

inflamed rhetoric, and that Jesse Jackson, the nation's best-known black leader, has become more conciliatory toward Jews in recent years.

Yet distrust continues and Friedman suggests that the conflict might be eased if the two sides simply stay out of each other's way and each address their own problems. This solution is disappointing and seems a bit naive. Jews still face anti-Semitism in America and threats to the Jewish religion and culture through assimilation. But their problems are nothing like those facing African-Americans. About a third of the African-American population is being severely damaged by continuing poverty, joblessness and destruction of families.

In light of that fact, the same degree of concern that swept through the Jewish community in the sixties for the oppressed would be a welcome healing influence today.

John Herbers, a retired reporter and editor for The New York Times, covered the civil rights movement in the South and nationally for three decades.

The Hot Zone

*Richard Preston
Random House, \$23*

By Timothy Noah

It's easy to sneer at this book. Packaged as a nonfiction knockoff of Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*, with hokey graphics ("Processing... You are cleared to enter...") reads some fake computer type that precedes the first chapter), cheesy jacket blurbs from Robert Redford and Stephen King, and occasionally hyperbolic prose, *The Hot Zone* seems targeted like a cruise missile for the best-seller list. But even if Random House hadn't tartered up Preston's expanded version of his *New Yorker* piece about a deadly jungle virus run amok in suburban Washington, this book would have been a runaway hit. With a little careful editing, Preston could have produced a work of nonfiction on the order of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and

Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*. As it is, he has merely written a tremendously gripping, superbly reported narrative just a notch or two below those classics.

The Hot Zone tells the story of the Ebola and Marburg viruses, two uniquely horrible diseases that had several deadly outbreaks in Africa over the past two decades. Both viruses cause the body to "crash and bleed," as Preston puts it, a disgusting and torturous way to die whose details I lack the stomach to elaborate here. Suffice it to say that in 1989 a strain of Ebola, the more terrifying of the two diseases, found its way into a Reston, Virginia, warehouse via a shipment of monkeys from the Philippines, causing a mild panic within the medical community.

Reston is a suburb of Washington, where a few readers of this magazine live, including me. Indeed, I lived here in 1989 but didn't have a clue about the Ebola scare. Preston reports with some glee that *The Washington Post* botched its front-page story on the matter by stating, incorrectly, that the monkeys had "been destroyed as a precaution" at a time when they most emphatically had not been destroyed, and when quite a few scientists were nervously trying to figure out how to destroy them without contracting the disease. (He could have added, but didn't, that the *Post* had been scooped by the suburban *Journal* newspaper chain.) The *Post* did a creditable job on subsequent stories, but those ran mainly in the Metro section.

Well, now I know. The doctors, who were working at least as hard on news containment as they were on biocontainment, were considerably less sanguine about the prospects of averting a deadly epidemic than they let on. This is a nightmare for those of us who tend to believe scientific experts when they tell us confidently that this or that environmental or health risk is really minimal. Preston also does a marvelous job showing how even the Army's daredevil virus hunters who unwittingly exposed themselves to Ebola failed to quarantine themselves to protect the

population at large. These folks knew better than anyone else the potential danger they posed, but somehow the need to pick up the kids from school, or to go out with some pals for a drink, or whatever, came first.

Ebola Reston, as the strain is now known, did end up jumping from the monkeys into the bodies of a few homo sapiens, but for reasons not totally understood it didn't make them sick; some tiny genetic difference between Ebola Reston and its deadly near-identical twin, Ebola Zaire, averted calamity. Had this not proven the case, Washington probably would have had a gruesome epidemic on its hands. The number of deaths might not have been impressive—viruses as deadly as Ebola kill too quickly to allow for wide transmission—but you can bet there would have been hysteria in the nation's capital.

Timothy Noah is a reporter in the Washington bureau of The Wall Street Journal.

The Transformation of American Politics

*The New Washington
and the Rise of Think
Tanks*

David M. Ricci

"An incisive look at the rise of think tanks and at their impact on policymaking."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"An important book that helps us understand how Washington works today."

—Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.,

Heritage Foundation
new in paperback \$15.00

At fine bookstores
or call 1-800-YUP-READ

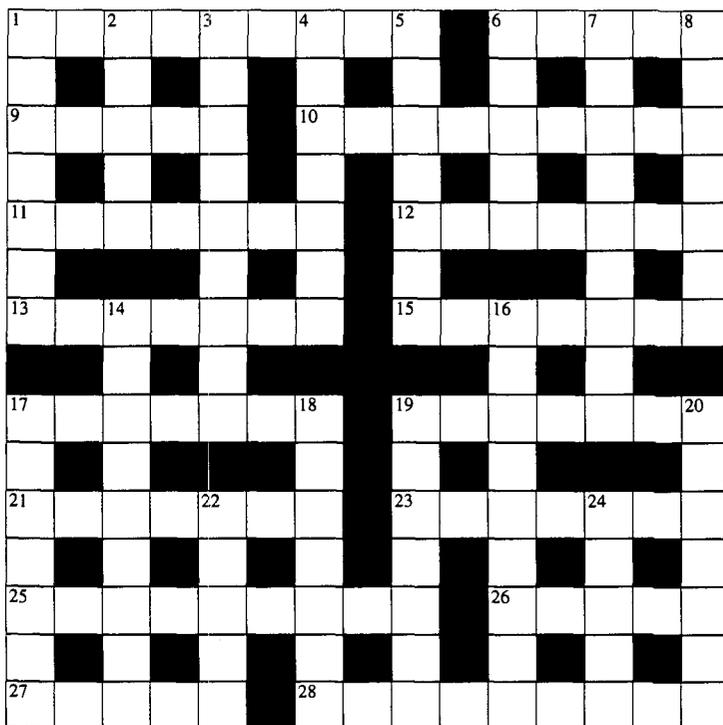
Yale University Press

P.O. Box 209040
New Haven, CT 06520

Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



ACROSS

1. One candidate is seeking salary, we hear. (9)
6. Strangely overt for citizen. (5)
9. Beauty in proven usage. (5)
10. Married unhappily and sits around. Just the opposite, put badly. (9)
11. Adjusts data in Connecticut indoors (7)
12. Clear degrees preceding kinky love. (7)
13. What some lenders do to make nerd lie. (7)
15. Eastern leaders cultivating salt and sun. (7)
17. Rudeness from rat swallowing donkey. (7)
19. Copper hauls mom in for observation. (7)
21. Sorted seven University of Pennsylvania ties. (5,2)
23. Brave it recklessly for thrill. (7)
25. Enemy returned rotted car interior. (9)
26. Cares about land measures. (5)
27. Political contest stir scare. (5)
28. Candidates desperately postpone around November 1. (9)

DOWN

1. Confused a driven type of entrant (7)
2. He questions 199 about New York Return. (5)
3. Our country lions tamed in Michigan for former leader. (9)
4. Seaman's organization acting unanimously. (2, 5)
5. Sun acts strangely for some Italians. (7)
6. New stove blocks. (5)
7. Attract attention changing tail title. (9)
8. Where shells get direction from start of rudimentary glands. (7)
14. Gloomy about spicy dept. (9)
16. Fool disturbed Rabin meal. (9)
17. Reckless liberal preens fussily about start of debate. (7)
18. Noted woodcarver made poet get excited. (7)
19. Rationalization returning in impure vocalization (5, 2)
20. They believe his test confused. (7)
22. Covers up fasteners. (5)
24. High priest pulling an oar. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

