



The Lynn Samuels Show

(WABC 770 AM, New York City)

Another example of the new civility that our liberal progressive friends are bringing down on us, good and hard:

Samuels: She waited—what—three years after the incident until *The American Spectator*—that R. Emmett Tyrrell was on C-Span this morning. What a pig, what a vile, obnoxious, nasty human being he is. But they published the name, Paula, and then she got all in a snit, and it's like she wants Clinton to apologize. Well, Clinton doesn't publish that scurrilous publication, now, does he?

[JANUARY 13, 1997]

Vogue

Party hack George Stephanopoulos offers a glimpse into the high-grade intellect that earned him his ABC News post, a faculty appointment at Columbia University, a \$2.85 million book contract, and who knows, perhaps a seat on the Supreme Court:

I like to joke about how much better-looking I seemed to get on November 4, 1992. You can't do anything about that. It's all fake. Still, I haven't fully internalized how difficult it's going to be to give up my White House pass. It's the ultimate Gold Card. It has nothing to do with me, but people treat somebody who has talked to the president in the past 48 hours differently from the way they treat everybody else. There is a force that goes with that. And that's going to go away when I leave here.

The 7:30 staff meeting in the White House is the most powerful drug I've ever experienced. I mean, we sit there for 45 minutes, and sometimes it's boring, but more often than not, you just can't believe that you're sitting there, picking up every single issue that's come into play that day and thinking about how the president is going to fight it. It's the coolest thing ever. It just is.

[FEBRUARY 1997]

Nation

A half dozen years after the peaceful defeat of Communism, with Washington aid now flowing to the countries of the former Soviet Union and the American military pounding its swords into plowshares, the anti-Cold Warriors are still at it, intoning their Marxist *patois*:

While increased funding was the bright underside of cold war government-university relations, there were also overt liaisons between researchers and the neo-imperial state.

[MARCH 10, 1997]

Chicago Tribune

The school system of the District of Columbia costs, roughly speaking, twice that of the nearby suburbs. The same holds true for the school systems of New York and Chicago and most other large American cities. Nonetheless columnist Clarence Page will not be restrained in his urge to pontificate:

But, at least, in the middle class and mostly white suburbs of America, new ideas are given a chance to prove themselves. So far, after almost 30 years of debate, we still don't know whether black English instruction works in helping students learn standard English. Part of the reason, linguists told Specter's subcommittee, is that just about every time word gets out that a program is getting started, local controversy causes it to be shelved.

Numerous columnists, commentators and radio talk show hosts have gotten a good laugh out of the Ebonics story. But the real story is not so funny.

It is a story about urban school districts whose black students are so starved for educational resources that some officials will try to tap another shrinking pie, bilingual education funds.

That's a tough story to discuss, so we talk about a side issue like Ebonics, instead.

There's a name for such a false debate. I call it "idiotics."

[JANUARY 26, 1997]

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

The Hon. Klink discoursing on Evil in the impassioned style that has made him Capitol Hill's true heir to the late Stephen A. Douglas:

U.S. Rep. Ron Klink broke his silence Tuesday on the ethics problems plaguing Newt Gingrich by sharply rebuking the House speaker and the alleged Republican Party attempts to sweep his troubles under the rug.

At a media briefing yesterday at the Hilton Hotel, Downtown, Klink, a Democrat from Murrysville, said he had avoided interviews on the ongoing controversy because he didn't want the appearance of promoting "partisan wrangling."

"But when someone defecates on your plate over and over again, you can only turn the other cheek so often," Klink said.

[JANUARY 14, 1997]

New Republic

Someone going by the pen name of Michael Walzer in praise of short attention spans:

Since the beginning of political time, politicians have used power to build their bank accounts and satisfy their libidos. Israelite kings and Roman senators provide early examples (though I am sure there are earlier ones), and the cases multiply over the centuries. Every time I read about another one, I am shocked—exactly as I am supposed to be. I know that sort of thing is wrong; I've written a book to explain why. Still, the cases don't excite me. I rapidly lose interest in the media's and the legal system's endless pursuit of detail.... Let indignant citizens organize against personal corruption, financial and sexual—I am sure they are doing the right thing. But for the moment, at least, I'm not marching.

The sex is too uninteresting, and in any case sexual pleasure is one of the more equally distributed goods in our society. Whatever added pleasure power brings, the addition, so long as it isn't coerced, isn't outrageous....

[FEBRUARY 17, 1997]

Washington Post

Mary McGrory explains how the fiend Morris took advantage of our big lovable ug of a president:

Still, the McDougals and their ilk are nothing compared to the White House fundraising cast, a collection of hustlers and con men who bought their way in and paid to come back. And the man who began it all is Dick Morris, the reptilian consultant who sullied Clinton into raising all the money in the first place...

It's a bleak prospect, any way the president looks at it. The most he can hope—provided he beats the rap on selling foreign policy—is to emerge from it all as First Dupe.

[FEBRUARY 20, 1997]

Los Angeles Times

Investigative journalism at its best...and most pitiless:

Lia Silverstone, the star of *Clueless*, held a news conference at Beverly Hills High, where she urged students to refuse science assignments that require dissecting an animal. And she said she received an F in middle school for refusing to carve up a frog.

However, Silverstone seemed to be playing a partly fictional role here.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* tracked down her science teacher at Crocker Middle School in the Bay Area. The teacher said that not only did Silverstone not receive an F but that students in the class were not required to dissect animals.

We have to say this, though: Silverstone is the first actor we can recall who exaggerated her educational accomplishments downward.

[FEBRUARY 1, 1997]

New York Times

Love at first sight, and on the news pages of the venerable *Times*, of all places:

Tokyo, Feb. 23—As she prepares for her visit to China, the last and most sensitive test of her grueling, 9-nation, 11-day tour of the world, Madeleine K. Albright shows every sign of having a wonderful time.

Whether chatting in good French and being kissed by France's President, plunging into surprised crowds at Rome's forum, uttering the cadenced sound bite for television or even getting her talking points exactly right

in her brief visit to the anxious South Koreans, Ms. Albright is displaying an energy, practicality and cosmopolitanism that senior career diplomats find refreshing.

Like Henry Kissinger, she has star quality...

[FEBRUARY 24, 1997]

Toronto Globe and Mail

A classic compendium of all the glassy-eyed drivel devoutly believed by progressives about one of the century's foremost opponents of freedom, tolerance, science, humanism; in sum, one of the century's foremost opponents of progressivism. And this idiot esteems himself an intellectual:

This year I have chosen to describe a meeting I was granted with Fidel Castro. I have not spoken previously of this meeting in a public way because of the political sensitivities of my former role as a member of the Ontario Legislature. I am speaking out now because I believe it is time to break silence on matters that, though politically sensitive, are important to a fuller understanding in First World nations of the enormous vision, compassion, commitment and altruism of one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of the 20th century and human history.

The meeting occurred about three years ago. For security reasons Dr. Castro's whereabouts and schedule are a closely guarded secret. I knew only that I had been approved for a meeting with the Comandante. I did not know when the meeting would occur.

One evening I and my delegation's guide and interpreter were whisked to the Palace of the Revolution. I was relieved briefly of my briefcase but subjected to no other security checks before being led into a large room where we waited for about 45 minutes until Fidel, accompanied by two aides, walked in casually. We adjourned to his spacious and tastefully though modestly furnished office. I was impressed with his quiet and unpretentious manner and I found myself curiously relaxed and at peace in his presence.

We spoke for nearly two hours. There was absolutely no glad-handing salesmanship with which many North American politicians attempt to charm their guests. Dr. Castro's attitude and manner were matter-of-fact, thoughtful, quite disarming and conveyed the impression of a man thoroughly at peace with himself.

We discussed a wide range of subjects

including my psychotherapy teaching program and issues pertaining to Canadian and Cuban history and society. He was interested in knowing more about our system of government, about the welfare of our native people and he was very interested in the James Bay Hydro Electric project. He sought my views about Quebec separation. I in turn had many questions about Cuba.

I was struck with what I felt to be Dr. Castro's integrity, sincerity and calm. I have never met a better listener. He would pause and reflect in a very respectful way before providing a thoughtful and comprehensive response to every question I posed. I knew enough of Cuba and its problems that I would have easily recognized scripted or propagandized responses and there were none.

Dr. Castro conducted himself more like a thoughtful professor emeritus than a revolutionary politician and world statesman. I had the impression of a man of tremendous self-knowledge and personal integration who had dedicated his life to his country and to the goal of social justice. I sensed that his views were based on thorough thought and a great deal of scholarly pursuit and investigation.

Dr. Castro is extremely well-read and well-informed. On the several occasions when he was imprisoned for revolutionary activities he used the time to read and study works as diverse as Immanuel Kant's *Transcendental Aesthetics of Space and Time*, Franklin Roosevelt's *New Deal*, four complete volumes of the collected works of Freud, writings of Einstein and of course, the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

He is a very private man who from time to time withdraws to a self-imposed retreat when he feels himself to be at a crossroads or at a personal or philosophical watershed. He takes matters of revolutionary loyalty and altruistic commitment very seriously. He appeared to be devastated to learn during one of his imprisonments that his wife had accepted employment in a Ministry of the Batista regime....

Our meeting ended in the unpretentious manner in which it began. He walked down the hall with me, embraced me warmly at the elevators and wished me well. I felt that for the nearly two hours I had enjoyed the undivided attention and total presence of a historical giant who has given hope and a sense of dignity to oppressed people in Cuba and elsewhere.

[FEBRUARY 1, 1997]



Wedding Advisory

THE BEST WEDDING I EVER WENT TO took place a few years back in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. The Presbyterian church had bare whitewashed walls and clear windows; the only ornament was a massive brass cross over where the altar would have been if there hadn't been a Reformation. There was organ music at the beginning and the end, a single hymn in between, and a straightforward exchange of vows. The minister said a few words, to the effect that we would all be dead very soon and ought to behave as well as possible in the meantime. What I most admired was neither the aesthetics nor the theology of the ceremony but its brevity: We were in and out, and off to the reception, in hardly more than twenty minutes.

OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, I have seen my friends walk down the aisle in churches and private gardens. I have toasted the newlyweds in country clubs and hotels—and once on the grounds of a nursing home, where residents in wheelchairs watched the festivities from a few yards away. I have waded in mud under a half-fallen tent, and watched fireworks go off over the Hudson in honor of the bride and groom. It has all been worth the time and trouble: No gesture of friendship is at once so meaningful and so easy to reciprocate as a wedding invitation. Moreover, weddings are inherently exciting—dramatic performances with real consequences. But no undertaking so complicated can be sure-fire; I haven't been to one yet where something hasn't gone wrong. For all those now in the late, frantic stages of planning June nuptials, I offer a few suggestions to help their marriages start off well:

Make up your mind. Once the groom, his party, and all the guests have arrived for the ceremony, it is a little late for cold feet. One woman I know didn't think so. Her father showed up at the synagogue and asked everyone to go straight to the reception, which went on like a not very lively wake. A (distant) cousin of mine showed greater commitment. It wasn't until the *end* of his wedding day that he had second thoughts; when it came time to leave the party, he said he was having too much fun, and let his bride go off by herself. The marriage was annulled soon after. Oh, for a little patience! On their first night in Rome, a honeymooning wife told her husband, "This was a mistake. I'm going home." "Fine," he said, "but let's not waste the tickets. We can get divorced in two weeks." After that she calmed down, and of course by the end of the trip was happily reconciled to her new state.

Booze covers a multitude of sins. As we know from the Gospel of John, running out of wine at a wedding reception is a calamity worthy of divine intervention. Food, flowers, music—nothing matters much by comparison when it comes to keeping everybody happy. Stint on alcohol and your guests will curse you and all your descendants. But generosity carries its own dangers, so remember to *clear all toasts*. One maid of honor thought it would be amusing to list all the men the bride had ever tried out for the groom's position. The bride's father, a clergyman and prominent politician, was not amused. (Nor were the guests—until afterwards, when they could tell the story.) At another wedding, one of the groomsmen rose to "bless this union," and decry all the "bad women" who had rejected his friend up till then. At yet another, a fellow recounted one of the groom's college stunts—attempting sexual congress with the statue of a Civil War hero in a public park—and declared that his friend's taste had greatly improved.

Mainstream the swingles. We unmarried folk enjoy the most enviable of lifestyles, with nothing to do after work but take yoga classes at the Open University or play catch-up volleyball with our fellow tenants in the garden-apartment complex. Yet at weddings we sink to the rank of untouchables, wretches let into the feast to remind the coupled majority how lucky they really are. We are resigned to this role, and prefer social events that are not attempts at social engineering. The eight to ten people at a swingles table probably have nothing in common except their solitude, which doesn't bode well for lively conversation, much less inspired flirtation. The notion that there's fairy dust in the air, and that everyone will pair off by the end, as in a Shakespeare comedy, is just fantasy. The best one can hope for is farce.

Location, location, location. A remote waterfall or a picturesque Vermont hamlet are fine spots to visit on a honeymoon, but not to drag your frail grandparents and child-toting friends to. After all my hassles with plane changes, rental cars, and poor directions, I have decided that the perfect spot for a wedding would be the airport chapel in a major airline's hub city, with the reception at the airport Marriott or Hilton. This would make connecting flights and overnight stays unnecessary for most guests, who could buy their presents on site. Expect lots of cigarettes, consumer electronics, and John Grisham novels. As always, it's the thought that counts. ❀