

January 25, 2010

[Peter Robinson](#) says hats off to the Tea Partiers.

...In short, our forty-fourth chief executive sought to end America's two-and-a-third centuries as a truly exceptional nation—more patriotic, more dynamic, more enterprising and freer than any other—to turn the republic into a kind of enervated satellite of Western Europe. Barack Obama's America, a supersized Belgium.

And but for one vote in the Senate—one vote—Obama would have succeeded. ...

...To whom, then, do we owe our gratitude? Broadly speaking: the unstylish, the unschooled and the uncool. In other words, the tea partyers.

If you had to choose one moment as the inception of the tea party movement, you'd select February 19, when CNBC reporter Rick Santelli suddenly and gloriously lost his temper on the air. On the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Santelli, reporting an Obama housing measure, began ranting about the unfairness of penalizing ordinary Americans in order to bail out mortgage deadbeats. What the country needed, Santelli announced, was a "Chicago tea party." Within hours, tea party Web sites had sprouted online. Meeting one another through Facebook and Twitter, tea partyers began organizing protests. On Tax Day, April 15, more than half a million tea partyers participated in protests at 800 locations around the nation. The soccer mom in Maine, the truck driver in Canton, the schoolteacher in Orlando, the farmer in Chico—all had found their voice. ...

...Will Barack Obama follow the example of Bill Clinton, who, after the electorate rebuked him in 1994 by handing control of the House back to the GOP, moved to the center? Or will Obama instead remain on the left and fight, turning the remainder of 2010 into a raw struggle for power? Beats me. But I do know this—and by now Obama knows it, too: The most potent political force in America is still an ordinary citizen who has finally had enough.

[David Bernstein](#) blogs in [Volokh Conspiracy](#) about one disadvantage to Scott Brown's victory. *Like others who oppose much of President Obama's legislative agenda, I'm pleased that Scott Brown won, and even more pleased that he won relying on generally libertarian themes. There is a downside, however. From what I can tell, the swing vote for Brown, and more generally against Obama these days, is senior citizens who want to protect Medicare in its current, bloated form; Brown himself argued that he wanted to defend Medicare from Obama.*

In a sense, this serves the Democrats right. For decades, any time a Republican suggested any sensible Medicare reform, the Democrats responded with a barrage of (very effective) political propaganda accusing the Republicans of wanting to eviscerate Medicare. As a result, Medicare became politically sacrosanct; the only major Republican-led reform of recent years was a massive Medicare expansion under President Bush.

...

...The problem, of course, is that Medicare is utterly unsustainable in its present form. One hopes that a bipartisan solution, that will be blamed on both (or neither) party can be achieved. More likely, I'm afraid, politicians will have learned that even liberal Democrats dare not mess with Medicare, and the program will gradually (further) bankrupt the country.

In the [Washington Examiner](#), [Byron York](#) reports that key national security departments were not consulted on the decision to give the pantybomber constitutional rights. It appears that Attorney General Eric Holder has a lot to answer for.

...So who decided to treat Abdulmutallab as a civilian, read him the Miranda warning, and provide him with a government-paid lawyer -- giving him the right to remain silent and denying the United States potentially valuable intelligence that might have been gained by a military-style interrogation?

This week that simple question -- Who? -- became more complicated after several of the administration's top anti-terrorism officials testified on Capitol Hill. The director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Leiter, said he wasn't consulted before the decision was made. The director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, said he wasn't consulted, either. The secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, said she wasn't consulted. And the head of the FBI, Robert Mueller, said he wasn't consulted. ...

...So on Thursday all seven Republicans on the Judiciary Committee sent a letter to Holder asking for a full explanation: Who made the decision and why, and whether the administration now has "a protocol or policy in place for handling al Qaeda terrorists captured in the United States." ...

The [WaPo editors](#) originally backed the Obama decision to give terrorist Abdulmutallab the constitutional rights of the US citizens that he was seeking to murder. Now that it has come to light that many departments and agencies were left out of the loop, the editors are questioning the decision. Some liberals believe that if there is a thorough discussion or summit of some kind, the decision must be a good one. Such logic gives further credence to the conservative belief that liberals do not know how to keep Americans safe.

UMAR FAROUK Abdulmutallab was nabbed in Detroit on board [Northwest Flight 253](#) after trying unsuccessfully to ignite explosives sewn into his underwear. The Obama administration had three options: It could charge him in federal court. It could detain him as an enemy belligerent. Or it could hold him for prolonged questioning and later indict him, ensuring that nothing Mr. Abdulmutallab said during questioning was used against him in court.

It is now clear that the administration did not give serious thought to anything but Door No. 1. This was myopic, irresponsible and potentially dangerous.

...In [testimony Wednesday](#) before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, and Michael Leiter, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, all said they were not asked to weigh in on how best to deal with Mr. Abdulmutallab. Some intelligence officials, including personnel from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, were included in briefings by the Justice Department before Mr. Abdulmutallab was charged. These sessions did provide an opportunity for those attending to debate the merits of detention vs. prosecution. According to sources with knowledge of the discussions, no one questioned the approach or raised the possibility of taking more time to question the suspect. This makes the administration's approach even more worrisome than it would have been had intelligence personnel been cut out of the process altogether. ...

[Stephen Spruiell](#) takes exception to Paul Krugman's assessment of the economy. There's a Krugman quote here from 2002 when he was suggesting the Fed should create a housing bubble. So, how'd that work out?

...And who could forget [this gem](#) from 2002?

To fight this recession the Fed needs more than a snapback; it needs soaring household spending to offset moribund business [investment](#). And to do that, as Paul McCulley of Pimco put it, Alan Greenspan needs to create a housing bubble to replace the Nasdaq bubble.

(Important note: I did not make that one up.)

Can we please stop taking recession-fighting advice from Paul Krugman? Really. Any day now.

Sabrina Eaton in the Cleveland Plain-Dealer writes about an Obama fan/activist using deception to get letters to the editor published.

[Ellie Light](#) sure gets around.

In recent weeks, Light has published virtually identical “Letters to the Editor” in support of President Barack Obama in more than a dozen newspapers. Every letter claimed a different residence for Light that happened to be in the newspaper’s circulation area.

“It’s time for Americans to realize that governing is hard work, and that a president can’t just wave a magic wand and fix everything,” said a letter from alleged Philadelphian Ellie Light, that was published in the Jan. 19 edition of [The Philadelphia Daily News](#).

...Variations of Light’s letter ran in Ohio’s [Mansfield News Journal](#) on Jan. 13, with Light claiming an address in Mansfield; in New Mexico’s [Ruidoso News](#) on Jan. 12, claiming an address in Three Rivers; in South Carolina’s [The Sun News](#) on Jan. 18, claiming an address in Myrtle Beach; and in the [Daily News Leader](#) of Staunton, Virginia on Jan. 15, claiming an address in Waynesboro. Her publications list includes other papers in [Ohio](#), [West Virginia](#), [Maine](#), [Michigan](#), [Iowa](#), [Pennsylvania](#) and [California](#), all claiming separate addresses. ...

Seems the pajamas news media-types are helping root out another liberal deception.

Patterico is compiling the newspapers and websites that published the Ellie Light letter. Can we get some Russian hackers to track "Ellie Light" down?

...Like [Ben Smith at Politico](#).

And the [Washington Times](#).

And a [blog at USA Today](#).

And the [Sheboygan Press](#) in Wisconsin. And the [Stevens Point Journal](#) in Wisconsin — listing an address of Algoma, Wisconsin.

...And in [TheUnion.com](#), listing an address of Grass Valley, CA.

...On an unrelated note, recall that recently, Glenn Greenwald flagged the fact that Obama’s pal (and head of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs) Cass Sunstein recently wrote this paper [suggesting something sounding a lot like Astrourfing](#):

Sunstein advocates that the Government’s stealth infiltration should be accomplished by sending covert agents into “chat rooms, online social networks, or even real-space groups.” He also proposes that the Government make secret payments to so-called “independent” credible voices to bolster the Government’s messaging (on the ground that those who don’t believe government sources will be more inclined to listen to those who appear independent while secretly acting on behalf of the Government).

...P.S. If you find other examples, please leave them in comments with a link. Many more updates in the extended entry.

...And my current favorite so far, [The Bangkok Post](#) — the “World’s Window to Thailand.” No hometown provided.

Eric at [Classical Values](#) has a little fun with "Ellie Light". You'll have to see the photo to get the joke.

[Chris Hafner](#) at [Car Lust Blog](#) celebrates the internal combustion engine and the gasoline-powered car.

...Think of a one-gallon container of liquid--a typical milk container, for example. With only that much gasoline, depending on conditions and driving style, a brand new Honda Fit will drive 40 miles, possibly more, before it runs out of fuel. ...

In absolute terms, 40 miles is a significant amount of distance. Think of the most common means of transportation before cars became common. Forty miles represents six hours of travel from a sailing ship traveling at a steady six knots. It represents five hours of travel from a horse trotting at a steady eight mph. It represents two days of travel from a cross-country wagon train. A late 19th-century train could cover 40 miles distance nearly as quickly as the Fit, but it would need 1,000-4,000 pounds of coal to do so.

Let's take a look at the other side of the equation. The Fit is capable of covering those 40 miles on one gallon of fuel, within 40 minutes or less, without drama, and in comfort. The driver would be swaddled in an environment that includes a comfortably upholstered chair, a high-quality sound system with decent acoustics, and with filtered and climate-controlled air. And while we consider the Fit a relatively small and efficient car, it is capable of remarkable utility--it is a 2,500-pound car with a modern safety cage, seating for a family of five, and room for gear. It only takes eight fill-ups and 80 gallons of gas, costing the driver roughly \$240, to propel this 2,500-pound object from one side of this continent to the other. That's an amazing accomplishment for a relatively small amount of fuel. ...

[Rob Long](#) in the [WSJ](#) tells of the passing of a pioneer in the field of hypnotism.

...Dr. Herbert Spiegel—a Freudian analyst who became a trailblazing hypnotist—had died at 95.

Dr. Spiegel treated anxiety, smoking, posttraumatic stress syndrome—and a host of other disorders that I probably also have—with hypnosis. In the 19th century, doctors had experimented with the method—Franz Mesmer more or less invented hypnosis, and Sigmund Freud practiced it in his early days. ...

...And there was something disturbing about Dr. Spiegel, too: his efficiency. He put you under, you had a therapeutic conversation, he snapped his fingers, and . . . done. Pay the lady on the way out.

Actors came to him for help with stage fright. People afraid to fly found themselves, after treatment, happily boarding planes. Smokers were cured. In other words, people got better.

And Dr. Spiegel got famous. Well, not famous famous, but known in Manhattan media and political circles as an interesting, effective and fast-acting healer. He even had a regular table at Elaine's, the Upper East Side hangout with its heyday in the '60s and '70s. The names of his clients are confidential, yet when one recalls a few of the more notorious Elaine's regulars—Woody Allen, Norman Mailer, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote and George Steinbrenner among them—it's clear he could have had a lot to work with. ...

Triumph Of The Tea Party

by Peter Robinson

Over the next few months I need to spend a lot less time in the present and a lot more in the past—I'm writing a book about the Cold War, intended to make the point, absent from academic works on the subject, that our side won. So I've decided to go on a hiatus from this space. In this column, then, a brief look back at the events that have taken place over the year and a half or so during which "Man Friday" has appeared.

What stands out? Two features. The country had a really close call--but the people and institutions who averted it are rarely given due credit.

The close call wasn't the financial crisis. As the crisis developed, the Fed properly flooded the financial system with liquidity, preventing a collapse—or any real threat to our institutions or way of life. Yes, we're still suffering a recession. And, yes, the Administration's policies are no doubt making it worse. But the recession is just that: a recession. Sooner or later the economy will once again begin growing.

The *real* close call was President Obama's assault on the constitution—not on our founding document, the Constitution (note the capital "C"), but on the set of habits and mores that enable our democracy to function.

The Founders did a neat job of designing checks and balances, making as certain as they could that the federal government would act slowly, after due deliberation, reflecting the settled will of the people. They set the Senate against the House, the House against the Senate and the Congress against the President. What the Founders didn't anticipate—before this year, who did?—was that one day the Senate, the House, the President, and, for that matter, the federal bureaucracy and the press would all lock arms to march in perfect lockstep, even though nobody had ever consulted the American people about the direction.

Candidate Obama, you will recall, even if our chief executive appears to have forgotten, promised voters he would govern in a moderate and bipartisan manner. Yet instead of complying with the constitution—that is, instead of respecting his understanding with the electorate—President Obama chose instead to present an agenda that will more than double the federal debt over the next five years while extending government control over virtually every aspect of the economy. Commanding majorities in the Senate and House, cheered on by a bureaucracy that always wants more government and positively fawned over by the mainstream media, Obama enacted a trillion-dollar "stimulus" bill that consisted not of stimulus but pork, expropriated the automobile industry, took over the banking sector and fought to nationalize the one-sixth of the economy that health care represents.

In short, our forty-fourth chief executive sought to end America's two-and-a-third centuries as a truly exceptional nation—more patriotic, more dynamic, more enterprising and freer than any other—to turn the republic into a kind of enervated satellite of Western Europe. Barack Obama's America, a supersized Belgium.

And but for one vote in the Senate—one vote—Obama would have succeeded.

Now that Obama has at last been stopped, to whom do we owe our thanks? Not to the Republican Party. John Boehner in the House and Mitch McConnell in the Senate performed a clarifying act by persuading Republicans in both chambers to vote against ObamaCare unanimously. (Well, almost unanimously. Rep. Joseph Cao of Louisiana cast the sole Republican vote in favor, a step that instantly placed the first-term congressman's brilliant future behind him.) Yet otherwise the leaders of the GOP remained largely inert. Not to the mainstream media, a point that needs no elaboration, or to intellectuals, who, as every survey of university faculties demonstrates, continue to support Obama monolithically. And not to business leaders, whose willingness to remain supine even as the Obama Administration undermined such fundamental aspects of free enterprise as private property (in taking over GM, the Administration simply ignored the rights of bondholders) represented one of the most disgusting aspects of the entire episode.

To whom, then, do we owe our gratitude? Broadly speaking: the unstylish, the unschooled and the uncool. In other words, the tea partyers.

If you had to choose one moment as the inception of the tea party movement, you'd select February 19, when CNBC reporter Rick Santelli suddenly and gloriously lost his temper on the air. On the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Santelli, reporting an Obama housing measure, began ranting about the unfairness of penalizing ordinary Americans in order to bail out mortgage deadbeats. What the country needed, Santelli announced, was a "Chicago tea party." Within hours, tea party Web sites had sprouted online. Meeting one another through Facebook and Twitter, tea partyers began organizing protests. On Tax Day, April 15, more than half a million tea partyers participated in protests at 800 locations around the nation. The soccer mom in Maine, the truck driver in Canton, the schoolteacher in Orlando, the farmer in Chico—all had found their voice.

Since then, the GOP has scored a hat trick, winning upsets in Virginia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, where this last Tuesday Scott Brown became the first Republican elected to an open Senate seat since 1966, a date so long ago that, by my estimate, only 40% of the current population of the Bay State had even been born. Yet these victories would have proven impossible if the GOP had been unable to draw on the spontaneous nationwide movement that preceded them. The tea parties came first.

Will Barack Obama follow the example of Bill Clinton, who, after the electorate rebuked him in 1994 by handing control of the House back to the GOP, moved to the center? Or will Obama instead remain on the left and fight, turning the remainder of 2010 into a raw struggle for power? Beats me. But I do know this—and by now Obama knows it, too: The most potent political force in America is still an ordinary citizen who has finally had enough.

Peter Robinson is a research fellow at the [Hoover Institution](#) at [Stanford University](#) and a former White House speechwriter.

Volokh Conspiracy **[A Downside to the Brown Victory](#)**

by David Bernstein

Like others who oppose much of President Obama's legislative agenda, I'm pleased that Scott Brown won, and even more pleased that he won relying on generally libertarian themes. There is a downside, however. From what I can tell, the swing vote for Brown, and more generally against Obama these days, is senior citizens who want to protect Medicare in its current, bloated form; Brown himself argued that he wanted to defend Medicare from Obama.

In a sense, this serves the Democrats right. For decades, any time a Republican suggested any sensible Medicare reform, the Democrats responded with a barrage of (very effective) political propaganda accusing the Republicans of wanting to eviscerate Medicare. As a result, Medicare became politically sacrosanct; the only major Republican-led reform of recent years was a massive Medicare expansion under President Bush.

I haven't followed the pending health care legislation to know whether the proposed reforms cuts to Medicare are sensible or not, but the point is that any tinkering with Medicare to reduce costs is politically deadly. And many Medicare recipients are smart enough to recognize that if the private part of our health care system gets squeezed, the implicit subsidy that Medicare gets will inevitably be endangered.

Apparently, the Democrats believed that their decades-old creation and defense of Medicare would lead elderly voters to trust them, but instead their demagoguery on Medicare has led to the program being politically untouchable, including by Democrats. (Anecdotally, my parents' elderly Jewish liberal New York friends and relatives, Obama supporters all, are mad as hell about the Democratic health care proposals.)

The problem, of course, is that Medicare is utterly unsustainable in its present form. One hopes that a bipartisan solution, that will be blamed on both (or neither) party can be achieved. More likely, I'm afraid, politicians will have learned that even liberal Democrats dare not mess with Medicare, and the program will gradually (further) bankrupt the country.

Washington Examiner

[On bombing suspect, tough questions for Eric Holder](#)

by Byron York

It seems like a pretty simple question. Who made the decision to charge Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the accused terrorist arrested for trying to blow up a Northwest Airlines jet on Christmas Day, as an everyday criminal, as opposed to an enemy combatant?

After all, Abdulmutallab was trained by al Qaeda, equipped with an al Qaeda-made bomb, and dispatched by al Qaeda to bring down the airliner and its 278 passengers. Even though the Obama administration has mostly abandoned the term "war on terror," the president himself has said clearly that the United States is at war with al Qaeda. So who decided to treat Abdulmutallab as a civilian, read him the Miranda warning, and provide him with a government-paid lawyer -- giving him the right to remain silent and denying the United States potentially valuable intelligence that might have been gained by a military-style interrogation?

This week that simple question -- Who? -- became more complicated after several of the administration's top anti-terrorism officials testified on Capitol Hill. The director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Leiter, said he wasn't consulted before the decision was made. The director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, said he wasn't consulted, either. The secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, said she wasn't consulted. And the head of the FBI, Robert Mueller, said he wasn't consulted.

"The decision was made by the agents on the ground," Mueller told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, referring to the officials who apprehended Abdulmutallab when the plane landed in Detroit. American agents questioned the accused terrorist briefly before he was taken to a hospital to be treated for burns suffered in the attempt to set off explosives hidden in his underwear. After that, Mueller testified, "in consultation with the Department of Justice and others in the administration," the agents read him his rights.

And that was that. "Isn't it a fact, that after Miranda was given ... the individual stopped talking?" Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions asked Mueller.

"He did," Mueller answered. But Mueller declined to say who made the decision to grant Abdulmutallab the right to remain silent.

The issue is enormously important because Abdulmutallab, newly trained by al Qaeda in the terrorist group's latest hot spot, Yemen, likely knows things that would be very useful to American anti-terrorism investigators. He's not some grizzled old terrorist who's been sitting in Guantanamo Bay since 2003 and doesn't have any new intelligence. He's fresh material. Yet he is protected by U.S. criminal law from having to answer questions.

Why? Republicans on the Judiciary Committee increasingly believe there is only one person who can answer: Attorney General Eric Holder.

It was Holder who made the decision to try 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in a criminal trial in New York. It is Holder who has expressed his desire to grant full American constitutional rights to foreign terrorists. It is Holder who is leading the administration's sputtering effort to move some Guantanamo inmates to the United States. And it is Holder who is apparently cutting other parts of the government out of crucial terrorism decisions like the treatment of Abdulmutallab.

"These days, all roads lead to the attorney general," says one well-placed Republican source in the Senate. "They seem to have aggregated quite a bit of power inside Main Justice." The problem is, the Holder Justice Department appears to be handling terrorism issues from a defense-attorney perspective, and doing so without the input of the government's other terrorism-fighting agencies.

That was the message of Wednesday's testimony from Blair, Leiter, Napolitano, and Mueller, all of whom were out of the loop on the Abdulmutallab decision. Their accounts left a number of Republican senators shaken; as the GOP lawmakers see it, the decision to read Abdulmutallab Miranda rights was a dreadful mistake, one that could have serious consequences down the line. There should be some accountability.

So on Thursday all seven Republicans on the Judiciary Committee sent a letter to Holder asking for a full explanation: Who made the decision and why, and whether the administration now has "a protocol or policy in place for handling al Qaeda terrorists captured in the United States."

Republicans were troubled by the decision even before Wednesday's testimony showed that major administration figures knew nothing about it. Now, the lawmakers want to know what happened, and they believe the only person who can tell them is Holder.

Washington Post - Editorial

Did the Obama administration blow an opportunity in the Flight 253 case?

UMAR FAROUK Abdulmutallab was nabbed in Detroit on board [Northwest Flight 253](#) after trying unsuccessfully to ignite explosives sewn into his underwear. The Obama administration had three options: It could charge him in federal court. It could detain him as an enemy belligerent. Or it could hold him for prolonged questioning and later indict him, ensuring that nothing Mr. Abdulmutallab said during questioning was used against him in court.

It is now clear that the administration did not give serious thought to anything but Door No. 1. This was myopic, irresponsible and potentially dangerous.

Whether to charge terrorism suspects or hold and interrogate them is a judgment call. We originally supported the administration's decision in the Abdulmutallab case, assuming that it had been made after due consideration. But the decision to try Mr. Abdulmutallab turns out to have resulted not from a deliberative process but as a knee-jerk default to a crime-and-punishment model.

In [testimony Wednesday](#) before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, and Michael Leiter, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, all said they were not asked to weigh in on how best to deal with Mr. Abdulmutallab. Some intelligence officials, including personnel from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, were included in briefings by the Justice Department before Mr. Abdulmutallab was charged. These sessions did provide an opportunity for those attending to debate the merits of detention vs. prosecution. According to sources with knowledge of the discussions, no one questioned the approach or raised the possibility of taking more time to question the suspect. This makes the administration's approach even more worrisome than it would have been had intelligence personnel been cut out of the process altogether.

The fight against an unconventional enemy such as al-Qaeda cannot be waged exclusively or effectively through any single approach. Just as it would be a mistake to view all terrorist acts as law enforcement challenges, so would it be unwise to deal with all such incidents as acts of war. All paths must be seriously considered before a determination is made.

The administration claims Mr. Abdulmutallab provided valuable information -- and probably exhausted his knowledge of al-Qaeda operations -- before he clammed up. This was immediately after he was read his

Miranda rights and provided with a court-appointed lawyer. The truth is, we may never know whether the administration made the right call or whether it squandered a valuable opportunity.

The Corner

[A Note On The Krugman](#) [Stephen Spruiell]

Paul Krugman posts, "[A Note On The Economy](#)":

Quite aside from everything else going on, the [economic recovery](#) isn't looking very good. [Unemployment claims are stalled](#) at a level that bodes ill for the overall employment picture (don't count on falling unemployment until that number falls well below 400,000). And the [10-year bond rate](#), which is my personal index of the market's expectations about recovery, has been falling off again after rising for several weeks.

No reason to panic — but it does look as if this recovery is going to be jobless for quite a while.

That's weird. I [read somewhere](#) that the stimulus would be having its maximum effect right now.

I know, I know — the stimulus [wasn't large enough](#). We'd be in great shape if we'd spent another \$3 or \$4 trillion of borrowed money on wind farms and new federal buildings and [unemployment](#) insurance and COBRA and weatherization projects in Detroit. That's why Massachusetts just sent a Republican to the Senate — the people cry out for more stimulus.

Krugman bonus: In his [column today](#), he writes, "The fact is that the Senate bill is a centrist document, which moderate Republicans should find entirely acceptable."

Some more Krugmanisms along these lines:

"The fact is that the Treaty of Versailles is a centrist document, which the Germans should find entirely acceptable."

"The fact is that *Requiem for a Dream* is a charming coming-of-age tale, which movie-goers of all ages should find entirely enjoyable."

"The fact is that my Segway is totally awesome, which the ladies should find entirely man-tastic."

(Important note: I made these up, except for the last one. Ok, that one too.)

And who could forget [this gem](#) from 2002?

To fight this recession the Fed needs more than a snapback; it needs soaring household spending to offset moribund business [investment](#). And to do that, as Paul McCulley of Pimco put it, Alan Greenspan needs to create a housing bubble to replace the Nasdaq bubble.

(Important note: I did not make that one up.)

Can we please stop taking recession-fighting advice from Paul Krugman? Really. Any day now.

Cleveland Plain-Dealer

Obama has suspicious number of letter-writing fans named 'Ellie Light'

by Sabrina Eaton

[Ellie Light](#) sure gets around.

In recent weeks, Light has published virtually identical “Letters to the Editor” in support of President Barack Obama in more than a dozen newspapers. Every letter claimed a different residence for Light that happened to be in the newspaper’s circulation area.

“It’s time for Americans to realize that governing is hard work, and that a president can’t just wave a magic wand and fix everything,” said a letter from alleged Philadelphian Ellie Light, that was published in the Jan. 19 edition of [The Philadelphia Daily News](#).

A letter from Light in the Jan. 20 edition of the [San Francisco Examiner](#) concluded with an identical sentence, but with an address for Light all the way across the country in Daly City, California.

Variations of Light’s letter ran in Ohio’s [Mansfield News Journal](#) on Jan. 13, with Light claiming an address in Mansfield; in New Mexico’s [Ruidoso News](#) on Jan. 12, claiming an address in Three Rivers; in South Carolina’s [The Sun News](#) on Jan. 18, claiming an address in Myrtle Beach; and in the [Daily News Leader](#) of Staunton, Virginia on Jan. 15, claiming an address in Waynesboro. Her publications list includes other [papers](#) in [Ohio](#), [West Virginia](#), [Maine](#), [Michigan](#), [Iowa](#), [Pennsylvania](#) and [California](#), all claiming separate addresses.

Light – who e-mailed an identical missive to this reporter on Jan. 16 without listing a hometown – would not answer e-mailed questions about the address discrepancies in newspapers that ran her letter, or her identity, although she did say she wasn’t a former co-worker of this reporter’s who had a similar name.

“I do not write as a representative of any organization,” she said in an e-mail. “The letter I wrote was motivated by surprise and wonderment at the absence of any media support for our President, who won a record-breaking election by a landslide less than 18 months ago, and now, seems to be abandoned by all, supposedly for the infantile reason that he couldn’t make all of Bush’s errors disappear in one day.”

University of Missouri journalism professor [Tom Rosenstiel](#), co-author of a textbook on journalistic values titled “[The Elements of Journalism](#),” reacted with surprise and wonderment upon learning of Light’s widespread publication under multiple addresses.

He said newspapers might be able to avoid similar situations in the future by requesting street addresses and home telephone numbers from would-be correspondents, and verifying that those addresses and phone numbers exist.

“Just because it is inconvenient for us in the news business to find out who people are doesn’t mean it isn’t important anymore,” Rosenstiel said. “It is not OK for people to have multiple identities. This is something that people in the news business and in the business of printing “letters to the editor” need to be aware of.”

The Plain Dealer asks letter writers for a phone number for verification purposes.

This story was first posted at 4:54 p.m. Jan. 21.

Update: "Ellie Light" responded to this story in the comments below. Here's what she had to say, and reporter Sabrina Eaton's response.

EllieLight:

I did answer Ms. Eaton's questions about addresses and the letter's authenticity. She identified herself as a journalist who covers Washington. There was lots to write about this week, for example Teddy Kennedy' seat falling to a Republican, or the Supreme Court's ruling allowing corporations to donate unlimited funds to causes they support. Both those events portend unimaginable consequences for democracy in this country. And Ms. Eaton, a "Washington" journalist, decides to spend a few minutes pasting snippets of letters into Google and come up with a story about a letter writer. I'm sure such domesticity and small-mindedness would make Sarah Palin quite proud.

Sabrina Eaton:

I reported the item about you over several days in the spare moments I had between writing about yesterday's Supreme Court ruling, today's presidential visit to Ohio, and other national news that affects Ohio. That's why there was a bit of a delay between our email exchange and the publication of this item. I do have plenty of work to do. But I also thought your successful publication in multiple newspapers using multiple hometowns was newsworthy

Your emails to me did not explain how you appeared to have so many addresses. I will reproduce them below, to satisfy the curiosity of any reader who might care:

MY INITIAL EMAIL

From: SABRINA EATON

To: Ellie Light

Sent: Mon, January 18, 2010 1:05:57 PM

Subject: Questions on your recent "letters to the editor" omnipresence

Dear Ellie

My name is Sabrina Eaton and I'm a reporter in the DC Bureau of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio's largest newspaper. Years ago, I had an entry-level reporting job at the Bergen Record in New Jersey. A more experienced reporter there was named Ellie Light, and I wondered if you were the same person. I sent you an email about this a few days ago and got a reply back with the single letter "s," and didn't know what to make of it. So I did a "Google" search on you, as well as one on Lexis-Nexis, and was surprised at what I found.

This email of yours has apparently been published in scads of newspapers. Each of them lists you as residing in their circulation area. How can you simultaneously reside in Kellogg (Michigan), Midland (Michigan), Follansbee (W.Va.), Myrtle Beach (S.C), Waynesboro (Va), Vallejo (Ca.), Mansfield (OH), Salinas (Ca), and Three Rivers (N.M.)? I also found your Haiti email printed in the paper in Lebanon, (PA). That one claimed you reside in Cornwall.

How did your missive end up in all these different publications, citing all these different residences for you? Where do you actually live? What do you actually do for a living? Are you sending these emails at the behest of any organization or politician? Are you the same Ellie Light who was once a reporter for the Bergen Record? Please respond ASAP because I plan to write about this.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Eaton

Plain Dealer, DC Bureau

Patterico's Pontifications

[Ellie Light: Obama Astroturfer? Or Very, Very, Very Energetic But Independent Letter Writer? With Houses All Over the Nation?](#)

by Patterico

A woman has written the same letter defending Obama to dozens of publications across the country, getting them published in at least 42 newspapers in 18 states, as well as Politico.com, the *Washington Times*, and *USA Today*. And the woman, Ellie Light, has claimed residence in many of these states.

Think there might be some phony Astroturfing there?

At the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Sabrina Eaton **[makes a nice catch](#)**:

Ellie Light sure gets around.

In recent weeks, Light has published virtually identical “Letters to the Editor” in support of President Barack Obama in more than a dozen newspapers. Every letter claimed a different residence for Light that happened to be in the newspaper’s circulation area.

“It’s time for Americans to realize that governing is hard work, and that a president can’t just wave a magic wand and fix everything,” said a letter from alleged Philadelphian Ellie Light, that was published in the Jan. 19 edition of **[The Philadelphia Daily News](#)**.

A letter from Light in the Jan. 20 edition of the **[San Francisco Examiner](#)** concluded with an identical sentence, but with an address for Light all the way across the country in Daly City, California.

Variations of Light’s letter ran in Ohio’s **[Mansfield News Journal](#)** on Jan. 13, with Light claiming an address in Mansfield; in New Mexico’s **[Ruidoso News](#)** on Jan. 12, claiming an address in Three Rivers; in South Carolina’s **[The Sun News](#)** on Jan. 18, claiming an address in Myrtle Beach; and in the **[Daily News Leader](#)** of Staunton, Virginia on Jan. 15, claiming an address in Waynesboro. Her publications list includes other **[papers](#)** in **[Ohio](#)**, **[West Virginia](#)**, **[Maine](#)**, **[Michigan](#)**, **[Iowa](#)**, **[Pennsylvania](#)** and **[California](#)**, all claiming separate addresses.

She has more houses than John McCain!

But there are a few more places her little pro-Obama missive appeared, besides those documented.

Like **[Ben Smith at Politico](#)**.

And the **[Washington Times](#)**.

And a **[blog at USA Today](#)**.

And the **[Sheboygan Press](#)** in Wisconsin. And the **[Stevens Point Journal](#)** in Wisconsin — listing an address of Algoma, Wisconsin.

And in addition to the **[Californian.com](#)** link provided in the *Plain Dealer* story, listing an address in Salinas, CA, there are other California letters with other California addresses.

The letter appears in the **[Gilroy Dispatch](#)** and **[Morgan Hill Times](#)**, both listing an address of San Felipe, CA.

And in **[Good Times](#)**, listing an address in Santa Cruz, CA.

And in [TheUnion.com](#), listing an address of Grass Valley, CA.

And Connecticut's [stamfordadvocate.com](#).

A letter was sent to [a columnist at the local Daily Breeze](#) here in the South Bay area of Los Angeles.

On an unrelated note, recall that recently, Glenn Greenwald flagged the fact that Obama's pal (and head of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs) Cass Sunstein recently wrote this paper [suggesting something sounding a lot like Astroturfing](#):

Sunstein advocates that the Government's stealth infiltration should be accomplished by sending covert agents into "chat rooms, online social networks, or even real-space groups." He also proposes that the Government make secret payments to so-called "independent" credible voices to bolster the Government's messaging (on the ground that those who don't believe government sources will be more inclined to listen to those who appear independent while secretly acting on behalf of the Government).

Who is Ellie Light?

I would like to know.

Wouldn't you?

P.S. If you find other examples, please leave them in comments with a link. Many more updates in the extended entry.

UPDATE: Add the following:

California: The [Los Banos Enterprise](#), listing an address of Gustine, CA.

Maine: In addition to the Maine link above, there is another appearance of the letter in Maine: in the [Bangor Daily News](#), in which Light lists an address of Bangor, Maine.

Maryland: The [Baltimore Chronicle](#).

Massachusetts: The [North Adams Transcript](#), listing an address of Williamstown.

List your additions below.

UPDATE x2: Add these as well:

Connecticut: Another Connecticut paper, in addition to the Stamford listing: the [Danbury News-Times](#). And here's another: the [Greenwich Time](#) a/k/a [Ctpost.com](#). (Address listed is Greenwich.)

Georgia: [Gainesville Times](#). (Her address is listed as Gainesville.)

Massachusetts: In addition to the above, there is [The Berkshire Eagle](#).

New Hampshire: It appeared in the [Seacoastonline](#), which appears to be an online version of several New England papers including the *Portsmouth Herald*, *Exeter News Letter*, and others. Light's address was listed as Portsmouth, NH.

Vermont: [Bennington Banner](#).

Wisconsin: In addition to the above, there is the [Oshkosh Northwestern](#) (address listed is Oshkosh).

So far I count 35 publications in 16 states as well as the District of Columbia. Light managed to get herself published in media outlets in California, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, D.C., West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

UPDATE x3: redc1c4 adds [Spectrum.com](#) in Utah, where Light claims to be from Washington City. That's 36 publications in 17 states plus D.C.

UPDATE x4: DRJ adds 5 more publications in comments:

Here are a few more:

[HudsonHubTimes.com](#), in which Ellie listed Streetsboro OH as her hometown.

[Duplicate already mentioned in the *Plain Dealer* article eliminated.]

[The Willits News](#), with Willits CA as the hometown.

[CDAPress.com](#) of Coeur d'Alene ID, with Ellie listing a hometown of Post Falls.

From Ohio, the [Chillicothe Gazette](#), with Chillicothe OH as the hometown.

And my current favorite *so far*, [The Bangkok Post](#) — the “World’s Window to Thailand.” No hometown provided.

Idaho is thus included as a new state, bringing the running total to 41 publications in 18 states plus D.C.

UPDATE x4: redc1c4 adds an [Annapolis, Maryland publication](#). Light lists her city of residence as Annapolis. That's 42 publications in 18 states plus D.C.

Classical Values

[Going Light?](#)

posted by Eric

Who is Ellie Light?

She's...simply...amazing!

She appears everywhere, and writes, anywhere! In plenty of papers! Penning powerful paeans in praise of the President!

["42 papers in eighteen states with dozens of different hometowns listed at last count"](#)!

Naturally, a [lot of people want to know](#), and some have [spent a great deal of time looking into the matter](#).

It took some doing, but I finally [found her](#).



Glad she's a real female. (As opposed to [femalesque](#).) I never liked the expression "[light in the loafers](#)."

MORE: Via [Glenn Reynolds](#), I see that the [Ellie Light count has gone up](#), and is still rising:

Car Lust Blog

[In Defense of the Gasoline-Powered Internal Combustion Engine](#)

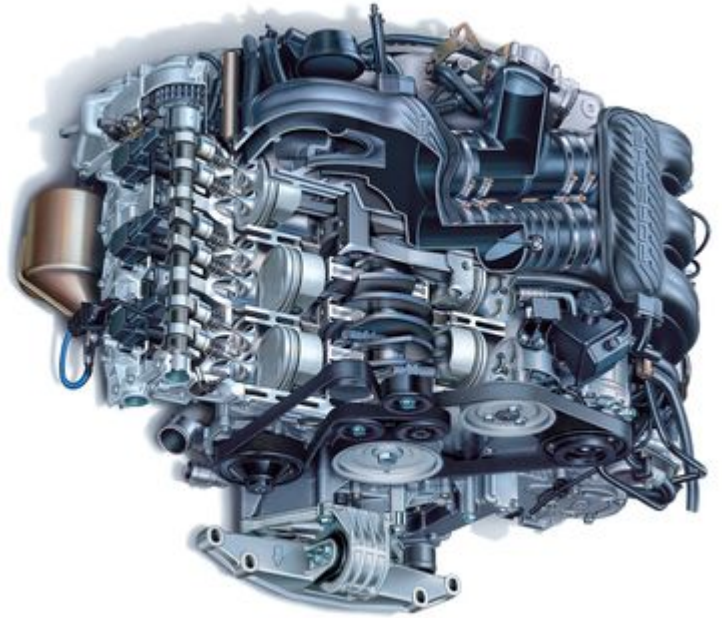
by Chris Hafner

I would like to kick off this post with two breathtakingly broad generalizations. My first generalization is that we live in an amazing time, in which the human race has made miraculous leaps in the fields of information, communication, transportation, medicine, and entertainment--to say nothing of feeding and clothing ourselves. My second generalization is that we have a bad habit of taking these advances for granted.

This is by no means a new opinion--comedian Louis C.K., for one, has a real knack for pinpointing the absurdity in this. Here, for example, are his thoughts on air travel:

*"I was on an airplane recently and there was high-speed Internet on the airplane. That's the newest thing that I know exists. And I'm sitting on the plane, and they go 'Open up your laptop and you can go on the Internet.' and it's fast, and I'm watching YouTube clips--it's amazing, I'm in an airplane! And then it breaks down, and they apologize. The guy next to me goes "Psshhhh. This is bull****." Like how quickly the world owes him something he knew existed only ten seconds ago! ...*

"Flying is the worst one because people people come back from flights, and they tell you their story. And it's like a horror story. It's--they act like their flight was like a cattle car in Germany in the '40s: that's how bad they make it sound. They're like "it was the worst day of my life ... first of all, we didn't board for twenty minutes, and then we get on the plane, and they made us sit there! On the runway! For forty minutes! We had to sit there." Oh, really? What happened next? Did you fly through the air incredibly, like a bird? Did you



you partake in the miracle of human flight, you non-contributing zero? That you got to FLY?? YOU'RE FLYING! It's amazing! Everybody on every plane should just constantly be going, "OH MY GOD! WOW!" You're flying! You're sitting in a chair in the sky.

"But (the chair) doesn't--it doesn't go back a lot ... and the chair's really..." You know, here's the thing: people might say there's delays on flights. Delays? Really? New York to California in five hours. That used to take 30 years to do that. And a bunch of you would die on the way there and have a baby. You'd be a whole different group of people by the time you got there. Now you watch a movie and you take a dump and you're home."

This is all funny because it's true; and I think it's especially true of modern cars and their motive force, the gasoline-powered internal combustion engine.

It's not a particularly fashionable time to write a pro-car treatise. Cars, their engines, and their fuel are blamed for a variety of sins--polluting the environment; distorting our foreign policy; requiring ugly and expensive roads; encouraging social deviancy; killing off drivers, pedestrians and wildlife; and hurting small business in small downtowns by encouraging sprawl. Here in Seattle, for example, a rather vocal portion of the populace has argued that we don't need to replace a major highway through the city despite our existing problems with congestion. The thought is that the resulting level of gridlock would serve an ostensibly worthwhile purpose of getting some cars off the road.



Here's the thing--a lot of those complaints have merit. Today's cars *do* have their downsides--particularly environmentally. After all, cars take a lot of energy and materials to build. To make them run you need a variety of toxic fluids, any of which can contaminate water and ground, and most of which need to be extracted from land situated in a politically volatile part of the world. Gasoline, the most central of these, adds a nasty pollution cocktail to the atmosphere when burned.

This all true, but I think it misses the larger point. Cars cause problems because there are just so many of them--their impact is multiplied by the sheer, staggering scale of their ubiquity. They are everywhere, and that's because they're fantastic at mobilizing us and giving us the freedom of movement. Today's car and its gasoline-powered internal combustion engine is essentially a miracle with some rough edges; and while we should acknowledge and work towards removing those rough edges, I want to take some time to recognize the miracle.

On its face, the internal combustion engine doesn't have much to recommend it. For one thing, it's not a particularly efficient way of turning energy into motion. It works from a series of controlled explosions, which generate force that translates into reciprocal motion and, eventually, the rotation of the drive wheels. This means that of all the energy contained in a gallon of gasoline, only 25 percent turns into motive force. The remaining 75 percent of the energy turns into heat, light, and noise. This compares well to steam engines (roughly 8 percent efficient), but pales in comparison with electric motors, which are 75-95-percent efficient.

So, why am I defending the internal combustion engine? Because, despite this relative inefficiency, the gasoline-powered engine is an amazing machine. Let



me explain by telling you what you already know--today's cars can do amazing things with a small amount of fuel.

Think of a one-gallon container of liquid--a typical milk container, for example. With only that much gasoline, depending on conditions and driving style, a brand new Honda Fit will drive 40 miles, possibly more, before it runs out of fuel. Please suspend your ennui for a moment; I'm going to do my best to persuade you that this truly is remarkable.

In absolute terms, 40 miles is a significant amount of distance. Think of the most common means of transportation before cars became common. Forty miles represents six hours of travel from a sailing ship traveling at a steady six knots. It represents five hours of travel from a horse trotting at a steady eight mph. It represents *two days* of travel from a cross-country wagon train. A late 19th-century train could cover 40 miles distance nearly as quickly as the Fit, but it would need *1,000-4,000 pounds* of coal to do so.

Let's take a look at the other side of the equation. The Fit is capable of covering those 40 miles on one gallon of fuel, within 40 minutes or less, without drama, and in comfort. The driver would be swaddled in an environment that includes a comfortably upholstered chair, a high-quality sound system with decent acoustics, and with filtered and climate-controlled air. And while we consider the Fit a relatively small and efficient car, it is capable of remarkable utility--it is a 2,500-pound car with a modern safety cage, seating for a family of five, and room for gear. It only takes eight fill-ups and 80 gallons of gas, costing the driver roughly \$240, to propel this 2,500-pound object from one side of this continent to the other. That's an amazing accomplishment for a relatively small amount of fuel.



Bigger and faster cars are obviously less efficient, but it's a matter of degree. Most family cars are capable of 30 mpg on the freeway. Even a high-performance Chevrolet Corvette Z06, which cranks out more than 500 horsepower and is among the best-performing cars on Earth, can get more than 20 mpg on the freeway. If you're willing to trade utility and comfort for performance and economy, a motorcycle will take you even farther than the Fit, while allowing you to accelerate like a race car--with an engine displacing 1000cc or less, roughly the size of the water bottle pictured here. I think that's absolutely miraculous.



So, how is this possible? Well, for one thing, the gasoline-powered internal combustion engine is fundamentally a century-old technology in the same way that high-powered turboprop airplane is fundamentally a century-old technology. In both cases, the basic, primitive beginning has transformed into something much more sophisticated, thanks to billions of dollars of development, innovation from some extremely smart people, and a century of customer- and warfare-driven pressure to improve. New materials, variable valve timing, turbocharging, fuel injection, direct injection, computerized engine management, and other high-tech wizardry have turned the old internal combustion engine into a highly efficient source of power. Though, to be fair, these same forces likely would have driven some amazing strides in steam or electric cars as well, had either of those technologies emerged as the standard in the 1900s.

Boring old gasoline has also turned out to be a pretty fantastic fuel. It's easily transportable, burns relatively cleanly, and contains a lot of energy. This is one problem with a lot of the possible alternatives to gasoline--one gallon of gasoline is less expensive and contains more energy than liquid natural gas, liquid hydrogen, methanol, or ethanol. You get more bang (literally!) for your buck with gasoline.

To return to the clean-burning point for a moment; note that I said *relatively* clean burning. Burning any sort of fossil fuel will result in carbon and some nasty byproducts. But, compared to the bad old days, today's cars are amazingly clean ([according to the EPA](#)):



Car Pollution (grams/mile)

Year	VOC	NOX	CO
1967	16.8	3.2	81.7
1998	1.2	0.6	3.0

VOC-Volatile Organic Compounds; NOX-Oxides of Nitrogen; CO-Carbon Monoxide

That's a staggering drop in pollutants--and it explains why the skies over major American cities are cleaner than they were in the 1970s despite an increase in the number of cars. Another interesting fact from that study--the typical 1998 car would need to drive *660 miles* to emit the same amount of VOC put out in just one hour by a chainsaw. This data is also a decade old; cars have become cleaner as technology improves. [My 2003 Honda Accord](#), like many other cars, meets ULEV criteria, which means that it pollutes less than half as much as the average new car.

Please don't get me wrong here--I'm not saying gasoline-powered, internal-combustion-engined cars don't have serious flaws, that we shouldn't build more and smarter mass transit, or that we shouldn't make a serious effort to pursue alternative propulsion technologies. On the contrary, I think there's a lot of room to have smarter, faster, cleaner, and more efficient cars, and I'm looking forward to what tomorrow's technology brings.

The point here is that we should take a moment to give today's humble, much-maligned car a nod of respect and to recognize that whatever new propulsion model replaces the gasoline engine has some really big shoes to fill.

The top image is a Porsche Boxster engine cutaway; I found it at [Serious Wheels](#). The smoggy picture of Beijing came from [Eco Auto Ninja.com](#). The two bottles are Amazon images, the Honda Fit picture is a widely available Honda press photo, and the image of the gas nozzle comes from [Cars Are Evil.com](#)--I figured I should include a link to those guys as a counterpoint. *Chris H.*

WSJ

[Dr. Spiegel and the Catalog of Odd Behaviors](#)

by Rob Long

For my birthday one year, a friend presented me with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—the "DSM," for short—which is published by the American Psychiatric Association and contains diagnostic criteria for pretty much every type of odd behavior ever observed. I recognized myself on almost every page, which I was told later is a typical and quite "sane" reaction. Still, after folding down almost every other page—"I've got that. And I've got that. Oh, and I've got that"—it did seem like I should do my best to knock a few of the disorders out of my personality.

So I talked it over with a psychiatrist friend, who explained that it really isn't done that way. You don't, apparently, just "knock a few disorders" out of a complex and troubled mind. You don't just "fix" some stuff—my epic-scale procrastination, for instance; or the fact that I simply cannot stop myself from eating all of the

bread in the bread basket at a restaurant. No, you have to go see a guy and talk about it and try to dredge up enough shadowy memories so that it can all be blamed on your parents.

"Does anyone ever get better?" I asked.

"You're asking the wrong question," my friend said, which is where my quest to get stuff done sooner and stop it with the bread ended.

So my dog-eared DSM is collecting dust in anticipation of the day—never to come—when I might zip through it again and tick off the cures.

I brought it down from the shelf last month, though, when I read that Dr. Herbert Spiegel—a Freudian analyst who became a trailblazing hypnotist—had died at 95.

Dr. Spiegel treated anxiety, smoking, posttraumatic stress syndrome—and a host of other disorders that I probably also have—with hypnosis. In the 19th century, doctors had experimented with the method—Franz Mesmer more or less invented hypnosis, and Sigmund Freud practiced it in his early days. But by the time Dr. Spiegel began treating patients that way in the early 1940s, hypnosis had become just a carnival act—creepy magicians in threadbare white tie, state fair "mentalists" in caftans and dark makeup.

And there was something disturbing about Dr. Spiegel, too: his efficiency. He put you under, you had a therapeutic conversation, he snapped his fingers, and . . . done. Pay the lady on the way out.

Actors came to him for help with stage fright. People afraid to fly found themselves, after treatment, happily boarding planes. Smokers were cured. In other words, people got better.

And Dr. Spiegel got famous. Well, not *famous* famous, but known in Manhattan media and political circles as an interesting, effective and fast-acting healer. He even had a regular table at Elaine's, the Upper East Side hangout with its heyday in the '60s and '70s. The names of his clients are confidential, yet when one recalls a few of the more notorious Elaine's regulars—Woody Allen, Norman Mailer, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote and George Steinbrenner among them—it's clear he could have had a lot to work with.

And it's equally clear that he will be missed. The current crop of famous compulsives and disordered personalities could surely use a quick dash into Dr. Spiegel's office for a little subconscious retreading. If he could cure chain-smokers, couldn't he keep Tiger Woods out of strip clubs? And imagine if the entire cast of the freak show now called "NBC's late night troubles" spent an hour or two in Dr. Spiegel's wakeful sleep. Might not work, but at least they'd all be silent.

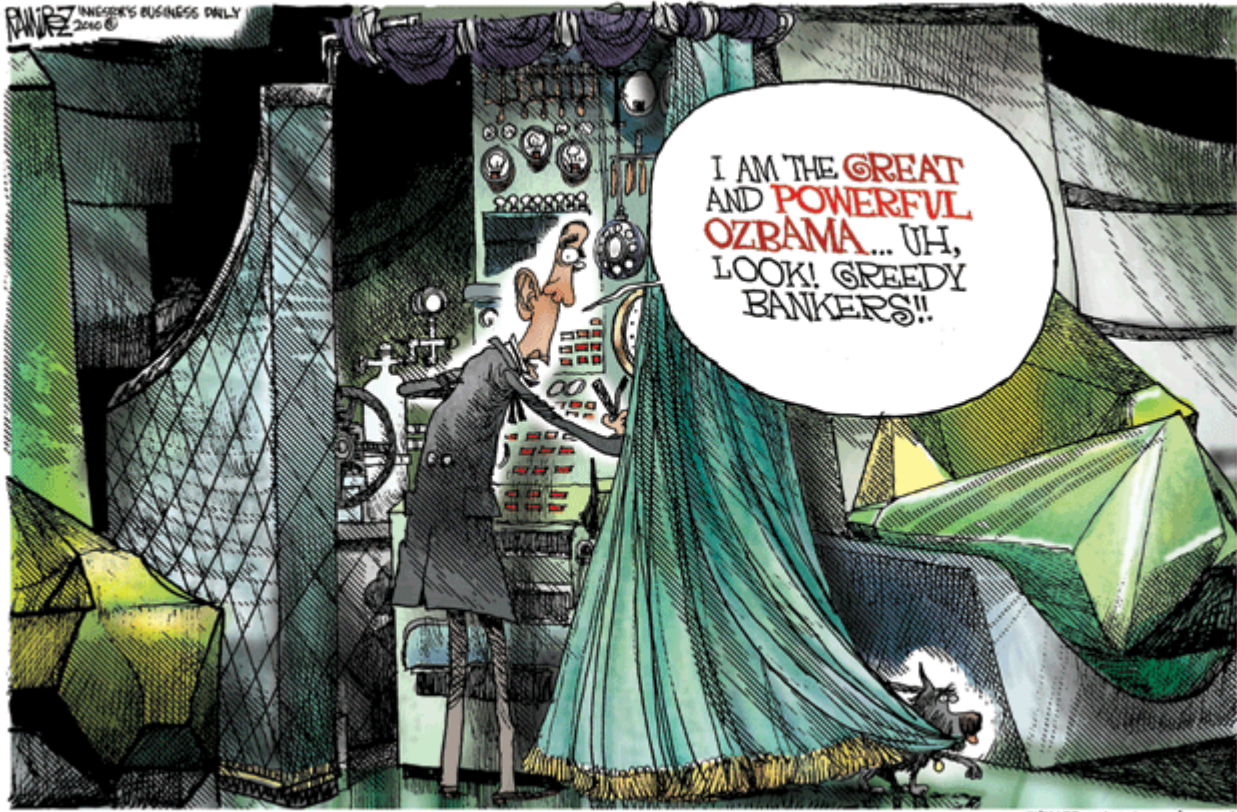
So why doesn't everybody do this? Why not just put yourself under and fix your issues?

Looking for explanations, it's tempting to lapse into paranoia. (An "Axis II" disorder, according to my DSM. And, yes, that page is folded down, too.) Of course they don't want you to know about hypnosis's power. They want to bleed you, an hour a week, in a talking cure that doesn't really work.

But the truth is, not everyone is susceptible to hypnosis. Dr. Spiegel, in fact, developed an accurate and (typically, for him) efficient test of a patient's ability to lapse into a relaxed focus: The higher you can roll your eyes upward, the easier you are to put under. Those who can't roll them high enough are just out of luck.

Which probably describes me, unfortunately. I have only two settings: asleep and hungry. Still, I'd have liked to have met Dr. Herbert Spiegel before he died to take a shot at whittling down my disorders. Or, failing that, it would have been nice to have had dinner with him at Elaine's, rolling my eyes upward as he tried to put me under, and methodically eating all of the bread in the basket.

Mr. Long is a Hollywood writer and producer.



PULLING THE CURTAIN BACK ON THE WIZARD.

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