



Death of a Producer

Friday

Back on the pitching trail. I am in a meeting in a building in Century City, talking to a kind woman about ideas for TV movies. By coincidence, she went to high school not far from where I went to law school. We talked about that for a while. We remembered the Housatonic River—although, for some reason, she remembered it as dirty and forbidding, lined with ancient rusting factories. I remembered those factories as picturesque. Maybe the difference is that she and members of her family worked in them. Lucky little me! I just drove by them on my way to Vassar to visit my future bride.

"We're looking for pictures where there is a woman lead, doing something brave and dangerous, hopefully with a role for another woman who also does brave things," she said.

"I see. How about this: a woman Nazi sympathizer and spy helps a Nazi POW break out of prison and go across the country to kidnap Albert Einstein and make him help with the Nazi atom bomb project, which is much farther along than anyone thought."

"Hmmm," the woman in the office said.

"Plus, the woman Nazi is being chased by a woman from the government who is sort of thrust into the unfamiliar role of FBI agent."

"I like it," the woman said. "Now, would it have to be a period piece, or could it be present day? We don't like to do period pieces because they tend to be too expensive."

BENJAMIN J. STEIN is a writer, actor, economist, and lawyer living in Hollywood and Malibu.

"Well, it's actually based on a book I wrote called *The Manhattan Gambit*, and it's set in 1943."

"Could we move it up to present day?"

"Well, it has to be set in World War II," I said.

"Why?" she asked enthusiastically.

"It's a World War II story," I said. "World War II has been over for a long time. That's the problem."

"Yes," she said, recognition slowly dawning. "And I guess Einstein has been dead for a long time."

"Exactly," I said. "Hitler, too."

"But otherwise I really like it," she assured me, and said we'd be in touch.

Later that night, after a modest dinner of leftovers, the Steins caravanned out to our ramshackle house in Malibu. Tommy came with me and listened to stories about the life of Richard Nixon, with whom he has become almost obsessed—to my great delight. Mommy took her dogs, ancient, doddering Martha, who has the bad habit of relieving herself in the back seat, and frisky, playful Susie, who likes to throw up when the car gets going fast. You see what a glamorous family we are.

I unpacked our mound of books, food, logs, and newspapers, and set about making myself chocolate chip cookies. As I listened to my little black radio on the kitchen counter next to the window that faces the Pacific, I heard an amazing story. Don Simpson, fabulously successful producer of such giant hits as *Flashdance*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Crimson Tide*, and *Days of Thunder*, had been found dead in a bathroom of his 26-room mansion in Bel-Air. I called to tell Alex, who had been a lawyer on many of his movies. She was stunned.

Don was a maniac, but in many ways he had been a good friend to us. I was first introduced to him by Michael Ovitz. For

some reason, probably because we were both interested in the stock market, Don and I became friends. When my wife wanted to leave her law firm practice and work at a studio, Don was instrumental in getting her in the door at Paramount. Years later, when the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, for which I wrote a column, was about to print a major exposé about Hollywood drug dealing, Don called and asked me to help him. He said the piece named him, falsely, as a drug dealer.

I knew very well that Don was a drug user, but the idea that he might have been a dealer was a bad joke. He made far too much money to even consider wasting his time and risking his freedom dealing drugs. I prevailed upon Mary Anne Dolan, the editor of the *Herald*, to rethink it. She later denied that my pleas had anything to do with it, but in any event, the story did not run. Don was grateful indeed, although now that I think of it, I am not at all sure that Don ever bought a script from me. Still, he was friendly, even after he became a major star. He always greeted me very cheerfully when he saw me at Morton's or on the lot. But he was rarely happy. In fact, the more powerful he became, the more unhappy he seemed. He became not just a focused man, but obsessed.

He was obsessed with not only making lots of money, but looking thin, muscular, handsome, and dashing, gangster style. It's amazing but true that the model for behavior in Hollywood is not looking happy or respectable or kind or smart, but acting and looking like a gangster. Don wanted to look like a thin gangster. Alas, like me, he had a tendency to gain weight. He tried diets, exercise, drugs, more drugs, still more drugs. No matter

how rich he was, he was still wildly unhappy at how he looked. I guess he was wildly unhappy, period.

It's a major self-inflicted wound to be really unhappy with how you look, and Don picked at that scab endlessly. Why? Well, why do people come to Hollywood? They want to be movie stars. Don should have known Hollywood well enough to know that there are no real life movie stars, but he didn't. He really thought he could look like a movie star in real life.

He also wanted to be physically strong, a commonplace obsession with people who feel inwardly weak. He exercised and worked out and struggled to be powerful not only with a checkbook but with his biceps. He was always trying to get me to arm wrestle him to show how strong he was. He had weight machines and little exercise gizmos in his office.

Anyway, he's dead now. Apparently he died on the toilet. Like Elvis. Then last year there was Charlie Minor, the rock producer shot by a jealous ex-lover. And long before that, Sarai Ribicoff, daughter of my father's college roommate, killed by gunshot in a robbery in Venice Beach. David Begelman, dead of self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Too many people here die of unnatural causes. Maybe that's wrong, too. Maybe it's natural here to die unnaturally just as it's natural here to live unnaturally.

Monday

What a gorgeous day! I keep seeing on TV that rain and snow are "pounding" the east and Midwest. There are floodwaters over part of my beloved Sequoia restaurant in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. But here in L.A., it's balmy and clear, with a slight breeze. This has been the most beautiful winter I can recall. It's pretty easy to see why I stay here year after year. I mean, I can see the sun reflecting off the ocean thirty miles from my house in town, and it's dazzling.

I had dinner at Morton's with my funny friend B. and also with my airplane dealer friend Barron. It was an unusually interesting evening. At the table next to us, several powerful Hollywood friends of Don Simpson—along with the elegant,

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lovely manager of Morton's, Pam Morton—were planning a wake for Don. Steve Tisch, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Jim Wiatt of ICM, Jeffrey's sensitive-looking wife, Marilyn, and a woman I did not know sat with Don's erstwhile partner, Jerry Bruckheimer, going over a long list. They looked sad. I offered my condolences to Jerry Bruckheimer and he accepted them with a certain becoming gravity.

At the next table, Marvin Davis held court with Sidney Poitier. Then behind us was Theodore Forstmann. He stopped to talk to me about economic growth and how important it was that the GOP understand that. I suspect that's some kind of code for his liking Steve Forbes, but I'm not sure. He looked sort of intense, as if he were about to make another billion dollars somewhere. Then there was Wallis Annenberg, heiress to the *TV Guide* fortune, who was extremely friendly indeed.

I had an intense talk with B., my ultra funny friend. He revealed to me for the first time that he is the father of a little 20-month old girl whose mother is a high official here. B. lives in New York, and as far as I can tell, has almost nothing to do with the child.

"This is the biggest mistake of your whole life," I told him. "You are missing the defining moments of human life. It's incredibly important for you, but it's even more important for her. Think of how you would have felt as a child if your father ignored you. Think of what it will mean to that girl to have her father there to hold her hand and just be there talking to her, feeding her, carrying her around. It's the difference between night and day. Plus, it gives you a reason to live. It's better than money, better than fame. Fathers who miss it are missing the exact essence of life."

B. looked at me blankly. He's a sort of jet-setting guy, well connected on the New York party circuit. I suspect he thinks I was being a pest from a silly, stupid older generation. If he knew how right I am, he would never even go back to New York for his clothes. He would move right next to the little girl and never leave.

Thursday

Here I am at the Edgewater in Sandpoint. I'm on the laptop—a Canon Notejet, same as Bill Buckley has—and also on the phone, talking to my colleague and friend, Howard Dickman, of *Reader's Digest*. We're discussing suburban life and how much certain of the intellectualoids hate it. "Just mention 'Ozzie and Harriet' and you can see them grind their teeth," says Howard. "It's the memory of that repressive place called suburbia in the 1950's and 1960's," he said with a smile in his voice.

"Yes, and when I think about 'Ozzie and Harriet,' I cry," I said, "because that was my dream of how life was supposed to be."

"You know, on my street in Connecticut," Howard said, "there were no divorces ever that I can remember. All the kids had two parents. How horrible, huh?" he said, again with his light touch of irony.

After I set down the phone, I thought about Harvey Road, where I grew up. In a line that's a classic, my sister once summed up Harvey Road, Silver Spring, Maryland, circa 1953-1959. "I don't remember in that whole time ever having an invitation to a party. If there was a party, everyone was invited. It was that simple," she said. "Someone had a party, and the doors were open to everyone on the street."

Some day, I would love to write a book about Harvey Road. It was a dead end street off Dale Drive in Silver Spring, abutting a magnificent park called Sligo Creek. Most of the houses were three bedrooms with a rec room downstairs. They were built during and right after the Korean War. They were mostly split levels. Ours was custom built, but most were built by a builder named Platt.

The street was about half Jewish when we moved in and became more so as the years passed. At that time, the better neighborhoods in D.C. were off limits to Jews. So the Jews like my mother and father

built their own little neighborhoods. There were about forty houses on Harvey Road and its offshoot, Greyrock Road. From the first days I lived there, I knew every name of every family.

The lairds of the manor were the Sculls, scions of noble families from Philadelphia and Maryland. Their son and daughter, David and Betsy, were my special pals. But there was also my friend and picaresque role model, Carl Bernstein, my next door neighbor, who was a lively, irreverent rogue, and in every home there were kids my age. In the fall and winter, there were pickup football games. In the summer, pickup baseball and basketball. Every afternoon, there was play in the neighborhood. I was a very poor baseball player, but a neighbor, Gene Dauter, took pity on me and taught me to hit much better. He was probably the most sweet-natured person I ever met in my childhood.

There were no divorces on Harvey Road, no alcoholics, no wife beaters. There were doctors, lawyers, small businessmen. The families had Buicks and Oldsmobiles, except for rakish Mr. Scull, who had a Studebaker Golden Hawk that he let me drive up and down the driveway—I still shiver over the time I came close to crashing it into another car.

There were only a few bad incidents: a family named Kennedy had friends over, and one of them once called me a kike, when I was probably nine, long before I had any idea what it meant. A neighbor's son, now a famous lawyer in D.C., ripped me off when I had forgotten a pencil on the first day of seventh grade and made me buy one from him for twenty-five cents, about five times the going rate. It's really perfect that he's a lawyer at a big D.C. firm now.

Anyway, some days when I cannot sleep, I imagine being back on Harvey Road. What child ever thinks he's going to grow up and be 51?

Friday

You cannot imagine what a beautiful day it is. I'm at the Schweitzer Mountain Ski Resort outside Sandpoint. The sky is a deep blue. The snow is deep and powdery and on some paths, where I do my pitiful

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cross country skiing, it's absolutely virgin. I'm trudging around, occasionally gliding a few feet, with my lovely instructor, Jacqui. The resort is packed. Mobbed. It looks as if everyone in the Northwestern U.S. is here today. It's also cold as hell, and there is a wind. Sometimes, it's pretty amazing to me that skiers travel long distances, spend fortunes on ski clothes, get all suited up, risk breaking a leg, all for a few minutes gliding down a hill. But then when you actually get out on the trail, actually get out with the other skiers and are gliding, however pitifully or well, along a trail, you feel pretty good. Then, when you're finished, you feel really good. Sort of like how you feel after you stop hitting your head against a wall.

Later, I did my stint as Grand Marshal of the Winter Carnival. I was driven around a few blocks of Sandpoint while people waved at me and said, "Hi, Ben." I couldn't figure out how they knew my name until I realized that my name was on the side of the van I was riding in. Tommy and his pal Alex rode in the back of the van with me. Tommy and Alex hysterically wanted to run alongside the van, but they couldn't because the doors were locked and there was a sign on the doors that they would break if they opened the doors. Did that stop Tommy? Not at all. He blithely opened the door anyway. I had to yank his little arm away and throw him back into his seat.

He complained, but that's exactly why there are parents: to make kids stop doing

things that are demonstrably and clearly harmful to them. That's what we're there for. Ha.

Monday

This is terrifying. A major snowstorm is blowing across North Idaho. We're in our little Nissan Pathfinder. It's got four-wheel drive but it's light, and it's blowing all over the highway. The GMC Yukon that I was provided for the Winter Carnival was much preferable. It was solid, absolutely sure-footed, a dream of a truck. Tommy and I felt safe in the Yukon. We don't feel safe in the Pathfinder, and I am getting really scared. By the time we got to Coeur d'Alene, we could not see more than a few feet. What was I to do? If the Spokane Airport were closed, I would have driven this scary drive for nothing. Maybe I should just go back to the Edgewater and stay there until tomorrow.

I was totally freaked, and when I noticed that in addition to everything else, Tommy had opened his door and then not closed it properly, I started swearing a blue streak. I knew I shouldn't have, but I was just out of my mind with fear. Tommy looked at me blithely. "That's eight dollars for the swear jar," he said.

"Damn it, we're about to die and you're counting the money in the swear jar?" I demanded.

"That's eight-twenty-five," he said with a big grin.

By a miracle of the kind that God often throws my way, shortly west of Coeur d'Alene, the snow stopped completely. When we got to the nice curbside check-in at the Spokane Airport, it was dry and fine. Alaska Airlines was only about an hour late, which is about par for them even in totally dry weather.

On the plane, Tommy said to me, "Daddy, did you say I had stock in Coca-Cola?"

"Yes, you do," I said.

"I'd like for you to sell it," he said, "and give me the money."

"Good luck," I said. "That's for your college."

"But I have something else I want to invest in," he said.

"What's that?"

"I want to buy a monkey," he said. "Or else a hedgehog. They make really cute pets."

I love that boy. I just cannot stand how cute he is. How can anyone stay away from them? I absolutely have to get reconnected with the Right to Life folks. If I could be sure I wasn't going to be beaten by some overeager policeman, I think I would start going with Operation Rescue. They're my heroes.

It's my duty to remember these moments with my boy. These days go quickly, just like my days on Harvey Road. I want to savor them, store them up, think right this moment how much I will miss them when they're gone, appreciate them. The moment, this moment when Tommy is a sweet child, when my parents are lively and at the peak of their wit, when Alex is still a beauty and I still get asked for autographs—savor the moment.

Two days ago in Sandpoint, I got a call from Jerry Bruckheimer's assistant. "Jerry wants you to come to the memorial for Don Simpson," she said. "It's at Morton's at seven Monday night."

"I'll be there, and I'd like to bring a few people who were friends of Don's—especially my wife, because she used to be Don Simpson's lawyer," I said.

The woman took the names and thanked me.

Today, as I was getting ready to go, my parents called from Washington. I told them I was about to go to Morton's for a memorial for Don Simpson. "It's a memorial? At a restaurant?" my father asked. "I would have thought they would do it at a church or maybe a temple."

"Morton's is a temple," my mother said.

"Well, it's sort of a wake," I said. "Maybe I should have said 'wake' and not 'memorial.'"

Just as I was walking out the door, the phone rang again. It was Phil de Muth, a psychologist and writer who is the brother of Chris de Muth, head of the American Enterprise Institute. "I have to tell you this one amazing statistic I came across this afternoon in an article," he said. "The average American middle-aged male has one friend, and that's his wife. One friend."

The dining room and bar at Morton's had been cleared, and without the usual, familiar lineup of tables, the room looked

far smaller. (Isn't that what real estate agents always tell you—that rooms look smaller without furniture?) We were among the first to arrive. In the back of the room, Jerry Bruckheimer, Simpson's erstwhile partner, stood talking to Jeffrey Katzenberg and Jeffrey's wife, Marilyn. They were joined moments thereafter by Steve Tisch, who looked unnaturally cheerful. I thanked Jeffrey for making sure I was invited to the wake.

"Jeffrey didn't want you to come," Steve Tisch joked. "I was the one who insisted that you had to come."

Staci, one of the women who had been in Don's life, and a longtime pal of mine, a stunning Italianate beauty, walked over to the bar and had the first of a long series of Mai-Tais. "You know, the last time I saw Don was here, just a few weeks ago. I'm not sure he was even having dinner here. He might have just been passing through. He saw me and he said, 'Let's go out to my car for a couple of minutes.' He had some major lines of blow and I said, 'Don, how can you keep doing all this coke year after year?' and he said, 'Here's my strategy. Live fast. Die young, and leave a beautiful corpse.' Can you believe that? Don telling me that just a few days before he died?"

Alan Greisman strolled in, looking very hip in various tones of black. We had a good laugh about the wording of certain parts of the headline in *People* about his former wife, Sally Field. "I loved the part about how she was now 'free of the need to please a man,'" I said. "I'd like to see the movie star who devotes a lot of time to pleasing a man."

Alan laughed and drank some ridiculously healthy thing. Staci started to complain about the prenuptial agreement that her fiancé wanted her to sign.

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"I don't like prenuptial agreements," Greisman said. "I think it just tells each side that they can get out of the marriage any time they want to, and that's not good. It sort of gives you a license to leave. Sally and mine was fair, and I'm not saying it wasn't, but just in general, I think they're a bad idea. I wish we had never signed it."

Ron Meyer, the maddeningly healthy looking head of MCA, came over and said hello. Why are these people so thin and fit? It occurred to me that this was probably the exact thought that went through paunchy Don Simpson's mind again and again. From now on, I'm not going to compare myself with anyone else. Ha.

Staci and I walked through the room and saw the head of a very large talent agency. "See that guy?" she asked. "Don threw a 26th birthday party for me at Mr. Chow. He had a limo come and pick me up, and there were a lot of Don's buddies there, and that guy, the head of the agency, asked me to guess how old he was. I said, 'Well, you're in great shape, but your hair is receding, so I would guess you're in your forties.'"

"The guy throws a complete fit. Goes berserk. Starts screaming about how he's never been so insulted in his life. Then he pulls me aside and tells me he'll forgive me if I go with him on a jet to Hawaii in the morning. I told him I wouldn't go. The next morning, Don's on the phone around the clock telling me I have to apologize *in writing* to the agency guy or he's never going to speak to me and my career in this town is finished."

"What did you do?" asked my pal, the airplane dealer, Barron Thomas.

"Well, I didn't want my career to be over," Staci said. "So I sent him a fax: 'Dear Mr. W. I hereby apologize for saying your hair was receding. Sincerely, et cetera.' And Don was so happy he sent me a huge basket of flowers, and from then on, every year he sent me flowers and every New Year's he sent me a big basket with a ham and a turkey and a lot of liquor and flowers. He had a list. A list of people who he sent that basket to."

I saw Jeffrey Katzenberg talking to Gary Nardino, the former head of Paramount TV, a giant player in TV at one time, and still a great and wealthy guy. Gary said, "Jeffrey, I want to know how you get rich-

er and richer, and more and more famous.”

“It’s better to be lucky than to be good,” Jeffrey said.

“No, it’s not that,” Nardino said. “I mean how come you get so rich and famous and you never gain any weight? Do you work out every day?”

“For an hour and a half,” Jeffrey said. “I get up at 5:30 and work out for an hour and a half every day.”

“I hope you’re kidding,” I said.

“No, I’m not kidding,” he said.

“Do you take a nap during the day?” I asked.

“No, and I keep going until 11:30,” he said, “and then I’m back at it at 5:30 the next morning.”

“Who had more energy and discipline in your family?” I asked. “Your mother or your father?”

“Come on,” he said. “I don’t want to talk about me. That’s boring.”

This explains all too much about Jeffrey. He’s not only incredibly disciplined, but amazingly self-effacing.

Farther on, I saw two beautiful young women eating smoked salmon at a table. “Who might you be?” I asked.

“Just friends of Don’s,” one woman said.

“From the 1980’s,” the other one said.

“Right,” the first one echoed. “From the 1980’s.” As if that explained everything, as if the 1980’s were a morally free time zone when you could do anything you felt like doing.

“I remember once when Don took me to a movie premiere,” Staci said. “At a studio. He went out of the theater for a really long time, and I went looking for him. I saw him in a room laying out lines of coke, with two girls lying on the floor next to him sniffing it up. And they were screening his movie. What a lonely guy.”

By about eight, the room was densely packed. There were monitors all around, on which a handsome photo of Don, looking rakish in very dark glasses, was steadily displayed. There were also photos of Don—Don lying on his side with fishing tackle, Don with Jerry and Tom Cruise, Don looking happy and chubby, Don looking unhappy and thin. “The thing about these pictures is that they show Don before

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and after his plastic surgery,” Staci said. “Here he is when he looked like himself, and here he is when he had his cheeks done and his eyes and his whole face lifted. He looked better before he had the surgery.”

“They always do,” I said.

Just as Staci told me that, there was movement at the front of the room near the bar, as Jerry Bruckheimer took the microphone.

“I know how happy Don would have been that so many of his friends came by,” he said, or words to that effect. “We’ve made this little video about Don and some of the movies that he and I made, and about Don’s life, and I think we’ll show it now,” he said, or pretty close.

On all the monitors, glittering images appeared of hit Simpson-Bruckheimer pictures. *Flashdance*. *Top Gun*. *Beverly Hills Cop*. *Dangerous Minds*. Intercut were pictures of Don with friends, Don bopping to music at a dubbing session, Don with his friends’ kids, Don with his helicopter skiing buddies, excerpts from trade stories about how much business Simpson-Bruckheimer movies did. Then came parts of an interview with Don. “When I was a kid, this cop, sort of like Dirty Harry, huge guy with tattoos all over him, busted me for stealing cars, and he took me aside and said, ‘You’re either going to be the smartest guy in San Quentin or you’re going to get smart and do something you like with your life.’”

I thought of how very many Hollywood producers have told me that they were car thieves when they were young. I don’t think

any of them was, but they have it in their minds that a car thief is a good thing to be, so they make up that little bit of legend, and gradually they believe it. The legend helps them to believe that they’re tough.

Then there was another clip. “When you’ve made a certain amount of money, you don’t have to worry about money anymore,” Don said, “and then you come up against something that’s really scary: you.”

Next to me, Marilyn Katzenberg was sobbing. Tova Laiter hugged her in a particularly touching way. It occurred to me that Marilyn and Tova were the only women in the room who looked genuinely stricken.

After the clip, I saw a major movie star come in, looking very harassed. “Don used to tell me that she gave him the most sex of any star he ever worked with,” Staci said.

“I don’t believe it,” I said.

“Well, that’s what Don said.”

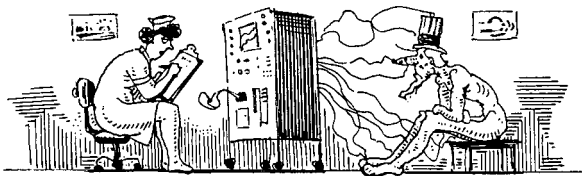
Then they ran the video again. “This is a strange video for someone who basically killed himself from drug abuse,” Staci said. “I mean, you would think he had just gone on a cruise to see how happy and on top of it he looks. I used to talk to him all night long when he was coked up. He was a totally lonely, unhappy guy. And look at the people here. Do you think they get it?”

“Some of them do. Jerry definitely does. Jeffrey does.”

“Yeah, but a lot of them think Don had a great life. They don’t know. They still think Don was someone to envy.”

Don was never married. He said in the video that maybe he would never know what love is. “Love is for other people,” he said, or words like that. It’s hard for me to think of many people in Hollywood who know what love is. Hollywood is largely for people who were extremely scarred in their childhoods and come here to escape, to be healed. It rarely works out that way. Maybe that, too, comes out in today’s movies. Love scenes never look right. That might be the bottom line on what’s going on in Hollywood right now: the love scenes never look as if the lovers mean it.

Despite all that, I am going to miss Don a lot. Life is personal, and not political or even artistic, as Wlady says, and Don was my friend. ❧



by Jeff Milyo and Tim Groseclose

Lost Shepherd

By now most Americans have heard about Rep. Enid Greene Waldholtz (R-Utah) and her husband and campaign treasurer, Joe Waldholtz; he is a con man who married her under false pretenses and then bilked her father out of five million dollars. Somehow \$1.7 million of that money found its way into Enid's congressional campaign funds during her successful 1994 run for the House. Once federal investigators started asking questions about her campaign financing, Joe bolted, abandoning his wife and their new baby for six days before finally surrendering to authorities.

Enid has denied any wrong-doing, and claims to have been an unwitting victim; but that hasn't placated Karen Shepherd, the former Democratic representative whom Waldholtz unseated. "She stole the election with illegal money," Shepherd claims, and a number of female commentators have come to her defense. Rep. Pat Schroeder said Waldholtz tried to "claim victimhood and therefore shed responsibility." Ellen Goodman of the *Boston Globe* opined that the election was "probably bought" and that Waldholtz should "give up her seat." Mary McGrory of the *Washington Post* characterized her as "sniveling" and "a typical Republican overspender" who defeated the "much admired Karen Shepherd."

Despite the contempt being showered on Waldholtz, however, a few facts and a little analysis make clear that this election was surely not bought. The 1994 race was not the first time that Waldholtz ran against Shepherd; they had fought for

the same seat in 1992. Back then, Shepherd rode the anti-Bush wave and narrowly defeated Enid by 9,000 votes, a 51-47 percent margin, in an open seat election. Shepherd was able to woo many Perot supporters; like Clinton, she was a "new Democrat" who supported term limits and a balanced budget amendment. She even vowed not to vote for any tax increases. According to the *Almanac of American Politics*, it also helped that Shepherd was "not shy about pointing out in family-friendly Utah that she was a wife and mother and [Enid] was single."

Once in Washington, however, Shepherd shed her "new Democrat" cloak. She voted for Clinton's tax increase, his stimulus plan, his crime bill, family leave, the Brady Bill, gays in the military, and federal money for abortions. Given the conservative tilt of her district—only 31 percent of its voters backed Clinton in 1992, compared to 43 percent nationwide—and the fact that she was the only non-Mormon in Utah's congressional delegation, Shepherd's voting record was quite extraordinary. In her first year in office she voted with Clinton 79 percent of the time; the House average was 62 percent, and the Democrat average was 77 percent. This record so incensed her constituents, in fact, that at one district meeting she was given a police escort.

Political scientists at Stanford have analyzed the electoral fates of incumbent House Democrats in 1994. They note that in districts that gave Clinton less than 40 percent of the vote, only nineteen voted with Clinton more than 75 percent of the time. Twelve of them, including Shepherd, were defeated in the mid-term elections. By contrast, of the twenty Democrats who represented conservative districts

but voted with Clinton less than 75 percent of the time, only four were defeated in 1994. Shepherd's support of Clinton did not aid her re-election prospects.

Even without her voting record, however, Shepherd's re-election chances were grim. First-term House members are always vulnerable to defeat, and mid-term elections usually claim several victims from the president's party. In the 1994 elections, Republican vote share increased six percentage points in the average district, and even more in the South and West. This mid-term swing alone was sufficient to swamp Shepherd's 1992 victory margin. Add to this mix the fact that Enid had since married and was about to start a family, and it isn't hard to see why voters dumped Shepherd. Enid Waldholtz won the race handily by nearly 20,000 votes, or 46 percent to 36 (a well-known third party candidate, Merrill Cook, got 18 percent). If one excludes the third-party votes, Waldholtz won 56 percent to 44.

This margin is simply too large to be explained by the \$1.7 million in illegal campaign funds. Money helps, but not to this degree. The most telling evidence that this election wasn't bought comes from a study by Steve Levitt, an economist at Harvard University. Levitt examined repeat meetings of House candidates (like Waldholtz-Shepherd) over the last twenty years. Levitt's statistical models indicate that, even if Joe Waldholtz had funneled the money into Karen Shepherd's campaign, Enid Waldholtz would still have won the election. Shepherd may want to blame him for the fact that barely more than one-third of her constituents thought she deserved another term, but that pig won't fly. Joe Waldholtz probably has a better chance of going home to flowers and a warm welcome. ❧

JEFF MILYO is an assistant professor of economics at Tufts University. TIM GROSECLOSE is a post-doctoral fellow in political economy at Harvard and MIT.