

"Well," recalled Pearson in that delightfully informal manner of his, "I put him in the Department of Justice as soon as I could . . . and told him to go ahead with the Criminal Code. Some of my older colleagues disapproved, in fact the majority did not want to go ahead with the Code. But

I insisted, and besides, I had a Minister of Justice who was interested in it. I could have dropped it, put it off, because I did not want to get Mr. Trudeau into too much trouble. But I knew he could handle it all right, it had to be done by a Catholic if at all possible."

The rest is history. Thanks to Pearson having given Trudeau a leg up we got subsidized feminism and legalized abortion, also economic atrophy and a constitution that mandates government of the government, for the government, and by the government. Imagine how it would be if the rules

of the Democratic party were constitutionally enforceable across the United States. Trudeau's Catholic leftism imported from France may not have worn well. Not to worry. We are going to have to live with it for many years yet. We are his picture of Dorian Grey. □

Charles Murray

## THE FAIRNESS DELUSION

The speech our President should make.

**D**emocrats have been bludgeoning the Reagan Administration with "the fairness issue" since 1981. The fairness issue covers a variety of sins, generally falling under the headings of rewarding the rich and cutting programs for the poor. For those who have been raising the clamor, citing specifics has often seemed unnecessary. Every fair-minded person should be able to see, we are given to believe, that the Administration has been palpably, obviously "unfair."

The people in charge of making the Administration's case have never quite made up their minds how to respond to these allegations. The President usually takes the line that the cuts in social programs affected only those who didn't need the benefits anyway; the truly needy were not hurt. I have listened to other Republican officials point proudly to how much money the government continues to spend, arguing that the Reagan Administration is spending unacknowledged and unappreciated billions to help the poor, even more than the Democrats spent.

Perhaps these are politically astute responses for an election year. But, astute or not, they do not ring true. Benefits were taken away from some people, and some of those people were hurt. That's what happens when people at almost any level of income suddenly have less income. And while the Reagan Administration surely does

continue to spend large sums on the poor, it would be spending much less if the Democrats had let it.

Why be so defensive? Why be so disingenuous? Why do conservatives shy away from making the honest, compelling argument so readily available to them that the social policy toward the poor that Reagan inherited (and has changed very little) has been desperately unfair and destructive for the poor? The reason such policies must be reformed is not that there is a budget crisis. It is not to get rid of welfare cheats. It is not to benefit the middle class that pays the bills. The real reason is that the reforms of the 1960s and thereafter have been bad for the people who most deserve our consideration. I hereby offer the Administration, free and clear, the speech I think Ronald Reagan ought to be making about "the fairness issue" and

a few of the numbers behind the rhetoric.

**M**y fellow Americans. Tonight, I wish to speak to that great multitude of Americans, of whom I am one, who are comfortable. Some of us are rich; most are not. But what we share in common is enough money to live more or less where we wish, in a style that is pleasant by any standard and luxurious by most. We have the resources to raise and educate our children. We have pensions and security for our old age.

I wish to speak to you of the plight of millions of other Americans who are less fortunate. No, tonight I am not talking about the destitute. I am not talking about the chronically unemployed. I could talk about them; their plight is no less grievous. But

tonight I refer instead to another population that has been strangely ignored: millions of ordinary American parents who work steadily and work hard but, because of little education or because of other disadvantages or simply because their abilities are limited, work at menial, low-paying jobs. These are people who are never going to be rich. They have gone about as far as they can go. But their instinct is to keep working, raise their children right, and hope their children have a better life. In other words, they are the kind of people that most of us had for parents or grandparents or great-grandparents, and to whom we owe much of our own present prosperity.

My proposition is that in the last twenty years, we comfortable people, in the name of fairness and generosity, have ravaged their lives.

How can this be, when the last twenty years have seen an explosion in spending on behalf of such people? To see why, let us begin by ridding ourselves of a curious condescension that takes hold whenever my middle-income opponents talk about what the government is doing for low-income working people. They count up the extra income in food stamps or housing subsidies or the welfare check, and judge fairness in terms of increase in the dollar total—when it would not occur to them to measure their own lives in such terms. Tonight, think for a moment how differently "fairness" for the poor looks if you ask yourself what most worries *you* as a parent, and then make one assumption: The poor are not so different from you and me.

You worry about crime. You have chosen the neighborhood where you



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live in part because it is safe. Some of you have deliberately stayed away from urban neighborhoods where you would like to live because they adjoin the ghetto, and you are unwilling to put yourself and your spouse and especially your children at risk.

Parents who live in the ghetto fear for themselves and their children too. But they have no option about where to live. They cannot afford to move away from troubles; they must endure them. Do you know what happened to the crime problem in *their* neighborhoods in the last twenty years? It went through the roof. Yes, we affluent people have our tales of being mugged or burglarized that we tell one another at cocktail parties. But the increased risks for us are nothing compared to the increased risks run by people in poor neighborhoods.

*In the seven years from 1965 to 1972, the number of black males who were victims of homicide increased by 30 per 100,000. During the same period, white male victims per 100,000 rose by 3. From 1965 to 1979, the annual number of low-income blacks who were victims of robbery rose by 1,266 per 100,000. Among middle-income whites, the increase was 359. Proportionately, the increase in victimization among white and middle-income populations was high, but in terms of actual risk of being a victim, poor blacks suffered far more.*

Think of it this way. Suppose that the government, for some obscure reason, decided it wanted to take a daily busload of the inner-city's muggers and burglars and aggravated assaulters who are returned to the streets—the ones the courts will not put in jail or keep in jail because it is only their first (or second or third) offense, or because they are only juveniles, or because



prison doesn't help, or because of one of the many other arguments based on fairness and compassion—and let them hang out in your neighborhood instead of the ones they come from. You as a resident of this neighborhood are given no choice in the matter. But the government offers you compensation. How much must you get to make your life whole again? How much money will make what the government has done to your life . . . fair?

**Y**ou worry about educating your children. So when you chose where to live you gave a lot of attention to the

## My opponents add up a pittance of money that many of these parents despise anyway, say they will increase it, and call it fairness.

quality of the public schools. Many of you, especially in the cities, send your children to private schools. For us comfortable people, the deterioration of public education during the last twenty years has been an irritation and something we've had to work around. Have you considered what it was like to be the parents of a child in the inner city during the 1960s and 1970s if you desperately wanted your child to get a decent education but had to rely on the public schools?

You couldn't expect an especially bright child to be pushed to his or her potential, because tracking systems were elitist— forbidden by school policy and even by law in many of our largest cities. You couldn't expect the teacher to maintain an orderly learning environment, because teachers were at professional risk of lawsuits if they tried to enforce discipline—and increasingly at physical risk as well. You couldn't expect a challenging curriculum and strict standards for achievement—the whole school system was at risk of lawsuits and cutoff in federal assistance if it paid too much attention to "culturally biased" measures of achievement. The results for students in the worst of our public schools—blacks living in the urban core—were disastrous.

*In 1980, the Defense Department administered its "Armed Forces Qualification Test," a carefully designed and standardized test of basic skills, to a nationally representative sample of over 9,000 youths. The mean score among blacks with a high-school education was less than half the mean score among whites with the same level of education.*

But that's not the worst of it.

Tonight I am talking about parents who care most deeply about report cards and how hard their children are studying, parents who want their children to go to college. If you were such a parent, you could not even interpret what you saw on the report card—a student in the inner city could do everything the teacher asked, get straight A's, and never be given a chance to realize how little he was learning. Thus in the last decade we have gotten used to seeing newspaper stories every spring about the valedictorian from an inner-city high school whose preparation was so inadequate that he or she could not meet the en-

trance requirements of a good university. Sadly, these are not isolated cases.

*On the mathematics component of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (the "SAT," the core of the College Boards), the average white score in 1980 was 482. Only 11 percent of black students scored that high. On the verbal component of the SAT, the white mean was 442. Only 13 percent of blacks scored that high.*

Ask yourself: How much would the government have to pay you to make you agree to send your child to a public school in a ghetto of one of our large cities? How much money would make it a fair bargain?

"Perhaps," I hear some of my opponents saying, "we went overboard with some of the changes we made in law enforcement and education. But at least we helped these people economically. Look at food stamps, at Medicaid, at Supplemental Security Income and housing subsidies."

Yes, let's do look. There is some additional money coming in. Mind you, the additional money is small. Many of the people living in poverty do not get welfare benefits—not because they are not qualified, in most cases, but because they just don't bother. Perhaps pride is involved. And even if they do avail themselves of such programs, being employed means that the amounts are small. But never mind; some of the families of whom I speak are getting some extra resources, and, other things being equal, I would be happy about that. But other things are not equal.

Because the thing you worry about most, that all good parents worry about most, is how the kids will turn out. We worry a lot even if our

children are just unhappy in their work or their personal lives. If they turn out very badly—in jail, or on drugs, or unable to hold on to a job—most of us carry a deep sense of unhappiness and of failure with us for the rest of our lives, no matter how successful we may be professionally or financially. Now, imagine how much more decisive that unhappiness would be if the only tangible measure of success in your life was investment in your children—as is the case of many low-income parents.

In the last twenty years, these parents have watched as their children have gone down the drain. I speak in part of the losses of the younger generation to drugs and to crime. But two less dramatic types of tragedy have been yet more common.

**O**ne of these has consisted of the young male, poor and with a minimal education, who spends the critical years of his late teens and early twenties drifting in and out of the labor market. Sometimes he does so because there is no work to be had. But far too often, in a phenomenon that scholars are finally accepting to be real despite the reluctance of many to talk about it, youths at this critical stage of their lives begin to *choose* to drift in and out of the labor market, for reasons that make sense to an adolescent but lock him into poverty for the rest of his life.

*From 1965-1980, labor force participation among young black males dropped radically and unexpectedly. Among 18-19 year-olds, for example, participation dropped from 67 percent to 56 percent. During the same period, participation of 18-19 year-old white males rose from 66 percent to 74 percent. The nature of unemployment among young black males changed drastically as well, shifting from periodic involuntary unemployment because of lack of demand for labor to a pattern characterized by short-term, voluntary unemployment.*

The second tragedy involves the daughters of these families. Poor families—and once again, poor black families in the inner city have suffered most—have watched steadily increasing numbers of their daughters throw away their chances for a good education, for a career, for escape from poverty, by having children as single parents, often as teenagers.

*By 1980, 55 percent of all live births to blacks were illegitimate, compared to 11 percent for whites. By 1980, black American teenagers had a fertility rate of 24 per 100, more than twice as high as the second-highest rate (10*



per 100) in any of 32 developed nations.

Now put yourself in the position of the parents I have been talking about. Your son says to you that starting at the bottom and doggedly working up bit by bit is a chump's game. The problem is that he is technically right—at least, over the short term, which is the term that adolescents tend to use. Holding on doggedly to a low-paying job is not smart; it yields no more money than alternative packages of periodic work, benefits, and perhaps the occasional hustle in the underground economy. It yields much less leisure.

Your daughter is sexually active, not using contraceptives, and, once she gets pregnant, finds that the logical choice—note carefully, the *logical* choice—is to have that child as a single parent. Given the way that the welfare system works and the child-support laws do not work, it would be foolish of her to encourage the man to marry her. In the short term.

In the long term, you are watching your children throw away their futures. But have a hard time fighting it. You try to drum it into their heads that it is in their long-range interest to behave differently, but you have to contend with the peer pressures of their friends. The wisdom of the streets once they leave the front door promulgates the short-term logic.

Even if it weren't for the crime, even if it weren't for the bad schools, how much would it take to convince you to let your children be socialized in an inner-city neighborhood? How much money, how many food stamps, would it take until you were compensated? How much would be fair? For most of you, *no* amount would be enough.

The parents I am talking about have had no choice. They have had to put up with the worsening crime. Put up with worsening education. Put up with values they do not share, foisted on them by legislators and judges and bureaucratic rule-makers who do not have to live at their side. And in return? My opponents add up a pittance of money that many of these parents despise anyway, say they will increase it, and call it fairness.

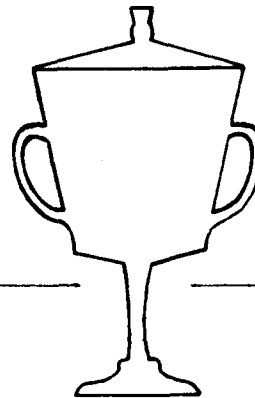
I am not going to spell out a program of solutions for you tonight. That is another speech—but I will warn you that the solutions are tough, and far more sweeping than anything this Administration has considered in the past. Tonight, I want you first to realize the nature of the problem. We, the comfortable people, are requiring that millions of people who share our aspirations, our values, and our priorities live in a world run by rules that we pushed upon them, and that

we would not dream of accepting for our own neighborhoods or our own children. It is arrogant and smug. It is also tragically unfair.

*The issues in the President's speech are formidably complicated, and perhaps it is just as well that they are not at the center of the campaign's rhetoric. They are too important to be*

*left to political statistics. My thesis is that the more closely the numbers are examined and the more deeply the analyses of social policy over the last twenty years are scrutinized, the clearer it becomes that we took a wrong turn in the mid 1960s—not in any one program, to be fixed by any one remedial amendment, but in the nature of the rules of the game that we created for poor people. As far as I can tell,*

*neither Republicans nor Democrats are eager to confront the full implications of changing those rules. Welfare cheats are an easier target for the conservatives; hungry children are an easier object of compassion for liberals. But at least the political rhetoric has one thing right: "Fairness" is the proper word for describing what our social policy is not. We just need to think harder about what it means.* □



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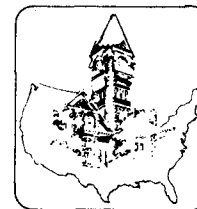
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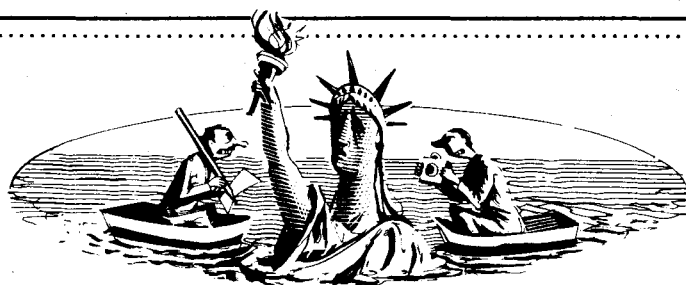
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# PRESSWATCH



## POLLSTERGEIST

by Fred Barnes

Greg Schneiders, one of Washington's shrewder political consultants, wrote in the *Washington Post* last June about "a variety of imagined threats to our political system . . . that we will be urged between now and November to worry about." You know, threats like non-discussion of the "issues" by the presidential candidates and non-coverage of these "issues" by the press, or clear and present dangers to the body politic such as television or money, which are sure to be accused of "ruining the process." Don't worry about any of them, he said. Democrats, don't worry that "Republicans are making inroads in the black community," Schneiders wrote, because they won't be. Republicans, don't fret that "Democrats are making inroads into the business community," he noted, for they won't be either. But Schneiders ran out of phony threats at ten, forgetting one that the press is now trumpeting—the perilous plague of political consultants.

The story of these devilish media specialists, pollsters, and strategists has been told in books, magazine and newspaper articles, and on television shows. And the scare stuff just keeps coming. Political consultants are blamed for practically everything, except losing elections. Between this year's Democratic and Republican conventions, the *New York Times Magazine* ran a semi-hysterical account of how these malefactors have "spent the last decade remaking the political landscape." Not only that, but "the use of ever more artful ads to alter dramatically a candidate's image" may be the undoing of representative government in this country, wrote Ron Suskind in the *Times* piece. And some accounts go further, pursuing the sky-is-falling tack that political consultants are taking over the world. Think I'm kidding? Well, here is how British journalist Roland Perry closes *Hidden Power*,<sup>1</sup> his new book on American pollsters Patrick Caddell

and Richard Wirthlin: "With their control over politicians and their understanding of the new technology, it is the strategists who, more and more, will dictate the direction of nations and the world."

Think of it. Caddell, who was George McGovern's polling expert and then Jimmy Carter's, running the world. Or Wirthlin, who is President Reagan's pollster, as the puppeteer behind the curtain at the White House pulling the strings. Now, I've heard some pretty wild conspiracy theories in my day, but this is absurd. If it were true, then an awful lot of reporters in Washington, including me, missed a story that rivals Watergate or Teapot Dome. It's a major scandal, the programming of the presidency according to advice from pollsters.

Except it isn't true. Sure, political consultants are hired by nearly every

*'Hidden Power: The Programming of the President, Beaufort Books, Inc., \$16.95.*

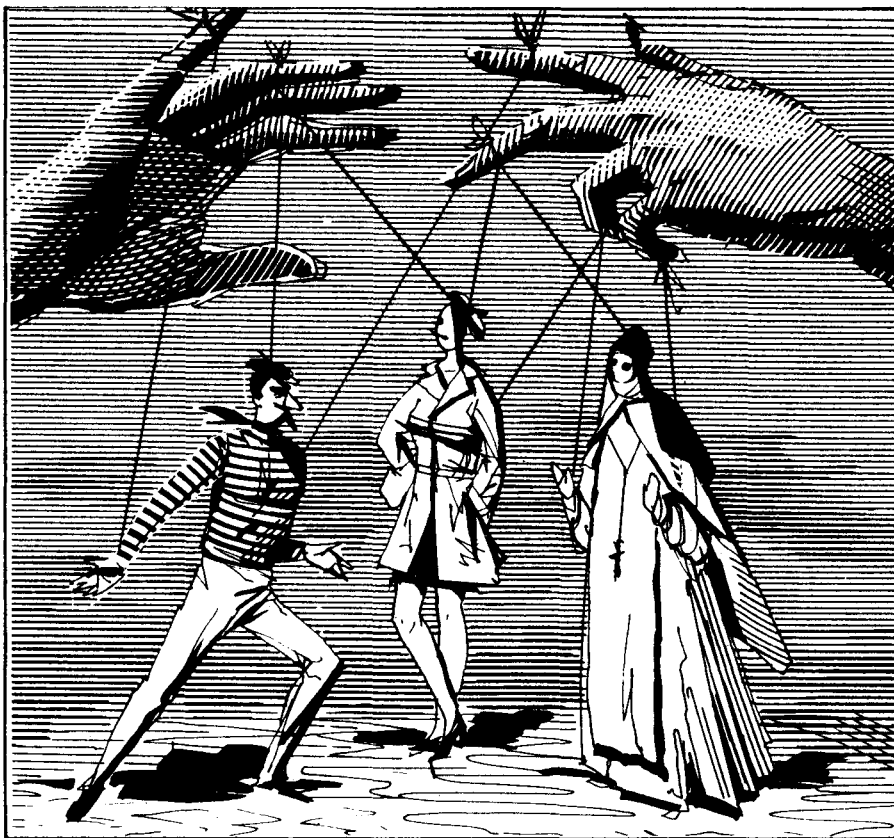
candidate for high office at the state and national level. At campaign time most bring on board a pollster, a strategist or two, and a media consultant. But campaigns ordinarily attract many candidates, though only one can win. And that ought to suggest something, namely that some candidates lose even though they've hired high-priced consultants. In the stories about consultants, however, you rarely hear tales of losers. This would take the scare out of the story.

You do get lots of episodes like one recounted in the *Times* involving a television commercial used in Republican Malcolm Wallop's successful bid to unseat then-Senator Gale McGee, a Wyoming Democrat, in 1976. The ad dealt with a new Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulation that required toilets for agricultural workers on the job. "The spot—known among consultants as the 'potty spot'—began by quoting a brief excerpt from the Federal Register about the proposed regulation," Suskind wrote. "Following the quote,

the ad showed a cowboy riding the range with a portable toilet strapped to his saddle. Voters laughed, and Senator McGee went down to defeat." Pretty simple, huh? Only that's not quite the way politics operates. Obviously, there was considerably more at work in Wallop's victory, such as the national drift, especially in the West, away from liberalism and liberals.

But gradual ideological shifts are not the stuff of fascinating journalism; what Suskind calls "a handful of high-priced, much-sought-after experts" are. So in *Hidden Power*, it's not Hubert Humphrey's tapping of anti-war sentiment that lifts his 1968 presidential campaign to a near-victory over Richard Nixon. It's his hiring of consultant Joseph Napolitan that is the pivotal event. And if Humphrey had cooperated more fully with Napolitan and accepted more of his advice, Perry suggests, he'd have won. Even though his candidate didn't win, Napolitan devised a winning strategy and was the driving force of the campaign. Of course, the 1968 race was cast in quite another way in *The Selling of the President* by Joe McGinness. He wrote that Nixon's media men controlled the campaign by selling the public a false image of Nixon. Both of the interpretations can't be right. If Nixon's men were in control, how come Humphrey came so close to winning? If Napolitan was, how come his candidate, representing the majority party, lost to a fellow who couldn't get elected governor of California? The reason is other factors prevailed, as they always do. Things like real differences between the two candidates, Democratic disunity, the war in Vietnam, race riots.

In the devil stories about political consultants, one of the common assertions is that they are new political bosses, the heirs to the old big city hacks. This is a theme of two books, *The New Kingmakers* by David Chagall (1981) and *The Permanent Campaign* by Sidney Blumenthal (1980). This silly notion fails to take



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