

The Bootblack Stand



Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at *avant-garde* bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled *What's in It for Me?* Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

My name is Billy Joe Klegg and I am the presidential candidate for the Presidency of the United States of America on the Loyal U.S.A. party. I, "the poor boy with the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt," am called Billy the Kid, though it is only a nickname and my real name is Billy Joe Klegg. I believe that I shall be the next president of the United States, and I have

travelled over fifty thousand miles to bring word of my candidacy to everyone. I have overcome great obstacles, for I am an anti-establishment candidate — a shaker-upper-of-the-system — who knows the Establishment is as red as Kosygin's long johns. Twice my official 1952 Chevrolet has busted a radiator and once one of Nixon's agents took polaroid pictures of me in front of the A&P delivering an address with my shirt off. Hippy dope freaks often harass me and one stuck pins in the head of my campaign teddy bear, while I took a breather at Country Slim's All Night Truck Stop in Ferret, Arkansas — my national headquarters.

Obviously my safety is in danger, yet Mr. Nixon has consistently refused to give me Secret Service protection. This hurts my campaign because until I get more security, I must continue to keep my schedule confidential and how can I turn out the big crowds when no one knows I'm coming? What can I do?

Patriotically,
Billy Joe Klegg

Dear Billy Joe:

Drat! Isn't that just like the Nixon Administration! First the Watergate Capers and now this. I suggest you ask George McGovern for one of his Secret Service agents. From the way his campaign is going, it doesn't really seem that he needs all that much protection.

—GWP

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

I am in desperate need of assistance. Let me tell you the truth. I cannot stand

my knob-headed running mate, George McGovern. He insists that I work mornings and has refused to let me go to the dog shows. When he plays tennis he perspires repulsively, and I am heartbroken over the way he dresses. His suits look like he got them at Walgreen's; he wears clip on ties. His table manners are inhuman. Last week he tried to eat his vichyssoise with a knife and fork. His wife drinks Bourbon and Cola in public. Several days ago I arranged a big fund raising meeting at his quarters. When I arrived with Auntie and Unkey-Pooh he met us in his swimming trunks, made a tasteless joke about belching and insisted we all sit around his television set and watch the Roller Derby while he soaked his teeth in a glass of something his wife brought up from the basement. Now he wants to dine with me down at the Club. I shall be mortified. What can I do?

Cordially,
Sargent Shriver, B.A.

Dear Mr. Shriver:

I am familiar with your predicament. It was not long ago that Tom Eagleton was writing me about just this kind of thing. It is not easy to run with a man like Senator McGovern, but then think of all those poor fellows who had to endure the late Bryan. Unfortunately, there are not any alibis left. You are going to have to go through with it. But, if you find it any consolation, your association with him should not last beyond November 7.

—GWP

Malcolm McDowell.) Is it perhaps the linguistic, the coding battle among these five or so which ensures that the code will have some possibility of being readily decodable?

Clockwork Orange, a beautifully complex movie, adds to the five above the music, highly original, of Walter Carlos. This music has a codal life of its own. For the starting point of the gang rebellion and the crucial scene we analyzed above was an act of disrespect to Beethoven. And the conclusion of the film shows the hero once more able to have an organism while listening to Beethoven, and imagining violent public, homosexual sex. Beethoven is a *metonym* for classical art. Even this art, in this kind of society, the *Clockwork Orange* warns us, becomes an art of masturbation. Far more than the relatively trivial argument about freedom and conditioning, this is the musically encoded warning of *Clockwork Orange*. Once great art is perverted, in a drug and record culture, the perversion of freedom and education cannot be far behind. Viddy well, my droogs!

John Ashmead is a professor of English at Haverford.

AVEY

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planes on supply barges supplying a freighter. Pro-American story, right? Uh-uh. *The freighter could not be iden-*

tified because of darkness! Get it? We might have hit a peace-loving Liberian freighter or even, gulp, a Chinese one, because we bomb in the dark. Goddam it, Errol Flynn didn't bomb in the dark. We didn't defeat Helmut Dantine and all the rest of that crew by bombing defenseless freighters in the dark. Stop this terrible after-dark bombing! Cease this nocturnal savagery! Put a halt...

Sorry, Diary, I got carried away. When the *Times* lights my fire, I just don't know what I'm saying.

I love her because she's so blunt. On page five between ads for Bergdorf Goodman and Macys there is a poignant headline: VIETCONG ASSERT A SERIOUS REPLY BY NIXON COULD HAVE ENDED THE WAR. Curse you, Dick Nixon and your frivolous replies!

I love her because she is even-handed. On page eight there are but two stories,

BOOBS NEED NOT APPLY

The Alternative is now hiring full-time editorial help. We also have openings in our circulation and business departments. If you are interested please send resumes to our offices in care of Mr. George Nathan. Fame and fortune await you at this very moment.

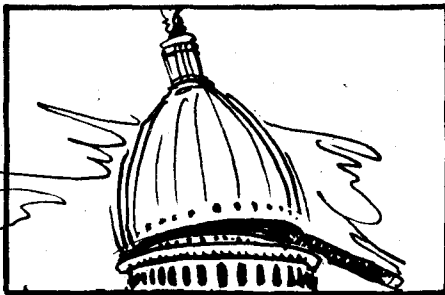
a big one and a little one. The big one carries this headline: POLISH-EAST GERMAN TOURISM BOOMING UNDER OPEN BORDER PLAN. Hoorah for open-border plans of the peoples' democratic socialist republics! The other headline tells a different tale: BRAZIL WILL RETAIN CURBS ON LIBERTIES. Boo to liberty-curbing Brazil. Boo. Hissss. Get the picture? East Germany and Poland are "open-border" countries and Brazil...well, Brazil is just awful!

I love her most of all because she's cute. She just has a way of saying things that completely win my heart. Take her editorials. She has one today in which the following sentence appears: "We believe that the integrated school, even if it produced no educational gains, must be the goal of a free society." Perfect. Beautiful. "Even if it produces no educational gains..." Has anyone ever put it so neatly or so sweetly? Integration for integration's sake. Integration hits the spot even if it costs a lot. School integration, which most scholarly evidence shows can come about only through the use of force, is a "goal" for a "free society!" That's my girl.

Well Diary, 'nuff said for tonight. I can't wait until I see her again tomorrow. She'll be there, as she always is, with the wind blowing through her prejudices, waiting for me (played by Freddie Bartholomew or maybe even Jimmy Lydon). They all tell me that I'm too young, that this is just a teen-age crush. But I don't care. Good night sweet-heart... □

C. Bascom
Slomp

Letter from a Whig



Another Tall Tale

One of the unpleasant aspects of this world of modern mass communication is that, when nothing is going on a lot of people go hungry, so it is that the mass communications boys have got to talk as though something is going on even when all is deadly dull. It keeps bread on the table and beer in the bucket. Thus in this election year as the Republican candidate reposes on the front porch and the Democratic candidate makes a windy hind of himself, the media boys have had to confect a little suspense, keeping some Americans from falling asleep and others from dying of laughing fits. The suspense-packed issue that they have whipped up this month is called the "possibility of a coattail effect." Supposedly, as this dreary campaign slumps along Americans are to sit on the edges of their chairs, wringing their hands over the perplexing question of just how many congressmen and senators of the Republican variety Mr. Nixon will bring into office with him.

Of course, the Democrats should not worry too much based merely on the evidence of numbers. The numbers favor them. The Republicans need thirty-nine accretions in the House and five in the Senate (this would tie things up in the Senate, allowing Mr. Agnew to tip the balance for the GOP). Such an accomplishment would, obviously, demand a pretty potent coattail, for only fourteen of the thirty-three Senate seats at stake now belong to Democrats.

But, nevertheless, according to the pundits, Mr. Nixon's lead is now so shattering that the rest of his campaign just has to be history making and that means something like a complete reversal of roles in Congress. Phooey and blah! I no more expect to see a legislature filled with Republicans, next term, than a legislature filled with vegetarians. As recent scholarship has shown, an increasing number of discriminating Americans are voting a split ticket. Further, the great boon of redistricting that was once expected to usher in an era of matchless democratic precision has actually encouraged incumbents to protect themselves in each new round of redistricting. Finally, and most important of all, the philosophical substance of our parties no longer makes much impression on an individual voter. Certainly the Republican Party no longer can be called a party of fixed principles, for what does the typical Republican promise that differs from a run of the mill Democrat? When a party no longer embraces a set of identifiable or comprehensible princi-

ples that deeply touch the needs of men, there just is no reason for men to identify strongly with a political party. Today's political parties do not address themselves to the personal and enduring needs of the citizens. And so long as this is the case citizens will not identify themselves deeply with the party.

Now, in the political era just passed people did identify strongly with the Republicans or with the Democrats, and those people who survived from that era

David Brudnoy:

Black Mischief

From Stepin Fetchit to Slaughter ("Jim Brown is Another Black Superman!") blares the *New York Daily News*: Progress. The Negro has been discovered as human being. He has his new filmic heroes. He rises to mythic heights of Identity. To equality through separatism. To Power. *The Man is Black*. *Melinda* is — well see her, starring Calvin Lockhart and Rosalind Cash. *Superfly* is oh my. *Blacula* sucks blood. Soul blood.

Go back, back, way back to early movies, to those medieval times when Negroes were ill-served by carpetbaggers and scallawags a la Hollywood (*Birth of a Nation*.) To the travesty-stereotypes of Negro lethargy, bumbling (Jack Benny's Rochester), cringing ("Feets, if you's ever served me, serve me now!" — the terrified Negro servant to Charlie Chan), smiling, grinning servility ("Aw, Miss Lou, ah don' mind staying 'round to help you" — the Negro maid to Mae West in *She Done Him Wrong*, mindless stupidity ("I don' know nothin' 'bout birthin' babies, Miss Scarlett" — Butterfly McQueen as Prissy to Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*), venality, natural rhythm. An undeniably sad record of misrepresentation, distortion, prejudice-confirming portrayal of colored people in the American film.

Then the gradual opening up, broadening, humanizing in the 1950s and 1960s — Harry Belafonte, Satchmo, Dorothy Dandridge and above all, Sidney Poitier: superspade, the Negro better than most Caucasians, oh-so-sympathetic friend of the young blind white girl in *A Patch of Blue*, devilishly clever cop in *They Call Me Mister Tibbs*, super-brainy son-in-law-to-be in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and on and on. An abysmal half-century of misuse at the hands of the film industry superseded by an evolved generation

will continue sedulously to vote for their respective party, as Everett Ladd and Charles Hadley have so convincingly argued in *The Public Interest* (Spring, 1971). But younger voters will not be so easily regimented behind a party. For it means no more today to be a Republican than to be a supporter of the Chicago Bears. To support the Bears is merely to carry an enthusiasm — admittedly a pretty bizarre enthusiasm — and it goes no deeper. So it is with Republicanism.

I believe the make up of the next legislature will be about the same as it is at present. There is only one occurrence that might interfere with my conclusion. If two or more Senate seats fall to Republicans, Mr. Byrd and one or more of his colleagues from the south might cross over to the Republican side causing Republican domination in that chamber. This is an outside chance and unlikely. Thus the big story of the month is not much of a story after all, and next year we can expect to see President Nixon struggling again with his unwieldy and un-productive alliance in a relatively unchanged legislature. □

of fanciful, albeit complementary, glorification at the de-prejudiced hands of the same film industry. On balance I prefer the sanitized, romanticized, deodorized Negro of yesterday's film to the grossly maligned nigger of long ago. But each twisted reality, though so do most films.

Granted, within the past ten years or so, American movies have done somewhat better with Negroes in peripheral roles. An attempt at "fairness" in films marched apace with the same trend on television: with an almost embarrassing fealty to the aim of putting at least one Negro into every TV program's regular cast, the tube gives us a Barney for "Mission Impossible" and a Mark for "Ironside," while the cinema follows suit.

But in both media, producers have failed to produce, to come up with believable Negro characterizations for lead roles. The breakthrough of "I Spy," which almost (but not quite) gave equal billing to Bill Cosby with white Robert Culp, preceded "Julia," a pleasant middle-class fantasy — not that there aren't middle-class Negroes, but simply that "Julia" somehow didn't make it — which was followed by Redd Foxx in "Sanford and Son," a sort of poor relation to "All in the Family." Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-In" has been most successful in using Negro comedians in ways that both show off their special talents and avoid tokenism, romanticization, condescension and exploitation. "Laugh-In's" imitators have followed a similar pattern. And Flip Wilson has made it to the very top on TV — in comedy. Yet believable Negro lead characters in straight dramatic roles have not developed on TV to any great degree.

But at least the tube's excesses in star-