

Borked

I write to dissent from the derisive review by *Wall Street Journal* theater critic Donald Lyons of Robert H. Bork's book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, that you published in December.

It would be pointless to attempt to refute the review's many mischaracterizations of the book. There are too many. Perhaps the reviewer read the book, but there is little evidence of that in the review.

Why *The American Spectator* chose a theater critic to review Judge Bork's thorough and extraordinarily well-researched analysis of the decline of American culture and its consequences is a mystery. But the tone of the review suggests that Mr. Lyons is piqued that Judge Bork dared to tread on Mr. Lyons's sacred territory. "An incisive legal mind," Lyons snipes, "does not necessarily make for incisive cultural criticisms." Well, there you have it. Cultural criticism should be kept to real professionals such as theater critics.

Mr. Lyons's dismissive review could, on reflection, have resulted from an actual reading of Judge Bork's book. Judge Bork refers in his book to "intellectuals" as the "chattering class," most of whose members are "not involved with serious mental work," but "spend their time and usually make their livings, by producing or distributing, at wholesale or retail, ideals and symbols. They need not be, and often are not, very good at dealing with ideas." Mr. Lyons may have seen himself in those words and chose to counterattack with his review.

Your readers should not be put off by what Mr. Lyons offers as an analysis of *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*. Judge Bork has taken the time to chronicle and analyze forces at work in this country that have very disturbing implications. No one who cares about our country or its future should miss reading this book.

—THEODORE B. OLSON
Washington, D.C.

Donald Lyons replies:

Mr. Olson does not defend Mr. Bork's book, for he cannot, but instead wastes indignation on the idea of a cultural critic reviewing a book about culture.

Write On

William Tucker's article in *TAS* of October, "The Moral of the Story," was one of the best I have had the privilege of reading in any publication in the past several months. The article is a basic analysis of American social and political problems, attempted by many authors but rarely executed in so skillful a manner. Many of us deplore welfare and can see the damage that has been done in these sixty or so years, but only rarely do we read an analysis that explains so completely and skillfully the underlying faults in the process, the cause of damage to the nation. My compliments to Mr. Tucker.

—MORRIS GURALNICK
Orofino, Idaho

Bryant's Loss

I read with much glee that there is an unwanted copy of R. Emmett Tyrrell's new book, *Boy Clinton*, floating around (Correspondence, *TAS*, November 1996). If Rep. John Bryant doesn't want his copy, can I have it?!

—MRS. ROBERT L. WARNER, JR.
warner@globaldialog.com

Happy Days Are Here Again

You could not stand the thought of Boy Clinton being elected president again; however, your innate support of conservative candidates and their philosophy, at the expense of supporting Bob Dole, the only one with a chance of beating the Slickster, disgustingly helped Clinton ease into office one more time.

It wasn't so much the defeat by Clinton as it was the "conservatives'" pyrrhic victory over Bob Dole and Jack Kemp, aided and abetted by narrow minded ideologues such as Kristol, Phillips, Weyrich, Sobran, and, of course, your staff.

You must be most editorially happy...

—E.A. RICHARDS
drer@execpc/cp

Another Carville

You guys are publishing porno for political perverts. My only question is—do you know it? Or do you really believe the garbage you publish?

Have a nice evening next Tuesday [Election Day]. And thanks in advance for helping to make the outcome what it will be.

—CURT CORE
L-Pad@webtv.net

Blaming the Victim

You've done a terrific job inoculating the populace against any and all outrageous (or even not-so-outrageous) accusation against the Clintons. As a Republican who once voted for Goldwater and Nixon but due to disgust with you and your bash-the-Clintons publication, I will be voting for Democrats. Thanks again!

—H.W. LIOTT
liotta@aldus.northnet.or

Bothered and Bewildered

This is *not* one of those silly, whining "cancel my subscription because you said something mean" letters. I have been an avid reader of *The American Spectator* (in its various appellations) for almost twenty years and plan to continue. In hopes of improving a good magazine, however, offer the following constructive criticism.

There has been a disturbing negative trend in the tenor and substance of your magazine regarding President Clinton. It has become disturbingly uncivil and increasingly tabloid-like. A few examples: The credibility of the November editorial alleging frequent cocaine use by the president about equals that of the federal prison inmate who claimed to have once sold drugs to then-Vice President Quayle.

Several issues ago, you reported an encounter between the president and Mr. Tyrrell concerning a bottle of champagne (It was also reported elsewhere.)

Even following his own account, Mr. Tyrrell's actions were boorish. The accompanying photo of Mr. Tyrrell grabbing the tie of a Clinton look-alike actor was in poor taste. What is our polity coming to if leading conservatives behave this way towards the president, especially in the presence of his child?

Several pundits have noted that conservative animosity toward Clinton resembles the liberals' hate for President Nixon.



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JOHN COLTRANE

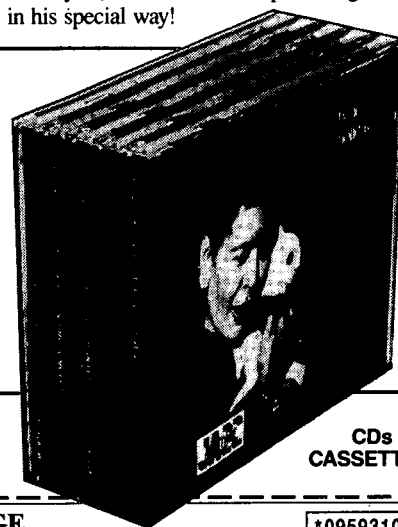
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LOUIS ARMSTRONG

AND KING OLIVER. Included here are: *Just Gone; Canal Street Blues; Mandy Lee Blues; I'm Going Away to Wear You Off My Mind; Chimes Blues; Weather Bird Rag; Dipper Mouth Blues; Froggie Moore; Snake Rag; Alligator Hop; Zulu's Ball; Workingman's Blues; Krokod Blues; Mabel's Dream; Southern Stomp; Riverside Blues;* plus seven Red Onion Jazz Babies selections. Exciting sounds of a host of early jazz greats!

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I wouldn't go so far as to equate Mr. Tyrrell's behavior with burning flags and draft cards, but of course we expect far more of conservative leaders than of radical hippies. Perhaps Mr. Tyrrell thought it all in good fun, or had flashed back to the youthful if sophomoric vigor of a college paper. Yet the episode was, well, disappointing.

It's quite possible that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may have turned into another trough for pork instead of a means for more efficiently using federal resources during an emergency. Yet in a recent rush to condemn the Clinton administration's operation of FEMA, your reporter James Bovard unfairly impugned Reagan administration appointee Louis Giuffrida ("FEMA Money! Come & Get It," TAS, September 1996). It was implied that Giuffrida was selected only as a "crony of Ed Meese." This is false; Giuffrida had precisely the expertise needed for FEMA. In addition to a distinguished military career, Giuffrida helped to establish the California Specialized Training Institute under then-Governor Reagan. The Institute is nationally recognized for providing some of the nation's best training for law enforcement in emergency operations such as hostage situations and the management of natural and man-made disasters.

The president's character is certainly a valid issue. Yet the increasing number of poorly substantiated attacks is counter-productive. Without solid evidence to back accusations, they risk adding mere noise that dilutes the public's attention from any serious evidence that may appear, and adds credence to claims that the special prosecutor is on a political witch hunt.

Furthermore, by getting carried away in personal assaults on the president, the very real faults of his policies may get swept aside. By all accounts, Al Gore's ethics can withhold scrutiny at least as well as any Republican's. In 2001 (or earlier?), would this country really be better off with a far more liberal President Gore?

Refocusing your efforts on policy issues would better serve both the public and *The American Spectator*. I hope you will do so.

—CHRISTOPHER M. SCHNAUBELT
Santa Maria, California

Road-Tested Ross

In his review of *Citizen Perot: His Life and Times*, Tucker Carlson accuses Ross Perot of knowing "next to nothing about how cars are manufactured and sold." Maybe so, but neither does Carlson.

He points out that Perot harangued General Motors for taking five years to develop a car. In fact, development time was an area where the Japanese auto makers held a key advantage over GM and other Western car builders. Fast development both saves money and keeps the product closer to market demands. These days, some car makers develop cars in as little as two-and-a-half years, and they take every opportunity to brag about this achievement.

Furthermore, the record at GM during its dalliance with Perot suggests that GM management didn't know much about manufacturing and selling cars either: When Roger Smith became chairman in 1982, GM had 43 percent of the American car market. When he retired that share had shrunk to 35 percent and continued to shrink in the succeeding years. In 1992, the board of directors finally reacted to this self-destruction by replacing the chairman and president who had been hand-picked by Smith.

One can properly criticize Perot for failing to effectively influence GM's management. But Perot's mid-eighties criticisms of the world's largest auto maker seem amazingly prescient when viewed with a decade's hindsight.

—CSABA CSERE
Editor-in-Chief
Car and Driver
Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Fix Is Always In

Tom Bethell's November column, "Coming to Terms," is, for the most part, on target. He is correct that a large part of the electorate seems to think of President Clinton as "an amiable rascal"; however, Bethell falls into the old standard, misguided view of current politics in the Arkansas-neighboring state of Louisiana. The Cajun "bayou-dwellers" comprise a small part of Louisiana, and *les bons temps roulez* philosophy is largely confined to what we refer to as Acadiana, which comprises less than 18 percent of the state's population. The state political control in

Louisiana is usually decided by a coalition of Afro-American and union voters. Most of the non-unionized Caucasian voters in statewide elections usually have their votes nullified by the Afro-American/union combination. In tomorrow's senatorial election, the liberal Democrat, Ms. Landrieu, needs only about one-third of the so-called white votes in order to win. Union and soccer moms will automatically give her about 30 percent of the white vote to start with, and over 90 percent of the Afro-Americans are going to vote for a member of the Democratic Party regardless of the candidate's color or gender.

The main point on Louisiana politics completely missed by Washington writer like Mr. Bethell is that, with occasional exceptions such as our fine current governor, the outcome of statewide election is determined by an Afro-American and union coalition, not by the small group of fun-loving francophiles of Acadiana.

—JACK W. GRIGSBY
Shreveport, Louisiana

Of Human Bondage

While I am always both amused and informed after an hour or so spent reading your articles, this month I was also somewhat perturbed to read James Ring Adams's treatment of my own legal specialty—bond counsel work—in his article "The Clinton Plan to Steal Your Retirement Savings" (TAS, November 1996).

Mr. Adams makes many telling points about the bond industry and its historical tendency towards a "pay to play" mentality. Since by definition all municipal bond issues are political in nature—each must, after all, be approved by a city council, county board or state agency—I suppose some of the ingrained sucking-up to politicians is inevitable. I admired the cynicism, if not the accuracy, of the general description of the bond market appearing on page 45.

There are undoubtedly some municipalities and state agencies where bribing public officials is the avenue to success in the bond counsel business. There are probably some attorneys practicing in this area who willingly engage in this form of backsheesh, and others who feel pressured into participating as a cost of doing business. Some bribes are open and notorious; some

are more subtly requested and delivered, generally in the form of a contribution to a future political campaign that may never be fought. There are also state and local agencies with revolving doors, through which bond counsel attorneys are transformed into bond authority members and then, at the end of the administration in question, back into private bond counsel. The law firms from which they “graduate” often become (surprise!) the designated bond counsel firm for bonds issued by the issuing authority. In some cases, law firms hire attorneys recommended by a politician whom they wish to please, after which time they are rewarded with new appointments for bond counsel work. In others, even well-respected bond counsel firms will make substantial voluntary PAC donations to an individual seeking an office that has bonding authority, in the hope that they will be looked upon favorably for bond counsel work following a successful election.

The bond business is a strange and often uncomfortable blend of private industry and political decision-making, created by the intricacies of the Internal Revenue Code. Because I am familiar with the standards of conduct/ethical regulations for federal employees, I am often surprised at the looseness of state and local codes for other public officials. On one occasion, I recall being solicited by a public official for a fee-generating, long-term “understanding” which I believed wholly unlawful. When I rushed to the state code, I found there was no conflict-of-interest provision in that jurisdiction against a public official entering into such an arrangement in exchange for his obtaining state legal work for the private firm. I would have loved to cite chapter and verse as an objection to the official, but instead was relegated to merely walking away.

Mr. Adams should know, on the other hand, that there are plenty of bond lawyers in the United States who try, as I do, to succeed—based upon competence and quality service. Their political contributions are colored by their views of candidates and issues and are entirely independent of their hopes for increases in the bond business. His general comment that bond lawyers “receive high fees for very little work” may apply in specific cases but does not have general support in the bond practice.

Most bond counsel firms would be delighted to see greater restrictions placed upon public officials, a complete bar against political contributions, and federal oversight of the process, so that competition for work could proceed on the basis of qualifications rather than one’s credit-rating.

—LISALEE ANNE WELLS
Long Beach, California

The Rifleman

Kenneth R. Timmerman tarnishes an otherwise fine article (“Whatever Happened to Iraqgate?” *TAS*, November 1996) by his seriously flawed description of the NRA’s annual Camp Perry match as “men in camouflage battle fatigues committing unexplained acts of violence under the cover of darkness.”

That statement is not only bizarre, but bears not a scintilla of truth. The prestigious annual matches held at Camp Perry started in the year 1907! The upcoming match will mark the 90th year of competition. The best marksmen in the United States will compete with the best from the armed forces and the law enforcement community.

The next Camp Perry match begins July 15, 1997, and will conclude on August 17. Mr. Timmerman is welcome to attend as an observer or competitor provided that he will not be offended by the truth. All firing for each day ceases at 7 p.m. Bring your watch, Mr. Timmerman.

—G. NEWTON HALEBLIAN
Rifle, Colorado

Until the government began taking serious hunk out of the Second Amendment, the NRA was known primarily as a shooting sports organization. It is still that.

Mr. Timmerman’s tongue-in-cheek reference to the NRA’s annual Camp Perry National Matches “giving rise to tales of men in camouflage battle fatigues committing unexplained acts of violence under cover of darkness” was, respectively, partially right, wrong, and wrong.

As reported in the NRA’s *American Rifleman*, many of the Champions at Camp Perry this year happened to be military people—some in camouflage duds. Other winners weren’t men or even males at all. One Champ was a 12-year-old young lady from Colorado. Every “act” was fully explained

and then some; the violence happened to inanimate targets (and perhaps to some egos); and all events except the awards were carried out in the full light of day.

Any real reports of men in camouflage battle fatigues committing unexplained acts of violence under cover of darkness are probably triggered by Delta Force folks practicing for the day—or night—the Posse Comitatus Act publicly bites the dust.

—PAUL WESCOTT
wesc@ptialaska.net

O.J. 2000

In November’s Last Call, M.D. Carnegie claims to “still see that snowy Buffalo afternoon” on which O.J. Simpson broke the 2,000-yard barrier. Having been in attendance that day, I can assure Mr. Carnegie that it was a snowy Flushing afternoon, as the game was played in Shea Stadium.

—JEFFREY A. SCHWARTZ
Brooklyn, New York

M.D. Carnegie replies:

I fumbled. Because the Bills were wearing white uniforms, I erroneously assumed they were playing at home. My thanks to Mr. Schwartz and the many other readers who wrote in to set me straight.

The Boy in the Bubble

I had heard of your publication but never read it. Last month I flew the Delta Shuttle and picked up a copy. I was astounded at the quality of the magazine and the wit of the writers, especially Mark Steyn. I am a 32-year-old married, white, self-employed father, and consider myself to be a moderate. I will now spread the word of *TAS* to my friends. Keep up the good work. It appears that you have for the last twenty-nine years. Where have I been, in a bubble?

—CONSTANTINE G. PERGANTIS
Washington, D.C.

Working Online

I was so happy to discover you had an online service. Love Ben Stein and James Bowman. Mark Steyn is hilarious. We regular readers need these happy optimistic people to balance the desapor that Adams, Brock, and York bring us. Four more years... help us, O Lord. See you later.

—PAUL F. MULLIGAN
folly@telerama.lm.com



The West Huang

When the Democratic National Committee made much of its post-election furloughing of ace fundraiser **John Huang**, it failed to mention that it gave Huang a six-figure payout, or that he has already spoken with departing White House chief of staff **Leon Panetta** and current White House counsel **Jack Quinn** about doing "volunteer" fundraising work in California for a '98 Panetta gubernatorial run and a 2000 Gore for President campaign, which Quinn expects to help run. While more than \$1 million in dirty money raised by Huang has now been returned, he raised a lot more than that for the party last year and he's not being written off. In a private meeting with party co-chairman Sen. **Christopher Dodd** before the furlough was announced,



Dodd told Huang he was a "party hero" and joked that his services would always be welcome so long as Huang kept his "chin up and his profile down, way down."

Incidentally, reporting on the DNC scandals has remarkably omitted one ques-

tion: How much of the shady dealing was sponsored by Dodd himself? It defies credulity that lower level apparatchiks, even the hyperactive Huang himself, were responsible for such a string of abuses, which under Dodd's watch have included the suspension of safeguards against illegal contributions and failure to file a final pre-election report to the Federal Election Commission. Dodd says this all happened without his knowledge, a claim rather too consistent with his frequent "So what?" stonewalling during the Senate Whitewater hearings. Since Congress is notoriously reluctant to investigate a colleague—the animus against **Newt Gingrich** derives from what he did to former speaker **Jim Wright**—questions about Dodd's role make another argument for referring the case to an independent counsel.

Clean Break

Post-Whitewater Arkansas is a more family oriented, honest, and politically open place to work and invest, Governor **Mike Huckabee** told a group of media types in a recent expedition to New York City. Even allowing for the state-booster rhetoric, Huckabee's talk was a remarkable repudiation of the corrupt regimes of his predecessors, **Jim Guy Tucker** and that other guy. In November Arkansas voters elected their first Republican U.S. senator of modern times, as well as two Republican U.S. representatives and

a GOP lieutenant governor, **Winthrop Paul Rockefeller**. Huckabee, a Baptist preacher, was elected as lieutenant governor in a 1993 upset, after a campaign in which he railed against the state's one-party lid on competition—a recipe, he said, for carelessness and corruption. He was not on the ballot himself this time; and though he has maintained an 80 percent approval rating, Huckabee still faces tough odds. He has a thin pool of talent on which to draw for appointments, and the elections didn't greatly improve the Republicans' meager presence in the state legislature.

Power Couple

Eileen McGann, the long-suffering wife of former Clinton strategist **Dick Morris**, is making waves in her own right. The high-profile defense lawyer has the Connecticut bar in an uproar with her attempt to free **Joseph Santopietro**, the former Republican mayor of Waterbury who was convicted in 1992 in a federal corruption case that took down a good part of City Hall. At a late October hearing, McGann argued that her client deserved a new trial in part because his previous counsel was no good. That would have been **Hugh Keefe**, one of Connecticut's best-known attorneys. To criticize Keefe's trial performance, McGann produced civil-rights lawyer **John Williams**, a notorious Keefe rival. In a recent suit Keefe—representing the fam-

ily of Williams's deceased law partner—accused Williams of misappropriating the proceeds of her life insurance. The animosity carried over into the Santopietro hearing: during his testimony, Keefe took a zing at her spousal embarrassment. "I don't know about you, Ms. McGann," he



said, "but I don't like to be a doormat for anybody."

A Very, Very Fine House

Did White House deputy counsel **Jane Sherburne** know about a scandal before anyone else? The House Oversight committee wants to know. In the 12-page White House Clinton scandal "task list" memo released to House and Senate Whitewater investigators last July, which Sherburne compiled in November 1994, she listed as a potential problem area "residence renovations." Committee investigators wonder whether this was a reference to the DNC's shakedown of Asian businessmen for funds to renovate a childhood home of Bill Clinton's in Arkansas and turn it into a museum.