



# Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

*The Return of the House Call • Foot Fetishes • FDR's Affairs •  
Black and White Justice • The Case of the Missing Convertible*

SOMETIMES LAWYERS DO GOOD. I make the concession grudgingly, of course, but here's a case that demands it. You will recall the West Virginia couple whose daughter was killed by a car being pursued by state police at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour. It appears possible that the high speed may have been at least partially motivated by the fact that the police were being filmed by a television crew from "Real Stories of the Highway Patrol."

The state legislature reacted by increasing the penalties for drivers who flee the police. The couple's lawyer correctly divined that there were other guilty parties and sued both the state police and the television show, which is now owned by Rupert Murdoch's Fox News. The state police have settled the claim for \$775,000, according to the *Charleston Gazette*. The suit against the TV company is expected to go to trial in October. I hope the lawyer and his clients clean up.

TO PUT BILL CLINTON'S SINS IN perspective, it helps me to think of the leader I most admire. FDR is my great hero. I'm even a member of the committee that seeks to have him and Abraham Lincoln honored along with George Washington on President's Day. I'm also an admirer of Eleanor Roosevelt. But I have to concede that had they lived in the 1990s, the media would have had a field day with their sex lives. Their efforts to fight the Depression and win World War II would have been obscured by speculation about their friends who may have been more than friends,

several of whom actually lived in the White House. During the '30s, Mrs. Roosevelt's intimate friend Lorena Hickok resided on the second floor, the president's secretary and close associate Marguerite LeHand on the third. During the war Mrs. Roosevelt had several close female friends living with her in the Val-Kill cottage on the Hyde Park estate. The president had Princess Martha of Norway as his long-term guest on the White House's second floor. And FDR's daughter Anna acted as an arranger of his reunions with his old girlfriend, Lucy Mercer Rutherford, when Mrs. Roosevelt was not in Washington.

A FASCINATING story about the failure of a notable experiment in worker democracy recently appeared in the Business section of *The New York Times*. Called the Bolivar Project, it was an effort, in the words of the *Times*' Barnaby J. Feder, "to tear down the adversarial walls between workers and management" at Harman Automotive Inc., in Bolivar, Tenn. It enjoyed enough success in reducing the automatic hostility between union and company to be widely imitated. What then was the failure? Workers were given too much control over setting their hours. The less they worked, the less they felt

obligated to work, so that "a shortened workday came to be viewed as an entitlement." Soon the company was attracting the kind of job applicants whose first question when they got the post was not "which machine should I run?" but "when can I go home?"

This is similar to a problem I've seen in the federal civil service. Tenure, generous pensions, and excellent health insurance (see Eric Schnurer's article on page 20) attracted too many people who were more concerned with security and benefits than with doing a job.

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JOE CALIFANO, THE former secretary of health, education, and welfare who is now president of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at

Columbia University, has a good idea: Give treatment to prisoners who are drug or alcohol addicts or abusers. They number 1.2 million. If they were given treatment, many would relapse, but even if the treatment succeeded in turning only 10 percent into sober working citizens, the treatment would nevertheless pay for itself, making an estimated \$8.2 billion in benefits at a cost of \$78 billion.

THE NEW SPACE STATION IS now \$3.6 billion over budget, according to a recent report in the *Los Angeles Times*. So NASA is

searching for some favorable publicity. Not only is John Glenn going to be sent into orbit, so is a third grade teacher from McCall, Idaho. You will recall what happened to another teacher, Christa McAuliffe, when she got launched in another NASA PR stunt. What are the chances that Barbara Morgan, the teacher from Idaho, will meet the same fate?

According to another story, this one in *The New York Times*, the risk of catastrophe during a shuttle flight is now 1 in 145. This is better than the 1 in 50 it used to be. But it's a long, long way from the 1 in 2 million risk of a flight on a commercial jet. So why put another teacher's life in jeopardy?

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LIKE MOST PEOPLE, I BELIEVE A little more than an occasional public hug went on between Bill and Monica, but I am amazed at what little interest the press has in evidence to the contrary, evidence that tends to show that the relationship was innocent.

Take the *Chicago Tribune* story by Roger Simon that had the quote from Mike McCurry: "Maybe there'll be a simple, innocent explanation. I don't think so, because I think we would have offered that up already." You've probably read that a hundred times by now. But have you read anywhere that in the same interview McCurry also said: "This is the White House at the end of the 20th century. Not only a fish bowl, but the klieg lights are on all the time. There is no zone of privacy."

McCurry went on to explain — an explanation that as far as we can determine only the *Tribune* printed — "that he and other aides have access to the pantry in the Oval Office where Clinton is alleged, in one account, to have groped a female aide. McCurry goes there frequently to get coffee, he said, and suggested that such traffic makes it unlikely Clinton would have sex in the Oval Office. 'Because there is no privacy,'

McCurry said. "There is no way to do it if you wanted to."

You may still believe, as I do, that the president found a way, but it's a telling comment on the press that it was so uninterested in his possible innocence that it failed to tell the public about the exculpatory parts of the *Tribune* story. Later in the interview McCurry expressed a feeling I share when he said: "I think what was shocking to me was the palpable excitement in the reporters the minute they thought he was going down. They thought they were going to run this guy out of office and they got excited, thrilled by it."

As you watched the press corps play Grand Inquisitor with McCurry, assaulting him with an unrelenting barrage of heavy, hard-ball questions about a matter totally unrelated to the governance of the country, you also had to wonder at their lost sense of proportion. For me that is the most dismaying part of this sorry episode.

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I BELIEVED GENNIFER FLOWERS way back in 1992. That's why I have not shared the rest of the media's apparent conviction that additional evidence of Clinton's horniness and of his lying about it was shocking and therefore big news. For me there was no big story until Kathleen Willey's appearance on "60 Minutes." Assuming her story is true — that she does not go down in history as "call anytime Kathleen" — what I found new and surprising was not Clinton's sexual conduct in itself, but the lack of empathy it revealed. The president's capacity for empathy has been for me a redeeming quality, something that I have admired, but one has to ask: If he truly felt Kathleen Willey's pain, how could he feel her breast?

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NOW FOR SOME GOOD NEWS. "The house call is staging a comeback," reports Knight-Ridder's Marian Uhlman. When I was a boy, the doctor always came to see you

when you were sick. I welcomed the visits because they were usually a reliable indicator that I wouldn't have to go to school that day, and often even the next. But the practice died out in the 1950s. Most of the time since then I haven't minded going to the doctor's offices. But there have been a few times when I was really sick and the prospect of getting myself to the doctor's office was frightening. Now it appears that the tide is turning, not all the way back to the days when the doctor came whenever you wanted, but maybe to the point where he'll come when you really need him.

Medical schools are beefing up their home-care curricula, writes Uhlman. Medicare is raising the amount it pays doctors for house calls. And a national group of home-care doctors that started out with just five members 10 years ago now numbers more than 1,000.

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SPEAKING OF DISPROPORTION, HOW about the Maryland judge who sentenced Alan Lee Hill to eight years in prison for allowing his girlfriend to tie up and torture his young son? The same judge had given the girlfriend a sentence of 18 months, even though the abuse was her idea and it was she who performed it, including force-feeding the child hot pepper that damaged his liver. It appears the reason the second sentence was too tough was because the judge had been criticized for making the first one too light. So he compounded one mistake by making another.

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ON FRIDAY, FEB. 27, PRESIDENT Clinton released letters he had written to the Federal Election Commission urging it to prohibit soft money, and to the Federal Communications Commission asking it to require free or reduced cost air time for candidates. The next day, *The Washington Post* found the letters worthy of eight paragraphs on page A14. *The New York Times* gave the story even less attention, five paragraphs on the

bottom of page A7.

This was the week the McCain-Feingold campaign reform bill was killed in the Senate by Trent Lott (R-Miss.). Another way to achieve reform is through action by the commissions. A story delving into the importance of the reforms — very great — and the power of the agencies to make them — they have it — and the possibility that they will actually make the reforms (more likely at the FCC than the FEC) would have been interesting to anyone who cares about our campaign policies. It's a comment on the degree to which our great papers have taken leave of their senses that they devoted much less space to this story than to whether presidential semen might be found on Monica Lewinsky's dress.

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AND SPEAKING OF light punishment, you may recall the California man who was paroled after serving only 10 years for raping a woman and then chopping off both her hands. Recently he was found guilty of stabbing another woman to death. This explains why mandatory sentences for violent crimes make more sense than most of my fellow liberals admit.

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INEPTITUDE IN THE DISTRICT OF Columbia government is not just a problem at the managerial level. As I keep trying to explain, the rank and file has its shortcomings as well. The Case of the Missing Convertible provides the most recent example. Jeannie Whitt was driving her Chrysler LeBaron convertible near the waterfront in southwest Washington. She was not wearing a seat belt. Unfortu-

nately her unbeltedness was observed by two police officers who proceeded to stop her car and ask for her registration. She didn't have it. What's more, the license plates bore an expired date.

At this point the officers were properly suspicious. But then, instead of making phone calls to verify Whitt's claim that the car had been registered in her stepfather's name, which was the case, and ticketing her for the various infractions, the officers seized the car and told her they were taking it to the city's impoundment lot, leaving her on the street. They drove the car to the lot. But it was closed. Their solution: leave the convertible on the street too — with the keys in the ignition. "This," comments *The Washington Post's* Maria Elena Fernandez, "in a city where 9,600 cars were stolen last year." During the night, the figure became 9,601.

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FEDERAL OFFICES ARE BECOMING more spacious as a result of downsizing, *The Washington Post's* Mike Causey recently observed in his Federal Diary column. Which makes me curious about how much money could be saved by leasing or selling the office space that is no longer needed. Since more than 10 percent of the employees are gone, it seems reasonable to assume that at least 10 percent of the government's real estate empire could be disposed of, and that should bring in enough money to fund a needed program or two.

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ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN HIRED by the federal government knows that there's a long wait between the job offer and the time you actually go to work. This, you are told, is because of the extensive back-

ground check that is required to keep out spies and other undesirables. *The Weekly Standard's* Tucker Carlson was understandably curious about why the State Department's lengthy investigation failed to find out that Larry Lawrence had not served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II, as he had claimed. That service, you will recall, was what qualified the former ambassador for burial at Arlington. Carlson decided to see what he could learn by making just one phone call to the American Merchant Marine Veterans Association, which had been listed on Lawrence's resume. The association had no record of Lawrence. Carlson's suspicion that government investigators had been less than diligent in their inquiry was also confirmed by *The San Diego Union-Tribune* which sent two reporters out to check on Lawrence's reputation. "The reporters returned a few hours later with more derogatory information about Larry Lawrence than State Department sleuths had managed to gather in a few months," writes Carlson. The senior vice president of Lawrence's Hotel Del Coronado said "I wouldn't take his word for anything."

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IF YOU HAVE DEALT WITH MEMBERS of the United States Foreign Service, you have probably been impressed by their intelligence and maddened by their bureaucratic indifference to the problems of the average American who seeks their assistance. An example of the indifference was provided by a recent op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, titled "My Guatemalan Nightmare." Written by Carolyn Frazier, it describes how, when her sister had been shot in the throat by gunmen in rural Guatemala and her father asked for help from the American embassy, he was given a list of hospital phone numbers "passed impersonally from behind a protective glass window." On his own, the father arranged to have

the daughter transported to Guatemala City and hospitalized. "Although the hospital was less than 10 minutes away from the embassy, we still heard nothing from embassy officials."

Now comes the most telling part of the story. "It was only two days later, after a friend of a friend in Sen. Edward Kennedy's office called the embassy to inquire about my sister's condition, that we received a phone call." What, one wonders, would the embassy have done if someone hadn't known a senator?

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE Israelis hold Lebanese citizens in prison, not because they have committed crimes, but so that they can serve as hostages? Not only that but, according to Serge Schmemmann of *The New York Times*, the practice has been condoned by a three-judge panel of the Israeli Supreme Court. Thank goodness they have yet to shoot a hostage. But the Israelis are becoming disturbingly similar to their former oppressors.

SAN FRANCISCO'S MAYOR, WILLIE Brown, sees himself as a world statesman. He has recently traveled to the Philippines and Vietnam and has assigned space in the renovated City Hall that is desperately needed for regular city functions to an expanded office of protocol. But he's doing one thing right. Last month Brown decided to make a personal test of the municipal transit system. He boarded a city bus for a trip scheduled to take 12 minutes. It took 32. The result is that the mayor is now busy preparing laws designed to unsnarl the traffic that impeded his bus. You can't help thinking that public service would undergo dramatic improvements if more of the big shots would do what Willie Brown did. I can't wait to hear about Marion Barry standing in line to get his driver's license renewed. But he's

even more committed to his diplomatic duties than Brown. After visiting four countries in Asia and Africa last year, he's going to Israel this month.

IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE WHY African-Americans sometimes get a bit testy with the rest of us. They have to endure suspicious clerks when they go shopping and are ignored by the cab drivers they try to hail for the trip home. And of course they are usually treated worse than the rest of us when being arrested. The latest example comes from Milwaukee, where the police conducted a sting operation by placing a \$200 boom box in the back seat of a 1987 Oldsmobile which they proceeded to watch. Donald Henderson, a black man, stole the box. So did William Huntington, a white. Prosecutors recommended a sentence of 15 days for Huntington, and one year for Henderson.

TWO MEMBERS OF the New York literati — James Atlas of *The New Yorker* and David Halberstam in *House and Garden* — have recently lamented the impact on their lives of the Wall Street super-rich. But what is most revealing about the articles is how well the writers are living. Both have summer homes — Atlas in Vermont, Halberstam in Nantucket — as well as apartments in New York.

Although Atlas laments "one of our children has to sleep in the maid's room," he is able to send them to private school and pay a cello teacher to come to his house every Friday. Halberstam's problem with the super-rich is that they have stolen his gardener. But after all, she

was always fighting with his fish-pond man, further evidence of how tough life can be on Nantucket.

THERE IS NEW EVIDENCE TO support another fear of mine: that the federal downsizing of recent years may not have been as selective as I had hoped in terms of getting rid of people who really weren't needed and keeping or even adding the ones who are needed. The government now employs fewer nurses and engineers, people who do real work, and more who function under the suspiciously vague label "miscellaneous administration and program management."

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I HAPPENED to hear Sir John Templeton, the mutual fund sage, explain that stocks would continue to rise in price because there wasn't enough stock to satisfy the demand. Since

then I have heard this explanation offered many times, most recently in Brendan Boyd's "Investor's Notebook" column, which adds, "leveraged buyouts and mergers have further reduced supply. And corporations have been repurchasing their own shares in record numbers. As long as this supply shortfall persists, prices could continue higher." This makes me nervous. Doesn't it mean that stock prices are based not on intrinsic value

but on the psychology of demand?

Wasn't the argument that Japanese real estate would keep climbing in value based on the same short-supply theory? Only it didn't work out that way, did it?

**During the '30s, Mrs. Roosevelt's intimate friend Lorena Hickok resided on the second floor, the president's secretary and close associate Marguerite LeHand on the third.**

BACK TO THE JOURNALISTIC



madness inspired by the Clinton-Lewinsky story, 41 percent of what purported to be news reporting during the first week of the scandal actually consisted not of fact but of "analysis, opinion, and speculation," according to a study sponsored by the Committee of Concerned Journalists. And we're not talking about the *National Enquirer* but the likes of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN.

I wish the study had included a determination of the amount of space that was wasted on attempts at colorful writing such as John Broder's news story in *The New York Times* on Sidney Blumenthal's grand jury testimony in response to Ken Starr's subpoena:

"After a long career as a scribbler in the shadows, Sidney Blumenthal got his moment in the sun today. ... Mr. Blumenthal faced the camera at the peak of the Western Hemisphere's last solar eclipse of

the millennium."

Broder and his editors deemed this material worthy of the front-page space they were unable to find for the story about the president's letters to the FEC and the FCC.

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IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN AN advance man, you have to feel sorry for the hapless fellow who arranged that disastrous town meeting at Ohio State. Big shots are not happy when things go wrong and you are almost certain to bear the brunt of their anger. The blame stops with you and stays there. And disaster can be cruelly unexpected.

I remember one visit that John Kennedy made to Charleston, West Virginia. I had carefully arranged to have crowds on hand to meet him at the airport and at the hotel where he was staying. In between, I counted on the high school band that marched before Kennedy's car to attract crowds as we proceeded through the down-

town area.

Kennedy got off his plane and saw the large crowd. He thanked me and said he'd been told that "You were responsible for all the arrangements." I smiled self-deprecatingly, but actually of course feeling pretty good about myself. That began to change as we proceeded through downtown. There was no crowd, nothing more than the ordinary pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk, which if anything seemed less than usual. As the blocks went by, the situation did not improve. I slumped in the front seat, hoping the senator would just forget my existence instead of throttling me, which seemed quite a bit more likely. Then we made the last turn into the block that led to the hotel. Arrayed before us was a great mob — cheering, waving Kennedy placards, reaching out to touch Kennedy. As we got out of the car, I said, "Of course, you know I planned it this way." Of course, he knew I hadn't, but he grinned. And at least that time I dodged the bullet — which I fear will not be the case with the State Department official responsible for Ohio State. He's probably already on his way to Outer Mongolia to take up his duties as second secretary

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EVER HOPEFUL OF FINDING NEW ways to entice readers to subscribe to *The Washington Monthly*, I always try to read the direct mail solicitations from other magazines. One approach that I certainly wouldn't have thought of was made in a letter my wife received from *Vogue* the other day. "Dear Friend," it began, "Do you need more shoes? Of course you do. Shoes make you happy. That's why *Vogue* reports on shoes like nobody else. Sexy and oh-so-high heels. Strap-py sandals. Friendly flats. Thigh-high boots. Essential pumps. Amusing mules. Where else are you going to find a magazine with such a fetish about your feet?" ●

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# The Right-Winger to Watch

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*Gary Bauer is smart, savvy, not afraid to rock the Republican boat — and a possible presidential candidate*

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BY MICHELLE COTTLE

**S**LAP A FLOPPY HAT AND A PAIR OF oversized sunglasses on Gary Bauer and he would be the spitting image of the late Truman Capote: Standing just over five-feet tall, Bauer has a broad, round, vaguely cherubic face; a high forehead; heavy eyelids; a fair complexion; and something vaguely prim about the mouth. Squint a little, and you can almost picture him in 1970s New York partying with Andy Warhol and Paloma Picasso at Studio 54.

But a physical resemblance is as far as the parallels go. A former Reagan White House official and the current head of the ultra-conservative Family Research Council, Bauer is about as far from Capote on the political and social spectrum as Jesse Helms is from Gianni Versace. A vocal advocate of “pro-family” policies on issues ranging from child care to taxes, Bauer is the quintessential social conservative. He opposes abortion, gun control, gay rights, no-fault divorce, women in military combat, bilingual education, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He supports school choice, school prayer, abstinence-only sex ed, the death penalty, an increase in the per-child tax credit, tougher obscenity laws, and tax breaks for stay-at-home spouses. Though a long-time Republican, Bauer shares none of his party colleagues’ current obsession with cultivating a “big-tent” image for the GOP. He is an unapologetic ideologue, as one might surmise from the Family Research Council’s (FRC) stated mission: “to reaffirm and promote nationally, and particularly in Washington, D.C., the traditional family unit and the Judeo-Christian value system upon which it is built.”

But Gary Bauer is no run-of-the-mill right-winger. Unlike many conservative Republicans, this pro-family crusader does not engage in knee-jerk government bashing. (In fact, he and close chum William Kristol,

editor and publisher of *The Weekly Standard*, are derided as “big-government conservatives” by some of their colleagues on the right.) Although he shares many of the GOP’s ideas about keeping government hands off the American family, Bauer recognizes that Uncle Sam can at times be useful in advancing a conservative social agenda. As a result, over the past year or so Bauer and FRC have been generating waves in Washington with their decidedly un-Republican opposition to policy proposals such as Social Security privatization, the flat tax, and free trade with China. Moreover, in gathering support for his causes, Bauer has proved willing to cross party lines and enlist a number of unconventional allies — from House minority leader Dick Gephardt to liberal matriarch Ethel Kennedy to the AFL-CIO. His willingness to form such coalitions has drawn the attention of the mainstream media — “It’s sort of a man bites dog sort of story,” explains Bauer — helping to make the FRC chief a regular on the pundit circuit. In recent months Bauer has squared off on-air against opponents as diverse as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the president of the Motion Picture Association, Jack Valenti.

Bauer’s outspokenness has also upped his profile on the Hill. In addition to tweaking Reps. Armey and Gingrich over their economic priorities, Bauer has not been shy about dressing down the GOP for abandoning the social conservatives who helped sweep it into the majority in ’94. All too often, laments Bauer, Republican candidates sound defensive and apologetic when addressing the nation’s “virtue deficit.” During the past two presidential campaigns, he notes, “the American public never heard the social conservatives’ world view at all.”

To Republicans’ discomfort, Bauer’s criticism reflects a growing discontent among the party’s religious and social conservatives (nearly half a million of