

October 23, 2011

**Streetwise Professor** says if Occupy Wall Street wants to do some good they might consider occupying Fannie and Freddie.

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**Charles Krauthammer** comments on the latest debate.

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**McCain campaign aide** on why he hated the debates and why they're useful.

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**USA Today OpEd** thinks Romney is in the lead.

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**WSJ OpEd by John Yoo** celebrates 20 years of Justice Thomas.

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*Justice Thomas's two decades on the bench show the simple power of ideas over the pettiness of our politics. Media and academic elites have spent the last 20 years trying to marginalize him by drawing a portrait of a man stung by his confirmation, angry at his rejection by the civil rights community, and a blind follower of fellow conservatives. But Justice Thomas has broken through this partisan fog to convince the court to adopt many of his positions, and to become a beacon to the grass-roots movement to restrain government spending and reduce the size of the welfare state.*

*Clarence Thomas set the table for the tea party by making originalism fashionable again. Many appointees to the court enjoy its role as arbiter of society's most divisive questions—race, abortion, religion, gay rights and national security—and show little desire to control their own power. Antonin Scalia, at best, thinks interpreting the Constitution based on its original meaning is "the lesser evil," as he wrote in a 1989 law journal article, because it prevents judges from pursuing their own personal policies. Justice Thomas, however, thinks that the meaning of the*

*Constitution held at its ratification binds the United States as a political community, and that decades of precedent must be scraped off the original Constitution like barnacles on a ship's hull. ...*

**[Huffington Post](#)** mines the book on Steve Jobs.

*Jobs, who was known for his prickly, stubborn personality, almost missed meeting President Obama in the fall of 2010 because he insisted that the president personally ask him for a meeting. Though his wife told him that Obama "was really psyched to meet with you," Jobs insisted on the personal invitation, and the standoff lasted for five days. When he finally relented and they met at the Westin San Francisco Airport, Jobs was characteristically blunt. He seemed to have transformed from a liberal into a conservative.*

*"You're headed for a one-term presidency," he told Obama at the start of their meeting, insisting that the administration needed to be more business-friendly. As an example, Jobs described the ease with which companies can build factories in China compared to the United States, where "regulations and unnecessary costs" make it difficult for them.*

*Jobs also criticized America's education system, saying it was "crippled by union work rules," noted Isaacson. "Until the teachers' unions were broken, there was almost no hope for education reform." Jobs proposed allowing principals to hire and fire teachers based on merit, that schools stay open until 6 p.m. and that they be open 11 months a year.*

The Economist reviews a documentary on the **[Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis](#)**. The conclusions seem to be scattered, but we like the piece because it reminds us how foolish the bien pensants really are.

*THE filmmakers behind "[The Pruitt-Igoe Myth](#)" confronted a formidable task: to strip away the layers of a narrative so familiar that even they themselves believed it when they first set out to make their documentary. Erected in St Louis, Missouri, in the early 1950s, at a time of postwar prosperity and optimism, the massive Pruitt-Igoe housing project soon became a notorious symbol of failed public policy and architectural hubris, its 33 towers razed a mere two decades later. Such symbolism found its most immediate expression in the iconic image of an imploding building, the first of Pruitt-Igoe's towers to be demolished in 1972 (it was featured in the cult film [Koyaanisqatsi](#), with Philip Glass's score murmuring in the background). The spectacle was as powerful politically as it was visually, locating the failure of Pruitt-Igoe within the buildings themselves—in their design and in their mission.*

*The scale of the project made it conspicuous from the get-go: 33 buildings, 11-storeys each, arranged across a sprawling, 57 acres in the poor DeSoto-Carr neighbourhood on the north side of St Louis. The complex was supposed to put the modernist ideals of Le Corbusier into action; at the time, Architectural Forum ran a story praising the plan to replace "ramshackle houses jammed with people—and rats" in the city's downtown with "vertical neighbourhoods for poor people." The main architect was Minoru Yamasaki, who would go on to design another monument to modernism that would also be destroyed, but for very different reasons, and under very different circumstances: his World Trade Centre went up in the early 1970s, right around the time that Pruitt-Igoe was pulled down. ...*

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## Streetwise Professor

### [Occupy Fannie and Freddie, Why Don't You?](#)

by Craig Pirrong

It is passing strange—or maybe not—that the OWS crowd/mob is giving Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac a pass. They are the best example of an unseemly nexus between government and business. Look at the guys who were their CEOs and board members over the years.

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The. Biggest. Losers. (I mean F&F, not OWS—but the race is a close one!) But nary a has been hippie or wannabe hippie in sight camping out at those places. Twinkles down, dudes.

Many economists on the left—notably Krugman, DeLong, and Thoma—deny, deny, deny that F&F were primarily culpable for the subprime crisis. [As I said in an earlier post](#), Krugman et al evaluate the F&F pudding by claiming that the ingredients were A-OK: specifically, they claim that F&F did not take on much subprime or Alt-A risk, but that banks did. Hence, the banks did it.

There are two problems with this. First, as former FNMA chief credit officer Edward Pinto has shown, the F&F puddings were in fact pretty well stuffed with low credit quality mortgages.

Second—and more importantly—loss follows the risk. If F&F lost a lot on subprime and Alt-A, it is because they were exposed to its risks in massive amounts. As the biggest losers, they were collectively the biggest risk takers. The biggest suppliers of risk capital to the low-credit end of the housing market.

As I said in my earlier piece:

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We are now eating F&F's losses. They demonstrate, quite forcefully, that their brand of pudding was rotten. Going on and on about statistics allegedly demonstrating the quality of the ingredients doesn't mean squat if the first bite makes you puke.

And we're still puking. To the tune of \$169 billion, with billions more on the way.

Krugman *et al* have never—ever—confronted this simple fact. Their stirring defense of the GSEs has no credibility whatsoever until they can show how F&F lost such huge sums without being exposed to the housing price and credit risks inherent in subprime and Alt-A.

Clarifying question, guys (you can't see my hand with my fingers cupped in the shape of a C, but it is!): if they were exposed to these risks, and in huge amounts larger than any other single entity, and in larger amounts than the total represented by multiple non-GSEs, how is it possible to say that they were not a major contributor to the housing boom and bust?

The failure of Krugman et al to answer that question is very revealing. I don't see how it is possible to square the fact of the huge loss with their contention that F&F were bit players in the boom and bust.

And until the OWS people OFF, they are just adding additional proof—as if any is needed—that they are truly clueless about the truly outrageous nexus of corruption in US finance. So folks, either Occupy Fannie and Freddie—or F-off.

**Update:** Fannie&Freddie are very similar to the kinds of corporations that Adam Smith and the Founders disliked and distrusted. Specially chartered corporations that were give extraordinary privileges and used to dispense political favors. Companies that grew large because of artificial advantages conferred by the Federal government, not as a result of prevailing in competition in the marketplace.

## Washington Post

### [Punch-out in the desert](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

On Tuesday night, seismologists at the Las Vegas Oceanographic Institute reported the first recorded movement of a hair on Mitt Romney's head. Although it was only one follicle, displaced a mere 1.2 centimeters, the tremors were felt from Iowa to New Hampshire. Simultaneously, these same scientists detected signs of life in Rick Perry, last seen comatose at the recent Dartmouth debate.

Such were the highlights of Tuesday's seven-person Republican brawl at the Venetian. To be sure, there were other developments: Herman Cain stumbled, Newt Gingrich grinned, Rick Santorum landed a clean shot at Romneycare and Michele Bachmann made a spirited bid for a comeback.

But the main event was the scripted Perry attack on Romney, reprising the old charge of Romney hiring illegal immigrants. Perry's face-to-face accusation of rank hypocrisy had the intended effect. From the ensuing melee emerged a singularity: a ruffled Romney, face flushed, voice raised.

It lasted just a millisecond, but it left its mark. The reassuring and unflappable command that had carried Romney through — indeed, above — previous debates was punctured. True, his unflappability is, to some, less reassurance than a sign of inauthenticity. But if you are going to show real passion, petulance is not the way to do it.

Worse, Romney turned to the referee — moderator Anderson Cooper — with a plaintive "[Anderson?](#)" seeking intervention. An uncharacteristically weak moment. What does he do when



Vladimir Putin sticks a finger in his chest and starts yelling at a Vienna summit? Call for Anderson?

On substance, Romney remained as solid as ever, showing by far the most mastery of policy, with the possible exception of Gingrich — but without the lecturing tone and world-weary condescension.

Romney's command was best seen in his takedown of Cain's 9-9-9 plan. Cain refused to concede the burden to consumers of a national sales tax added on to existing state sales taxes. Doggedly sticking to his point long after it had been undermined, he kept raining down metaphors about apples and oranges. His national sales tax is a solution to a federal problem (a monstrous tax code), he insisted, and therefore irrelevant to any discussion of state sales taxes, which would exist regardless.

It took Romney one sentence to expose the sophistry. He simply pointed out that a real-world consumer with a basketful of apples and oranges would be paying the sum of the two sales taxes at checkout. Q.E.D.

Cain remained, as always, charming, engaging, confident and good-willed, the only person on stage other than Bachmann who didn't have a sour or nasty moment. But his tax plan collapsed under fire in about 10 minutes, the coup de grace delivered by Gingrich, who, when asked why the Cain plan is a hard sell, replied, "You just watched it." It was the deadliest line of the night.

However, the principal drama was provided by Perry. His aggressive performance brought him back into the game, especially because he now has a few weeks before the next debate to deploy his major assets: a talent for retail politics and a ton of money.

But the price of reentry was high. His awakening wasn't very pretty. He showed he can draw blood, but it was a nasty schoolyard punch-up. In primary races, personal attacks often have the effect of diminishing both candidates. This happened in 2004 in Iowa when Democratic front-runners Dick Gephardt and Howard Dean savaged each other, allowing John Kerry and John Edwards to sneak past them.

Nonetheless, because of his [considerable resources](#), Perry, by merely stirring himself, is back. But he hasn't solved his problem. It's not just that, [as he readily admits](#), he's not very good at debating, although that in itself is a huge liability. It wasn't before 1960. It is now. And based on Perry's first five performances, Barack Obama would eat him alive in a one-on-one.

But apart from the importance of debating itself, Perry's often clueless responses betray an even deeper problem: He simply hasn't thought through the issues on a national scale. He is still Texas. And Texas simply isn't enough. That was most glaringly evident during [the Dartmouth debate](#) when, in response to questions about China and then about health care, Perry sought immediate refuge by talking instead about his energy plan. Interesting, but unrelated.

The Vegas fight mildly unsettled the Republican race. But its central dynamic remains. It awaits the coalescence of anti-Romney sentiment around one challenger. Until and unless that happens, it's Romney's race to lose.

## Real Clear Politics

### Why Debates Are So Detestable -- and Yet So Helpful

by Mark Salter

When the 2008 presidential election ended in defeat for my candidate, John McCain, I was consoled by the knowledge I would never again have to be involved in a candidate debate. I hated them.

For seemingly endless stretches, it felt like the chief activities of our campaign were helping our candidate prepare for debates, pacing anxiously in holding rooms while he slugged it out on stage with his opponents, and arguing about the results after they were over. Why, I often wondered, had we ever agreed to do so many of the damn things?

The biggest winners of those contrived contests were the sponsoring cable news networks that showcased themselves and boosted their ratings at the expense of the miserable candidates and their staff.

Debates have become the most important function of the campaigns for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination, and my sympathies go out to all the candidates and their teams. They've been trapped in almost weekly overhyped, circus-like showdowns. The press promotes the stakes in advance: It's always one candidate or another's last chance to get traction or overcome previous poor performances or answer lingering doubts or manage to string two sentences together coherently. Within seconds of the last answer to the last question, pundits and reporters announce the winners and losers before the poor viewers can draw any conclusions for themselves.

Unlike the 2008 campaign when Mike Huckabee frequently outperformed the other candidates and still came up short, debates appear to be actually determining the direction and quite possibly the outcome of the 2012 race.

Candidates with little chance of winning the nomination and less chance of winning a general election -- Michele Bachmann and Herman Cain, for example -- suddenly rocket to the position of top challenger to front-runner Mitt Romney based on the strength of a single debate performance, and then return, Icarus-like (as Bachmann has and Cain will), to the pack.

Rick Perry's best day was the one he entered the race to become the Tea Party's much yearned-for alternative to Romney. By sleepwalking through several debates, and offering answers that seemed, at times, like free association, Perry's fortunes declined precipitously. He got off the mat in Tuesday's debate by portraying Romney as a political shape-shifter -- and a hypocrite.

Romney fought back effectively enough to maintain his front-runner status. Perhaps Perry did enough to re-establish his claim to the second spot in a two-candidate contest.

The debates have exposed each contender's strengths and flaws. Tuesday night, Romney showed again he has become a more agile candidate. He also inadvertently confirmed the gist of Perry's criticism when he answered the Texas governor's attack on his employment of illegal aliens to mow his lawn by recounting how he had told the lawn service he was running for office

and couldn't afford the bad publicity. Mystifyingly, none of the other candidates seized the opportunity to reinforce the charge that Romney takes positions to serve ambition rather than principle.

Perry showed why he's long been regarded as a tough, even brutal, campaigner, and also a facile one. His answers in previous debates to attacks on his record of inoculating girls for the human papillomavirus and granting in-state tuition rates to the children of illegal immigrants revealed a theretofore unsuspected generosity of concern for others and also how maladroit he is at shrewdly defending his positions on the fly.

Rick Santorum mainly revealed, once again, an unnerving certitude in his own convictions and moral superiority. He's the most forceful debater in the race, and the smuggest by a mile. That explains why he didn't manage to become the Tea Party flavor of the month when Bachmann and Perry began to lose their appeal. Irrespective of Santorum's uncompromising conservatism, he just isn't likable.

In every debate, Newt Gingrich reminds us why he's the smartest candidate, and the most undisciplined. Bachmann reinforces the impression she hasn't any idea how she got there. Cain did little to change the impression he's a remarkably uninformed, unprepared and unserious candidate for president.

These debates are no fun for the contenders and their staff. They're wearying, nerve-racking and dangerous. I know they must hate them, as I did. So it's with great chagrin that I admit that they've been indispensable at informing voters about the qualities, good and bad, of the men and woman who would be their president.

Mark Salter is the former chief of staff to Senator John McCain and was a senior adviser to the McCain for President campaign.

## **USA Today**

### **[Romney is winning electability argument](#)**

by Chuck Raasch

[Mitt Romney](#) is the equivalent of the Republicans' backup prom date, the standby if no better offer comes along.

Will the candidate who has always been near the head of the pack but never run away with the nomination, a man who is not always in step with an anxious and anti-establishment [GOP](#) base, get into the big dance with [President Obama](#) because Romney is perceived as the Republican most able to beat Obama in 2012?

Republican primary voters "are in a rebellious mood and Mitt Romney is not a rebellious candidate," said the Pew Research Center's Andrew Kohut.

Yet a CNN poll Oct. 14-16 said 41% of Republicans believed that Romney had the best chance of beating Obama next year. [Herman Cain](#) was a distant second at 24%. And 51% said they expected Romney to be their party's 2012 nominee.



Romney is winning the electability argument despite lingering doubts about his core beliefs and ability to connect to everyday Americans. In a rough-and-tumble debate in Las Vegas on Tuesday, Texas Gov. [Rick Perry](#) tried to exploit those doubts in a sharp exchange over illegal immigration. Former Pennsylvania senator [Rick Santorum](#) tried the same over health care reform. Romney parried that he alone had the business and political experience to beat Obama and address the nation's economic problems.

"Having actually created jobs is what allows me to have the kind of support that's going to allow me to replace President Obama and get the country on the right track again," he said.

He's counting on riled up Republicans who believe that the country's economic health is so threatened under Obama that removing him is more important than any political purity test on their side.

"I can't stand Romney but I will vote for him over Obama — you're damned right I will," said Steve Baldwin, a businessman and former California Republican assemblyman from [San Diego](#). Baldwin said he has heard fellow conservative Republicans talk about picking the candidate with the best chance of winning more than any time in 35 years in politics.

If so, they would be aiming for general election voters such as Dan Deceuster, 28, who oversees Internet marketing for a company in St. George, Utah.

Deceuster said he voted for Obama in 2008 but now supports Romney because he has "experience in turning around struggling companies, organizations and governments." Deceuster said he is not bothered that Romney has changed positions over the years on issues, such as abortion rights.

"I'm fine with a politician who can admit when he or she was wrong," Deceuster said. He likes that Romney "doesn't pander to the Tea Party."

Electability is a perennial argument in presidential primaries. [Hillary Clinton](#) tried it against Obama in 2008; Howard Dean's opponents dislodged him from front-runner status in 2004 by arguing that while Dean fired up Democrats, he was too hot for a less partisan general election audience. "Dated Dean, Married Kerry" became a popular bumper sticker in a year the Democrats nominated a more established [John Kerry](#). But electability might be a bigger factor this year because of perceptions on both sides of the political debate that the other side's policies are not just wrong, but a threat to the nation's security and survival.

Faced with hardening doubts about his economic policies, Obama surrogates have attacked Romney as an unprincipled political opportunist with little concern for average Americans, and whose policies were the same as those that led to the '08 economic meltdown. It's a sign that they expect Romney will be the Republican nominee, and that voters who have doubts about Obama must have more doubts about Romney if Obama is to win re-election.

In the end, Romney could also benefit from the weaknesses of his opponents. With a succession of potentially strong Republican governors or ex-governors declining to run, Romney's experience and familiarity among GOP voters helps him stand out.

Perry shot to the lead in some polls shortly after he got into the race, and he remains a formidable fundraiser. But a series of weak debate performances has some comparing him to former senator [Fred Thompson](#), who entered the 2008 Republican primaries amid great expectations but never lived up to the hype.

Cain has hung in better than many pundits predicted, but he lacks the campaign organization that can mean the difference between first or second and fourth or fifth on cold Iowa and [New Hampshire](#) days. Rep. [Ron Paul](#), R-Texas, has a solid libertarian base. But over two elections, he has had trouble reaching double-digit poll support. Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota has not been able to translate strong early debate performances into the robust fundraising necessary to endure months of primaries and caucuses. Santorum and former speaker [Newt Gingrich](#) have had debate moments, but both lag in polls and money support. Former governors Gary Johnson of New Mexico and Jon Huntsman of Utah have struggled to remain in the picture.

**WSJ**

## [Twenty Years of Justice Thomas](#)

by John Yoo

This weekend marks the 20th anniversary of Clarence Thomas's appointment to the Supreme Court. In his first two decades on the bench, Justice Thomas has established himself as the original Constitution's greatest defender against elite efforts at social engineering. His stances for limited government and individual freedom make him the left's lightning rod and the tea party's intellectual godfather. And he is only halfway through the 40 years he may sit on the high court.

Justice Thomas's two decades on the bench show the simple power of ideas over the pettiness of our politics. Media and academic elites have spent the last 20 years trying to marginalize him by drawing a portrait of a man stung by his confirmation, angry at his rejection by the civil rights community, and a blind follower of fellow conservatives. But Justice Thomas has broken through this partisan fog to convince the court to adopt many of his positions, and to become a beacon to the grass-roots movement to restrain government spending and reduce the size of the welfare state.

Clarence Thomas set the table for the tea party by making originalism fashionable again. Many appointees to the court enjoy its role as arbiter of society's most divisive questions—race, abortion, religion, gay rights and national security—and show little desire to control their own power. Antonin Scalia, at best, thinks interpreting the Constitution based on its original meaning is "the lesser evil," as he wrote in a 1989 law journal article, because it prevents judges from pursuing their own personal policies. Justice Thomas, however, thinks that the meaning of the Constitution held at its ratification binds the United States as a political community, and that decades of precedent must be scraped off the original Constitution like barnacles on a ship's hull.



In *United States v. Lopez* (1995), which held unconstitutional a federal law banning guns in school zones as beyond Congress's powers, Justice Thomas called on the court to reverse decades of case law that had transformed the legislature's authority "[t]o regulate Commerce . . . among the several States" into what he described as a limitless "police power." He would restrict federal laws to commercial activity that crosses state borders and end national control over manufacturing and agriculture.

Any case that allows Congress to regulate anything that has "a substantial effect" on interstate commerce "is but an innovation of the 20th century," wrote Justice Thomas in a concurring opinion. Taken to its conclusion, his view would drive a stake into the heart of the New Deal state, which would have to return policy over welfare, health care, education, labor and crime to the states where they belong. Tea partiers who oppose wasteful federal spending and want a smaller national government are following in Justice Thomas's intellectual footsteps.

Strictly obeying the original meaning of the Constitution can lead Justice Thomas to liberal results. Based on his reading of the Commerce Clause, for example, he unsuccessfully urged his brethren to strike down most of the federal drug laws—which made him an unlikely hero in my hometown of Berkeley, Calif., if only for a day. He joined a majority to invalidate thousands of criminal sentences because judges, instead of juries, had found the vital facts—in violation of the Bill of Rights.

Justice Thomas opposed the court's pro-business decisions that capped punitive damages because he believes the issue is for the state courts to decide. He voted to suppress evidence produced by police using thermal-imaging technology to scan homes for marijuana growth as unreasonable searches in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Because the Framers wanted broad protections for political speech, Justice Thomas joined opinions protecting violent movies and offensive protesters at military funerals.

Originalism no doubt gives Justice Thomas strong conservative views on constitutional law. He called for an individual right to own guns before it was cool; he would return control over abortion to the states; and he allows for more religion in the public square—but only because the Constitution entrenches a vision of limited government, broad economic and political freedoms, and a vibrant civil society.

Justice Thomas supplements the Constitution's inherently conservative nature with a perspective that only someone with his unique background offers. His self-reliant rise from poverty gives him a deep skepticism of social engineering by intellectual elites.

Not surprisingly, Justice Thomas reserves his deepest scorn for the government's use of race to determine society's winners and losers. In his dissent from the court's approval of affirmative action in higher education in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), he quoted Frederick Douglass: "If the negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is, give him a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone!" Justice Thomas has declared himself on the side of individual effort and choice against elite visions of social justice: "Like Douglass, I believe blacks can achieve in every avenue of American life without the meddling of university administrators."

In *Adarand v. Peña* (1995), striking down racial quotas in government contracting, Justice Thomas traced the nation's commitment to racial equality through the Constitution directly to the Declaration of Independence's promise that all men are created equal, just as did Abraham Lincoln. Affirmative action is "racial paternalism," he wrote, whose "unintended consequences can be as poisonous and pernicious as any other form of discrimination."

There is a price for Clarence Thomas's 20 years of purity of principle and clarity of expression. He will never be the builder of coalitions, the leader of majorities, or the rudderless vote swinging in the middle. He rejects Justice William Brennan's famous description of the most important rule on the Supreme Court: the rule of five votes. He happily forswears the siren song of political popularity and judicial compromise necessary to sit in the majority.

Instead, he is swinging for the fences. The true audience for his call for a return to Founding principles is the American people, not a few federal judges.

In his first two decades, not only has the court steadily moved in his direction, but also an unprecedented grass-roots movement has taken up his call for limited government and individual freedom. Imagine what he will do in the next 20 years.

*Mr. Yoo, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and an American Enterprise Institute scholar, is co-editor of the recently released "Confronting Terror" (Encounter 2011). He was a law clerk for Justice Thomas from 1994-1995.*

## **Huffington Post**

### **[Steve Jobs Biography Reveals He Told Obama, 'You're Headed For A One-Term Presidency'](#)**

In one of the [most hotly-anticipated biographies of the year, "Steve Jobs,"](#) author Walter Isaacson reveals that the Apple CEO offered to design political ads for President Obama's 2012

campaign despite being highly critical of the administration's policies and that Jobs refused potentially life-saving surgery on his pancreatic cancer because he felt it was too invasive. Nine months later, he got the operation but it was too late.

Those are just some of the tidbits about Jobs' life revealed in the upcoming biography, a copy of which was obtained by The Huffington Post. The publication date of the official biography of the notoriously-secretive Apple co-founder was pushed up after his death in October. "I wanted my kids to know me," [Isaacson quoted Jobs](#) as saying in their final interview. "I wasn't always there for them and I wanted them to know why and to understand what I did."

Among other details unearthed in the book on the notoriously-secretive Apple co-founder:

### **Jobs' Meeting With Obama**

Jobs, who was known for his prickly, stubborn personality, almost missed meeting President Obama in the fall of 2010 because he insisted that the president personally ask him for a meeting. Though his wife told him that Obama "was really psyched to meet with you," Jobs insisted on the personal invitation, and the standoff lasted for five days. When he finally relented and they met at the Westin San Francisco Airport, Jobs was characteristically blunt. He seemed to have transformed from a liberal into a conservative.

"You're headed for a one-term presidency," he told Obama at the start of their meeting, insisting that the administration needed to be more business-friendly. As an example, Jobs described the ease with which companies can build factories in China compared to the United States, where "regulations and unnecessary costs" make it difficult for them.

Jobs also criticized America's education system, saying it was "crippled by union work rules," noted Isaacson. "Until the teachers' unions were broken, there was almost no hope for education reform." Jobs proposed allowing principals to hire and fire teachers based on merit, that schools stay open until 6 p.m. and that they be open 11 months a year.

### **Aiding Obama's Reelection Campaign**

Jobs suggested that Obama meet six or seven other CEOs who could express the needs of innovative businesses -- but when White House aides added more names to the list, Jobs insisted that it was growing too big and that "he had no intention of coming." In preparation for the dinner, Jobs exhibited his notorious attention to detail, telling venture capitalist John Doerr that the menu of shrimp, cod and lentil salad was "far too fancy" and objecting to a chocolate truffle dessert. But he was overruled by the White House, which cited the president's fondness for cream pie.

Though Jobs was not that impressed by Obama, later telling Isaacson that his focus on the reasons that things can't get done "infuriates" him, they kept in touch and talked by phone a few more times. Jobs even offered to help create Obama's political ads for the 2012 campaign. "He had made the same offer in 2008, but he'd become annoyed when Obama's strategist David Axelrod wasn't totally deferential," writes Isaacson. Jobs later told the author that he wanted to do for Obama what the legendary "morning in America" ads did for Ronald Reagan.

### **Bill Gates And Steve Jobs**



Bill Gates was fascinated by Steve Jobs but found him "fundamentally odd" and "weirdly flawed as a human being," and his tendency to be "either in the mode of saying you were shit or trying to seduce you."

Jobs once declared about Gates, "He'd be a broader guy if he had dropped acid once or gone off to an ashram when he was younger."

After 30 years, Gates would develop a grudging respect for Jobs. "He really never knew much about technology, but he had an amazing instinct for what works," he said. But Jobs never reciprocated by fully appreciating Gates' real strengths. "Bill is basically unimaginative and has never invented anything, which is why I think he's more comfortable now in philanthropy than technology. He just shamelessly ripped off other people's ideas."

### **Meeting His Biological Father**

Jobs, who was adopted, was a customer at a Mediterranean restaurant north of San Jose without realizing that it was owned by his biological father -- from whom he was estranged. He eventually met his real Dad -- "It was amazing," he later said of the revelation. "I had been to that restaurant a few times, and I remember meeting the owner. He was Syrian. Balding. We shook hands."

Nevertheless Jobs still had no desire to see him. "I was a wealthy man by then, and I didn't trust him not to try to blackmail me or go to the press about it."

### **Anticipating An Early Death**

Jobs once told John Sculley, who would later become Apple's CEO and fire Jobs, that if he weren't working with computers, he could see himself as a poet in Paris. "Jobs confided in Sculley that he believed he would die young, and therefore he needed to accomplish things quickly so that he would make his mark on Silicon Valley history. "We all have a short period of time on this earth," he told the Sculleys. "We probably only have the opportunity to do a few things really great and do them well. None of us has any idea how long we're gong to be here nor do I, but my feeling is I've got to accomplish a lot of these things while I'm young."

\* \* \* \* \*

For his first interview about the book, [Isaacson talked to "60 Minutes"](#) for the Sunday, Oct. 23 episode, telling host Steve Kroft that he was shocked about Jobs's decision to initially skip surgery for his pancreatic cancer -- that such a genius could make such a wrong decision about his own health.

"I've asked [Jobs why he didn't get an operation then] and he said, 'I didn't want my body to be opened ... I didn't want to be violated in that way,' said Isaacson.

"I think that he kind of felt that if you ignore something, if you don't want something to exist, you can have magical thinking. ... We talked about this a lot," he told Kroft. "He wanted to talk about it, how he regretted it. ... I think he felt he should have been operated on sooner."



## The Economist

### American public housing

#### *Why the Pruitt-Igoe housing project failed*



THE filmmakers behind “[The Pruitt-Igoe Myth](#)” confronted a formidable task: to strip away the layers of a narrative so familiar that even they themselves believed it when they first set out to make their documentary. Erected in St Louis, Missouri, in the early 1950s, at a time of postwar prosperity and optimism, the massive Pruitt-Igoe housing project soon became a notorious symbol of failed public policy and architectural hubris, its 33 towers razed a mere two decades later. Such symbolism found its most immediate expression in the iconic image of an imploding building, the first of Pruitt-Igoe’s towers to be demolished in 1972 (it was featured in the cult film [Koyaanisqatsi](#), with Philip Glass’s score murmuring in the background). The spectacle was as powerful politically as it was visually, locating the failure of Pruitt-Igoe within the buildings themselves—in their design and in their mission.

The scale of the project made it conspicuous from the get-go: 33 buildings, 11-storeys each, arranged across a sprawling, 57 acres in the poor DeSoto-Carr neighbourhood on the north side of St Louis. The complex was supposed to put the modernist ideals of Le Corbusier into action; at the time, Architectural Forum ran a story praising the plan to replace “ramshackle houses jammed with people—and rats” in the city’s downtown with “vertical neighbourhoods for poor people.” The main architect was Minoru Yamasaki, who would go on to design another monument to modernism that would also be destroyed, but for very different reasons, and under very different circumstances: his World Trade Centre went up in the early 1970s, right around the time that Pruitt-Igoe was pulled down.



The promise of Pruitt-Igoe's early years was swiftly overtaken by a grim reality. Occupancy peaked at 91% in 1957, and from there began its precipitous decline. By the late 1960s the buildings had been denuded of its residents, the number of windows broken to the point where it was possible to see straight through to the other side. The residents that remained had to act tough for the chance to come and go unmolested. Critics of modernist architecture were quick to seize on the design of the buildings, arguing that such forward-thinking features as skip-stop elevators, which stopped only at the first, fourth, seventh and tenth floors, were wholly unsuitable and ultimately dangerous. Designed to encourage residents to mingle in the long galleries and staircases, the elevators instead created perfect opportunities for muggings. Charles Jencks, an architectural theorist, declared July 15th 1972, when Pruitt-Igoe was "given the final coup de grâce by dynamite", the day that "Modern Architecture died".

Directed by Chad Freidrichs and currently travelling the American film-festival circuit, "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth" complicates that picture by considering the larger context. The city of St Louis was undergoing its own postwar transformations, to which a project such as Pruitt-Igoe was particularly vulnerable. The city's industrial base was moving elsewhere, as were its residents: over a short period of 30 years, the population of St Louis had shrivelled to a mere 50% of its postwar highs. The Housing Act of 1949 encouraged contradictory policies, offering incentives for urban renewal projects as well as subsidies for moving to the suburbs. Federal money flowed into the construction of the projects, but the maintenance fees were to come from the tenants' rents; the declining occupancy rate set off a vicious circle, and money that was dearly needed for safety and upkeep simply wasn't there.



Abstract policy decisions and large-scale economic changes are difficult to render compelling, no matter the medium, but this documentary succeeds in finding the drama. Original footage from Pruitt-Igoe's early days, including a promotional reel replete with a buoyant, 1950s-era voiceover and cheerful primary colours, runs up against desolate photographs of the project's decline. The film also features interviews with several former residents of Pruitt-Igoe, who convey their hopefulness when they first moved in, as well as an affection for the buildings that for many of them persists to this day.

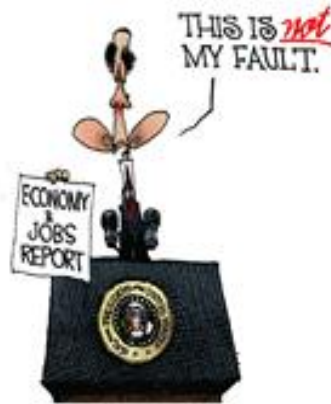
In their eagerness to challenge the Pruitt-Igoe myth, the filmmakers verge on suggesting that the design of the buildings had nothing at all to do with the failure that ensued. But critics of High Modernism can point to the counter-example of Carr Square Village, a low-rise housing project built in 1942 across the street, which didn't suffer from Pruitt-Igoe's escalating rates of vacancy and crime. Clearly many factors—economic, demographic, political and, arguably, architectural—converged on Pruitt-Igoe.

"The Pruitt-Igoe Myth" owes much to earlier academic work that exposed the seams in the dominant consensus. This [eight-page paper](#) by Katharine Bristol, published in the *Journal of Architectural Education* in 1991, offers more analytical rigour than could be captured in an 84-minute film. The difference, of course, is that the documentary carries a more visceral punch, which gives it the potential to reach the kind of wider audience that Ms Bristol's 20-year-old scholarly paper never had. In order to unseat a powerful narrative about the failure of modern architecture and public housing, the filmmakers have offered a powerful narrative of their own.

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