

Too Much News, Too Little Time

I often feel like one of those lumberjacks we used to see in the newsreels, trying to knock a competing lumberjack off a spinning log. The foolishness comes at us so rapidly that trying to stay on top of it all before we wind up in the drink is too much for one man.

That's why when the opportunity presents itself, I like to delegate responsibility. So it's with a sense of gratitude, I acknowledge that when Melanie Campbell, one of the many pinheads who was invited to speak at the Martin Luther King anniversary shindig, compared the Supreme Court to the Ku Klux Klan, comedy writer Argus Hamilton pointed out how wrong she was: "The Klan are a bunch of guys in white sheets that scare the hell out of black people, while the Court's a bunch of guys in black sheets that scare the hell out of white people."

I would like to give a shout-out to the folks in Colorado Springs who successfully recalled two liberal legislators who helped pass gun-control legislation. There's nothing like a successful recall to remind politicians that they only think they live in a money-lined cocoon.

Speaking of elections, I regret that Anthony Weiner and Eliot Spitzer both lost their attempts to climb back aboard the political gravy train. The voters in New York City, the same nudnicks who elected Michael Bloomberg three times, deserve to be embarrassed as often as possible, and what could be more embarrassing than to be represented by a whoremonger and a serial exhibitionist?

Well, I suppose being represented on the world's stage by Barack Obama and Joe Biden comes close. These mooks can barely run a bath, let alone a country.

Imagine being in the Oval Office this long and having to boast of ObamaCare as your greatest accomplishment. Early on, when Nancy Pelosi was still telling us Congress would have to pass the Affordable Care Act before we'd know what was in it, a lot of us were already concerned about the federal government grabbing control of one-sixth of the economy. But now that everyone has a pretty good idea that it was conceived in a spooky backroom and passed in a toxic dump; when the Catholic Church, the labor unions and every major company from UPS and IBM to Xerox and Delta, are opposed to it; Obama, Pelosi and Reid, are still trying to tell us that this crapburger tastes like fried chicken.

This is a health care plan that is in desperate need of a health care plan of its own. Preferably, one that contains death panels.

Moving on, the Navy reports that sexual assaults in the ranks numbered 1,800 so far in 2013. Whatever happened to the notion of swabbing decks and peeling potatoes to keep the troops occupied?

A left-wing Italian newspaper publisher conducted an interview with Pope Francis. Apparently His Holiness didn't actually claim that atheists could get into Heaven, as the story was headlined in the socialist press. But that's why when I first heard about it, I recall wondering if St. Peter was shaking his head and muttering, "Well, there goes the neighborhood."

Having now read the interview, with all of his papal parsing, I can see where it might have lent itself to such an interpretation; especially if you were looking to sell newspapers. If I had the Pontiff's ear, I would advise him to quit yakking on his cell phone and doing one-on-ones with left-wing journalists. If he has too much time on his hands, I suggest he start swabbing the floors of the Vatican and peeling a few potatoes.

Possibly the biggest surprise of the year was watching John Kerry morph from the sort of self-righteous dove who was so outraged by the war in Vietnam that he tossed other people's medals over the fence at the Pentagon into a liberal's version of a hawk. That would be the sort of hawk who would demand a military attack consisting of teensy-weensy pinpricks that would let Bashar Assad, along with the mullahs in Iran and the nutty dwarf in North Korea, know that America doesn't just stand around twiddling its thumbs when women and children are being gassed to death.

And, finally, in case you're still brokenhearted because Ron Paul isn't President Paul, you will be relieved to know he hasn't gone gently into the night.

Instead, he was the keynote speaker at the Fatima Center earlier this month. In case you've never heard of the Center, some people claim it's anti-Semitic just because it's headed up by Father Nicholas Gruner. But, then, some people will leap to conclusions on nothing more than his having published articles claiming that Jews are trying to undermine the Catholic Church on behalf of Satan and that wealthy Jews are guilty of financially raping Russia, a nation for which Gruner feels a great empathy. Perhaps it's based on their mutual hatred of Jews.

And then, of course, there's the business about Gruner's denial of the Holocaust. "A question that nobody has been able to answer for me is: how can you have six million Jews die, and have 13 million left, when you had 13 million to start with? I think it's impossible. But you know I'm open-minded. I'll listen to somebody who can prove it otherwise."

Clearly he's so open-minded, his brains fell out somewhere along the way.

As for Ron Paul, when asked for his opinion, he said the reports were disturbing, but added that he hadn't read them. That, come to think of it, is exactly what he said when he

came under fire during the 2008 presidential primaries, and was accused of regularly publishing anti-Semitic articles in his own newsletter!

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Listen Up Republicans

Because I do my level best to avoid liberals, most of the political arguments I get into are with my fellow conservatives. As a rule, it comes down to my being willing to vote for any Republican on the general ballot. In the primaries, I will always favor the one furthest to the right. But if he or she loses, I will vote for the last Republican standing.

The folks I argue with are the ones who would rather sit out an election than vote for a Republican who fails the litmus test. It does no good to point out that even Reagan wouldn't be able to pass the test in 2013. After all, he raised our state taxes twice when he was governor, and even signed the most liberal abortion bill in America. As president, when amnesty was still merely a glint in John McCain's eye, Reagan, who made such a big thing out of trusting but verifying when dealing with the Soviet Union, turned into a flounder, and fell, hook, line and sinker, for the bait when the Democrats swore to shut down the border.

As I see it, it's fine to seek the perfect candidate, so long as you understand he doesn't exist, except in your dreams. It's like seeking the perfect woman, and thinking you've found her, only to discover that, unfortunately, she happens to be seeking the perfect man.

I can't tell you how disappointed I was when the San Diego City Council voted unanimously to pay most of Mayor Filner's legal expenses in exchange for his resigning. The recall process was already well underway, and there was no reason to strike the deal. Once he was out of office, half of San Diego's female population would have been free to sue the old leech for sexual harassment and not have it cost the taxpayers a dime.

But that's what you can expect when politicians are given carte blanche to spend other people's money. If I had my way, it would be the law that before taking office, every politician would have to sign a binding agreement absolving the taxpayers of any financial responsibility accruing from his malfeasance. These schmucks not only screw us, but we wind up having to pay for the privilege.

That reminds me, how can we expect to wean people off welfare when in 35 states, welfare payments exceed minimum wage? In Hawaii, a lout can collect the equivalent of a \$60,000-a-year salary just for breathing. Breeding pays extra.

About 15 years ago, I wrote a spec screenplay in which a jihadist plots to blow up a skyscraper. I wasn't entirely prescient. I set the scene in Chicago. At the time, my agent claimed she was shopping it around. I should have known better than to believe her. There's a reason, after all, that used car salesmen look down on Hollywood agents.

It wasn't until after 9/11 that I found out she hadn't bothered showing it to anyone. A new agent did set up a few meetings with producers, but nothing came of them. Finally, I asked my agent what the purpose of the meetings was. He explained that they wanted to meet me and have me meet them, because they had liked the writing, but knew they'd never be able to sell a script in which Muslims were shown to be cold-blooded killers. And, as I say, this was after we saw those planes crashing into the twin towers and witnessed our fellow

Americans leaping off the rooftops rather than perish in the flames.

At the same time, we constantly heard our president and secretary of state insisting that Islam was a religion of peace. What they never got around to telling us was which religions they thought were the really bad ones. After all, if Islam was noteworthy because it was so doggone peaceful, it had to have been the exception to some that weren't. And how is it that nobody ever felt it necessary to remind us of the peaceful nature of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or Shintoism?

I, for one, am looking forward to the 2016 Democratic Convention when I anticipate Bob Filner, Anthony Weiner, Eliot Spitzer and Bill Clinton, will take the stage to berate us Republicans for our endless war on women.

Finally, it appears that the soap opera involving Bradley Manning isn't going to be ending anytime soon. It seems he is now demanding that the Army pay for a gender change. The question in my mind ever since I first set eyes on the little weasel is just how hard up is the U.S. military that it would accept the little putz into its ranks. Even the Mafia has higher recruiting standards than that.

I mean, it's one thing to do away with the Clintonian policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," but it's another to open the doors to someone who looks like he got lost on his way to a Gay Mascots Parade.

I just hope that the Army doesn't fall for this ploy and allow Bradley Manning to get his wish and become Chelsea Manning. The expense aside, wouldn't it be just like some shyster lawyer to demand his release on the grounds that Chelsea Manning had never served in the Army and, therefore, had never leaked classified documents to Julian Assange?

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At the Precipice

✘ When I heard Robert Duvall speaking with Mike Huckabee last year about his film, "Get Low", I knew it was my kind of movie. It's the story of a man who wants to throw his own "funeral party" while he's alive and have people come and tell stories about him and is loosely based on a true story that took place in Roane County, Tennessee in 1938.

Sounds a bit quirky but the movie is anything but. Mr. Duvall plays the main character, reclusive Felix Bush, who has lived the life of a hermit for the past 40 years on the outskirts of town. He's taunted by children who throw rocks at his windows, rumors have been spread about him and he's feared by the town folk. As the movie unfolds, we realize that it's Felix who has a very dark secret, well hidden from everyone but his friend and minister, Charlie Jackson, who has to be coaxed by Felix into attending the "funeral party" to insure his story is told if he, Felix, is unable to unload the heavy burden himself.

Eventually, Felix's secret is uncovered. He slowly and painfully reveals to the hundreds of town folk who have assembled that, 40 years before, he fell in love with a married woman who planned to leave her husband and start a new life and family with him. A tragedy results. **Spoiler alert:** Move on to the next paragraph if you plan to watch the movie.) When she doesn't arrive at their pre-arranged meeting place, Felix goes to her home, confronts her husband, who sets fire to the lower floor of the house. Felix rushes upstairs to find his love on the floor having been beaten by her husband. The husband, who was able to make it up the stairs, attacks Felix who cannot recall if he leaped from the window or was pushed. In either event, he is emotionally destroyed

because, ultimately, he was unable to save the woman he loved.

He details his shame in having even looked at the woman, who, in his words, allowed him to feel love the only time in his life. He admits that had he not done so, the tragedy would not have occurred. The guilt he felt over the past 40 years was palpable and his public confession was excruciating to watch. (Mr. Duvall's performance was superb but overlooked at this year's Academy Awards.)

I commend Mr. Duvall for having executively produced this film and bringing to the screen a story about old-fashioned ideas like shame, guilt, remorse, forgiveness and, finally, redemption.

As I watched the credits of "Get Low" roll, I thought about people similarly situated today. Do the characters in these modern-day real-life dramas feel anything – remorse, guilt, shame, humiliation? Do they ever seek forgiveness or redemption?

The latest in this long list of public offenders is, of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who just this week publicly admitted to having fathered a child with a member of his household ten years ago. After serving as Governor of California and leaving office in January, he finally told his wife. He now asks the press and public to respect his wife and children. How come he didn't?

There was a time in America when any type of scandal would have and did destroy the careers of celebrities and politicians because the public was not as forgiving as today.

Celebrities and public officials like Woody Allen, Paris Hilton, Barney Frank, Roman Polanski, Al Sharpton, Jimmy Swaggart, Eliot Spitzer, John Edwards, Kobe Bryant and Kim Kardashian, all who've done shameful things, breathe a sigh of relief because, in today's America, they can continue to maintain political power or enjoy highly lucrative careers

because of society's acceptance of their "indiscretions." We'll see how Arnold's career goes after this.

On the other hand, I often wonder if the average Joe actually feels the kind of regret, dishonor or embarrassment felt by the character, Felix Bush. In the real world, obviously no one is reduced to ashes because of their behavior, but lives and families are affected forever by bad behavior and are often destroyed beyond repair.

While celebrities and public officials often have no sense of shame, I'd like to think that there are those private individuals who do regret their actions and try to make amends. But for those selfish, narcissistic people who couldn't care less about the destruction they leave behind in similar circumstances, life goes on.

On good days, I have to believe there are more people in the former category than in the latter. While seeing the public offenders continue to enjoy profitable careers and acceptance by the public, the pessimist in me says we've lost the notion of right and wrong, we're circling the bowl and we're going to Hell in a hand basket, but I'm hoping we haven't completely lost our moral sense of direction but merely on the edge of the precipice, still able to take a step back.

Bottom line: I get Felix Bush.