

# CURRENT WISDOM

## New York Times Book Review

Chilling evidence that the Attack of the Giant Quota Creatures continues:

To the Editor:

In her sympathetic review of my book "Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods" (April 5), Bettyann Kevles makes an assertion I would like to correct. After carefully outlining the admittedly bizarre U.F.O. abductions and enforced genetic experiments my book describes, she states that all the victims of these experiences are white Americans. She wonders, then, if this constitutes a racial bias. Since I had not felt the obligation to disclose the race of anyone I dealt with in my book, I am dismayed that the absence of this information led Ms. Kevles to assume the subjects were, by default, white. In fact, the abductees I've worked with include seven Hispanic victims as well as blacks, Europeans, Native Americans and people of extremely varied ethnic and socioeconomic background.

—Budd Hopkins  
New York

## Bettyann Kevles replies:

Perhaps this is an instance in which identification of the racial composition of the victims might have been enlightening. The half-alien, half-human hybrids Mr. Hopkins describes are all pink or gray, from which I inferred that all of their human parents were white. I am pleased to learn that a number of them were Hispanic-Americans or blacks.

[May 3, 1987]

## Writer

Dr. Kirkpatrick Sale reveals the tricks of the trade for hysterics bit by the Lit. bug:

And even when what's on your plate is nothing so simple as a profile or an autobiography, it makes good sense to go out of your way to find a character here, an individual there, a personification, an embodiment, that will make your themes live for the reader. I once vowed that I would never read a word about Richard Nixon's background or career—this was sometime around 1959—and I kept that vow until I undertook a book on Watergate and the sleazy world of the Sunbelt it opened up for us. And then I knew I would have to delve into Richard Nixon's character completely. It was a sickening trip, to be sure, for what there is of substance about the man is depressing and oily and banal and evil and vengeful and cruel, but I knew I had to know the man inside out—and I knew I had to paint that portrait as carefully as I could. I knew it would turn out to be no more than a minor theme of the book: the faults, dear Brutus, are not in our individuals but in our culture. But it would prove to be vital, and a vital way of presenting the distant truths. So I let Nixon come alive here and there, let readers sympathize with him now and again, let him come through, eventually, as a believable and knowable person.

What we won't go through for our art!  
[April 1987]

## Rolling Stone

The *Stone's* incomparable William Greider sings for his supper:

Liberals are making a comeback because Reagan failed to deliver on his economic promises. The Gipper laid out a program that, he said, would restore prosperity and boost incomes. Okay, the nation gave it a shot, and it didn't work. Inflation was eliminated—but all this proved was that inflation was not the source of the underlying problems. In fact, vast areas of the economy were much better off with inflation than without it. The numbers don't lie: economic growth, investment, productivity, employment, wages, every important indicator of economic vitality has taken a turn for the worse. The state of Reagan's economy in the 1980s is even more troubling than Carter's in the 1970s.

[June 4, 1987]

## New York Times

A sensible suggestion from Friendly Ted, apparently the village idiot of booming Waltham:

To the Editor:

The new \$200 million United States Embassy in Moscow has been bugged, and it clearly cannot be used as an embassy. What do we do with the building?

I disagree with those who say it must be torn down. Why not turn the building into a school, a college or a cultural center? Students from the United States and the Soviet Union could go to learn the language, social customs and cultural contributions of each other's society. Both countries could provide teachers and financial upkeep. And, if the school is bugged, listening to one another's youth might prove enlightening.

Knocking down the new building would be a waste of taxpayer money, and the loss of an opportunity for the superpowers to create something positive instead of leaving it as a negative mess.

—Theodore Jones  
Waltham, Massachusetts  
[May 14, 1987]

## Esquire

A correspondent from the rag "for man at his best" gives Daniel Ortega the standard once-over and is mesmerized in the standard way—those eyes! this time performing amazing tricks: So it was natural for the junta coordinator, in the midst of a cheering crowd at a great religious festival, to remain almost somber. The turn of events that had brought him to Purisima could hardly be said to have stopped revolving. He would do what he could to influence those events in his country's favor, and his eyes shone inward and outward at the same time, as they always had, while he calculated the chances of Nicaragua against both the gravitational pull of its own underdevelopment and the momentum of the national engine coursing toward it from the north.

[March 1987]

## Boston Globe

Little Steven Erlanger of the *Globe's* Moscow staff falls in love:

The fresh, purist wind of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet general secretary, has caused extraordinary soul-searching throughout Soviet society.

His commitment to discipline, accountability and quality control, his tough stance against corruption and drunkenness, a shake-up of the bureaucracy and a weeding out of the Brezhnev old guard, all this has delivered a shock to the system, and to the people who have learned to manipulate it.

[April 11, 1987]

## Arrival

Mr. Scott Russell Sanders, belletrist, trots out his most gorgeous prose to investigate a favorite subject—Mr. Scott Russell Sanders, belletrist:

"This must be a hard time for women," I say to my friend Anneke. "They have so many paths to choose from, and so many voices calling them."

"I think it's a lot harder for men," she replies.

"How do you figure that?"

"The women I know feel excited, innocent, like crusaders in a just cause. The men I know are eaten up with guilt."

We are sitting at the kitchen table drinking sassafras tea, our hands wrapped around the mugs because this April morning is cool and drizzly. "Like a Dutch morning," Anneke told me earlier. She is Dutch herself, a writer and midwife and peace-maker, with the round face and sad eyes of a woman in a Vermeer painting who might be waiting for the rain to stop, for a door to open. She leans over to sniff a sprig of lilac, pale lavender, that rises from a vase of cobalt blue. . . .

I search my soul. I discover guilty feelings aplenty—toward the poor, the Vietnamese, Native Americans, the whales, an endless list of debts—a guilt in each case that is as bright and unambiguous as a neon sign. But toward women I feel something more confused, a snarl of shame, envy, wary tenderness, and amazement. This muddle troubles me. To hide my unease I say, "You're right, it's tough being a man these days."

[Summer 1987]

## Dallas Morning News

Scholarly sociopoliticohistorical insights from Prof. Sam Donaldson:

"The left wing has never been in the ascendancy in this country. This country is basically a conservative reactionary type of country. Yes, we make progress in some areas that are thought to be areas of liberalism. By fits and starts, human rights is one of them. But it's always going to be the right wing that is going to make the most noise. It was the Ku Klux Klan that marched up Pennsylvania Avenue in the 1920s. It wasn't the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It's always the right."

[April 16, 1987]

## Washington Post

An erstwhile Senate aide testifies that Mr. Gary Hart's real first name was probably Tom:

"I remember one day in the Senate, I'd been there about a year maybe, and Gary didn't show up for work one day. So I called his home and Lee said, 'Oh, we've had this tragedy.' I ask what's the tragedy. She tells me that during the night their cat had taken quite ill and Gary couldn't deal with it. He couldn't sleep with the fact that the cat was ill, so he stayed up all night holding the cat, and it eventually died in his arms. He was crushed.

"I could see him get a 16-page brilliantly written paper from one of his aides and forget to say thank you, you know, honest to God forget to say thank you. It didn't occur to him, and then losing sleep over a cat. The guy is just a very, very tough nut."

[May 8, 1987]

## Chicago Sun-Times

Sophisticated badinage from Judy Markey, columnist and Aristotelian for the Windy City's Number Two:

But the real point of National Condom week is to educate, encourage and absolutely demolish any last vestiges of embarrassment. After all, what's to be embarrassed about? It's not like yesteryear when young men died a thousand deaths purchasing the coveted foil packet from their local pharmacist. Today there are racks and racks of the things sitting right there in the open for anyone to buy. Even a woman.

[February 15, 1987]

## New York Times

In the kultur pages of the venerable *Times* of New York Mr. Stephen Holden bears the burden of reviewing another grisly drama of toilet amour for the ithyphallic modern male:

Robert Chesley's two-character drama, "Jerker, or the Helping Hand," is a cry of anguished solidarity from the heart of San Francisco's homosexual world, a segment of society where the AIDS epidemic has taken an especially devastating toll.

The play consists of 20 telephone calls between J.R. (Jay Corcoran) and Bert (John Finch), strangers whose anonymous telephone-sex relationship turns into a morale-boosting dialogue on homosexual pride. Conversations that begin as intricate, kinky safe-sex fantasies change in mood and quality as rough "playtime" stories metamorphose into tender "bedtime" stories that look back nostalgically to the 1970s.

"Jerker" accurately bills itself as "a pornographic elegy with redeeming social value," and its gamy language and continual simulated autoeroticism are definitely not for squeamish tastes. . . . Over the course of the drama, we learn that J.R. is a paraplegic Vietnam veteran. And in a stridently angry and simplistic diatribe, he contrasts the evil morality of war to the "really, truly basically good" promiscuous way of life that the epidemic has cut short.

[May 1, 1987]

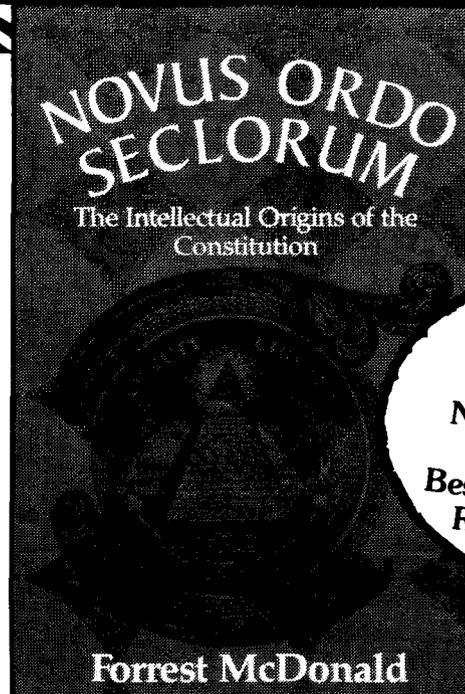
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**STANLEY N. KATZ**, Princeton: "This is McDonald's best book and, indeed, the best single volume on the origins of the U.S. Constitution and the accomplishment of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. . . . Most of *Novus Ordo Seclorum* is devoted to a rigorous analysis of 18th-century thought (political theory, political economy, and law). It is solidly grounded in the most recent scholarship and based upon a very original reading of the primary sources. McDonald writes with uncommon grace; the book is a pleasure to read, but it is nevertheless densely and vigorously argued. . . . no reader will regret the hours devoted to this work."

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