

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The Maestro Exits the Stage



In mid-April one of the most finely tuned musical instruments ever to be heard in America was withdrawn from public view, abruptly and probably forever. From a speaker's dais in Fort Wayne, Indiana, William F. Buckley, Jr. announced that this was his final public performance. The orotund voice of the Republic's finest debater and lecturer was on its way to retirement.

Radiant wit, critic, author, editor, and public intellectual, Bill Buckley is also one of the two or three most important figures in the founding of modern American Conservatism. The resurgent movement began to twitch and to breathe in air in the early 1950's. From then on Bill played practically every role required in a political movement: organizer, polemicist, fundraiser, and even candidate. He was the delight of the 1965 New York City mayoral race when he ran a campaign mixing puckishness and sophisticated policy proposals as the Conservative Party candidate. Yet, his most notable role has been that of maestro of the word, both written and spoken.

His books will be read long after he assumes room temperature. The writing is grand. His ideas, epitomizing those of the growing conservative movement, have spread through both political parties (that New Democrat in the White House boasting of his balanced budget and welfare reform while calling conservatives "extreme right" is but a New Hypocrite).

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Unfortunately, it is Bill's spoken words that are now in danger of being lost. Most words uttered to an audience expire the night they are uttered. So much the better for most of the mediocrities who speak publicly in America nowadays. But Bill's lectures have been composed with great care and spoken with a fine sense of drama. His debates have been even better, especially when they were with such bright prestidigitators of the left as John Kenneth Galbraith. The heyday of those debates was in the 1960's when liberalism's intellectual and political possibilities were still arguable, and when liberalism's proponents were still vigorous and disciplined in their thought. That was long ago, and no heirs to Galbraith ever replaced him.

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, Bill was left debating the ghost of Galbraith and a few second-rate sophists. No wonder he is retiring. Debate in America died 20 years ago. Why it died is an open question. Perhaps one reason is that people supposedly debate to arrive at the truth. Looking back on the debates between conservatives and liberals since the 1960's, one gets the impression that truth was not the goal. Through the years, while Buckley debated the value of free markets, limited government, moral absolutes, and all the lesser desiderata of his point of view, socialism was being abandoned, government bureaucracy was being exposed, and the anarchy of life without standards was leaving wretchedness and absurdity as its obvious consequences.

Outside the debating hall Bill had won the debate. Inside the debating hall his opponents merely ignored the evidence and continued to hold to the Old Time Religions of Progressive Thought. What they revealed was that they were not interested in the truth so much as they were intent on conforming to the

orthodoxy of Progressive Thought. Today Galbraith is 91. His views on the economy, the environment, and all the other artifacts of progress are unchanged. He dwells in the intellectual ruins but is content. If he were a little younger he might have shown up in Washington recently to demonstrate against "global capitalism."

Then he might have popped over to visit friends in the White House. There the president and all the other New Democrats would quietly set aside their

25 YEARS AGO IN The American Spectator

University bars were never as good as we remember them to be, and it does no good to go back again. Mory's, The White Horse, or the Sepp'l, the world over, university taverns have an air about them, of childish indulgence, of self-importance, of hokey tradition. In Europe, most university saloons are resorted to for pure drinking and fun; in America, they have a cloying air of pomposity. We pretend that, while sitting and drinking, we are all "being geniuses together." Remember the Twenties in Paris? Thus, in American college saloons are found the ubiquitous chess boards, the little five-foot shelves (usually containing Tynan, Mailer, and Dante, cheek by jowl), and the eternal booming of the stereo speakers above one's head.

Around the University of Chicago neighborhood, these days, drinking has gone to the dogs. Taverns were not included in urban renewal, and most of the fabled places have been razed. So much for urban planning. What is left today is but a few memories of a neighborhood famous for its muggings and saloons. And one bar, Jimmy's, which somehow had clout with Chicago's engineers (and ward committeemen) survives.

—Philip Brantingham
*Jimmy's and All That—
The University Saloon*
JUNE/JULY 1975

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Wayne LaPierre

Wayne LaPierre
*Chief Executive Officer,
National Rifle Association of America*

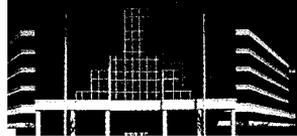


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enthusiasms for world trade, balanced budgets, and all the rest that they have learned from Bill Buckley's debates, and accord Galbraith's antique concerns abundant amens. The New Democrat talks on both sides of every issue; but lest the New Democrat wreck the economy, he allows the market to work. Galbraith still believes the market to be a myth. Some myth!

So Bill has quit the lecture circuit and there will be no more debates from him.

After all, what is there to debate? In most departments he has been right. He does have some tricks left to play. Just to let posterity know about his virtuoso performances at the speaker's dais, he has gathered some of his finest lectures into a volume that will be published soon. He has a book coming out on Elvis Presley and more in the planning stages. One of those books has got to be a memoir. He knows more about how America got here from there than almost anyone else. ❁

Even I have been called a Clinton hater! Just the other day after an interview with what seemed to be an objective and equable journalist from a moderately liberal magazine, she actually described me as the "premier Clinton hater." She went on to call my magazine "the ultraconservative *American Spectator*." For whatever reason, there are large numbers of people in and around politics who cannot see the world as it is. *The American Spectator* is no more "ultraconservative" than her magazine, the *New Republic*, is "ultraliberal." "Ultras" are farther to the right and to the left. To think otherwise is to think that any magazine with a point of view is extremist. Such thinking is not quite adult, or at least not very cosmopolitan.

On both counts I believe my interviewer innocent. She is merely another casualty of the Clinton campaign to depict any critic as a fanatic. After all, can you think of any critic of the Clintons, no matter how temperate, whom the Clintons respectfully disagree with? Is there any Clinton critic—or for that matter any Clinton victim—who is not a "Clinton hater"? I specifically informed my sunny interviewer when she called that I am not a "Clinton hater." I am a Clinton chuckler. Rather than hating Clinton, I have been laughing ever since, early in his revels, it struck me that he and his bossy wife are the 1990's incarnations of Mr. and Mrs. Warren G. Harding of Marion, Ohio. Surviving Hardings are free to object, but please do not call me a Harding hater.

Of course I exaggerate, but I do so to amuse. When the Clintons and their apologists do so with hyperbolic references to conspirators and haters, they do so to confuse the public and to smear their opponents. That is why the arrival of Schmidt and Weisskopf's *Truth at Any Cost* is so welcome. Cleanly written, lucidly reported, *Truth at Any Cost* disinters the facts of the Starr investigation from the bovine fertilizer. It is a very good read for those who desire to see the world as it is. ❁

Welcome Truths

There is good news for those of us who see the world as it is and hope our fellow Americans will too. I have in mind those of us who see our neighbor's household pet and recognize it as a dog, not a potential beneficiary of the Bill of Rights or an eventual naturalized citizen of the United States. We see spring showers and avail ourselves of an umbrella rather than a bomb shelter. We see prosecutors pursuing a crooked politician and recognize the workings of the American legal system, not the intrigues of a "vast right-wing conspiracy."

The good news is that Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf's book, *Truth at Any Cost: Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton*, has just arrived in bookstores. A disciplined account of Ken Starr's investigation of Whitewater and all the attendant Clinton scandals that followed, *Truth at Any Cost* sees the independent counsel's investigation of President Clinton as it is. It is not, as Clinton diehards spin it, a "*coup d'état*" or a "conspiracy." Such hyperbolic squawks are examples of what the eminent American historian Richard Hofstadter termed "the paranoid style in American politics." Rather, Starr's work has been the orderly procedures of a duly constituted prosecutor pursuing the irregularities of a politician who clearly and repeatedly has lied under oath and obstructed justice.

There is nothing particularly unusual or villainous here. Politicians lie all the time. Some—the most reckless—lie under oath. To those of us who see the world as it is, Clinton is what he has been since we began viewing him sometime around 1991, to wit, a rogue who puts himself above the law. He is, as a now famous judge described him after seeing him as *he* is, even under oath. According to Judge Susan Webber Wright, "The president responded to plaintiff's questions by giving false, misleading, and evasive answers that were designed to obstruct the judicial process." And she cited him for contempt of court.

Through all the years of Clinton scandals, the Clintons and their apologists have tried to hornswoggle the public into seeing things as they are not. They have insisted that Clinton is a public servant cruelly beset by "scandal mongers," though they offer no explanation as to why he attracts these swarms of scandal mongers while previous presidents have remained comparatively scandal monger-free. They say that, except for a regrettable libidinal lapse with the callipygian Monica, he has led a morally irreproachable life in the White House, though they cannot explain why, during his years as Arkansas's chief executive officer, he was accused of precisely the same kind of misbehavior that put him on the road to impeachment in Washington. They say that his critics are not critics, but "Clinton haters."

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What's Duesberg Up To?

Rediscovering the cause of cancer.

Peter Duesberg was packing dusty papers into boxes when I saw him. He was being moved from his lab on the 5th floor of the Wendell Stanley Building at U.C. Berkeley, to a smaller lab downstairs. He is 63 now, but he is still lean and vigorous, and in many ways youthful. He remarried a few years ago and has a four-year-old son. He still overflows with streams of wisecracks and German-accented military metaphors, and he is still very much the contrarian. He hasn't changed his view that AIDS is not infectious and is not caused by a retrovirus. He still says that the drug AZT kills more people than it cures. He has even been back in the news in connection with AIDS. The president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, has questioned AIDS himself, and having "trawled the Internet" as every news story parrots, he came across Duesberg's views. So Duesberg is still a heretic. But now he has embraced a new heresy, and it is one that should concern us all—cancer. For years, the medical establishment said that AIDS "puts us all at risk." You had to be a trusting soul to believe that. But with cancer, yes, we do believe it. So what is Duesberg saying now?

Nothing dramatic, like claiming to have found a cure. In contrast to his AIDS message ("don't do drugs, don't take anti-HIV medicine, and forget about it"), he is not reassuring about cancer. But there are familiar echoes. Research into the cause of cancer has

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been focused on a single theory for the last 25 years, most of it funded by the federal government, and it is in fact an erroneous theory, Duesberg believes. The theory is that gene mutations are the cause of cancer. That is the view of the National Cancer Institute and other branches of the National Institutes of Health. The cancer institute's home page reports that "NCI-funded investigators identified that alterations of only three genes...are sufficient to transform a normal human cell to one capable of producing a tumor."

Today, the NIH spends about \$4 billion a year on cancer research, and since the War on Cancer began in 1971, maybe ten times that sum has been spent. As with AIDS, the subsidized consensus on cancer tolerates little dissent. All of Duesberg's 11 grant applications to study his alternative view of cancer have been turned down by the NIH, just as all his existing grants were terminated once he questioned the consensus on AIDS. It is precisely this ability of a central agency to de-fund dissent that creates a climate of intimidation around an orthodoxy. Competition between theories, an indispensable part of science, is stifled.

We went downstairs to his new lab, east-facing, without the grand view over the San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate that he enjoyed from his old lab. We stopped off in a library, filled with bound volumes of *Cell*, *Nature*, *Biochemistry*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Duesberg is a member of the National Academy, and members usually get their papers published without peer review

in the *Proceedings*. Since he questioned AIDS, however, some of his papers have been quickly rejected. But more recently he sent them a paper whose implications were so important that the editors agreed to publish it if it passed peer-review. It did, and it was published on March 28. Its title is "Aneuploidy vs. gene mutation hypothesis of cancer: Recent study claims mutation but is found to support aneuploidy."

Aneuploidy we will come to, but the "recent study" was conducted by Robert A. Weinberg and his associates at the Whitehead Institute at MIT, and the study's findings are those advertised on NCI's home page. One of the leading cancer researchers in the country, Weinberg and his cancer investigations were the subject of Natalie Angier's interesting book, *Natural Obsessions*. His study was published in the journal *Nature* last July, and on the day of publication the *New York Times* published a front-page story about it. Copycat articles followed in *Time* and *Newsweek*. The *Times* article began: "Scientists report today that they have used a precise molecular recipe to turn normal human cells into cancer cells in the laboratory, triumphing in a task that sounded simple but that had eluded molecular biologists for more than 15 years. In the end, what was required was just three genes."

Before telling me about aneuploidy, Duesberg said something about his background and interest in cancer. With a Ph.D. in chemistry from Goethe University in Frankfurt (1964), he was looking for "a hot issue in molecular biology that I could work on before I settled down in some drug company to make fertilizers," he said. "Everybody said 'go west.' Everybody was saying