



Gather Ye Rosebuds

by Benjamin J. Stein

Sunday

I have journeyed across the country to be with my mother and father for Mother's Day. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land. My mother is . . . well, figure it out. She can remember Armistice Day, even though she was just a toddler at the time. So, as I say, figure it out. We're at the Cosmos Club and she's with a lot of other Moms, and we're all eating from the buffet, and I have a thought. It has to do with Mothers and Fathers and newspapers.

As I look around the room at all the other kiddies with their parents of all ages, I realize that what's in the newspapers has almost nothing to do with what's important. What's important is the health of our parents and children, how we're getting along with them, the little kindnesses that we do for them and they do for us. Someday, I'm just going to stop getting the papers altogether. I'll just concentrate on living my life instead of on reading about global warming.

Anyway, my mother and father and I are talking about people we have known who are now absent, and my mother suddenly says, "Chance favors the prepared mind." This is her new shtick: in the strangest moments, inserting a bon mot or an aphorism or a cliché, without any explicit explanation of just why that particular comment belongs in the flow of conversation.

After brunch, I walked to Georgetown. It was a spectacular day, with that lively light green that's in the leaves in the east in spring. There was a delightful breeze wafting off the Potomac. I walked into my favorite restaurant, the Sequoia, on the water in

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, actor, economist, and lawyer living in Malibu and Hollywood.

Georgetown. A vast mob of students started calling out, "Bueller, Bueller." That was nice. A number of them politely asked me for my autograph. This is also nice. Some of them, though, just came over and demanded that I do a line from *Ferris Bueller*, as if they owned me. I hate that.

On my way out, I stopped to talk to a madly flirtatious little cherub named Stacie, who was personing the captain's desk. She told me she was a fan of *The American Spectator* and wanted to work there. I said I'd try to help, but I don't know. Usually, to work at TAS, you have to take many secret blood oaths and go through a long period of training with the Montana Militia.

That night, I watched my parents sitting watching TV. I napped as I watched them. Occasionally my mother brought me grapes. Someday, all of that will just be a memory. And then there won't even be anyone to remember it at all. It will be as if it never happened, and that warm spot will be cold. If I could tell how I got to go from permanently sad and feeling cheated to feeling grateful, it would have a lot to do with that scene: The great joys that we now take for granted will someday be as gone as Caesar's Rome. Someday, this languorous gift of family and grapes will be a wistful memory.

I am determined to be grateful for what I have right now, while I have it. I am determined to realize that right now, right this instant, is the golden moment, and these are the golden days.

Monday

I am hurtling around Fauquier County in my little rented Buick. I'm looking for Maple Springs Farm, along a little country lane called Frogtown Road. I would love to buy that farm, but here's what I'm thinking. If I bought it, it would

probably cost me about \$2,000 for each night I spent in it. That's a lot. That's so much more than I can readily afford that it's almost insane. Why is it that the things we want always cost more than we can pay?

Well, that's not right. The material things. Hmmm. That's not right either. The real estate. That's it. That's the killer. Real estate.

Then, past the beautiful maples of Frogtown Road to Dulles Airport, and then onto American Airlines Flight 75—where no one dropped a single thing on my head—and then home again, home again, jiggety-jog.

This was one of the best flights I have ever been on. The passengers in business class were totally quiet. Not a sound. Just reading and sleeping. I love them for it. They're my heroes.

Then, at LAX, my boy, and he's looking at me and jumping up on me and saying, "Put me down, Daddy. *Put me down!*"

Wednesday

Here I am on the set of "Earthworm Jim." Well, not exactly a set. More like a studio on Ventura Boulevard. We're doing a hilarious cartoon about Earthworm Jim taking on a huge scary monster who can destroy the universe. The monster's name is Rosebud. He has a nasal voice. Monotone. Guess who plays him.

I did that for about two hours. Then, off to pick up Tommy. Buy him books, books, books at the Book Universe, or whatever that humungous bookstore is called. Tommy found a picture book for *Casper, the Friendly Ghost*, the new movie I have a tiny part in. He saw my picture on the first page and started running all around the Book Colossus telling everyone, "Look at my Daddy." Then to

a yogurt store, where we got yogurt and he told everyone that I was in *Casper*. "My Daddy plays the voice of Casper," he said.

"No, Tommy. Not even close," I corrected him. "I play a lawyer in one scene."

"You're on the first page of the book," he said.

"Still, it's a small part."

Then home to supervise him while he does his spelling. He's a fine speller and a fine reader and great at arithmetic, but unbelievably lazy at penmanship. Like Daddy. I can barely write at all without a computer, to tell you the truth. What were once vices are now habits.

Then to dinner with a group of pretty girls. I'm taping a feature for "American Journal" on "Social Kissing." This means kissing that's on the cheek, or "air kissing," or some other kind of kissing meant to express affection but not romance, but really expressing contempt and social distance. I brought beautiful Patty, lovely Juliette, wicked Dotty, and cool Kerry. We sat at Morton's and then occasionally went into the parking lot and kissed for the cameras. I commented about it, and said that Republicans didn't usually do such silly things, but in Hollywood, we did as other Hollywood people did. I liked sitting with all of those beautiful girls. As they say, the fishing's great even if you never catch anything. Actually, my pal Peter from Sandpoint says that.

Then back to my apartment to shoot some more tape about "social kissing," and then there were ambulances and sirens. My producer rushed downstairs to find out what had happened. When she returned, she said, "Alexander Godunov is dead."

"You're kidding," I said.

"No. Alcohol, apparently," she said.

I knew him. When I first moved into The Shoreham Towers more than five years ago, he was a god. Lithe. Healthy. Handsome. Women were always flocking around him. Then he began to hate his "career." He was always saying to me, "Hey, Ben, how come you get all the good parts?"

"My parts are one-day parts," I would say. "Two-day, maybe three days, tops. When you get a part, it's a big part."

"I don't get any parts," he would say.

He was great pals with my late friend,

Maggie the Madam. They would get fantastically drunk together. She would send him girls, just as a gift, and he would be too drunk and passed out and paranoid to open the door. Then he would go on really major binges, and just lock himself in his apartment with vodka for days on end.

There was a woman in the building who fell insanely in love with him. He ignored her and would not talk to her. Then he disappeared. More and more and more vodka.

Now, he's gone. But how he could dance. How he could act.

Years ago, I interviewed him for *GQ*. He was with Jackie Bisset. Now that I think of it, I interviewed her, not him. He seemed desperately unhappy. He was stalking around the kitchen not talking to her, and with her not talking to him.



"Well," the producer said, "can we interview you about him?"

"Of course," I said. "Hollywood is too cruel to be taken seriously. Look at it with a laugh and a smile, and you'll get through. Otherwise, you're doomed. If you start to think it's your life, it becomes your death." Or something like that.

Still, I remember one ethereally beautiful blonde girl heading up to his apartment, with a look of such perfect, joyful expectation on her face. Heaven help that poor man, who had so much talent, but like so many Russians, had no defenses against the world and its promises.

Thursday

A difficult day. First, a call from my wacky neighbor, Veranda, a really lovely woman. She's 37, and she wants to get married desperately. She's dating a wealthy movie producer about fifteen years her senior.

"Now, Ben," she said, "you know a lot about how men think about women. Because you think so much about women. Here's my dilemma. I'm on the pill. But I've been thinking that I should go off the pill and get pregnant so that Victor would marry me. What do you think?"

"You mean, tell him that he's unexpectedly become the father of a baby and he should therefore marry you and be a happy dutiful husband for all time?"

"Right."

"I think maybe you should get married first, and then have the baby, and then maybe it would have a more straightforward feel about it. Here's a simple rule," I told Veranda. "Men do not like to be tricked. Men do not like to be lied to."

"But I want to get married," Veranda said. "How am I ever going to get married?"

"You have to be nice and not trick him and not start arguments and treat him like you would like to be treated. Make him little homemade presents. Call him and tell him you're thinking about him. Make him a nice dinner. That kind of thing."

"What about the things he's supposed to do for me?" Veranda asked. "Like, he's letting me use one of his Bentleys. But does he pay for gas? No. Did he ever offer to pay my rent? Does he ever bring me little blue bags from Tiffany? No. I think

we should talk about what he's going to do for me instead of all this talk about making him little dinners. I mean, he's the one with all of the money."

"Well, it's just that kind of talk that explains why you're not married," I said. "Generosity of spirit. That's what makes men get married. At least that's what did it for me."

"Then there's another problem," Veranda said. "The guy I'm dating is best friends with another guy I'm dating who's really rich, too, and he pays a lot of my bills, and he doesn't like the fact that I'm dating his friend."

"Randy," I said, "this really is not so

great. Can't you see just exactly why that would upset them? Men don't like for their girlfriends to date other men. It's basic human feelings. That goes triple when the other men are their friends. I mean, he's not only going out with you, he's paying your rent. Can't you see why he'd be upset?"

"Yes, but he doesn't own me. He doesn't want to marry me. He just wants me to service him. That's not right. I don't see why I shouldn't be allowed to try to find my own husband *while* I get my rent from the first guy. It's a tough world out there. I have to look out for number one."

"Randy, whatever you say," I said. There are some people who just cannot be taught.

I sat down to work on financial fraud. I was distracted by something I glanced at in a local trade paper. Some Hollywood powers were criticizing the right-wing kooks for their anti-government paranoia, insisting instead that government is our friend, and that law enforcement officials in particular are our pals.

What nonsense. For the entire last three decades, Hollywood has ground out movies and TV shows about how the feds are crooks and thugs and cannot ever be trusted. It's a staple of TV shows and movies that the local cops are good guys, but the feds—often BATF—come in and screw things up by their high and mighty tactics. It's a staple of movies that the outrageous conduct of the CIA is aimed against our own people and not against foreign enemies. The sinister government agent, ruining contacts with creatures from outer space, threatening small children who trust E.T., chasing innocent people like Robert Redford in *Three Days of the Condor*, plotting to take over the world in *All the President's Men*—this is how Hollywood makes movies. My favorite TV show, "The Marshal," is almost always about how secret government powers are ruining innocent people's lives, helping mad bombers, making deadly nerve gas in violation of international conventions. "Miami Vice" constantly had federal government gangsters working with drug dealers and mass murderers.

How dare Hollywood tell us that it's immoral to depict federal government agents as dangerous people. Hollywood wrote the book.

And Bill Clinton! Wow. Here's a guy

who got his start by marching and demonstrating against the federal government, accusing it of war crimes. His wife worked her little heart out trying to paint a Republican president as a felon. He ran for president accusing George Bush of using the mighty federal engine to ruin the lives of the poor. Now he—of all people—is telling us that it's wrong to criticize federal agents and to undermine people's faith in the federal government.

The hypocrisy of some people simply knows no bounds. None at all.

Thursday

Up in the morning to go to Alexander Godunov's funeral. It was strange, but I felt weirdly light on my feet when I got up to go to the ceremony. Possibly that's because I finished reading Martin Amis' much talked about novel, *The Information*, late last night. What a depressing book. It's about how unfair the literary world is and how cruel it is to those who are not on top. Most of all, it's about envy. When I finished reading it, I actually felt suicidal. Then I thought, wait a minute. I am not reading this right. What this book—about a failed writer's amazing envy of a successful writer—is about is:

(1) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house or his goods or his wife; and

(2) Thou shalt be grateful for what the Lord has given thee—which is how I interpret the command that "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Plus, I thought, I'm rich because I have a lot of friends. Plus, anyone with Tommy is rich.

So, off to the memorial service, at the absurdly tiny Little Chapel of the Dawn in Santa Monica. It was packed with pretty girls in tight black dresses. Plus some ancient gay men and some even more ancient Russians.

There were some flowers, but not a lot. An old ballet critic talked about how electrifying Godunov—Sacha, they called him—had been when he was 17. Then Jackie Bisset read some silly poems from James Fox and Paula Prentiss. A Russian photographer talked about meeting Godunov when he had just started at the Bolshoi. "'Golden boy,' we called him." An American woman said Sacha celebrated two birthdays: his natal birthday, and the day in 1979 that he defected. Godunov said that the day he

became a U.S. citizen was the happiest day of his life.

Then, off to a set in Culver City for a part in a TV drama. I love this. I am going to play a mercenary, uncool TV station advertising manager who gets into a fistfight with a newsman who insults his wife. I actually get to throw a fake punch and then wrestle on the floor with the guy I punch. A stunt coordinator named Ernie came to my trailer and gave me lessons in fake punching. "When your fist goes by his face, give a loud grunt, and that makes it seem real, and it also puts air in your lungs and oxygen in your cells to keep you from getting sore. Then when you're rolling around on the floor, do the same. Grunt and curse a lot. That puts air in your lungs. Just follow my instructions and remember it's not real. Just fake it and go with it, and you'll be the same as Clint Eastwood."

The man I was to wrestle was an old pro at it. He had done many action scenes on "McGyver." He sort of led me through it. He was pleasantly fey. "You won't get hurt doing this. But you might get excited. You know, wrestling with me."

I told him I would pass it on to my wife, and he looked away. But he was a great co-wrestler. The scenes were over in no time, and I was eager to have more action scenes.

Clint Eastwood, not Jerry Lewis. That's the ticket.

Saturday

We are up in Sandpoint, Idaho, for the biggest day of Tommy's seven-year-old life. I bought him a boat. A real one. Last year, in first grade, he was not that great a student. He had a number of disciplinary problems. Among other remedial measures, I promised him that if he was a good boy until last Christmas, I would buy him a boat. He was a super boy, earning high marks and high praise from his teacher, Ruth. So, he's accrued a boat. Now that the lake is ice-free, he gets it.

We went this morning to the Alpine Shop and studied little aluminum boats. Expensive. But they're cheap compared with outboard motors. After much struggle, we settled on a twelve-foot HarborMaster and a 6-h.p. Johnson.

Plus oars, paddles, life jackets, air horn, and fire extinguisher, and it's some money.

But Little Mr. Perfect is only young once, so whaaam, down goes the MasterCard, and up go the lids of his eyes. "I'm gonna call it the *Sea Susie*," he said, thinking of his dog. "No," he added. "I'm going to call it the S.S. *Sea Puppy*."

"That's a great name," I agreed.

"No, I think maybe just the *Sea Puppy*."

"Fine."

But by the time the deal was done, he had decided that *Sea Puppy* was too juvenile, so now it's just the *Sea Pup*.

When the men from the Alpine Shop delivered it to the dock in front of the Edgewater, Tommy was literally jumping up and down. Standing on the dock and lifting off into the stratosphere of little-boy happiness, and then back and then up again, with the blue sky and fleecy clouds above him.

We had a little trouble starting the engine, but finally it turned over, and we were off. At about five miles per hour in our boat. Tommy at the helm, my pal Peter and me watching like hawks. Him barely avoiding the rocks near the town pumping station. But a look of immense pride and happiness on his face.

"He'll always remember the day he got his first boat," Peter said.

I am pretty sure this is the first boat any Stein has even owned. It's a big moment for all of us.

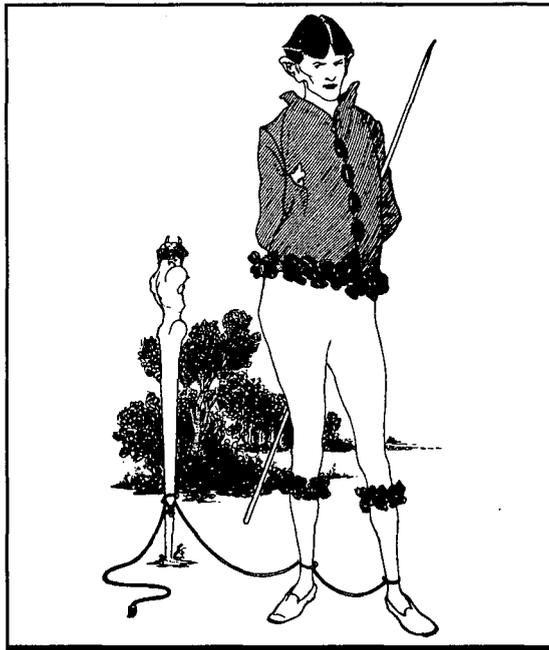
Later that day, the engine stalled and our pal Keith from the Windbag Marina wordlessly motored over and towed us to the dock. He waved off our thanks. Then Tommy got a blister on his toe. Lorna, the beauty in the Edgewater's cafe, carefully studied his little dirty foot and massaged his toe. Show me any other restaurant in the world where a waitress would do that for a little boy.

On my way up to Sandpoint I read something in *New York* magazine about how backward the people in Idaho are. Yes, they're very backward; they still believe in helping their neighbors, in not bragging, in not making money their god. They go back to a time when people treated each other like neighbors instead

of like victims. Good, Mr. *New York* magazine man. Stay well away, and keep Idaho just as it is.

Wednesday

Now I'm reading about "tort reform." This is a scheme for—among many other things—making it much harder for stockholders to sue corrupt managements. I really am disgusted about it. One of the great myths of this country is that all the bad people work for the government. That's not true. I used to work for the government. Plenty of poorly paid, hard working people with decent moral values worked near me, many far superior to me. At the FTC, at the Nixon White House, innocent people toiled for a pittance, with no hope of fame or glory.



In my experience, the great bulk of immorality about money is to be found in the corporate board rooms of bigtime companies. I'm talking about executives who give themselves tens of millions while running a company into the ground. I'm also talking about managements who attempt to loot their companies, à la Ross Johnson at RJR/Nabisco, who try to steal their companies, and then when they get stopped, they leave in a huff—with \$70 million in their pockets.

These guys are breaching basic moral duties to their stockholders, most of whom are pension plans for widows and orphans. But they never go to jail, never

have a militia label them as jackbooted thugs. They get away with it, in a word. It's not a myth that the big corporate power in America doesn't think it has to obey the law. Or, more to the point, when they have billions of dollars of Other People's Money at their disposal, they are the law.

The government doesn't take them on, because they own the government in most senses. The only people who ever had the guts and the resolution to take them on were the much maligned trial lawyers in the securities field. They weren't perfect, but at least they harassed the bad guys.

Now Congress is about to pass legislation that makes it really hard for small stockholders to even get into court to sue when management steals from them or lies to them about their company. This legislation, basically the Management and Accountant Protection and Insulation from Responsibility Act of 1995, erects yet another wall between managers and the little guy who buys the stock. I don't like it. It's not about unclogging the courts. It's about the protection of the executives and accountants who paid the campaign contributions that made it happen. It's about plain old political payoffs.

And what a breathtaking bargain for the managers and accountants: Just in connection with their role in the S&L fraud of the 1980s, accountants had to pay about \$1.6 billion to the government and to defrauded investors.

By spending a piddling \$4 million in lobbying and contributions, the accountants will make themselves largely unsharable for the foreseeable future. What a deal! A payoff of about four hundred to one—if you invest in political personages.

Lobbying is money very well spent. Congressmen can take money from people who have business before them, unlike executive branch employees. Just spread around a few shekels, and you are the boss. It's absurdly cheap to buy a congressman's vote. It's ridiculously cheap to send him on a junket. The lobbyists know how to do it.

Don't get me wrong. It's all human nature. None of it is new or unusual. But business as usual, and the politics of the paymaster, are not what I voted for in November. □

“It’s not HIV...”

advertisement

Scientists Discover The Real Cause of AIDS!

(Berkeley, CA) — At a shocking press conference recently, it was revealed that over 200 respected leading scientists who have been studying AIDS for the past several years now agree that the virus known as “HIV” cannot possibly be the cause of AIDS.

This group of well-known scientists includes Harvard researchers, Nobel prize winners, and top virologists from the University of California at Berkeley, Walter Reed Medical Center, the National Academy of Sciences, MIT, and the Pasteur Institute in France, among others. They most certainly cannot be dismissed as a “lunatic fringe.”

And yet they have come under fierce attack from the “AIDS Establishment,” the media and radical gay rights groups for suggesting that HIV is *not* the culprit causing hundreds of thousands of deaths.

HIV, these scientists say, is actually a “harmless microbe” which, for political and financial motives, is being used as a “smoke screen” to cover up the *real* cause of AIDS.

‘Another deadly factor’ is always present

According to Mr. James Trabulse, a spokesman for the 200 scientists and publisher of the group’s newsletter, *Rethinking AIDS*, “Ten years of exhaustive research show that HIV is completely incapable of destroying a person’s immune system. Instead, in every AIDS case, there is always *another deadly factor* present which — for political reasons — has been deliberately covered up and ignored.”

This “other deadly factor,” the scientists say, has been covered up because politically powerful gay rights groups don’t want the public to know about it. “It would severely harm their agenda if the public knew what really causes AIDS,” said Trabulse.

\$6 billion at stake

Furthermore, the “AIDS Establishment” now has a vested *financial* interest in perpetuating the myth that HIV causes AIDS.

“AIDS has become a six billion-dollar-a-year *industry*,” said Trabulse. “If the AIDS Establishment admitted that it’s been chasing the wrong culprit all along, they would lose all that money overnight. That’s why they’re trying so hard to silence us.”

The real cause of AIDS, say these scientists, is a simple factor that’s easy to treat and would *not* require the billions of dollars in research now spent on the HIV “wild goose chase.”

Plus, the huge pharmaceutical company that manufactures the drug “AZT” (the #1 treatment for AIDS) would no longer have a

lucrative market for their drug. “They would lose hundreds of millions of dollars overnight,” declared Trabulse. “It’s no wonder this company gives millions of dollars a year to gay rights lobbying groups to help perpetuate the HIV myth.”

Truth is not ‘politically correct’

All this would explain why these top scientists have come under such immense opposition from the AIDS Establishment and gay rights groups. As they claim, they were merely doing their job trying to find out what causes AIDS — *and they found it!* But alas, their findings are not “politically correct.”

And they’ve paid the price for it. One of the most outspoken scientists in the group, **Dr. Peter Duesberg** of the University of California at Berkeley, has had his research grant from the government’s National Institutes of Health (NIH) *terminated* because he strayed into “inappropriate areas.” Before questioning HIV, however, Dr. Duesberg — a member of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences — was one of the star researchers with NIH and one of the most widely respected virologists in the world. But now that a scientist of his caliber has credibly challenged the six-billion-dollar AIDS “industry,” he has been targeted for destruction. He may even lose his lab at Berkeley, a post he has held for 25 years.

What’s more, one of Dr. Duesberg’s top doctoral students at Berkeley, **Mr. Bryan Ellison**, was prohibited from doing his thesis on Duesberg’s view of AIDS. And, when he was only 6 months away from getting his Ph.D., the biology department illegally kicked Ellison out of the doctoral program at Berkeley in an attempt to silence him.

Can’t silence truth

Ellison and Duesberg, however, refused to be silenced, and they teamed up to write a blockbuster book that exposes the fraudulent science and politics behind the HIV/AIDS myth. In this fascinating new book, they give exhaustive, convincing proof that the “other deadly factor” they’ve discovered is what’s really causing AIDS. And once you see what it is, you’ll immediately understand why certain powerful special-interest groups don’t want this information getting out.

Indeed, the “other deadly factor” is currently affecting millions of Americans — **including school children** — and will continue to kill, says Ellison, “until the AIDS Establishment admits its mistake, stops playing politics with people’s lives, reverses its un-

conscionable drive for money and power...and instead works to save innocent lives.”

Ellison and Duesberg’s new book is titled ***Why We Will Never Win The War On AIDS***, a provocative title designed to show that *politics* and *greed* — not a lack of scientific knowledge — are the real forces preventing a cure for AIDS.

You’ll be shocked, horrified, and thoroughly outraged at the scientific fraud being perpetrated against an unknowing American public by the powerful AIDS Establishment. You will also learn just how big the “AIDS Scam” is, how the news media and the Federal Government are involved, who’s behind it, and *why*.

Learn how to protect yourself!

But most importantly, you’ll learn the *real* cause of AIDS — so you can know how to protect yourself and your family. According to Ellison and Duesberg, ***even children are at risk***, but the AIDS Establishment refuses to warn the public.

Why We Will Never Win The War On AIDS is compelling and easy to read, written for laymen (not scientists). It’s over 290 pages long, thoroughly documented, and will undoubtedly be the most exciting and most important book you read all year. (Not surprisingly, though, this book is not being carried by the major bookstores and is therefore available only by mail.)

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After the Coup

by Byron York

In early June Bill Clinton invited 263 police academy graduates from around the country to be sworn in at a ceremony on the south lawn of the White House. "I intend to keep my promise to the American people," the president told the new cops, "to put 100,000 more of you on the streets." It appears Clinton is keeping his promise. The only problem is they're all on Pennsylvania Avenue.

In late May, the president announced that two blocks of the street in front of the White House would be closed to traffic—permanently. Secret Service officers and city workers descended in the middle of the night, leaving concrete barriers that blocked off Pennsylvania from 15th Street on the east to 17th Street on the west. Eventually, White House officials say, the street will become a park, so attractively landscaped that nobody will ever miss the old traffic.

Maybe so, but today a visitor to the White House sees something more reminiscent of an enormous crime scene. On 17th Street, around the corner from the White House, yellow police tape is strung along the parking meters. Signs say "No Parking Until Further Notice." Uniformed Secret Service officers stand around.

A short distance away are the concrete barriers that block Pennsylvania at the corner of 17th Street. Actually, they don't block the entire street; there is a gap between the barriers so a security van or VIP car can snake its way through. The gap is filled by a police car, with more uniformed Secret Service officers standing around. A Secret Service van blocks Jackson Place, the little road into Lafayette Park. And at the 15th Street end,

Byron York is a writer and television producer in Washington.

there are more concrete barriers, another Secret Service car, and more officers.

Most people, conditioned to walking on sidewalks, stay off the street, making the avenue more deserted than tourist-friendly. Secret Service men, some wearing the black military-style getup that has attracted so much attention these days, stand on the White House lawn. Similarly outfitted security men peer down from the roof, often with binoculars and telescope; they look like soldiers standing atop a South American presidential palace during a coup. Tourists take pictures of all the Secret Service men before they turn their cameras to the White House itself.

There's more on the south side. State Place and part of South Executive Avenue, the street that curves around the south lawn, are also barricaded. (In fact, it's been turned into a parking lot for administration staffers who work in the Old Executive Office Building, thus solving a long-standing shortage.) And there are still more officers. The sense of crisis is unavoidable. But what was the crisis? The White House didn't look this way during the Gulf War, when Americans were killing Iraqis by the thousands and the press was raising the specter of Middle East terrorism coming to America. It didn't look this way when Middle East terrorism *did* come to America with the bombing of the World Trade Center. It didn't look this way after John Hinckley shot Ronald Reagan.

Clinton conceded as much when he made the announcement during his radio address on May 20. "Pennsylvania Avenue has been routinely open to traffic for the entire history of our republic," he said. "Through four presidential assassinations and eight unsuccessful attempts

on the lives of presidents it's been open; through a civil war, two world wars and the Gulf War, it was open. And now, it must be closed."

Why? Hadn't he just made a persuasive argument for keeping it open?

The answer was classic Clinton: *he* didn't want to close Pennsylvania Avenue, but the experts said it had to be done. He was simply deferring to them. "[The Secret Service] are the best in the world at what they do," the president said. "I believe it would be irresponsible to ignore their considered opinion, or to obstruct their decisions." But the Secret Service has wanted to close Pennsylvania Avenue for years. They always want as much protection as possible; if they had their way, the president might never leave his cocoon of security. The president is the only person who can tell them no.

Clinton acted after the White House security bureaucracy prepared a massive analysis of White House safety. The study was commissioned on September 12, 1994, the same day a depressed and drunken pilot flew a Cessna into the White House. The review was barely under way when, on October 29, Francisco Martin Duran stood on the sidewalk in front of the White House and opened fire, hitting the building several times. Other less serious incidents followed.

Curiously, the president did not mention any of those events in his radio address. Rather, he explained the closing as "a practical step to protect against the kind of attack we saw in Oklahoma City," which occurred as the security review was winding down. The Secret Service reportedly seized upon the Oklahoma City bombing to press its case anew that Pennsylvania Avenue should