However, because the war has not turned out very well, the rationale becomes even more problematic there. The second thing they did is, they said that through a combination of tax cuts and increased spending—domestic, defense on the war and everything else—that the economy would perform in such a way that incomes would go up and the deficit wouldn't be as big of a problem. That has not worked out for them.

So they've made two huge decisions, and really risky, you could even say bold. Now, the idea is that history—this is one of the things I see and I'm very amused—is very kind to the bold. No it's not. History actually for the most part takes better care of the cautious. I would argue to you that the boldest decision of the 20th century was Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. I mean, good God man, that's a huge country. It turned out to be the bloodiest, costliest decision made in the 20th century. But it was certainly bold. I mean, we could certainly say that Yamamoto's decision to bomb Pearl Harbor, that was a really bold thing to do. And let me be very clear here, I'm not comparing Bush to

Hitler or Yamamoto. I'm just making a general point that boldness is not always what's called for.

MCDONALD: On Fox News Channel, they'd just reduce that down to the comparison and then leave out—

CARVILLE: —“Carville compared him to Yamamoto.” But I would doubt it because nobody at Fox knows who Yamamoto was.

MCDONALD: Then it seems that the Bush Administration's only tactic now is to confuse the story line.

CARVILLE: Of course they have to confuse the story line. They're not going to get out there and say, “We made two big decisions in this administration, and we've bet the whole stack and guess what, we lost both of them. But in spite of that we think you ought to re-elect us.”

MCDONALD: Lend me 50 bucks....

CARVILLE: Right. But at some point, people understand this. Everything they said is, if you sacrifice the environment there'll be growth, and you cut taxes it'll cause growth, and if you do away with overtime it'll cause growth, and if you do this, it'll cause—well, guess what? Growth for who?

ON WRITING: So their other strategy is to distort John Kerry's story line.

CARVILLE: Again, if the natural story line of the election is, do you want four more years of what you have or something different, people overwhelmingly say they want something different. So what they're saying is, you don't want this different. It's like, do you want four more years of having a blemish on the side of your neck? No. But do you want us to take half your neck out? Well no, either.

ON WRITING: And how much time does Kerry have to define the story line and be consistent?

CARVILLE: There are a lot of things that are just going to naturally evolve, and Kerry is going to get a lot better in doing this. These things turn around in days, in hours. And in spite of what seems to be some opposition to turning this one around, it will. And he'll do fine.

* * *

James Carville's winning streak as a political consultant began in 1986 when he managed the gubernatorial victory of Robert Casey in Pennsylvania. A loser in three previous attempts, Casey defeated a popular lieutenant governor in a come-from-behind win.

Carville went on to manage the successful campaigns of Wallace Wilkinson in Kentucky, Frank Lautenberg in New Jersey and Zell Miller in Georgia.

In 1991, Carville drew national attention when he managed Senator Harris Wofford from 40 points behind in the polls to an upset landslide over former Pennsylvania Governor and U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. With the unpredictable win, Carville had exposed the political vulnerability of George Bush, Sr., who had been enjoying 91 percent approval ratings during the Gulf War.

The following year, Carville guided Bill Clinton to the presidency. Carville was honored as Campaign Manager of the Year by the American Association of Political Consultants for his leadership of Clinton's 1992 campaign. He was also the focus, along with George Stephanopoulos, of the feature-length Academy Award nominated documentary The War Room.

After the Clinton victory, Carville began to focus on foreign consulting. His political clients have included: Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, President Jamil Mahuad of Ecuador, the Liberal Party of Canada, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, President Hipolito Mejia of the Dominican Republic and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel.

Carville has written a number of books including, All's Fair: Love War and Running for President with his wife, Mary Matalin (eight weeks on The New York Times Bestseller List), We're Right, They're Wrong: A Handbook for Spirited Progressives, The Horse He Rode In On: The People vs. Kenneth Starr (both on The New York Times Bestseller List), Suck Up, Buck Up... and Come Back When You Foul Up with Paul Begala, and his most recent, the children's book Lu and the Swamp Ghost, which was published fall, 2004.

Carville is a co-host of the CNN show Crossfire.

Jack McDonald is a documentary writer, director and producer of Emmy Award-winning programs for National Geographic Television, The Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel and the Public Broadcasting System. His work ranges from history, natural history and science to adventure, travel and current events. Recent productions include West Point, a two-hour history special for PBS. Prior to his work in documentary film, McDonald was a news desk editor and reporter for Time magazine in New York and Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON

Mark Alan Stamaty



Calvin Trillin

The following pieces are from Calvin Trillin's collection of verse Obviously On He Sails—The Bush Administration in Rhyme, published by Random House, 2004.

CHENEY'S HEAD: AN EXPLANATION

One mystery I've tried to disentangle:
Why Cheney's head is always at an angle.
He tries to come on straight, and yet I can't
Help notice that his head is at a slant.
When Cheney's questioned on the Sunday shows,
The Voice of Reason is his favorite pose.
He drones in monotones. He never smiles—
Explaining why some suspects don't need trials,
Or why right now it simply stands to reason
That criticizing Bush amounts to treason,
Or which important precept it would spoil
To know who wrote our policy on oil,
Or why as CEO he wouldn't know
What Halliburton's books were meant to show.
And as he speaks I've kept a careful check
On when his head's held crooked on his neck.
The code is broken, after years of trying:
He only cocks his head when he is lying.

—JUNE 24, 2002

THE LOYAL OPPOSITION

The Senate Democrats sat mum,
Like doves afraid to coo.
So history will soon record
This war as their war too.

—APRIL 7, 2003

EXPLAINING IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS WHY THE UNITED STATES INVADED AND OCCUPIED ANOTHER COUNTRY WITHOUT PROVOCATION, GEORGE W. BUSH OFFERS HISTORY HIS VERSION OF "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR!"

Iraq had shown proclivities
For "weapons-of-mass-destruction-related program activities."

—FEBRUARY 23, 2004

JUST SPECULATING

Loose sixties morals, Gingrich said,
Was where our troubles lay.
Then Newt himself was found to have
A tendency to stray.

Rush Limbaugh has been hooked on pills,
While Bennet's hooked on slots.
Do all the right-wing morals police
Have copybooks with blots?

Does Falwell have a floozie, say,
Does Ashcroft, you suppose,
Get home from church and swiftly snort
Some white stuff up his nose?

Does Robertson crave demon rum?
Does Cheney make clerks promise
To hide the fact that he's renting tapes
Last viewed by Clarence Thomas?

—NOVEMBER 3, 2003

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SEARCH FOR WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, WHOSE PRESENCE WAS THE REASON GIVEN (AT LEAST ON MONDAYS, THURSDAYS, AND ALTERNATE FRIDAYS) FOR WAGING PREVENTATIVE WAR ON IRAQ

So maybe we will find them yet,
Well stashed away in some place clever.
Or were they just destroyed in March?
Or never there at all? Whatever.

—MAY 19, 2003

* * *

Calvin Trillin has served on the staff of The New Yorker since 1963. For the past 14 years, he has also been The Nation's "deadline poet," contributing a piece of verse on the news each issue.

Larry Gelbart

A Slight Change of Address

Forty-seven years ago, four of our fathers brought forth a new nation dedicated to the preposition that all men are created conceivably equal.

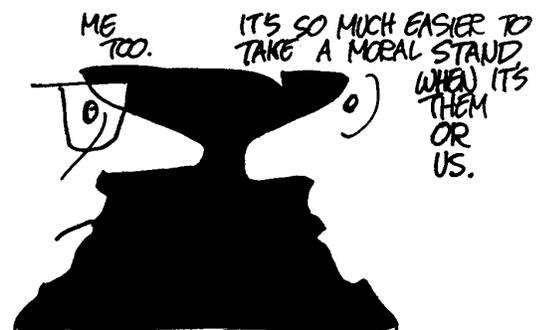
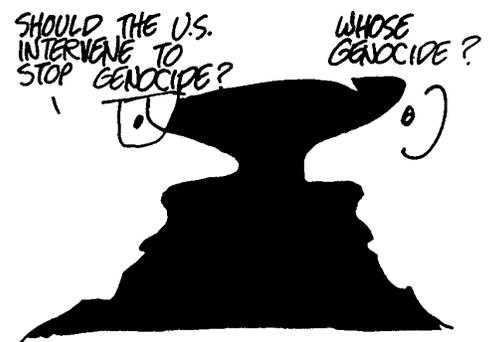
What we are now is we're engaged, see? Engaged in testing just how long any nation that is a nation in a national sense that's been so deceived and so desecrated can long endure. So it sort of fits together that we're gathered at this final resting place for those who lost their lives by dying here.

But in the big picture, we can't desiccate—we certainly can't concentrate—we can't hollow this ground. The brave souls who are snuggled here, you see, they've already done that, far above our power to add or to subtract. The world's not going to note all that much, or remember whatever it is I'm trying to say here, but it can never forget what it was that they did when they did whatever it was that they did here.

So it's kind of for those among us who might still be alive to dedicate ourselves to the job that lies ahead before us—that we highly revolve that these dead shall not have died in the van; that this nation, shall be born-again in freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not vanish into the earth. See?

* * *

Larry Gelbart has spent six decades as a professional writer. He hopes to get it right in the bottom of the seventh.



—Jules Feiffer

Belinda Haas

I saw the John Ford film *The Informer* on a summer afternoon in 1968 when I was 10 years old. That day my blithe certainty about the rightness of my parents, in all things, ended.

I watched it from the armchair in the sitting room of our family's summer cottage in Northern Ireland on a black and white TV, the screen of which was no bigger than today's most modest laptop. It was a Sunday. I know this because my parents were tramping back and forth from house to car with luggage and other miscellany in preparation for going back to Belfast. Occasionally, they would cross paths in the sitting room and pause to debate the inclusion of this or that item in the current carload. Didn't they make a decision on what to do with that rug last Sunday, I wondered? Couldn't they deal with such petty disagreements elsewhere? Didn't they understand that by blocking my view of the TV they were threatening, quite literally, my nascent political consciousness?

The answer to all the above was, no. Yet, 36 years later, as I pick my way back along the trail that has led me to reject almost every shred of political information given me as a young child, I would still maintain that *The Informer* was the first fork in the road.

1968 was a big year for us: all of a sudden Northern Ireland came into focus for the rest of the British Isles. For years, the perception had been that our island was a boggy backwater whose inhabitants practiced a form of social intercourse 10 years out of date and whose fashion sense drew more on Leningrad than London. And then, one night, there were people on our TV screen who looked radically different. They materialized, or so it seemed to me, fully formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus. They called themselves "The People's Democracy" and demanded "Civil Rights." I had no idea what that meant and certainly I didn't know anyone like them.

That summer I watched my parents watching the six o'clock news. One night my father snarled with disgust as a "wee" girl called Bernadette Devlin, hair flailing, feet stamping, smashed paving stones outside Queen's University in broad daylight while "no one lifted a hand to stop the mayhem." My mother clapped her hand to her mouth at the sight. Was it horror she sought to contain or a thrill of glee rippling through her body and curling irrepressibly onto her lips? In hindsight, I suspect that the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland provided the trigger for my mother's personal revolt that culminated in her leaving my father for a drunken fiddle player 20 years her junior. But that's another story. On this night, once the news was over, we packed the car, as usual, and my father drove slowly and carefully (as usual) to the cottage for the weekend.

The cottage was an hour away from our Belfast home. It sat at the base of the sublimely romantic Mourne Mountains and was no more than a skimming stone's throw from the shore of the spindly-fingered inlet called Carlingford Lough. The Norsemen had given the Lough its name: "the fjord of Carlinn." The name stuck, though no one knew who Carlinn was anymore. As a child, I wondered if the Vikings camped on our secluded, crescent-shaped pebbled cove. Did they, too, sit on the

point, popping seaweed pods between thumb and forefinger looking up at the yellow, gorse-blotched mountains? Perhaps, by the time they got this far they had seen it all before and were looking for no more than a quick route home with a little trade, a little plunder. Either way, we know they came, they named and they conquered. Like us, the Vikings knew the power of the naming of things.

We Protestants were the most recent in a long line of peoples who had sliced, drawn and quartered Ireland. An ancestor of mine came with Cromwell's army in 1649. Over the next two years, English soldiers rode roughshod over the Irish countryside, crushing dissent in the name of Puritanism. At the end of it, when all was quiet, Cromwell requisitioned lands from native farmers for officers in his army willing to settle in Ireland permanently. My ancestor was one of those "planters." How those Irish lips must have tightened into pencil lines of hatred as my primogenitor rode past on his high horse to town. Over the centuries, his descendants, and many more powerful and influential Protestants, molded Ireland into a sectarian society based on the crude, but effective, premise of divide and rule. By the time I was born, the Protestants had had a good long run of it. Those were my people.

At 10, I "knew" that, with the exception of a few rotten apples, Protestants were good, ditto the English. Catholics, or "Romans" as my relatives would sometimes call them, were, on the other hand, generally lazy, drunk and, if given the money and opportunity, wanton to the point of depravity. I was a little bigot. I'll say in my defense that I didn't have much firsthand information to contradict this view. I only knew one Catholic, Kitty McDonald, our nanny. I was able to accommodate the dissonance between the stereotype and Kitty's immutably exemplary behavior on the grounds that she was the exception to prove the rule.

But in addition to Catholics and Protestants who coexisted, if uneasily, in the Province, there was a group of faceless, nameless people who lived, in every sense, beyond the pale. These shadowy brethren—madmen, fanatics and killers—were, in our minds, less than human and, at times, superhuman in their capacity for evil. These were the men who lay in wait in ditches at dead of night to put a bullet in the head of a judge. These were the malefactors who, according to my father, might come and burn us in our beds at the cottage at the word of some "corner boy from the Republic." In Ireland, the I.R.A. is not an acronym for Individual Retirement Accounts as it is in America—unless your idea of planning ahead is a bullet in the gut—but for the Irish Republican Army. This is where my viewing of *The Informer* comes in. In the course of 91 minutes, everything I "knew" about good and bad went topsy-turvy.

The Informer was set in Dublin in 1922, during the conflict that led to the partition of Ireland into the southern republic and a northern province remaining under British rule. In it the English were, at best, wrongheaded prigs and, at worst, malevolent, Imperialist bullies. The I.R.A., on the other hand, were firm-jawed, disciplined, noble, compassionate and, above all, honorable men who were performing their patriotic duty by resisting British rule. It was Victor McLaglen's greatest role. He was a thick-headed drunk named Gypo Nolan, who, when the film begins, is living hand-to-mouth on the fringes of society. Gypo is in a corner. His best buddy, who has done the

thinking for him up to this point, is on the run from the British army. Gypo's girl-friend Katie has been driven by poverty to prostitution. The I.R.A. has thrown him out of the organization for cowardice. What Gypo does is squeal on his buddy in order to get the reward and take Katie to America. He then embarks upon a drunken odyssey, blows the reward money and reveals himself as the informer. Shot entirely at night, on streets literally and metaphorically strangled by fog, Gypo staggers out of the gloom, flails hopelessly against his dismal life, only to be wrenched back into the void by a noose fashioned from the twisted sheet of history and his own unwavering stupidity. At the end of the movie, I didn't cry for Gypo, for Katie or for Gypo's friend—even though the pathos was palpable in the final shots when Gypo staggers into the chapel, blood gushing from his chest, and is granted forgiveness by his friend's mother before he dies. No, I was sitting bolt upright in my chair, electrified by the possibility that the people my parents believed were evil to the core: "terrorists" might, in fact, be "freedom fighters."

As the credits rolled, my parents paused again at my intersection of the living room and I asked them to explain what I had seen. My father laughed with amusement: "That's just an American film," he said, pronouncing the word film as fillum as is the norm in Ulster. "What do the Americans know about us, anyway?" Flick. Off went the TV. I sat, riveted to the screen, as a slow, deflating fizz folded the sound and picture in upon itself. I watched until the pinprick of light in the middle of the TV had gone, leaving just the gray screen. In that moment, everything changed. My father could no longer be fully trusted. I would have to recast him, myself, my country, in an entirely new light. Over the ensuing years, I did. But that summer evening when I was 10, I got in the car without a word and my father drove slowly and carefully (as usual) back to town.

* * *

Belinda Haas has been an editor, producer and screenwriter for films for many years. Her writing credits include Up at the Villa, The Blood Oranges, Angels and Insects and The Music of Chance. She grew up in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and has lived in the United States for more than 20 years.



Stuart Hample
(After David Levine)

In the 1960s, as American involvement in the Vietnam War was escalating, Lyndon Johnson had a gall bladder operation and displayed his scar to the press. The photos taken were the inspiration for cartoonist David Levine's drawing of Johnson showing the scar on his abdomen—in the shape of Vietnam.

In 2003, David Levine's cartoon was the starting point for cartoonist and writer Stu Hample's drawing evoking a connection between Johnson's folly in Vietnam, and George W. Bush's in Iraq.

Allison Silverman

Excerpt from a Future Presidential Debate

MODERATOR: Welcome to this Election 2376 Debate between the Republican Party candidate for president, Senator Ahar Peelix of Sector 9, and the Reorganized Republican Party candidate, Governor Vaid Rotak of Sector 2. I am Gus, a pulsing red digital eye connected to a vast nerve center located in an undisclosed location. You may know me as host of Saturday morning's *Kidz Rock!* Good evening to you both.

PEELIX: Nice to see you, Gus.

ROTAK: Hello, Gus.

MODERATOR: Gentlemen, we begin with the military. This week, there were serious contentions regarding your war record, Senator Peelix. How do you respond to allegations that you dodged military service in Vietnam?

PEELIX: Gus, I wish I could have served in Vietnam. But as I said in my statement, I was born in 2329, more than 350 years after the end of the war and that precluded me from serving. I have been very open about this, it was not a willful act. At the time, I was unable to control the year of my birth.

MODERATOR: And now?

PEELIX: As an adult, yes, with the knowledge and experience I have now, I believe I would find some way to make sure I was born in time to serve in Vietnam. But as an unborn baby, no. What I want to make clear to the American people is that if I had been alive, I definitely would have served my country in Vietnam, there's no question about that.

MODERATOR: Would you care to respond, Governor Rotak?

ROTAK: Gus, where are the specifics? Senator Peelix is all too happy to tell the world he would've fought in Vietnam, but what exactly would he have done there? America deserves more than generalities. Now, I have a detailed plan that lays out exactly what I would have done in the Vietnam War.

MODERATOR: I should advise the audience that, like the senator, you did not serve in Vietnam.

ROTAK: Not because I was born 350 years too late, Gus, although I was. I was unable to enlist because of a chronic back condition. It's well documented. Now with my plan, if I'd been in Vietnam, I would have been a platoon leader in charge of six Brashers and Quad 50. After being flown in to Khe Sanh by chopper, I would have defended the eastern perimeter of the airstrip with my guns positioned above a man-made trench abandoned by the Vietcong. And that's just a small part of what would have been two consecutive tours of duty. I feel confident in saying that this plan will revolutionize the way Americans think about what they would have done if they had been alive during Vietnam.

PEELIX: Governor, I've run the numbers and there's no such thing as a Brasher.

MODERATOR: Senator Peelix, I must advise you there are no interruptions.

PEELIX: But part of the governor's plan includes a piece of army machinery that never existed.

ROTAK: If the senator had read my plan closely, Gus, he would know that if I'd been in Vietnam, I would have invented the Brasher shortly after my arrival in Dong Ha.

PEELIX: Well, that's very convenient.

MODERATOR: Gentlemen, I must ask that you follow the rules of this debate which clearly state that there are to be no interruptions.

PEELIX: I'm sorry, Gus, I apologize to the governor.

MODERATOR: New question. Governor Rotak, in less than two years the peace treaty between our nation and the United Lunar Colonies will expire. As president, how would you guide America through this dangerous time?

ROTAK: Negotiations, Gus. I would find a compromise that benefits both our nations.

MODERATOR: Senator Peelix?

PEELIX: I'm fine with that.

MODERATOR: Very well then. Senator Peelix, the nation's economy faces a new set of challenges. As president, how would you curb the projected clone shortage threatening manufacturing?

PEELIX: I'd get a team together and map out a way to make up for the lost labor.

MODERATOR: Governor Rotak, rebuttal.

ROTAK: Well, this is less of a rebuttal and more of a pat on the back, I'd like to congratulate the senator on an excellent answer.

MODERATOR: All right, Governor Rotak, the next question goes to you. Does your platform include development of a time machine that would allow you to travel back through the centuries so that you could serve in Vietnam? And if so, what would the development of that machine cost American taxpayers?

ROTAK: I'm not going to lie, Gus, developing a time machine is going to be expensive. I have, however, found a way to keep costs within the means of our nation's budget. By concentrating on the machine's ability to go back to Vietnam and temporarily dismissing all research on other time travel destinations, we could have this time machine operational by the end of the decade.

(APPLAUSE)

MODERATOR: Senator Peelix?

PEELIX: Gus, this plan is simply unworkable. Governor Rotak has either forgotten or ignored some of the basic problems facing us in time machine development. Suppose the governor does complete this time machine. Is he then planning to go back and serve in Vietnam as a 53-year-old man? To make this plan tenable in even the most general sense, the governor would have to develop a time machine that would allow him to go back 30 years and then convince his 23-year-old self to build his own time machine and travel back to Vietnam. I don't like the odds of that and neither do the American people.

(APPLAUSE)

MODERATOR: Governor Rotak?

ROTAK: Senator, once again you've offered no specifics on a plan of your own. This nation is tired of politicians saying they'll find a way to go back in time and serve in Vietnam with no data or analysis to back it up. Now, I have a way to make it happen. What about you? Do you have a plan to travel back in time to Vietnam?

PEELIX: No, Governor, I don't....

(GASPS)

PEELIX: What I have is a plan to go further back in time and prevent Vietnam from ever happening.

(WILD APPLAUSE)

MODERATOR: Gentlemen, one final question. How will this election be affected by third-party candidate Ralph Nader?

* * *

Allison Silverman writes and performs for Late Night with Conan O'Brien and won an Emmy and a Peabody for her writing on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.

WASHINGTON

Mark Alan Stamaty



Alan Zweibel

Political Positions

I am writing this from a squatting position. Cowering, actually. Inside a small closet in my home in Los Angeles. I spend an inordinate amount of time here these days. Eating. Sleeping. With an occasional reprieve for either a bathroom break or a conjugal visit with my wife who is similarly hiding in another closet. Such is the result of being in Hollywood during a political season that makes any of the recent storms endured by Florida seem like sighs from an elderly aunt.

For me, politics began in a seated position. In dining rooms. Around seder and Thanksgiving tables where, as a young boy, I would listen in wonderment as relatives liberally employed the present tense when talking about FDR who, at this point in time, had been quite dead for well over 18 years. However, even my most polite suggestion about conjugating the verbs in deference to a previous generation were answered with shouts of “You’re too young to understand!” Which I didn’t. And still don’t because the vast majority of those very relatives are now just as dead as FDR and selfishly took all explanations to their graves with them.

In college, politics moved outdoors and, for the most part, I was standing. Shoulder to shoulder with dozens upon dozens of fellow sloganeers voicing outrage about Vietnam, Nixon, Agnew and Kent State. Standing upright was the position from which we were best heard. It was also the best position to start running from the tear-gas canisters being fired in our direction. The decibels of my relatives had been replaced by the chemicals of the National Guard, and if I wanted to spare myself burning eyes and irritated flesh, getting a good running start was advisable.

After enjoying life for many years as an East Coast writer, a television show I’d created brought me out to Los Angeles. The promise was exciting. I remember walking off the plane looking forward to raising our young children away from the travails of New York winters. Little did I know, that walk would be the last time I actually stood up in this town.

I should probably mention here that my politics are, by and large, left of center. Notice I said “my” politics. My opinions. My feelings about what is right and what is wrong with the world we live in and the course of action we might want to consider to indeed make things better. And while I can hold my own in a political discussion, I admit that I am not smart enough to write about it. Which suits me just fine as I am not so passionate that I feel the need to express myself even if I were smart enough to write about it. That I leave to others. All I ask, as a human being who is trying his utmost to get from one end of his life to the other—and perhaps leave his mark on some areas where his strengths *do* lie—is that my opinions be respected. Especially by those whose opinions are the same as mine.

That’s my problem, however. I am not liberal enough for my liberal friends. Nor am I vocal enough for my exceptionally loud friends. Quiet dinners seem to be a thing of the past as discussions are no longer the exchange of ideas so much as tests of resolve. My friends are shouting the way my relatives did at those FDR dinners. All my attempts to stand are met by forces strong enough to drive me backwards.

And penniless. More times than not the candidate everyone's supporting is actually present at the home we're invited to so checkbooks are required. Recently, it cost my wife and me \$3,000 to have dinner at a friend's house and we still ended up stopping for something to eat on our way home. Invitations descend upon our home like plagues. They are faxed to us. They arrive by mail on engraved stationery. And are e-mailed by people who've embraced self-aggrandizing causes.

"Since when do you care so much about elephant poaching?" I asked a life-long friend I thought I knew.

"Me? I don't give a shit about elephants."

"Then why are you hosting 'Kenya Awareness Night' this Thursday?"

"Because this director I really want to do my movie is into it so, you know."

"Jesus...."

All of our friends attended "Kenya Awareness Night." We didn't. I happen to like elephants. But it was my father's 77th birthday. My father doesn't have strong feelings one way or another about elephants. He wishes them well, but didn't necessarily want to spend his 77th birthday paying homage to them. So we took him to dinner at a local Italian restaurant, brought our 9-year-old daughter along with us, and returned home to a barrage of phone messages chiding us for not being there.

So now my oldest friend is angry because he feels that a 77th birthday isn't milestone enough to miss a pachyderm-fest. His ecologically sensitive wife is angry because the restaurant we took my dad to serves veal. My agent is mad because the "Kenya Awareness Night" party had a lot of people who could help me with a project I am currently trying to launch. His environmentally active wife is even angrier because we drove to the Italian restaurant in a car that wasn't a hybrid. And we just learned that my 77-year-old father is upset because our 9-year-old daughter didn't know who FDR was when he managed to bring his name up 24 times during his delicious birthday dinner.

It's come full circle. Make that full circle and then some. At least when I got shouted down at those seder and Thanksgiving tables I retreated to a seated position. But out here, in a town where social status is based on what people think everyone else's perception of you is, I've withdrawn. To my closet. Where I write in a squatting position. Where I plan on staying until the moving men come and load me into a van heading back to the East Coast. Where I can stretch my legs.

* * *

Alan Zweibel is a playwright, television and screenwriter, and author. His new novel, The Other Shulman, will be published in June, 2005. His children's book, Our Tree Named Steve, will be published in April, 2005. And his latest contribution to the Broadway stage, Billy Crystal's one-man show 700 Sundays, opens December, 2004.

Paula Pell

The Announcement



As the gay marriage debate rages on, many same-sex couples are facing an amazing possibility: soon they could be planning their own legal weddings—the traditional kind that involve getting certificates and signing documents. One would think that gays would have no trouble planning their own weddings as they’ve always been such creative people.

When I refer to the innate creativity of the homosexual I am not only referring to gay men. Gay ladies—or “Lesbians” as they are called in science pamphlets—are also often very creative. Anyone who has seen the homemade posters at a WNBA game can tell you that. Glitter glue and the art of collage have never been used with such nuance.

So it’s a given that the aesthetics of any gay wedding would be fabulous. But composing the invitations is where things could get a bit hairy. You see, not all guests will be on the same page regarding the couple’s relationship.

Gratefully, most invitations will be sent out to those who know and openly celebrate the union. Let’s call them “The Embracers.”

The second type of guests “know the deal” and are totally fine with it but would rather it not be said out loud because the Universe might implode. They are “The Avoiders.”

And to the folk who are completely oblivious, a third version of the invitation is necessary. These are the people who, if they witnessed a loved one being dipped in gay, rolled in powdered gay, fried up and served piping gay they would still be clueless. We’ll call this group “The Blissfully Unaware.”

When writing the invitations being sent to The Embracers, the words flow easily and without trepidation. Right up until the part where the parents are mentioned.



Come celebrate our love with us!!!!
Pam Brown
along with her friend and lover
Sue Brooks
request the pleasure of your presence
at the gay marriage of themselves.

Their parents
Miriam and Dr. Phillip Brown
and Sondra and Dick Brooks
are happy that they are happy because that's all that matters and
will be fine with the whole thing until maybe the kiss part
at which they will look around to admire the artistry of the church's
architecture.... Or perhaps choose that moment to try the new
Piña Colada flavor of Koolerz Sugarless Gum that Pam's mother
will loudly offer to the other parents during the vows.
Pam's mother Miriam would also like to go on record to say that
although she adores Sue and considers her a surrogate daughter
she still thinks if Pam put on a little makeup,
got rid of half her cats and found a guy who likes sporty gals
things might be different.
Oh. Right. The wedding.
On Tuesday afternoon, March the First
At four o'clock at the Unity Church on Grand Street.



To those invitations being sent to The Avoiders, the wording becomes a little dicey.



Best friends

Pam Brown and Sue Brooks

request the pleasure of your presence

at the celebration of their

“Sharing Expenses for Ten Years” ceremony.

The blessed joining of their friendship will take place at that real artsy church with the multi-racial nativity scene because it’s near their house and it holds a lot of people.

Pam and Sue are so happy to join with those they love as they profess how much in friendship they are with each other.

Jezebel their pit bull will be the Flower Dog.

Hey, sharing expenses is a smart thing in this day and age what with the economy how it is. Not to mention that it’s just flat boring to live on your own and it’s a lot safer coming home at night, too. There’s nothing wrong with that. Single women used to do that all the time back in the olden days. They called them Old Maids. They named a card game after it for Pete’s sake. So it must be totally common. Wait, didn’t those girls live together on Sex in the City? No, I don’t think they did.

Anyway, Tuesday, March First,
Unity Church on Grand.



The invitation sent to The Blissfully Unaware is actually the easiest of all. Keep in mind these are simple people.

Hey!
Pam and her pal Sue (remember Sue?)
are having a “Just Because” Party!
Just because they’ve been so busy with their golf shop
and they seriously need a break!
Doesn’t everybody? Whew!
Grandma Pearl will be glad to know the food’s gonna be great
and Uncle Joey’s gonna love the open bar.
Lots of roast chicken and potada salad.
Dress code: As if you were going to a wedding.
Just because we thought that seems like it would be fun.
We might even get silly and pretend we’re actually having a wedding.
Like a goof off
There’s a Broadway show like that.
Where they pretend to have a wedding.
Did we mention there’s gonna be pie?
You’re going to be sick of pie when you leave this thing.
Sometime in March. Near our house.

So here’s to all the same-sex couples creating beautiful weddings whether they are legal yet or not. But one thing is certain, in the end it won’t matter who embraces, avoids or doesn’t catch the drift of these gay unions. After Aunt Vicky rips through four Cosmos at the reception, everyone will be in the know.

* * *

Paula Pell is entering her 10th season of writing for Saturday Night Live. She and her best friend Deanna share expenses in Manhattan with their five rescued cats and their pit bull named Jezebel. Paula would like to thank the many homosexuals she interviewed for this piece so it would seem as if a gay person had written it. Thanks, gays.

GEORGE W. BUSH SAYS HE WANTS TO UNITE US, NOT DIVIDE US.



HE SAYS HE'S A HEALER.



HIS FAVORITE PHILOSOPHER IS JESUS.



HE ADVOCATES A BIG TAX CUT AND IMPROVING THE EDUCATION OF MINORITY YOUTH.

HE DOESN'T CHEAT ON HIS WIFE.



IMPRESSIVE.



BUT IF HE'S REALLY AS GOOD AS HE SOUNDS -



WHY THE SMIRK?

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Jamal Joseph

Red Books and iPods

“Politics is war without bloodshed, war is politics with bloodshed.” This is one of those cool Huey P. Newton, Black Panther quotes that young people would recite in the late '60s, early '70s. “Religion is the opium of the masses!” we shouted as we waved Chairman Mao’s Red Book, threw eggs at both Republicans and Democrats and protested the war in Vietnam by taking over college campuses on a regular basis. Long hair, afros, torn bell bottom jeans were more than a fashion statement. It was the uniform of protest and a bold youth declaration that you were about changing the system and bringing down “the Man.”

Now the teens have Linkin Park, the Black Eyed Peas and Jay-Z to riff from: “I got 99 problems but a bitch ain’t one.” There are \$50 T-shirts \$100 sneakers from all the cool ass hip-hop fashion companies to show that you are about “getting yours” and that you are down with the “bling bling.” “Feel me nigga,” as Tupac would say. The billion dollar sales of hip-hop gear and CDs in white suburban shopping malls prove that you don’t have to be black to be black. But we already knew that from the '60s when white civil rights workers were beaten, jailed and murdered just like the Negroes.

In 1968 kids would pass a joint and say, “Don’t trust anybody over 30.” Now they pass a joint and say, “You’re nobody until somebody kills you.” It’s a damn shame that the youth—the force in society that’s supposed to energize, shake up, push and often rip up the political envelope—are just walking around in a digital vacuum. They’re plugged in and isolated by their iPods, laptops, text messenger cell phones. They won’t come out of their rooms or look at you on the subway. They would rather text message a friend than talk to you at dinner. Yeah, this generation is spoiled and lost. Infected by the cross-marketing gadget, clothes, entertainment consumer gluttony that passes for youth culture these days.

Or maybe they know something we don’t know. The same way we young revolutionaries knew things that our lame parents with their post-World War II values didn’t. Remember, we also coined the phrase “drop out, turn on, tune out.” And as far as flip-flopping goes, the protest generation has been the biggest flip-floppers in history. Back in the day, John Kerry was the coolest Vietnam Vet, not because he went “Rambo” on a beach, but because he tossed medals over a fence and reamed the government for fighting an atrocious war. Now we’re outraged when his war record is attacked and his peace record is made to look dishonorable.

Before we all got older, wiser, practical and dangerously stiff, we were young, rebellious and dangerously irreverent. We stomped on the sacrifices and wisdom of the generation before us. I was a young, crazy, teenaged Black Panther who said that voting was not only useless, it was reactionary. Never mind that my own grandparents had seen lynchings, been jailed and beaten for daring to want to desegregate toilets and water fountains. “Politics is war without bloodshed and political power comes out the barrel of a gun.” My grandma had the right to pop me upside my head for dissing her sacrifices and dead relatives. But she didn’t, she listened and told me she would

pray for me. And pray she did—all through my radical street fighting years, prison years and “get back on my feet” years until she quietly passed away back in that little North Carolina town that she helped desegregate.

Now I am a screenwriter, filmmaker, Columbia University film professor and frustrated dad. I have a college senior son who doesn’t want to vote. My wife, 13-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son ganged up on him and explained that indifference is the root cause of our nation’s problems. “I thought it was greed,” my son retorts. “That too, but at the moment we’re talking about indifference,” I fire back. Then he reminds me that I didn’t vote until I was in my 30s. I tell him that we don’t have that kind of time. Change must happen now or the world is doomed. He reminds me how much the protest generation wanted to change the world and how little we did. Mortally wounded, I storm out of the room without even telling him that I will pray for him.

I find him in the kitchen later that night and we talk. My son says that his vote is not for sale—not to the slick marketers who made the Swift boat ads and not to the slick marketers who made *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Although he loves Michael Moore and has seen the film three times, he recognizes that Moore, too, has an agenda. My son tells me he doesn’t want to vote against Bush, he wants to vote *for* something, and that something is not necessarily Ralph Nader. I reluctantly realize that this isn’t personal apathy, rather this is his well reasoned choice. Then I realize that, connected to many of the millions of MP3s, computers and text messenger units are young minds who have made a similar choice. They want to vote and fight for something, not against the threat of terror, Houdini tax cuts or other boogeyman imperatives.

I help run two youth programs in Harlem—Impact Repertory Theater and The Order of the Feather—and I have contact with dozens of teens. It’s not that they don’t care or are too frightened to get involved. They are numbed by the lack of choice. They know that, as a group, kids and teens are the poorest, least socially served, highest HIV-infected, most likely to die by gunfire, worst health-covered group in our society. They shut down because parents, teachers and politicians talk *at* them instead of *with* them.

During Vietnam, you could fight when you were 17, but you couldn’t vote until you were 21. At least the 18-year-olds fighting in Iraq can vote. That’s progress, right? If they think voting is even worth it. Through the headsets, via the computer screens, in between the hip-hop and rock beats, we have to engage our youth. Not just P. Diddy holding up “Vote or Die” T-shirts at the Video Music Awards, but real discussions where we listen to what it would take to get them and their peers involved in this election and in the future. We need to listen. They might be able to tell us some new things and remind us of dreams we’ve forgotten.

* * *

Jamal Joseph’s film and TV writing credits include New York Undercover, Ali: An American Hero and The Many Trials of Tammy B. Directing credits include Drive By: A Love Story and Hughes Dream Harlem. He teaches screenwriting at Columbia University’s graduate film program. He serves as Executive Artistic Director of the New Heritage Theater in Harlem.

Doug Wright

In Hollywood, rather than read the countless screenplays piled on their desks, film executives often request “reader’s reports” instead—which are usually written by starving grad students, mail clerks or fledgling, would-be Spielbergs. Below, you’ll find a typical example of what is known in the trade as “coverage.”

READER’S REPORT

STUDIO: United States of America

EXECUTIVE: John Q. Public

PROJECT TITLE: The First Term

SCREENWRITER: George W. Bush

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: High-profile, big-money project. Touts itself as a patriotic action-adventure flick in the tradition of *Pearl Harbor* or *Top Gun*.

THEME: History doesn’t matter because “we’ll all be dead.”

LOG LINE: Failed Texas businessman with drinking problem takes over reigning super power.

CHARACTERS:

THE PRESIDENT

On the surface, a classic, wildly cinematic figure. He speaks with the tough talking monosyllables of a John Wayne. But his motivation? Fuzzy! Weapons of mass destruction? Oil? Or is he avenging an old assassination attempt on his dad? (If so, isn’t that a bit too obvious? Won’t audiences get ahead of him? Let’s face it, the Greeks did this better, and that was over 2000 years ago.) It’s hard to imagine a Tom Cruise or a Brad Pitt vying for a role like this one—whenever the plot gets tough, the leading man just disappears! For pages! Hapless, supporting characters are left to pick up the slack. Also, the voice-overs have to go—as a narrator, he’s just too unreliable. He can tell us anything (the economy is booming, health care for all, jobs, “No Child Left Behind,” etc.), but if we don’t see it on the screen, then it ain’t happenin’. The script may describe him as “the leader of the free world,” but—in the current draft—he’s just a cipher.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

This character is ill-conceived. Ruthless corporate raiders do not make compelling public servants. (Aren't those two roles antithetical?) As written, lacks charisma. Some comic potential here—the pugnacious, burly Costello to the president's Abbott—but in the current draft, it's woefully unrealized. (One promising character detail: a lesbian daughter. But—curiously—she never appears onscreen.)

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Even supporting characters should have the capacity for growth. This one is hit by a host of crises: a failed war, S&M prison antics straight out of Pasolini, calls for his resignation—and he still remains doggedly unchanged, plundering forward with all the obliviousness of an armored tank. Aspires to be the film's "Colonel Jessup," but lacks Nicholson's nuance.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

This character is wildly inconsistent. In one scene, she's the very picture of maternal reassurance, imbued with a soothing, unflappable voice that makes even the most preposterous policy statements sound no more alarming than Muzak. In the next, she's the goofy but lovable secretary, misplacing kooky memos like "Warning! Urgent! Terrorists intend to use planes as weapons!" and mistakenly putting them in the "vacation reading" pile. In still another, she's the spurned harridan, crying, "Richard Clarke is a duplicitous cad!" Clearly this role was written by a man. Couldn't we have a more fully dimensional, independent-minded woman? Especially in a script that's already crammed full with MEN, MEN, MEN!!!!

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

One big, jaw-dropping implausibility after another. In Act I, he loses an election to a dead man. He spends most of Act II speaking in tongues, and in Act III—while America's under imminent peril—he's wiretapping prostitutes! A total right-wing cartoon.

BARBARA AND JEN

Described in the script as "so not descended from the apes!" and "way abstinent!" Right now, these are the only two characters in the screenplay who offer any genuine poignancy. Absent father. A family history of alcohol abuse. Misdemeanor convictions. The omnipresent glare of the tabloids disrupting their keg parties and all-night raves. Possible vehicle for Olsen twins, or Lindsay Lohan in a startling double role. Real break-out (breakdown?) potential.

OSAMA BIN LADEN

An ingeniously crafted villain. Tall, dark, handsome, elusive. Only appears in still photographs, archival footage or voice-over (amps the "creepy" factor nicely). Comes complete with tragic flaw (dialysis). Ruthless, with a barbarism that harkens back to movies of yore like *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. Unfortunately—in the story that's presently crafted—he gets away! Scott-free! How satisfying is that?

PLOT SYNOPSIS: *GIANT* meets *THE SKULLS* meets *THE LOST WEEKEND* meets *AIRPORT* meets *TOWERING INFERNO* meets *ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN* meets *BLACK HAWK DOWN* meets *DUMB AND DUMBER* meets *APOCALYPSE NOW* meets *THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW*, with the strong undercurrent of spiritual conviction (i.e., bloodlust) of Mel Gibson's *THE PASSION* throughout. Talk about your disaster movies, this one's a doozie.

READER'S RECOMMENDATION: Hire a new writer. Quick.

* * *

Doug Wright received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award this year for his play *I Am My Own Wife*. He received an OBIE Award for his black comedy *Quills*. He went on to write the screenplay adaptation, which was named Best Picture by the National Board of Review and nominated for three Academy Awards. His screenplay was nominated for a Golden Globe Award and received the Paul Selvin Award from the Writers Guild of America.

#TWIBISTES



David O. Russel

I first read about Albert Markovski on the Internet when I was researching activists for I Heart Huckabees. He's young, only 23, and has founded the local Pacamac Chapter of The Open Spaces Coalition. He is also a poet, and reads his poems in parking lots—which I was eager to see, particularly since I'd read that there were people who regularly threw garbage at him. I sent e-mails that were returned. I got a phone number from a friend of a friend who knew him and I left several messages, but these also went unanswered. A few weeks passed and I forgot all about him.

Until one afternoon, I was sitting in my office as the door opened and there stood Albert Markovski wearing his trademark dark suit. He said, "Have you been trying to reach me?" I said, "Yes, I have." He was clearly angry and started pacing nervously around my office. When I asked why he hadn't called me back, he looked at me and said, "Because I never got the messages, that's why." "How come?" I asked. "Because I was kicked out of my own coalition, that's why." I wanted to know how it happened, but he said it wasn't important. What was important was that he was on his way back to power, and he suddenly sat down and poured himself a glass of water.

MARKOVSKI: Let's talk for a minute about how completely unimaginative and stupid it is to keep developing green open areas.

RUSSELL: OK.

MARKOVSKI: Let's talk about developers complaining that they have to make a buck like everyone else and we need construction jobs so we should leave them alone to develop wherever they can develop.

RUSSEL: It's a difficult choice because—

MARKOVSKI: Excuse me, but aren't there lots of dilapidated, run-down neighborhoods?

RUSSEL: What are you talking about?

MARKOVSKI: What am I talking about? I'm talking about dilapidated run-down hospitals, schools. Couldn't most communities use a kick-ass community center for young people to play sports, watch movies, maybe make their own videos, art or science projects? Wouldn't this benefit our entire country?

RUSSEL: Who's going to pay for it?

MARKOVSKI: Ah, the standard reply—where's the imagination? Come on. Look, with the virgin land we develop, a rich guy pays for it and makes money by building houses or a mall, right? Well, couldn't there be some fund created by a consortium of developers and government—

He stopped himself and put a hand over his mouth like a bashful geisha.

RUSSEL: What?

MARKOVSKI: I said a dirty word.

RUSSEL: What word?

MARKOVSKI: Government.

RUSSEL: Oh, that word.

MARKOVSKI: Government isn't supposed to do anything creative except fight wars—that's why Republicans bankrupt the government each chance they get and why they love the military because then they can just use government for what they want to use it for, which is wars that can protect their oil and make their cronies rich with defense contracting. Or, barring war, just make their cronies rich.

RUSSEL: They say they're keeping the economy going so that money can trickle down to the un-rich.

MARKOVSKI: Yeah, let me know when that trickle down reaches most of America, OK? God forbid government should do anything creative that is peaceful, like creating a consortium of developers and government that would create lots and lots of jobs and construction projects that actually rebuild the shitty, beat-down parts of our country that need it, build houses, community centers, health clinics, rehab centers.

RUSSEL: Like FDR.

MARKOVSKI: Wouldn't that make America an even greater, richer, stronger country?

RUSSEL: Is that a rhetorical question?

MARKOVSKI: Call me crazy, call me a socialist, but all I'm talking about is responsible capitalism that is not wasteful. Thank you.

And with that, he got up and left.

* * *

David O. Russell has written and directed *Spanking the Monkey*, *Flirting with Disaster* and *Three Kings*, which is scheduled to be rereleased theatrically and on DVD in October, 2004 with a short documentary featuring war veterans as they return home. His new film, *I Heart Huckabees* opens October, 2004.

Albert Markovski founded the Pacamac Chapter of *The Open Spaces Coalition*, dedicated to fighting suburban sprawl. He also writes poetry and is a client of the *existential detectives*.

I was against
the budget
deficit...

in theory.



But in actual fact-

it helped get rid of all
those wasteful
social programs.



Now the budget's
in surplus.

And the Big Spenders have
come out of their
closets screaming...



"More welfare,
health care,
child care and
education!"

What kind
of country
is this -



Where the taxpayer who
earned it has to
give it away -

to a bunch of no-goods
who can't pull their
own weight?



What America
needs is new
moral leadership -

with the guts to
run up the deficit.



© 1985 T. BATEL

Joe Cacaci

Let me warn you, I'm in a bad mood these days. Over the years, politics and religion have frequently gone hand in hand, but it seems to me that the sordid little two-some has scaled new heights of hypocrisy and immorality this election season. For one thing, George W. Bush is the only presidential candidate in history to be touted as the Almighty's chosen one. Adams, Jefferson and the gang from Philly—a mostly devout bunch—separated their religion from their politics, foreseeing the soulless, ruthless, heedless miscreants currently in power who treat God as just another endorsement, to be trotted out when beneficial, and stuffed into a trunk when cumbersome. Meanwhile, their Religious Right anointers guide their spiritual path.

And by the way, just who is the Religious Right anyway? Since there are more varieties of Protestantism than coffee, it's hard to tell. One group that's easy for me to spot, however, is the Catholic contingent. After eight years of Catholic education and two more spent as a teacher in two dioceses, I ought to understand the reasoning of the Mother Church by now, but I don't.

Their latest gut-wrenching behavior came just as the furor over the sex abuse scandal was beginning to wane a bit (meaning for me, that I wasn't walking past every parish in Manhattan wondering what horror was going on in the sacristy at that moment). The Conference of U.S. Bishops, in their infinite wisdom, took that as a cue to dive headlong into this year's election wars. In June, they released a statement in which they deemed any pro-choice politician "...guilty of cooperating in evil."

Reading the report carefully, I searched for any reference to politicians who support the death penalty—which the Church also believes is wrong—or about those who perpetrated the war in Iraq—which the Pope himself has denounced on many occasions—but came up with only a mandate that Catholic institutions "...not grant awards or honors...to Catholics who...act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles." Hmm. I wonder then, how they justify that the Pope chose to honor the former Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Bernard Law, by awarding him a highly coveted post in Rome even though he resigned in disgrace for protecting pedophile priests. I guess shielding children from sexual predators just didn't make the cut list of "fundamental moral principles." Similarly, why was naming a new trauma unit at St. Vincent's Hospital for pro-choice Republican Rudy Giuliani acceptable? Does party affiliation trump the evil?

In September came more dark tidings from St. Louis disguised as an easing of restrictions. (There was a time when the only bad news out of that town in September was that the Cardinals were blowing another pennant lead.) It seems that Archbishop Raymond Burke had softened his personal edict that Roman Catholics could not vote for pro-choice candidates (like John Kerry?) by saying that they could—but only if the pro-choice position was not the reason the person was casting the vote, in which case it would be a "grave sin." Thanks for the clarification. I'll sleep better now knowing my fellow Catholics are exercising their constitutional rights unencumbered by theological constraint.

All this religious piety mixed with political doctrine worries me no end since I couldn't help but notice that the perpetrators of the September 11 massacre were all deluded by religious piety mixed with political doctrine themselves. To them, we were the infidels and the carnage was the miracle. Only a die-hard conspiracy theorist (many of whom are in my phone book) would equate the 9/11 terrorist thugs with our current political and religious leaders—and I'm not drawing that parallel. But I would like to scream from the bell tower of some midtown church that religious zealotry paired with government is a highly combustible and toxic mix, no matter what the religious group or governing state, and it's time to get a grip.

The term jihad is not owned by Muslim terrorists, the most infamous one in history—the Crusades—having been paid for and executed by the Catholic Church against, among others, Muslims. Call me a heretic, but no God or political leader I'd want to follow would deem *any* war holy. But justifying hatred by claiming Providential authority is a powerful strategy. I can well remember many prominent church leaders and politicians in our great land quoting scripture and whipping people up into a frenzy over the perils of racial integration. And although only a few fanatics nowadays would bemoan the Civil Rights movement (publicly anyway), the piety and passion back then was as virulent and self-righteous as anti-gay, anti-Muslim, anti-"unpatriotic liberal" rhetoric is these days.

So what am I left with? A constant headache, a global travel website that may come in handy on November 3 and this very sad truth that, while not surprising, is disheartening because it is so conspicuous these days: wrapping yourself in the American flag while clutching the Holy Bible doesn't make you religious or patriotic if the deeds you practice are immoral—but it sure as hell can get you a lot of votes. And that, unfortunately, is why my bad mood won't quit for awhile.

* * *

Joe Cacaci's plays have been produced at theaters throughout the country, including: The Joseph Papp Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre, The Westport County Playhouse, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Houston's Alley Theatre and at East Coast Arts Theater company in New Rochelle, NY, where he was founding artistic director. He has written and produced numerous TV movies and co-created the TV series The Trials of Rosie O'Neill. He also was the executive producer of the series The Hoop Life and The Education of Max Bickford. He is currently an executive producer, with David Black and Richard Dreyfuss, of Mr. Black's series Cop Shop for PBS—he directed the pilot episode which premieres October 6, 2004.

GEORGE
W. IS
SMUG...



A
TOUCH
DIM...



COUNTRY-CLUB
AND
GOOD-OLD-BOY...



SPONSORS
SERIAL
CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT...



FOR THESE,
AND SO
MANY
OTHER
REASONS,
I CAN'T
STAND
HIM.

BUT HE
DOESN'T
ADVOCATE
UNLEASHING
CIA-STYLE
CONVERT
OPERATIONS-



AGAINST
HOSTILE
FOREIGN
POWERS.

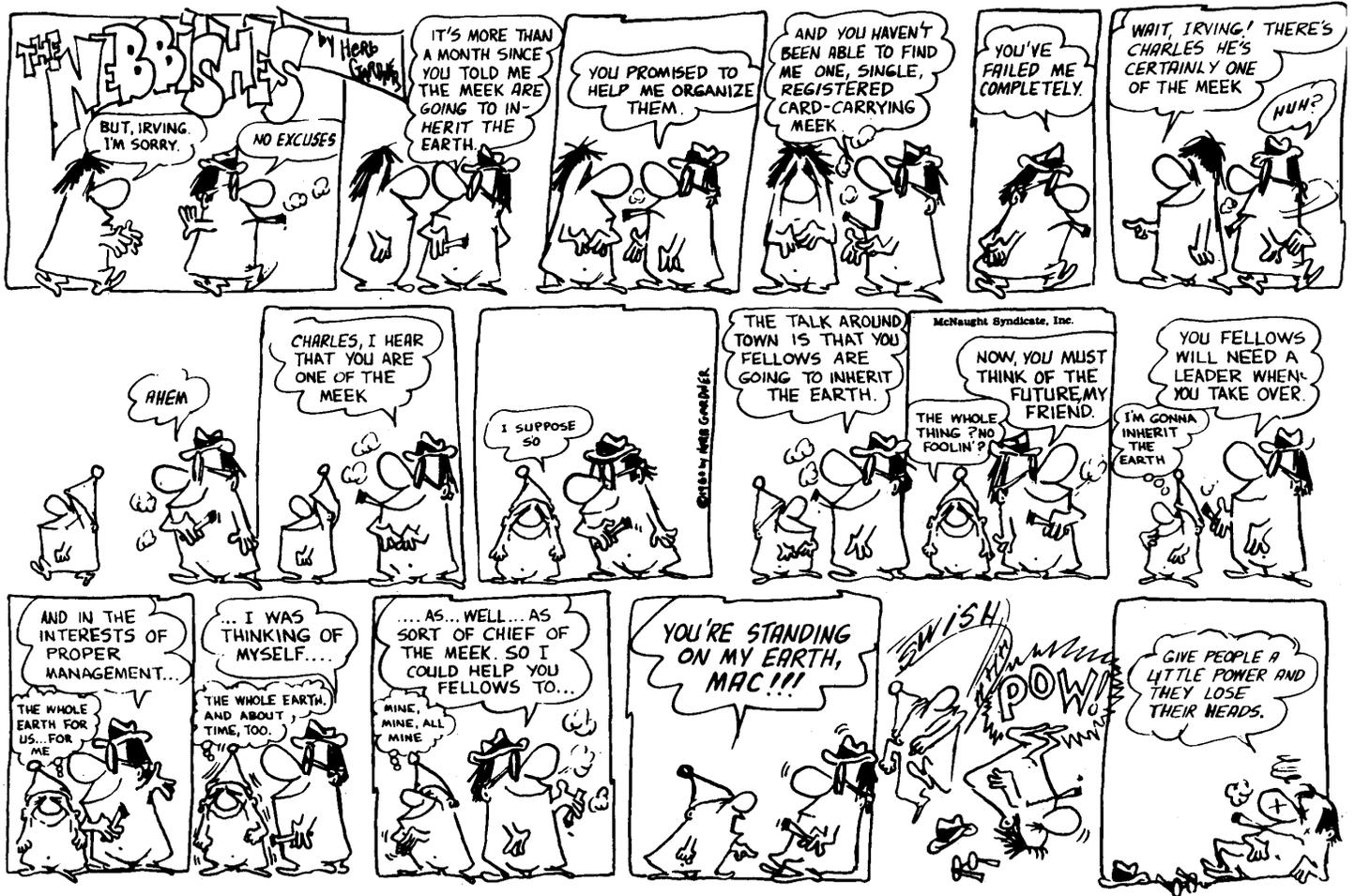


AND JOHN
MCCAIN
WHOM I
ADMIRE,
DOES.



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Andy Borowitz

Positive Ad Shocker from Borowitzreport.com

POLITICIAN ACCIDENTALLY AIRS POSITIVE AD

Commercial Praising Opponent Quickly Pulled

An Indiana candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives apologized to supporters last night for airing a so-called “positive ad” praising the attributes of his opponent in the race.

“Once I found out that this ad was airing, I pulled it immediately,” candidate Bud Phelan told supporters last night at a rally in Gary. “Positive ads have no place in this or any political race.”

Viewers across the state were shocked over the weekend when the Phelan ads praising Phelan’s opponent, Carlton Burriss, began airing.

Instead of the customary ominous drumbeats, unflattering black and white photos and damning quotes taken out of context that have become staples of negative ads, the spot stuck to the facts as it praised Mr. Burriss’s ample qualifications and outstanding record.

Senior members of Mr. Phelan’s party privately lambasted their candidate for airing the positive ad.

“If he’s doing this positive junk now, it makes you wonder what he’ll do in Washington,” one party pro said.

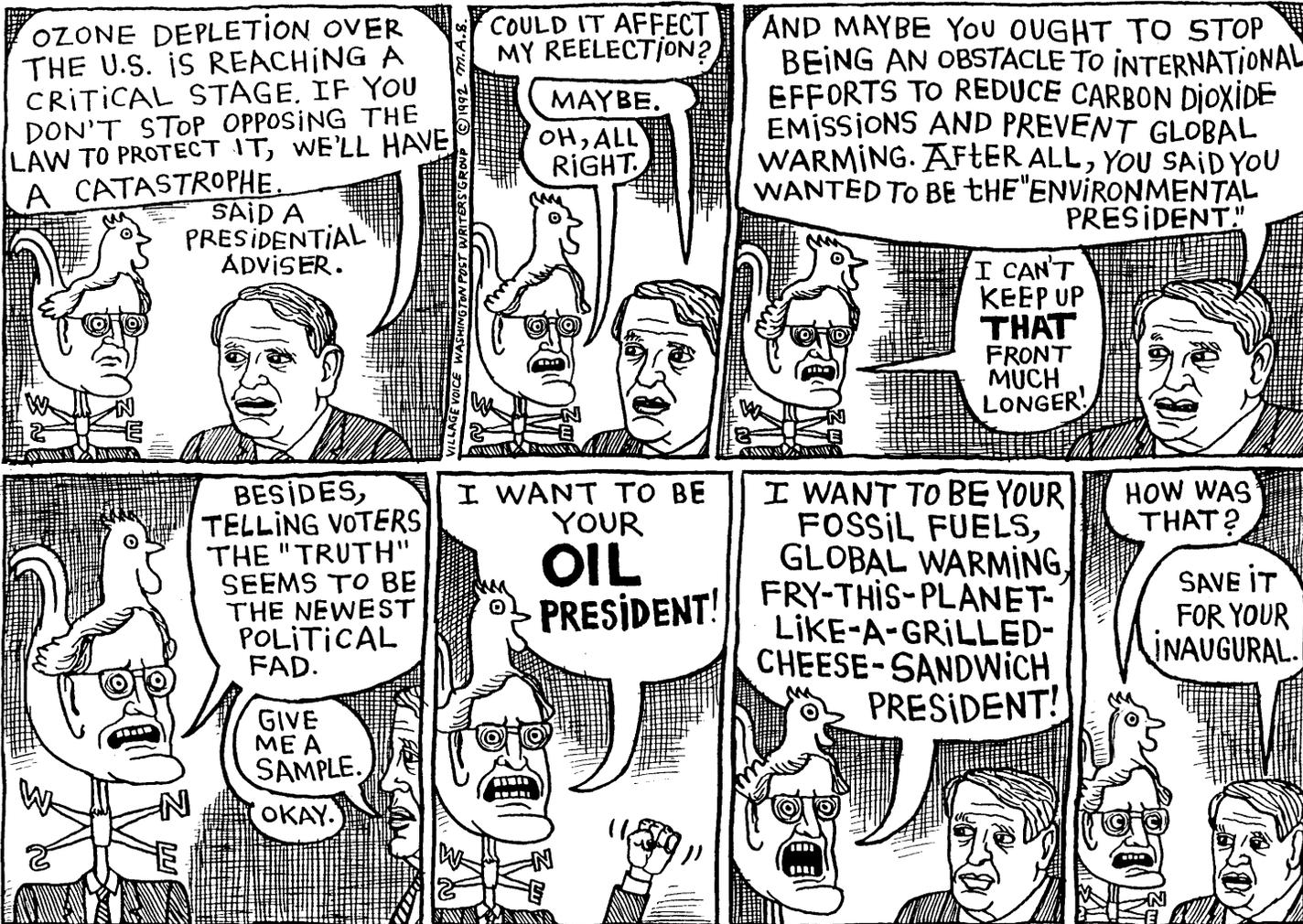
In the Phelan camp, aides to the candidate were scrambling to explain the last-minute decision to “go positive.”

“It was a total goof on our part,” said one campaign staffer. “After all of the terrific negative ads we’ve run, though, it seems a shame to think that this campaign is going to be remembered for the one positive one that slipped out.”

As of late last night, the Phelan campaign was working overtime to remedy the situation, producing an Election Day attack ad claiming that their opponent wants to raise taxes, kill senior citizens and sleep with a pony.

* * *

Andy Borowitz is a writer and comedian who appears on CNN’s American Morning, NPR’s Weekend Edition and the upcoming film Melinda and Melinda, directed by Woody Allen. He is the author of a new book, The Borowitz Report: The Big Book of Shockers (October, 2004, Simon and Schuster).



Terry George

If Mandela Was Osama

I'm scared, more frightened about nuclear attack now than I ever was back in primary school when hairy-chinned nuns warned about the godless Communists and how the Virgin Mary told some little French girl the world would end—soon.

In the decades that followed, I never had a serious problem with godless Communists—my biggest run-in with them was a row outside a bar in central Havana with a Cuban policeman. On the other hand, the God-crowd has been after my hide for most of those decades. It started with some local Protestant kids back in Belfast who discovered I was the only Catholic in the playground and decided that merited a good kicking. And today, here in New York, I'm waiting for some pissed-off Muslim with a glow-in-the-dark suitcase to teach us about his God.

Except it's never really about God, is it? With my Protestant sparring partners it was that us Catholics might steal away the slight bit of land and privilege the Protestants thought they had. And with our Muslim brothers it's also about land and privilege, the land we (the West) stole from them and turned over to a bunch of fat cats who would do our bidding, and the wealth and privilege we had/have and won't share.

I don't know how to deal with our pissed-off Muslim brothers. The Commies were easy. I checked them out, learned they wanted to create a Utopian Socialism—the withering away of the state—and then they'd retire. Besides, I never heard of Commies who'd ever blow themselves up, unless they tried to home repair one of their crappy washing machines. Our Muslim brothers? You're not going to see the Muslim version of that great movie *The Russians Are Coming* any time soon.

Fellow writers, I just spent a year working in Africa. If you think the world's millions of Muslims have plenty to be pissed off about, let me offer a few thoughts that crossed my mind back in Jo'burg. What if Nelson Mandela was Bin Laden? What if he was a force for evil rather than good? Mandela has a lot more to be pissed off about than Osama. So imagine if he announced a jihad as retribution for the suffering we the West inflicted and still inflict on his continent? Could you blame him? Imagine the bottled-up rage he could tap into: starvation, humiliation, famine, genocide, AIDS or the sheer hopelessness of living in Liberia, Rwanda or anywhere in Africa. Imagine the weapons at the disposal of angry Africans? South Africa already had the nuclear bomb, plus Africa's got anthrax, smallpox, every pox, Ebola for god's sake. Out of the millions of destitute and dying Africans, do you think they might find a few suicide bombers or one charismatic African Bin Laden?

So what's this got to do with the Writers Guild of America? Here's a 1928 quote from Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood—the Godfather of radical Islam. “They imported their half-naked women into these regions, together with their liquors, their theatres, their dance halls, their amusements, their stories, their newspapers, their novels...The day must come when the castles of this materialistic civilization will be laid low upon the heads of their inhabitants.”

Theatre, stories, novels.... castles laid low! 9/11. According to Hassan it was us. The Writers Guild is to blame!

One bit of good news from Jo'burg, they're big into Castle beer, miniskirts and movies. South Africa's a great country. It can be the salvation of Africa. But all of Africa needs our help now. We, the Writers Guild, need to give them cultural support and respect in our work.

Here's a quote I heard in Havana (when I wasn't jousting with cops): "Cultural imperialism is the atom bomb of the 21st century." WTC-boom! Madrid-boom! Beslan-boom! Fellow writers we'd better talk-soon!

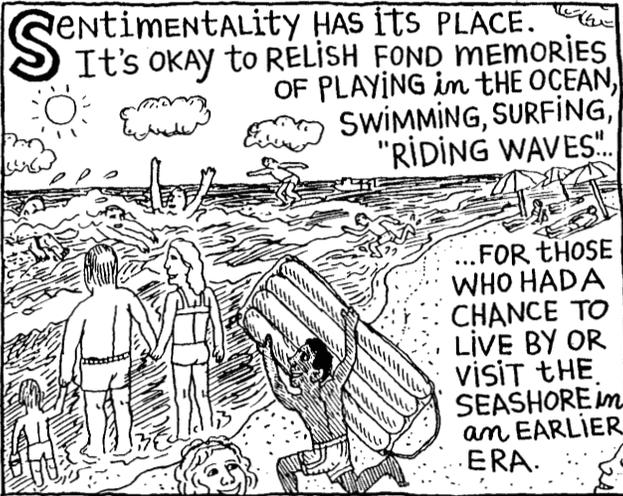
* * *

Terry George's films include In the Name of the Father, The Boxer, Hart's War and Some Mother's Son, which he wrote and directed. He wrote and directed the TV movie A Bright Shining Lie, and created the TV series The District. His latest film is Hotel Rwanda, a true story set during the 1994 genocide, which will be released in December, 2004.

WASHINGTON

Mark Alan Stamaty

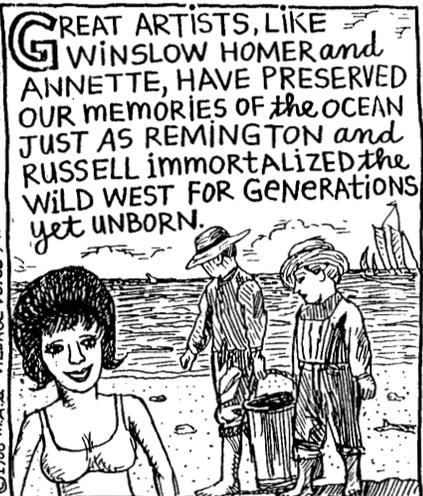
Sentimentality HAS ITS PLACE. It's OKAY TO RELISH FOND MEMORIES OF PLAYING IN THE OCEAN, SWIMMING, SURFING, "RIDING WAVES..."



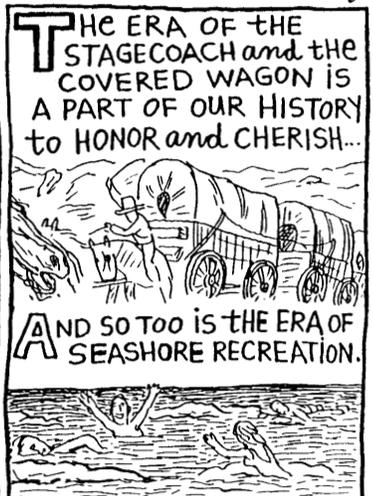
...FOR THOSE WHO HAD A CHANCE TO LIVE BY OR VISIT THE SEASHORE IN AN EARLIER ERA.

©1988 M.A.S. VILLAGE VOICE / WASHINGTON PAST WRITERS GROUP

GREAT ARTISTS, LIKE WINSLOW HOMER and ANNETTE, HAVE PRESERVED OUR MEMORIES OF THE OCEAN JUST AS REMINGTON and RUSSELL IMMORTALIZED THE WILD WEST FOR GENERATIONS YET UNBORN.

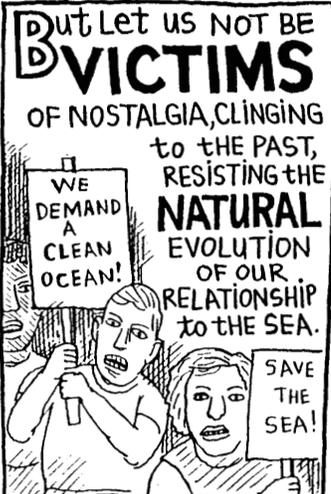


THE ERA OF THE STAGECOACH and the COVERED WAGON IS A PART OF OUR HISTORY TO HONOR and CHERISH...



AND SO TOO IS THE ERA OF SEASHORE RECREATION.

BUT LET US NOT BE **VICTIMS** OF NOSTALGIA, CLINGING TO THE PAST, RESISTING THE **NATURAL** EVOLUTION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SEA.



WE DEMAND A CLEAN OCEAN!

SAVE THE SEA!

IN THIS ERA OF WIDE PROLIFERATION OF AIR-CONDITIONED "HEALTH CLUBS" WITH INDOOR SWIMMING AND INDOOR TANNING, WE CAN **TRANSCEND** THE CRUDITIES OF OCEAN BATHING...



AEROBIC NETWORKING 300 P.M.

...and ALLOW OUR GREAT AQUEOUS FRIEND TO SERVE US IN A NEW WAY:

AS THE BIGGEST GARBAGE CAN IN THE WORLD!



THE FUTURE IS UPON US. LET US OPEN OUR EYES and OUR HEARTS. **M**AYBE OUR POETS CAN HELP US.



I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the scum, And all I ask is a dump truck and a pier to empty it from.

CARTOONISTS

Jules Feiffer *Jules Feiffer is a cartoonist and writer. His comic strip Feiffer, begun in 1956, was syndicated in the U.S. and abroad until 2000. He has published 16 collections of cartoons, two novels and nine children's books, two of which he illustrated and seven which he wrote and illustrated. His cartoons have been awarded a Special George Polk Award and a Pulitzer Prize. His plays include: Little Murders, Knock Knock, Grown Ups and A Bad Friend. He wrote the screenplays for Carnal Knowledge and Popeye. The Library of Congress and The New York Historical Society have had retrospective exhibitions of his work. The JCC in Washington, D.C. will present another retrospective this fall. Also this fall, Theater J in Washington will be producing his play A Bad Friend, first performed in 2003 at Lincoln Center.*

Herb Gardner (1934-2003) *Herb Gardner was 19 years old when his cartoon strip The Nebbishes (or "Lost Souls" in Yiddish), was syndicated in more than 40 newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Los Angeles Times and the London Observer. His plays include A Thousand Clowns, The Goodbye People, Thieves, Conversations with My Father and I'm Not Rappaport. His screenplays include Who is Harry Kellerman?, Thieves and A Thousand Clowns. He wrote and directed the films The Goodbye People and I'm Not Rappaport. In the year 2000, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Writers Guild of America, East.*

Stu Hample *Stu Hample's musical Children's Letters To God (based on his book of the same title) may be seen Off-Broadway at the Lamb's Theatre. His recent books are Happy Cat Day: A Manifesto for An Official Cat Holiday, and for children, The Silly Book—both of which he also illustrated. He collaborated with Woody Allen on the syndicated comic strip based on the comedian's persona, wrote for Kate & Allie, Jackie Gleason's American Scene Magazine, Comedy Zone, and for PBS, The Great Radio Comedians. He appeared as Mister Artist on Captain Kangaroo. Otherwise he is a multi-media failure.*

Mark Alan Stamaty *Mark Alan Stamaty's comic strip Washington was published regularly in the Village Voice, The Boston Globe, The Washington Post and more than 40 other newspapers from 1981 to 1994. His work has also appeared in many other publications including The New Yorker, GQ, Newsweek, Time and the online magazine Slate. His comic strip Boox can be seen monthly in The New York Times Book Review. His graphic novels for kids include Who Needs Donuts? His new one, Aliah's Mission—Saving the Books of Iraq will be published in December, 2004.*

* * *

