

the acceptance of God. Without God, positive law—ever changing, always relative—carries the day. They recognize that without God all things are possible and see not only the Soviet Union but the contemporary West as telling examples of what “all things” can be. The czarist system, for all its arbitrary power, was limited to some extent by the moral strictures of Christianity: the gulag was simply not possible then. These Russian critics hope that their people will turn to the Church, to the best of old Russia, to the culture that spawned not only *proizvol* but Tolstoy and Tchaikovsky, to

find the raw materials for building a new Russia. To fail to do so means once again to impose an alien system from above, for where else could the Westernized Russia come from? Moreover, even if one accepts the argument that Russian culture produced Soviet tyranny, it is wrongheaded to assume that is all it produced or is capable of producing. Our own civilization, after all, has produced St. Thomas, Shakespeare, and Mother Teresa, as well as Hitler, Dr. Kevorkian, and Hillary Clinton. One can surely find much to say in favor of a (Russian) culture that produces an Aleksandr

Solzhenitsyn as its social conscience. The closest thing that we have is Phil or Oprah. Our ancestors knew that the good life is not necessarily one that is materially comfortable. Russia, assuming there is enough of the best of her heritage left to build on and enough people who care about doing the building, may never be a democracy or a consumers’ paradise, but she could still be a society that her people could be proud of.

—Wayne Allensworth
Purcellville, VA

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

O.J. SIMPSON is now the most famous human being upon the planet. The details of the case can be of no interest to anyone intellectual enough to enjoy a game of “Go Fish,” but the debates, private as well as public, it has spawned will haunt us for some time. From fairly early on most whites admitted to believing him guilty, while a majority of blacks profess to think him innocent. In fact, what black Americans mean when they say that O.J. is an innocent victim of a white conspiracy is something much simpler and more reasonable than is supposed. What they mean is that Mr. Simpson is guilty of a justifiable or excusable homicide. They are not basing their defense on the old grounds of the *crime passionelle*, since, after all, the Simpsons were divorced, and if it were argued that Mr. Simpson took a Christian view of marriage, one would have to explain his own divorce, to say nothing of his own incessant womanizing.

No, it is not as outraged husband that Simpson is to be defended but as a black who killed a white. Khallid Muhammad, among the many black leaders supporting Simpson, had already received a standing ovation at Howard University for demanding a Colin Ferguson Day to commemorate the psychopath who shot up a train car full of white people, and his opinion seems to be widely shared within the community.

Two years ago in *Chronicles* I wrote an essay on the return of status to American law. Once upon a time, a man’s status determined the kind of justice he re-

ceived in court, but after several hundred years of reform, the civilized theory of equality before the law had triumphed, at least in theory. Today, it is increasingly difficult to sustain that fiction. Affirmative action requirements, hate crimes statutes, sensitivity training, and the double jeopardy inflicted upon the officers in the Rodney King case make it clear that there is one law for minorities—however defined—and another for those of us with the misfortune to be born straight white males of European descent. The entire Simpson case is an amusing *reductio ad absurdum* of this principle, since the public debate boils down to a shouting match between feminists clamoring for more laws protecting wives from abusive husbands and so-called black leaders working hard to persuade their followers that they are victims of discrimination. All we need now is for the ADL—a bigot lobby claiming to defend the interests of the most successful ethnic group in the history of the world, American Jews—to enter the picture on behalf of Mr. Goldman. I’d love this country, if I didn’t have to live here.

Mr. Simpson’s status is defined both by his celebrity and by his race. As a hero to good old American football fans whose minds are too uncomplicated to appreciate baseball or soccer, Simpson is entitled to special treatment, and as a rich celebrity he is entitled to be defended by the high-price lawyers that only rich liberals can afford to hire when they are trapped by the oppressive legal system they have created. But even if Mr. Simpson had spent all his money

on cocaine, his status as victim would ensure him first-class treatment, and in Los Angeles it is going to be very hard to find a mixed race jury that will vote unanimously for a verdict of guilty.

But suppose by some miracle Mr. Simpson is found guilty. He will most certainly not face the death penalty. Black leaders all over the country are already insisting that the death penalty is selectively used against blacks. The fact that blacks are approximately nine times as likely to commit murder as whites might explain why so many blacks are on death row, but even supposing there were bias in the application of the death penalty, what sane person could possibly care? I happen to believe that in fact whites are more likely to be executed than blacks, but so long as some murderers are put to death, I cannot complain, and if I were black, I should feel even more strongly on this point, since the victims of most black murderers are black. If a black is more likely to get executed for killing whites than for killing blacks, this does not mean that if he were returned to the streets he would not be more likely to kill members of his own race.

The entire debate over the death penalty reveals the stupidity and dishonesty of America’s media establishment. The worst victims of such disinformation are the many otherwise decent black men and women who are being fed this steady diet of lies and hate. It is poisoning their character today, and before too long the inevitable white backlash will not distinguish the gang-

sters and punks who are besieging our cities like packs of wild dogs from the ordinary people who have been reduced to servile laziness by the welfare state and infected with a sense of victimization that prevents them from doing anything to help themselves.

—Thomas Fleming

PBS HUCKSTERS Biff and Muffy bleated “Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!” from my TV and radio a couple of weeks back. They’re volunteers who run informational plead-a-thons on WTAX (KTAX west of the Mississippi). Looking weary after a dreadful day in the operating room or maybe on the trading floor—and even though their Pierre Cardins were rumpled and Paco Rabanne was fading—Muffy and Biff still found selfless time to honk the usual high-minded bluster about quality, variety, diversity, excellence, and community service, not to mention motherhood, hot dogs, and the crumminess of commercial broadcasting.

Great stuff, huh? Quick, name one regular show that’s produced by PBS in your town. Now ask your friends if they can. No, not *Sesame Street*, not *Nova*, something *locally* produced for all of those bucks. What is this tony team praising? Fact—PBS is where thousands of people get paid to entertain hundreds of viewers with a grant from our children—make-work for Ivy League semiotics majors. In fact, Nielsen’s data show that the 196 licensed PBS stations are primarily sitters for preschoolers and the aged.

According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “PBS’s numbers are dwarfed by its commercial network competitors. Its top-rated show [last] fall was the farewell movie of *I’ll Fly Away*, which didn’t attract enough viewers to survive on NBC. The 5.2 rating, cause for celebration at PBS, would have ranked the movie near the bottom of prime-time commercial shows. On a typical night in prime time, PBS reaches 2.4 percent of American homes.” Need a safe-house for *America’s Most Wanted*? Star them on a PBS show.

Suppose your cable company carried another distant PBS station and your local outfit went dark tonight . . . who would notice? Why are there local installations at all, when we could beam PBS from a cable-linked satellite like CNN, A&E, C-SPAN, or Nickelodeon?

And why do Biff and Muffy keep telling us how much they pay for all that marginal programming? With rarely more than a three-share, why did the feds give a quarter of a billion tax dollars last year to PBS to make that stuff? And since they’ve already grabbed so much of our money, why not just tell them, “Hey Biff and Muffy, we already gave at the office!”

Shallow, small-minded thinking? Take a trip to your PBS affiliate. Marvel at their equipment. And then ask where their capital, not their operating, their *capital* budget comes from. Imagine if your boss didn’t have to pay a bank note for land, equipment, computers, or even the purchase of the business. Imagine how much more would be left to pay you. On top of that, imagine getting listeners to mail some of their tax dollars to you instead of Washington! Wow, free equipment, then tax-subsidized bonuses (money for nothing and Muffy for free)! Well, what do you think tax-deductible contributions are?

Every buck oozing into a neighborhood PBS money-pit feeds the deficit that your kids will have to pay. Toxic tax spill. Even though Biff and Muffy could never utter it, each of those PBS shows is brought to you, literally, by a grant from your kids. And the fact that they spend about a quarter of all dollars raised to solicit even more pledges confirms that PBS T-shirt, “It is morally wrong to let suckers keep their money.”

And what whimsical programming they’ve got. Take the MacNeil/Lehrer illusion of balance: pit Democratic left-wing columnist Mark Shields against Clinton advisor David Gergen on a weekly political debate during the presidential election. That’s like booking Anita Hill and Lorena Bobbitt to probe the joy of the American housewife. And biased? How can it be when the third-largest source of most operating (and virtually all capital) dollars (after pledges and business gifts) is the federal government, in the form of grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Remember CPB? That’s the independent organization Congress created in 1967 to keep politics out of funding. Listen to Muffy and Biff smugly reveal, “This programming’s not for everybody.” They got that right. Judging by the numbers, you’re less likely to find a true conservative on PBS than in Berkeley’s sociology department.

PBS has a new and potent president,

Ervin Duggan, a 54-year-old ex-member of the Federal Communications Commission and its most outspoken critic of TV violence and strongest advocate of federal decency standards. Appointed to the FCC by President George Bush in 1990, Duggan is a Democrat who was a White House aide to Lyndon B. Johnson and who actively worked on creating PBS. He is considered fair-minded. Duggan says he wants to settle the long-standing controversy over the network’s *alleged* liberal bias, insisting that liberals and conservatives both want the same thing—diversity of opinion and inclusion. However, most people inside PBS consider him a friend with a deep commitment to the institution and some powerful buddies in both Congress and the FCC who could be rough on critics of public broadcasting, especially if they do talk-shows on commercial radio.

Meantime, Public Radio stations are sniffing at talk-show programming. Your tax dollars at work. Most of these stations carry a commercial-free, financial advisor. . . . Bye bye to ABC’s Bob Brinker. And there are the two cool mechanic guys. . . . Adios to American Radio’s Dr. Dre Bumgartner. This is alternative programming because it uses *commercial broadcaster* taxes to drive *commercial broadcasters* out of business as an alternative—to them. These guys do not forget to pillage before they burn.

Given the realities of competition, the PBS mission is dead, lying on the carpet, twitching. And when they pull the sheet up over its vacant eyes, Disney will buy Big Bird, Fred Rogers, and Barney in a New York minute. One of the Mr. Turners will snap up MacNeil and Lehrer, while A&E and Discovery are already re-running old PBS stuff to large audiences. Big steaming slabs of raw meat will be hacked away by networks who service taxpaying audiences between the ages of three and sixty.

How to stop that? Well, who needs mission if you’ve got money? Last year, a group of business leaders convened by the nonpartisan Twentieth Century Fund all agreed that PBS needs financial support. So, why not, they asked, have commercial broadcasters and cellular phone companies pay fees for their use of the public airwaves—you know, the way ranchers pay to graze cattle or sheep on public property? Can you imagine business leaders suggesting that they be charged to finance their weakest competitors? These guys at PBS don’t want

an equal contest . . . they don't want a contest. And, by the way, what court ever said that the airwaves are public property? Imagine if government claimed ownership of everything it regulated? Under those assumptions, who owns your car or your home—or, for that matter, you?

Calculated on a dollars-per-bleat basis, it is no surprise that PBS stations surround Biff-and-Muffy begathons with *Yawny in Concert* and whales. If Muffy and Biff are right, and if your neighborhood station is not just draining art dollars away from local musicians, theater, museums, and poets, then ask why Muffy and Biff don't whine only on locally produced PBS shows. Because these people are the Jack Kevoorkians of regional arts, sniffing out politically weaker cultural institutions. While you and your children pay for PBS installations and staffs, even Muffy and Biff don't watch the few programs PBS affiliates might genuinely make. This proves once again that taxes aren't raised for the benefit of the taxed.

—Ted Byrne

A WASHINGTON POST story earlier this year began, "Gunfire erupted among a group of teenagers in a hallway at Dunbar High School." Here was yet another tale of teenagers and guns in our nation's capital, of shootings at school, of another day when class ended not with the ring of a bell but with the frightening sound of shattering glass and bullets hitting the desks. It is a nightmare that has become all too familiar to families living in what one local columnist calls the District of Calamity.

Yet the shooting itself was less interesting than what the two reporters ingenuously revealed just a few lines later. In fact, few reporters have better described the intractable social pathology destroying the once tightly woven fabric of the inner-city American family: "We were in a panic; people were running around trying to figure out what was going on," said 11th grader Tashia Robertson, 17, who was in the chemistry class. . . . [Robertson] quickly went to get her year-old son from the day-care facility in the school. . . . 'I was scared for me and my baby,' Robertson said as she left the campus. 'I'm getting out of here.'"

Undeniably, Tashia learned something in school besides how to get pregnant, i.e., the mortal danger of public ed-

ucation in a realm ruled by the likes of Marion Shepilov Barry. But young Tashia's split-second brush with death and her serendipitous comment about her child ought to be more instructive to us than 12 years of school are to her. For one thing, the reporters wrote about Tashia's motherhood, disturbingly enough, as if it were the most normal condition in the world for a teenager, which it is in inner cities. Teenagers and babies and daycare are all part of the quotidian routine at schools in Washington, D.C. Somewhere, presumably, there's time for English and algebra.

But the subtext to the reportage is the more important lesson. Public schools, the one arm of government in which parents must place absolute trust because it has responsibility for their children, have become yet another apparatus of the therapeutic state, a place where every citizen has a problem the government must heal. In the District of Calamity, that is a herculean task, which is why six of every ten residents work for the federal city's government.

If junior doesn't get breakfast, the school will provide one for free. If mom cannot—or will not—pack lunch, that's no problem. The school has a free hot-lunch program. If mom or dad won't be home when the school day ends, daycare is available. The price is right, of course. "It doesn't cost a penny."

Yet if babysitting a generation of bastards is the common denominator to which public schools have been reduced, then it is no surprise that the District's government cannot fulfill its legitimate duties, such as punishing criminals. As Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly's therapists ponder the weighty matters of Norplant and self-esteem, criminals rule the streets, which is precisely why Her Honor called for the National Guard after the homeboys enjoyed one particularly thrilling weekend of mayhem and murder.

The therapeutic state is necessarily a totalitarian state, if only because it does so much of what it should not do and so little of what it should do that it finally must do everything it possibly can do. The condoms don't work, so the schools provide daycare. The antigun laws fail, so the police arbitrarily search law-abiding citizens for them. When darkness creeps over the Potomac, criminals rule the streets, so the mayor declares a curfew to keep everyone inside until a new day dawns.

If so much money weren't wasted and so many lives weren't so tragically ruined, conditions in the nation's capital would be hilarious. They cry out for satirization in a Tom Wolfe novel. The city and its elders, after all, are the apotheosis of everything wrong with late 20th-century urban America. Sad thing is, conditions aren't likely to improve until they get much worse and until the beguiled parents in the District of Calamity take their kids back from the bureaucratic therapists trying to destroy them.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

VIOLENT CRIME in California dropped for the first nine months of 1993 over the same period in 1992, reported attorney general Dan Lungren last winter. But statistics are of no comfort, and Lungren knows it. During the same press conference he even said so: "The reason people are more worried today than they ever have been before is the randomness." Or as pollster Marvin Field told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "When you have the Polly Klaas cases and the serial killers and the sexual molesters, that kind of crime bursts the bubble of feeling that you can protect yourself." Even in traditionally liberal San Francisco, bleeding hearts are hardening. After the abduction and murder of Klaas by a repeat offender, for instance, a *Chronicle* reporter told me that many of his most liberal newsroom colleagues had been broken and turned by the ordeal of tracking the local tragedy.

Average San Franciscans can likewise only take so much, which became clear after another particularly cold-blooded murder in the heavily touristed Fisherman's Wharf area (just a few months after a teenage Irish tourist was nearly shot dead for no reason in the same area by a 16-year-old out on a weekend pass from a juvenile facility). Michael Stuckey, age 23, suffered a mortal knife wound while trying to break up a mugging. His suspected killer, who has a considerable rap sheet, was arrested in a nearby Bay Street housing project, the one that surrounds a cable car turnaround where tourists, with good reason, wait pensively to be delivered upward to Knob Hill.

Even the televised dramatization of *Tales of the City* has not been enough to divert media and citizen attention away from the streets—no small thing for a city that has a sense of nostalgia that

can eclipse all else. For instance, facing minimal protest, Mayor Frank Jordan is going through with his "Matrix" program to get certain street people, many of whom can be downright menacing, off the streets.

Meal-ticket civil libertarians and radical clergy have been thrown into a predictable tizzy. But their rallies have failed to draw any significant numbers. One overnight protest in front of City Hall attracted a crowd of only 250, slim pickings for a city with a tradition of drawing throngs for any demonstration demanding "social justice" from City Hall's coffers. The next day's account of the protest in the *Chronicle* spells out why, as the Reverend Robert McAfee Brown of Palo Alto's First Presbyterian Church showed just how divorced from street life some homeless activists are: "We want to make an act of solidarity with homeless people," he said.

But if that's really the case, then, as anyone who works in the City Hall area or has to walk through it can tell you, the Reverend Brown ought to be sipping solidarity from a quart malt liquor bottle or smoking it from a crack pipe only a hundred yards away from City Hall on the steps of the emergency exits from the Civic Auditorium. If the reverend wanted to save souls, this would be an excellent place to start. To get to these homeless he would have to skip over broken bottles, streams of urine, and litter of all kinds, including the occasional soiled condom and used syringe. But by then he might even have second thoughts about Matrix, which links the self-destructive and disoriented to social services and puts criminals with outstanding warrants in jail.

San Franciscans have suffered a compassion breakdown, which is evident by the pathetic anti-Matrix effort—and the amazing tough talk by the city's mainstream media. The usually liberal *San*

Francisco Examiner, for instance, sounded downright traditionalist—echoing the Bushian "points of light" voluntarism—in an editorial entitled "Don't Give to Beggars." "Some [on the streets] are hard-luck cases. Some are afflicted with multiple ailments. And some are simply parasites," the editorial read. "No city should have to endure legions of beggars. . . . Give to Glide Memorial. Give to St. Anthony's. Give to St. Martin de Porres. Give to the Salvation Army. . . . Don't give to beggars."

Should it make the streets even remotely more hospitable to the working and tax-paying populace, Matrix may win Jordan, a moderate Democrat suffering from low numbers in popularity polls, a second term. In contrast, former mayor Art Agnos let the homeless have their way, and what aptly came to be known as "Camp Agnos," a homeless Hooverville, sprang up in front of City Hall, causing a long-running national embarrassment to the city. Compared to Agnos's homeless policies, Matrix represents the most responsive government San Francisco has seen in years, even if, as the far-left *San Franciscan Bay Guardian* has reported, "Only about 100 of the more than 7,000 homeless people cited, arrested, or fined since the program began last August have actually been taken off the street."

But absolute numbers don't count. Intent does. Jordan, a career cop, as opposed to Agnos, a career activist and liberal apparatchik (he's now the regional director for HUD!), makes the distinction any average man on the street would: "I separate homeless and street people," he told the *Examiner* in early January. "We should be sympathetic to those who are down and out and need help for a variety of reasons. But there are others who take advantage of all of us, including the homeless."

No doubt some on the streets may

have turned to crime or landed there because of hard times—the usual activist jag deceitfully lays *all* blame for the homeless on the "cold-hearted Reagan-Bush years"—but with the second year of the Clinton enlightenment now virtually over, even most bleeding hearts would have to agree that booze, dope, and the dole have more to do with criminality and life on the streets than does the labor market.

Now, sandwiched between random violent crime and streets more desperate than many in the Third World, San Franciscans are proving even liberals can be pushed only so far. Other progressive cities said to be studying Matrix include Portland and Seattle. Can the day be far off when progressives realize good intentions and even more government services aren't enough for a civil society?

—Jim Christie

OBITER DICTA: Back in the Midwest, stores in the St. Louis area that carry *Chronicles* include: World News, 4 South Central in Clayton, Missouri; Piece of Mind Books, 230 South Buchanan Street in Edwardsville, Illinois; and B. Dalton Booksellers, D-466 St. Louis Center in the city itself.

Also, we have received a number of complaints from subscribers who have failed to receive one or more issues of *Chronicles*, and we have traced the problem to the Chicago Post Office; Kable News Company, our mailing house, has been sending the issues out as usual. Blame government bureaucracy, blame affirmative action, but please don't blame us. Do let us know, however, if you haven't received an issue, and we will put another copy in the mail for you. (Call our customer service department at 800-877-5459.) We apologize for the inconvenience.

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

The Abortion Gambit

Trying to be the chief intellectual in the Republican Party is probably a little like trying to be an admiral in the Swiss navy,

but in the last year or so, that is more or less what Bill Kristol has become. The son of neoconservative godfather Irving Kristol, young Bill made his bones by billing himself as the brains behind Dan Quayle, when he served as the Vice Pres-

ident's chief of staff in the dark age of the Bush era. With the astute sense for the Main Chance we have come to expect from agents of the neoconservative mafia, Mr. Kristol seemed able to make certain that every news story that said

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