

on VDARE .com after the 2000 election, Bush surrendered millions of white male voters, many of whom had voted for his father in 1992 but resented his waffling.

It is also hard to find the value in the way the Republican National Committee and most Republican politicians treat immigration. To speak of this blunder, which Judis and Teixeira properly celebrate as their kind of diversity, and which will soon cost the Republican Party both congressional and presidential races in key states, as "Hispanic outreach" brings to mind the Saturday Night Live skit Republican presidential candidate who boasts about his "strategy." Studies by, among others, Steve Sailer, John O'Sullivan, and Peter Brimelow conclude that Republicans may be doomed to permanent minority status if Hispanic immigration is allowed to continue at its present rate. Yet, the Republicans, led by Karl Rove and the *Wall Street Journal*, advocate this road to disaster, while Rove has raged against the idea of recruiting Republican voters from among those who oppose immigration, which may by now be a majority of Americans. Equally silly have been the Republican efforts to court Jewish votes by fawning on the Zionist Right. Bob Dole's attempt to outdo the Israeli Right in his ill-fated

presidential campaign of 1996 by bashing the Palestinians, netted him less than 20 percent of the Jewish vote. It also helped enhance his opportunistic image after he had tried to reach out to every designated victim group, including gays. (Stanley Renshon published an eye-opening essay on Dole's outreach and the problem of vacuous politics in the September/October 2000 edition of *Society*.)

Although one can differ about the causes of this grotesque behavior, be it the leftist media, congenital stupidity, or WASP social guilt, it is something Republicans have done to themselves. Having voted for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 overwhelmingly and having introduced affirmative action programs under Nixon, the GOP has done at least as much as its Democratic opponents to win black votes. Perhaps it can now start catering to the Middle Americans who have voted Republican—or to the white male Americans who have grown disgusted with Republican opportunism masked as outreach. Let Republican strategists worry about their own base for a change, lest all of it stays home on election day. And let them stop thinking that they are morally reprehensible when they look for voters on the Right. Needless to say, the bogus Right will join the Left in decrying Republican candidates who come out

against immigration; and yes, journalist David Broder will predictably describe any Republican as a racist, as he did Senator Helms for the hundredth time last year, who calls attention to the set-asides received by a black opponent. (Judis and Teixeira, by the way, complain bitterly about the resort to "racial wedge issues" among Republican candidates who notice violent crime during their campaigns.) But those

are the necessarily divisive things that a competitive national party will have to face as it builds a right-of-center constituency. Only once this course has been tried and failed will the Judis-Teixeira Democratic majority seem historically inevitable. ■

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[No Way to Treat a First Lady, Christopher Buckley, Random House, 288 pages]

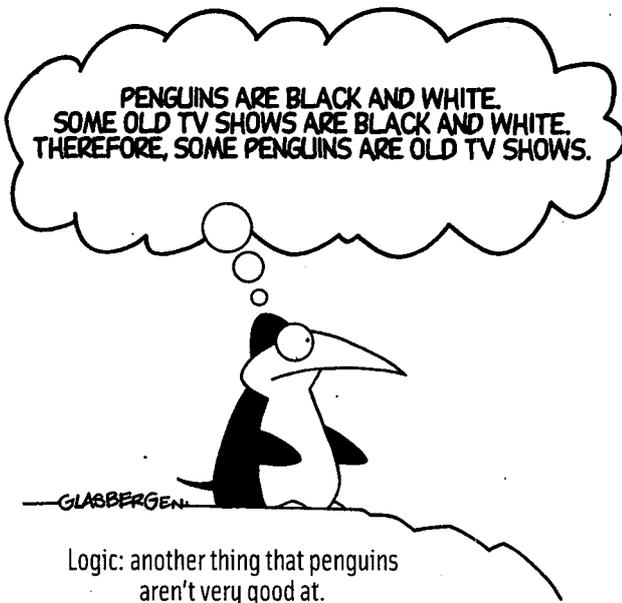
Will She Get a Pearl Necklace?

By E. F. Ulmann

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY is the son of conservative patriarch William F. Buckley Jr. He is a smooth man in the same way that his father is a hairy, craggy man. Having been a speechwriter for President Bush the Elder, he knows the layout of the White House and the Washington form on how the game is played and who the players are. He is a former managing editor of *Esquire*, and his current day job is editor of *Forbes FYI*. His latest book (his eighth) is going to make a bang-up movie, a Washington satire better than "Wag the Dog."

As they say in Hollywood, here's the pitch. Before the titles roll, the film opens *in medias res*. The scene is the White House Lincoln bedroom. The President of the United States is conducting vigorous, headboard-banging "bilateral relations" with a Barbra Streisand type. How do we know it's the President? Because she cannot resist inserting a "Mr. President" into the "Oh, baby, baby, baby"s. And because he orders her not to call him that "while Congress is in session."

Pretty good start wouldn't you say? I



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don't know about you, but I like a little humor in the hay, a laugh or two with my lechery. Perhaps you sophisticates may be jaded by the spectacle of the president hosting horizontal happy hours in the White House. In this case, however, as we later learn, President Kenneth Kemble MacMann, although a former state governor like some of his predecessors, is a Vietnam War hero, not a draft-dodger. As the encounter reaches its climax, a pan of the camera to the portrait over the mantle of our great Civil War president might add a nice touch of irony.

It is after 2:00 a.m. when the President slips back into the First Bedroom. Elizabeth Tyler MacMann, the knockout First Lady (think Catherine Zeta-Jones) hears the click of the opening door. "She knew," writes Buckley, "Knew instantly, even in the dark. No surer radar than a wife's intuition has been invented." She clicks on the lights. He reacts "like any creature of the night—raccoon, cockroach—suddenly bathed in unwelcome light."

"Iraq," sighs the President, rolling his eyes.

Go black. Roll titles.

Fade in. It is morning. A maid brings the First Couple their breakfast in bed. She says to the First Lady, softly but with alarm, that the president's eyes and mouth are wide open and he is looking awfully still. He has a bump on his head is colder than a smelt. Track to a silver spittoon on its side in a corner of the room.

Well, enough of this screenplay stuff. I'm sure that Christopher Buckley will do a fine job of it himself. He is a splendid writer of dialogue. It can go on for a page or so without a "he said, she said," and the reader is never in doubt as to the speaker. Believable, realistic dialogue with the fits, starts, and interjections of everyday conversation, was first introduced into the humorous novel, in the 18th century, by Lawrence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*. Buckley is a worthy descendant of Sterne, which for reasons known to him, I think he would take as a compliment.

Back to the narrative. As the evidence will later show, the lump on the president's forehead bears the hallmark of Paul Revere, silversmith, who wrought the six-pound, ten-ounce heirloom spittoon that is lying nearby on the floor.

As the Secret Service guards will later testify, a boisterous argument had followed the president's return to the bedroom.

The discovery of the cooled MacMann results in the Attorney General of the United States charging his wife with the capital crime of assassinating the president.

This, then, is the set-up. There have been real White House rumors of lamp-tossing and bumps on the head after choking on a pretzel, but here we have a situation in which the *dénouement* is actually fatal.

Mrs. MacMann, "Lady Bethmac" in the tabloids after her ruthless treatment of staff, is not a popular figure. It appears that the prosecution will have a slam-dunk case and that the First Lady is fated to get a pearl necklace—one fashioned into a noose like that which artfully decorates the dust jacket of Buckley's book.

Not so fast. Enter counsel for the defense: Boyce "Shameless" Baylor, Beth's dumped fiancé from their law school days twenty-five years ago. He is the highest paid lawyer in the country, first to bill \$1000 an hour, and notorious for his win-at-any-cost, successful defenses of a number of scoundrels. Think of Jack Nicholson as a handsome David Boies.

Of Boies David Margolick has written, "To understand David, you have to understand that you may not understand him." Buckley gets the irony down perfectly. "The last thing I want to know from my clients is did they do it," says Baylor, adding later, "The truth has no place in a court of law."

From here the book sparkles off to a riveting, often hilarious, courtroom drama. It is the "Trial of the Millenium," one that enraptures more than a billion television viewers around the world. It features a cast of characters that will be

readily identifiable to those with knowledge of the recent trials of merely the century and the gallery of pundits who provide the play-by-play.

There is the annoying assistant attorney general, a Marcia Clark type, who leads the prosecution. A few characters reappear from Buckley's earlier novels. There is John O. Banion, syndicated columnist and figure on the *Capital Bang* television show, who first appeared in *Little Green Men* and spinmeister Nick Naylor who repped the tobacco industry in *Thank You for Smoking*. I am saddened to report, however, that one of my favorite Buckley characters, Karl Kuntmore, the techno-military thriller writer from *Little Green Men* does not make an appearance. This anomaly is more than offset, however, by the odious Alan Crudmore, lead counsel in the J.J. Bronco case, who "had gotten acquitted some of the most loathsome human beings on the planet," and who tries to second-guess Boyce Baylor on this one. There will be no prizes for guessing who this is. Buckley does a great job of satirizing this legal figure who is well known for being a long way from hating himself, and frankly, deserves some sending up.

Some forty years ago Michael Flanders (*At the Drop of a Hat*) spotted satire squatting "hoof in mouth under every bush." It was apparently so popular that Flanders and Swann would satirize satire itself. "The purpose of satire," said Flanders, is to strip off the veneer of comforting illusion and cozy half-truth. And our job, as I see it, is to put it back in."

Today there is a dearth of satire, which makes Buckley's book so welcome. In the past some critics have accused him of being light on plot, but that is not the case in this novel. The conclusion is artful and the surprise ending well conceived. ■

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On the Left Bank

Driving to Provincetown with Scott McConnell and Kara Hopkins to interview Norman Mailer brought back memories. Getting famous writers to say yes is not

always easy. In the autumn of 1972, I was living in Paris, and William Buckley suggested I interview expatriate American writers like James Jones and Irwin Shaw for *National Review*. I was excited by the idea and went to work immediately. I rang James Jones from my room at the Plaza-Athenee, where I was living in great comfort after my *al fresco* stay in Hue, Vietnam the previous spring. Jones answered the telephone himself, and the conversation went something like this:

Me: Hello, Mr. Jones, my name is Taki Theodoracopulos. I write for *NR* and would very much like to interview you.

JJ: I am sorry, but I do not give interviews.

Me: This is very bad news because I'm a struggling writer who has just returned from Nam and needs to feed two children and a wife.

JJ: Well, we are all struggling writers, what can I say?

Me: Some more than others. But the kids gotta eat.

JJ: What did you say your name was and who do you write for?

Me: Taki Theodoracopulos, and it's *National Review*, the William F. Buckley Jr. conservative fortnightly.

JJ: You poor bastard. You better come around.

And around I went, to his beautiful house on the Left Bank, where he and

his wife Gloria treated me with great kindness and generosity of spirit. Jones revealed to me that he'd had it with Paris. "I'm going back to my roots in the good old U.S.A. Paris is really yesterday. Like Papa said, 'Paris is for the young ...'" He pointed out that the City of Lights had been irreparably damaged by the modern architecture sprouting all over the place and that the people had lost some of their spirit for the arts and literature. "The mindset is now that of Wall Street, so why settle for second best?"

A butler served us a wonderful lunch, Jones encouraging me to have seconds and thirds, obviously hoping to fatten me up before I returned to a diet of bread and beans. We talked about writing. *Time* magazine had just published some rubbish about how Irwin Shaw and Jones were *passé* because they were simple storytellers. "Yes," said Jones, "both Irwin and I write books that have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and we try to entertain our readers, not confuse them." This was before deconstructionism and magic realism had muddled the issue of literature. Still, we found plenty of ammunition against the modernists. Having taken copious notes, I bade James and Gloria *adieu* and thanked them profusely. I had spent eight hours with them, but it felt like much less. Jones looked awfully uncomfortable as I was leaving. But Gloria whispered something to him, we shook hands, and I left. I found out later that he wanted to slip me a few francs, but his wife thought I might be insulted by it.

Now comes the good part, as told to me by Irwin Shaw years later. Two weeks after my interview with James Jones, he and Irwin and their wives were dining in a bistro when the *Time* magazine article came up in conversation. Irwin was steamed up about it. "Who the hell are these no-talents to be passing judgment on us?" He then made a few choice remarks about critics and the press in general. James tried to calm him down. "Don't forget, we're quite fortunate. I had a kid come and see me recently, and he has a family to support on the lousy \$8,000 per year that Bill Buckley pays him. He had a long, strange name, a Greek one."

"That's funny," said Shaw, "I know somebody like that. His name is Taki Theodoracopulos."

"Yeah, that's him," said Jones.

"Well," said Irwin, "Taki is a friend of mine, is not married, has no kids, writes the occasional article for *NR*, and in case you're interested, I'm going to be on his yacht in the south of France next week."

"Son of a bitch," spluttered Jones, "I've been conned by a fascist."

Years later, at a Fourth of July party in Easthampton, Irwin couldn't stop chuckling about it. James Jones had passed away by then, as Irwin would soon afterwards, but he went on and on about it, actually congratulating me for having tugged at James's heartstrings. "You must have known that James was a softie underneath, didn't you?"

Well, I didn't, but successful, tough-guy writers like Jones are more often than not eager to help those whose talents don't match their own. Shaw was also like that, as is Norman Mailer. At least this time I didn't need to pretend I