



Off Their Feed

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Consider the absurdity of the scene! America's journalists, possibly the most sanctimonious collection of bores since the authors of the Mayflower Compact, are now languidly flagellating themselves for engaging in a "feeding frenzy" at the expense of the Clintons. The Pilgrim bores, circa 1620, called themselves "Saints." Surely, the herd journalists of the American media consider themselves "saints" too. Just the other day Rod MacLeish, the Washington bureau chief of Monitor Radio, was solemnly beseeching another local Saint, that congenital groaner Haynes Johnson of the *Washington Post*, as to whether, apropos of Whitewatergate, all Washington was in a "feeding frenzy." "Oh, 'tis true, 'tis true," responded Dr. Johnson, "'tis all too true."

Egad! By mid-March all Washington echoed with this sort of claptrap as the anointed of the dominant media culture began to betray their sense of phony guilt. And so the media's pre-eminent moral exhibitionists raised the lament that all Washington was amuck in a "feeding frenzy" nibbling on the tender parts of Boy Clinton and his cruelly persecuted wife. But wait! The press was reporting legitimate news stories, created by the incompetents in the White House. That is no "feeding frenzy," you see. That is evidence of abuse of power, conflict of interest, and obstruction of justice. But just to keep things simple for the simpletons now carping about a "feeding

frenzy," most of the Whitewatergate news stories are reports of events recently perpetrated by the White House Machiavels.

It is not the American press's fault that President Clinton's White House counsel and Mrs. Clinton's chief of staff attended controversial meetings with Treasury officials who briefed them regarding the Clintons' involvement in federal bank probes. Reporting those meetings is the press's duty. So is reporting the recent subpoenaing of ten White House officials and the forced resignation of White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum. The other day, when Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell resigned, was the press to look the other way, lest Haynes Johnson and Rod MacLeish descry a "feeding frenzy"? These are legitimate news stories,

which the press is duty-bound to report. For that matter the press was duty-bound to report the Clintons' petulant character assault on Republicans who sought congressional hearings into what appears to be the largest agglutination of sleaze since the Nixon administration. Arguably it is larger, involving as it might the removal of Vincent Foster's corpse.

Now Congressman Lee Hamilton, one of the most respected Democrats in Congress, has urged congressional hearings. Is he, too, engaged in a "feeding frenzy"? The Clintons' clique insists that all these stories are hoary with age. The collapse of the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan and the Clintons' Whitewater investment date back to Ronald Reagan's decade of greed. Perhaps Hillary Clinton will charge that Ronald Reagan and Ed Meese encouraged her to take a \$2,000-a-month fee from the floundering S&L to represent that fly-by-night operation before bank regulators beholden to her husband, the Arkansas governor. Maybe she will claim that it was Michael Milken who taught her and her associates to "flip" real estate lots—occasionally several times a day, inflating their value and using these inflated values to artificially pump up their asset values. And maybe it was the Bush administration and not the governor of Arkansas that enhanced the Whitewater development by building roads into its otherwise remote hills and forests.

Okay, let bygones be bygones, but the present White House coverups are as current as the morning newspaper, and the fallout should be reported.

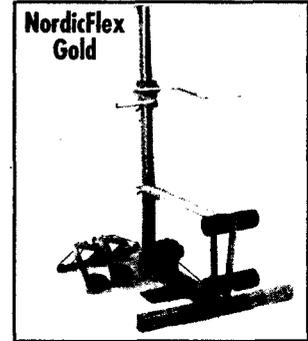
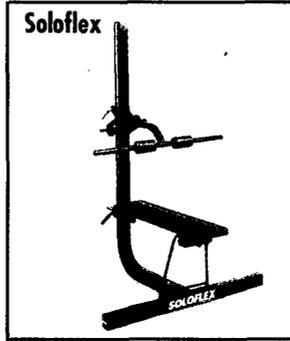
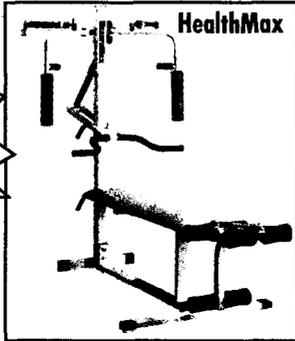


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Actually, the press has been very cautious about speaking ill of the Clintons. Washington bureau chiefs have muzzled some hard-working journalists who obviously have been sitting on information for months. That was certainly true of the *Los Angeles Times's* reluctance to publish Jonathan Rempel and Douglas Frantz's scrupulously reported story on Troopergate. And now in the immediate aftermath of Hubbell's resignation a splendidly informative story by the *Washington Post's* Howard Schneider and Sharon Walsh reports a vast amount of information about nearly a dozen of Hubbell's questionable dealings both as a lawyer at the Rose Law Firm and as associate attorney general. One wonders how long the

reporters gathered that information and if it would ever have seen the light of day without Hubbell's hasty exit.

The day after President Clinton's splendid bamboozling of a supine reporter at his nationally broadcast press conference, the *Washington Times* broke the story that its crosstown rival had suspended star investigative reporter Michael Isikoff for two weeks. Isikoff, the *Times* wrote, had accused the *Post* of spiking a story that gave credence to the allegations of Paula Corbin Jones—namely, that then-Governor Clinton had, unbidden, exposed his private parts to her in a Little Rock hotel room.

This is not a frenzy of feeding but a frenzy of events. □

there was a day when cheap patriotism was a phony way to get ahead or make a buck; but it is more common today to get ahead and make a buck by denouncing America as a sham or worse.

As I write, very few pundits have spilled much ink condemning the Ameses for betraying a country that happens to embody most of the noblest ideals of our civilization. In fact, it is a country that has nearly torn itself apart attempting to implement those ideals to the *n*th degree. No, most of the criticism has been directed at Ames not for his lack of patriotism but for putting a price on his deed—how very American! The only other criticism I have noticed has been directed at the CIA for lax security.

Well, let me file my criticism against the humbug intellectuals who have prospered by depicting American history as a chronicle of rogues and scoundrels, racists, exploiters, and war-mongers. On the one hand, you have the celebrated writer and pontificator Susan Sontag stating early in her career that which has become a common theme of America's perpetual graduate students: "America was founded on genocide. . . . It's the whole character structure of modern American man. . . . This is a doomed country, it seems to me; I only pray that when America founders it doesn't drag the rest of the planet down." Outbursts like that won her a \$340,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation in 1990.

On the other hand, you have Strobe Talbott, whom President Bill Clinton has raised from the ranks of journalism to the second highest position in the State Department. Late in 1989, when all Americans should have been celebrating our peaceful victory in the Cold War, Talbott paused in *Time* magazine to snipe at those Cold Warriors, Democratic and Republican, who had persevered. "The doves in the Great Debate of the past 40 years," he wrote, "were right all along." What were they right about? Were they right when they called Americans war-mongers, tools of the Military Industrial Complex, capitalists intent on exploitation? Were they right when they said Moscow was peaceful and harmless? Actually the doves were wrong about almost everything, but those of them who relentlessly criticized an America that never was made it much easier for the Ameses of this world to betray democracy with a clear conscience. □

Why Not Spy?

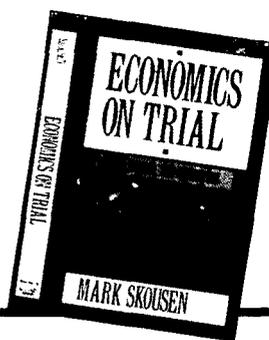
March 1 was a bleak day for the bookers over at the "Donahue" show, at Oprah, at Geraldo, and at the other talk shows. It was on that day that United States Magistrate Barry R. Poretz denied bail to the accused spies, Aldrich H. Ames and his chic South American wife Maria. Talk-show connoisseurs are going to miss a lot. Think of the fascinating stories the Ameses could tell about struggling with a multicultural marriage in the smug suburbs of Virginia! Doubtless it has been a real trial dropping off their bright-eyed, idealistic youngster at a day-care center dominated by the grasping progeny of all those rich Washington lawyers and psychiatrists. And surely Mrs. Ames could spice up the proceedings with some horrified shriek about the time she caught Aldrich eating the garter belt he got her for Valentine's Day?

Doubtless there would also be appearances by the Ameses on the more intellectual shows, say, "Larry King Live," and what a hit they would be on the campus lecture circuit. Aldrich, with his sophisticated demeanor and comparative youth, would make a splendid replacement for Alger Hiss. After all, he is surely more the "happening-guy" than the octogenarian Alger: no catty allusions to the early homosexuality of a Whittaker Chambers for Aldrich. He might even have the pluck to point out that New Soviet Man was

essentially gay, that feminism began with Khrushchev, and other whoppers eminently believable to an audience of American university professors. I can see him now, mesmerizing the professoriate and an audience of teacher's pets with a lecture entitled "The Surprise of Discovery": his Russian contacts were so very much like him. The KGB fellows who handed him the loot in exchange for the names of our double agents all loved their families and worried about their hairlines—ha, ha. Their concern for the environment was apparent—and for global warming, and the unwholesome abundance of red meat in little Sergei's diet. On second thought, perhaps Aldrich would not be such a hit on campus. What stupidity might he utter about America and Russia, particularly Communist Russia, that has not been resounding from progressive faculties for years?

I was taken aback at seeing the improbable Richard Cohen abominating Ames's treason in the *Washington Post*. What Ames did is simply a logical extension of what purveyors of progressive thought have been saying for years. With increasing regularity for decades now, the chic intelligentsia have been solemnizing America's shortcomings. Only Joe Sixpack and his wife Joyce fly American flags and sing America's virtues. Patriotism is laughed at. True,

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- **The rich aren't paying their fair share.**
- **Marx was a misunderstood genius.**
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Dr. Mark Skousen, economics professor at Rollins College, tears up Paul Samuelson's famous textbook. "Students deserve better!"

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Breaking Away

by Tom Bethell

The Committee for Waco Justice turned out to be a rather pitiful group of no more than fifty people holding candles in Lafayette Square. Some carried signs, one reading "Is Your Church ATF-Approved?" They were huddled directly in front of the floodlit, silent White House. Their muffled chants—*Hey hey, ho ho, / ATF has got to go; Hey Bill Clinton, find the scoundrels, / Appoint an independent counsel* (for Waco, not Whitewater)—could hardly be heard above the Pennsylvania Avenue traffic, and there were no supportive horns or headlights flashing. In Washington terms, we didn't exist.

Jon Utley had told me about the gathering, and we stood with the group for a while. One couple, wearing "Gun Owner" buttons, said they had read about it on the Internet. Carol Moore was the organizer, and she was selling her 134-page report, *The Massacre of the Branch Davidians*, for \$7. I was glad to give her the money. Hardly anyone would see it, let alone read it. The Texas jury's verdict in the case, acquitting the survivors of murder and conspiracy, had been handed down a few days earlier, prompting Attorney General Janet Reno to say that justice had been "had." The *Washington Post* called this verdict "a professional setback for government prosecutors," which should "spur on the review of military assault-type activities that federal law enforcement agencies launched . . ."

My own feeling was that bringing murder charges against the survivors of a military assault was just one more example, although an outrageous one, of the unlimited power that the federal establishment now wields. Before the final assault on the compound, the Waco standoff engaged the attention of hun-

dreds of reporters and I must have seen dozens of stories on TV, without seeing one that bothered to explain just how the federals had claimed jurisdiction in the first place. It is simply assumed on all sides that their jurisdiction is unlimited, which in practice it is. I realized how much my whole outlook on such matters had changed when I was reading recently about the American Revolution. I found myself thinking of today's federal government as analogous to the British in the 1770s. I suspect a lot of people may feel this way, perhaps without so formulating it. What can ordinary citizens do?

The real trend in the world today is toward the decentralization of power. This has been conspicuous all over Europe, in Canada, and in the demise of the Soviet Union. Here, however, it has been held in check, thanks to the continued liberal stranglehold over policy (unchecked by twelve years of Republican "rule"). In fact, the liberal establishment increasingly resembles nothing so much as a bitter remnant of the Socialist International. Unfazed by socialist failure everywhere else, they are pursuing the further centralization of power in Washington, with the Clintons as their willing agents. Centralize, centralize! That is their agenda, most obvious of late in the realm of health care.

Washington's attention, as I write, has been totally focused on Whitewater, Vincent Foster, Webster Hubbell, the shredded documents, and so on. Underlying all this weird business is the implicit question: Who gets to steer the federal beast? What I would like to know is how we cut it down to size. Bill Clinton's Arkansas background deserves all the attention it gets, of course. He pretended in his campaign to be a "new" Democrat, but his great hero turns out to have been FDR.

He's an astute enough politician to know that the expansion of federal power is the last thing people want, so deception was integral to his strategy. More federal power would have to be dressed up as something else. For this deceit alone, he deserves to be run out of town. (Clinton, incidentally, made the tactical error of choosing as his vice president a man whom Beltway regulars would dearly love to see in the Oval Office.)

Meanwhile, what about the federal beast? I think at bottom the impatient mood in the country stems from the government's failure to respond to the end of the Cold War. For decades, many Americans were willing to tolerate a bloated federal establishment as the price for resisting Soviet expansionism. The unstated deal in Congress was that conservatives would get their expanded military in return for ever-increasing domestic programs. Now that the Cold War is over, the military is (rightly) being cut back, but domestic spending keeps on growing. A lot of people—I will not call them conservatives, let us just say normal people (still the majority)—feel frustrated as a result. Even in the (net tax-recipient) Washington area voters are said to be "angry and impatient," according to the *Washington Post*.

Initially, Ross Perot appealed to the electorate because he seemed to understand this problem and perhaps could bring change. A familiar campaign of envy-arousal by the press, stressing his great wealth, backfired in favor of Perot. His money was seen as liberating him from the usual media suspects and party power-brokers. But Perot was a disappointment. His self-confidence exceeded his grasp of the underlying issue. He just didn't get it. In promising to raise taxes to balance the budget, he fell straight into the very first trap set for him. Establishment ringleader Pete Peterson, Republican Moderate, must have been

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