



THE FOUNDATION

"Nothing is more essential to the establishment of manners in a State than that all persons employed in places of power and trust must be men of unexceptionable characters." --Samuel Adams

PATRIOT PERSPECTIVE

SHOCK Theatre

By Mark Alexander

One of the great lines from Casablanca occurs when Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) is confronted by a regular patron of his gambling bar, the corrupt Prefecture of Police, Captain Louis Renault (Claude Rains), who is threatening to extort Rick by shuttering his establishment.

Rick asks, "How can you close me up? On what grounds?" Renault responds, "I'm shocked, *shocked* to find that gambling is going on in here!" (As Renault makes that faux pronouncement, a croupier hands him a wad of cash saying, "Your winnings, sir," and Renault quietly says, "Oh, thank you very much.")

Sound familiar?

If not, listen to all the Democrat remonstrations this week about the \$165 million of taxpayer bail bonuses scheduled to be paid by AIG. They were so shocked by the discovery of this largess that they even passed legislation to slap a 90 percent tax on any TARP-supported bonuses, despite the fact that such a move would never pass the constitutional sniff test. Of course, mere matters of constitutionality have rarely stopped congressional Democrats.

To his credit, White House economist Larry Summers said, "We are a country of law. There are contracts. The government cannot just abrogate contracts." (Apparently he didn't get the memo from his boss.)

Also worthy of honorable mention, Demo Rep. Charles Rangel, the House's primary tax writer -- the one who's currently under investigation for "tax irregularities" -- insisted that the tax code should not be used as a "political weapon." Unfortunately, he's about 90 years too late with that proscription.

Leading the chorus of the "shocked and outraged" is Rep. Barney Frank (a.k.a. "Bonnie Fwank"), who, without so much as the aid of an Obamaprompter, protested (phonetically transliterated), "These bonuses are going to people who sewewed this thing up enawmouswy, who made tewwibew decisions." Fwank added, "In high school, they wouldn't have gotten wetention, they would have gotten detention." (When it comes to rhetorical poetics, Jesse Jackson has nothing on Bonnie.)

Let's review, class.

First, it was the Democrats, in particular the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Barney Frank, who "who screwed this thing up enormously, who made terrible decisions." (For supporting evidence that would convict Frank, even in San Fran's Six Circuit Court of Appeals, read Frank's own words in "Economics 101" under the section "Housing crisis history," in which he defends his big campaign patrons Fannie and Freddie.)

Second, on 16 September 2008, one Timothy Franz Geithner (a.k.a. "The Candy Man"), then president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, now secretary of the Treasury for one Barack Hussein Obama (a.k.a. "Barry Soetoro"), authorized \$85 billion to bail out AIG.

The terms of that bailout specifically authorized the bonuses that are currently being protested, but let's cut Geithner some slack. The poor guy can't even figure out his own taxes (\$49,000 in arrears at last count), so we shouldn't hold him to a higher standard in regard to complex concepts such as executive bonuses.

Third, the shock being feigned by Obama and Senate Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd (a.k.a. "Sugar Daddy") is, to borrow an idiom from Alice, "curiouser and curiouser."

Peculiar, say I, because Obama's people met with Dodd's people last month to hammer out the details of Obama's so-called "stimulus bill", which, combined with his Obamanibus Spending Bill, is nothing more than a four trillion dollar ruse to hasten "the fundamental transformation of the United States of America" into a socialist state. (Here we might recall the telling words of Obama's chief hatchet man, Rahm Emanuel: "Rule 1: Never allow a crisis to go to waste. They are opportunities to do big things.")

But I digress.

As a result of the February confab with Obama and company, Dodd stripped a measure from the "stimulus bill" which would have restricted the AIG bonuses in question and replaced it with the Dodd Amendment, which explicitly exempted "contractually obligated bonuses agreed on before February 11, 2009" from executive compensation restrictions. (Surely this was unrelated to the fact that Dodd and Obama were the big winners of AIG campaign sweepstake graft last year -- receiving \$103,100 and \$101,332, respectively.)

Dodd now asserts, "One way or another, we're going to try to figure out how to get these resources back." And not a minute too soon.

Got it?

Now, Obama is calling on Geithner to "pursue every single legal avenue to block these bonuses and make the American taxpayers whole," insisting "that everyone, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, play by the same rules. That is an ethic that we have to demand." Obama adds, "How do they justify this outrage to the taxpayers who are keeping the company afloat?"

If ever did the proverbial pot call the kettle black!

This phenomenon of feigning shock, and then shifting blame, when caught red-handed in folly that would otherwise result in a populist mutiny, is a favorite tactic from the Demo playbook. It was authored by the Great Prevaricator, Bill Clinton, and has been further refined by Barack Obama, et al. Near as we can tell, the objective of this obfuscation is to make claims that are so blatantly hypocritical as to call into question whether there is any hypocrisy at all.

Earlier this week, I asked our editors to submit descriptive terms to apply to this faux "shocked -- SHOCKED" Demo-diversion. Here are a few of their responses: Demaneuver, Liberuse, Demododgery, Fauxdacity, Demofuge, Obamawink, Lefthoax, and my personal favorite, Uberdonkeydung!

Feel free to send me your suggestions for publication in Monday's Brief. In the meantime, feel the shock!

Quote of the week

"All of this reads as if yanked from an Ayn Rand novel. The government, in a desperate attempt to avoid political pain caused by its own foolish economic mistakes and lax oversight, has poured billions into bankrupt companies. Then when those companies pass out bonuses they claim are necessary to retain qualified workers, the political firestorm leads government officials to propose tax rates that would make even British socialists of a half century ago blush. We are slipping into debates that have nothing to do with a free economy and everything to do with the government calibrating how to balance the favors it hands out with the inevitable moral outrage those favors engender." --Wall Street Journal columnist John Fund

On cross examination

"I have no convictions ... I blow with the wind." --Captain Louis Renault, or most any politician, when questioned about his loyalties (Casablanca)

This week's 'Braying Jackass' award

"People are rightly outraged about these particular bonuses. But just as outrageous is the culture that these bonuses are a symptom of, that have existed for far too long; a situation where excess greed, excess compensation, excess risk-taking have all made us vulnerable and left us holding the bag. I hope that Wall Street and the marketplace don't think that we can return to business as usual." --Barack Obama, whose campaign's biggest benefactor was Wall Street

The BIG lie

"I did not want to make any changes to my original Senate-passed amendment [to the stimulus bill,] but I did so at the request of administration officials, who gave us no indication that this was in any way related to AIG. Let me be clear -- I was completely unaware of these AIG bonuses until I learned of them last week." --Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT)

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Hope 'n' Change:

Health care malpractice

As a campaigner, Barack Obama promised to cut taxes for "95 percent of all Americans." He even chided John McCain's proposal to count as earned income the amount employers pay toward health insurance in exchange for a tax break for middle-class families who have employer-provided benefits. But now that he's in office, President Obama is leaving no stone unturned in his effort to scrape up funding for government-provided health care. So McCain's idea of taxing employer health care benefits is right back on the table -- particularly when the Congressional Budget Office estimates that taxing those benefits could bring in \$246 billion a year at a time when Democrats are planning budget deficits north of \$1 trillion for years to come.

The question has placed both parties in an unusual position. McCain proposed, and some Republicans supported, the taxation of employer-supplied benefits as an incentive for individuals to buy their own insurance. Some Democrats who otherwise love taxes decry the practice as unfair to "working families." The Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that a family earning \$50,000 could see their income tax rise by \$2,500 if benefits were fully taxed. That's a figure which far eclipses the amount Obama's tax cuts would provide that same family.

While President Obama referees congressional wrestling over the issue of taxing benefits, he's four-square behind language in the recently passed omnibus spending bill, urging lawmakers to "consider" extending federal health benefits to same-sex couples (at a cost of \$670 million over 10 years). However, any bill allowing this practice would conflict with the Defense of Marriage Act, which allows federal benefits only for couples of the opposite sex. It would certainly lead to a lengthy court fight over its constitutionality. No such bill is yet before the Congress; however, Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-WI) plan to introduce similar legislation shortly.

The biggest health care blunder of the week, however, occurred when Obama proposed to "honor" wounded American military veterans by forcing private health insurers to pay for treatment of veterans who suffer from service-related disabilities and injuries. While akin to the chutzpah it takes to kill

one's parents and then plead for mercy on the grounds of being an orphan, Obama said the government could avoid paying \$540 million in benefits by shifting its responsibilities for veterans' care to the private sector. After veterans groups let their opinions be known, though, Obama quickly backed off the idea. Nothing like a little on-the-job training.

News from the Swamp:

'You will spend this money'

The battle that South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford is waging over whether and how to accept federal stimulus dollars took yet another turn this week. Obama budget director Peter Orszag denied the governor's request to use \$700 million to pay down the Palmetto State's debt rather than expand payments to the unemployed. Orszag wrote to Sanford, "During this severe economic downturn, Congress and the president wanted to provide states and localities with emergency funding in order to prevent the layoffs of teachers, police officers and other vital public servants. Congress has not authorized the executive branch to waive any of the above statutory requirements governing the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund."

Sanford said of the letter, "We're in the process of drafting a response that will go back to the White House ... which will more narrowly tailor our request to pay off debt in a way consistent with the administration's response. We believe there is a way to do so." We hope for South Carolina's sake -- and all fiscally responsible Americans' sake -- that the governor is successful.

New & notable legislation

The House passed H.R. 1388, "The Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act," conveniently mislabeled as the "GIVE Act," by a vote of 321-105 Wednesday. The measure expands AmeriCorps and similar government-paid programs that will replace true volunteerism with low-wage government employment. A companion bill is working its way through the Senate as S. 277.

The Senate passed the Public Lands Act Thursday, which sets aside more than two million acres in nine states as federally protected land. The Senate had passed similar legislation in January, but it was defeated in the House where Republicans fought for an amendment allowing concealed carry of guns in national parks. Supporters hail the bill as the most important conservation measure in decades. Sen.

Tom Coburn (R-OK), however, contended that the bill would hamper energy production on millions of acres of federal land.

From the states: Tax cuts in Georgia

There is still some sanity in the heartland. Despite Obama's "tax and spend" economic recovery plan, at least one state remembers that cutting taxes and spending worked the last time we faced a dramatic economic decline. The Georgia House of Representatives passed the Jobs, Opportunity, and Business Success Act of 2009 (J.O.B.S. Act) last week, by a 164-to-4 vote. According to economic analyst Stephen Moore, "The bill provides tax credits to employers for hiring new workers and suspends other business fees and taxes. A second bill, which passed 166-to-0, will eliminate the state tax on business inventory if voters approve it through a statewide referendum."

Georgia House Majority Leader Jerry Keen and his colleagues know the bill will be a "job creator." Rep. Tom Graves said, "For some reason people in Washington seem to think that only big government spending programs can lift us out of this economic recession." According to Moore, encouraged by former Reagan economist Arthur Laffer, the Georgia Senate is considering "an even more ambitious plan of phasing out the state's corporate income tax." Laffer says, "Georgia will be dramatically increasing its competitiveness relative to other tax-raising states."

From the Left:

Obama's new spiritual advisor

After Barack Obama's pastor of 20 years, Jeremiah Wright, was thrown under the bus during the campaign, Obama has surrounded himself with other spiritual advisors. Most notable among them today is Rev. Jim Wallis. According to The New York Times, Wallis "leans left on some issues" but overall is a "centrist, social justice" kind of guy. Of course, here, one could equate "social justice" with communism. Wallis was part of the anti-Vietnam War movement and founded an anti-capitalism magazine called the Post-American, the goal of which was to promote wealth redistribution and government-managed economies as the keys to achieving "social justice." In 1971, the Post-American became Sojourners, whose "statement of faith" exhorted people to "refuse to accept [capitalist] structures and assumptions that normalize poverty and segregate the world by class." According to Wallis, the U.S. is

"the great power, the great seducer, the great captor and destroyer of human life, the great master of humanity and history in its totalitarian claims and designs."

Wallis went on to embrace "liberation theology" and rallied for Leftist agitators in Latin America. In 1995 Wallis founded Call to Renewal, a coalition of religious groups that advocated for leftist economic agendas including tax hikes and wealth redistribution to promote "social justice." More recently, he has worked to rebrand such conservative phrases as "pro-life" to mean working with AIDS victims or helping illegal aliens. Wallis now likens President Obama to the Old Testament prophet Nehemiah, someone who "carefully surveyed the broken walls of the temple, called the people together to start the rebuilding and to 'commit themselves to the common good.'" One thing is sure: "Nehemiah" has a lousy adviser.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Warfront with Jihadistan:

What's in a name?

In another effort to distance itself from President George W. Bush's remarkably effective counterterrorism efforts, the Obama administration has announced that the term "enemy combatant" will no longer be used to describe the 200-plus residents of Guantanamo Bay. The administration also modified the policy for detention, saying that terror suspects can be detained if they "substantially supported Taliban or al-Qaida forces or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners." The Bush administration had used the words "directly supported." By modifying policies, the Obama administration is setting the stage to handle terrorism as only Democrats know -- as a criminal issue to be litigated in civilian courts. Still, as Wall Street Journal columnist James Taranto quips, "We visited Guantanamo a few years ago and were struck by how hospitable the place was: Detainees get three ample meals a day, books and games, mail privileges and generous accommodations for their religious practices. The U.S. treats them the way any guest would want to be treated (with obvious limitations, owing to their desire to kill us all). So why not call them 'company'?"

Soon enough, that may be true. Attorney General Eric Holder announced this week that detainees, whatever they're called, may end up being released inside the U.S. For "people who can be released

there are a variety of options that we have, and among them is the possibility is that we would release them into this country," Holder said. "That process is ongoing and we've not made any determinations or made any requests of anybody at this point." If it would help, we have a suggestion for where to first release the detainees -- Washington, DC.

In related news, Barack Obama apparently wants to disarm airline pilots once again. The Washington Times reports that the administration "diverted some \$2 million from the pilot training program to hire more supervisory staff, who will engage in field inspections of pilots." *That* should make everyone safer.

Department of Military Readiness: Skeptics trash missile defense

Now that the Obama regime has started dismantling America's free markets, it looks like it's time to start taking apart our military, too. A series of recent reports, most from knee-jerk skeptics of missile defense, such as the misleadingly named Union of Concerned Scientists, have questioned the need and capability of the fledgling U.S. ballistic missile shield. Additionally, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report pointed out that the type of ground-based interceptors deployed in Europe failed to hit targets in five of 13 tests. Or put another way, it was successful in eight out of 13 tries, which could be considered about right for a challenging new high-tech defense system that would definitely cause uncertainty in the mind of an aggressor. Planned as a defense against rogue nuclear nations, such as Iran, the system would cost \$9 billion to \$13 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office, but could leave parts of Europe unprotected from Iranian missiles. Still, we think that the chance of saving eight targeted European cities from vaporization ranks higher than definitely losing all 13.

During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama said he would support missile defense if it proved "workable," wording which leaves him considerable wiggle room. He also recently whispered to Russia that he would consider dropping the European system if Russia helped to stop Iran's nuclear program. But with a top Russian defense official on Wednesday confirming that Russia contracted two years ago to sell its latest air-defense missiles to Iran, and with Russia considering an offer from Venezuela to base some strategic bombers in that country, the Russian

Bear does not look as if it cares about U.S. national security interests. Maybe Hillary's sophomoric "Reset" button was effective after all, except that it has reset U.S./Russian relations back to the Cold War days of 1980.

Profiles of Valor: U.S. Army Sgt. Malone

United States Army Sergeant First Class Ed Malone was serving with the 3rd Platoon, Grim Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in 2005 and was conducting a joint combat patrol with the Iraqi Army in the extremely hostile Surai district of Tal'Afar, when the unit was attacked. Without immediate direct fire support from his Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Malone ordered his men to take a defensive position and return fire. He directed his grenadier to eliminate several enemy targets firing from a rooftop. Malone also repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire -- once to retrieve important equipment, another time to evacuate women and children caught in the crossfire, and finally to drag a wounded soldier out of the line of fire. His actions sped medical treatment and evacuation, saving the soldier's life. Malone refused to give ground until reinforcements arrived, and he and his unit held their position for more than an hour. He led a three-man team to clear a courtyard of enemy fighters, relieving pressure on his unit. There, while administering aid to an enemy combatant, Malone was shot in the foot. For his brave actions that day, Malone was awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V" for valor.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Federal Reserve tries to buy economic growth

"The Federal Reserve ramped up its efforts to revive the economy, declaring it would buy as much as \$300 billion in long-term U.S. Treasury securities in the next few months, and hundreds of billions of dollars more in mortgage-backed securities," The Wall Street Journal reports. The total amount "pumped into" the economy could reach \$1 trillion. Since the Fed has already cut interest rates as much as possible, it is now basically printing money in order to flood the market with available credit so that interest rates can be pushed down even further. The International Herald Tribune calls it "a tactic that amounts to creating vast new sums of money out of thin air." The Tribune reports, "Since last September, the Fed's lending programs have roughly doubled the size of its balance sheet, to about \$1.8 trillion, from \$900 billion. The actions announced

on Wednesday are likely to expand that to well over \$3 trillion over the next year." Such policies may help in the short term but are sure to produce inflation in the future.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration is working on plans to increase the power available to the Federal Reserve in terms of regulatory oversight. The Fed would have greater authority to take over any large financial firms that are failing and to implement tougher capital requirements for big banks.

As for Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds, the next contestant, auto parts suppliers, will receive \$5 billion to "provide suppliers with desperately needed funding to operate their businesses and help unlock credit more broadly in the supplier industry," the Treasury said.

Obama ignores treaty, bans Mexican trucks

"Treaty Schmeaty" was the message President Obama recently delivered to Mexico by canceling a federal pilot program allowing Mexican trucks to transport goods across the border. Created in belated fulfillment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed in 1993, the trucking program promised increased trade and lower consumer prices. Now, Americans can expect the opposite.

Mexico's Economy Minister Gerardo Ruiz Mateos called the trucking ban "wrong" and "protectionist." Meanwhile, with typical audacity, President Obama was talking out of the other side of his mouth to U.S. CEOs, telling them that a top priority was ensuring that the U.S. isn't "dropping back into protectionism." In the match-up between actions and words, however, actions always win.

Responding to President Obama's disregard for the United States' signature on an international agreement, Mexico, our third largest trading partner, has imposed tariffs on 90 U.S. industrial and agricultural products, a move that will hit 40 states to the tune of about \$2.4 billion. They specifically targeted products from districts represented by protectionist Democrats, particularly House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco district, which will bear a 45 percent tariff on table grapes. As Investor's Business Daily points out, "Free trade and treaty obligations aren't favors to be bestowed to special interests, but a two-way street, a deal, a bargain. Follow treaty

obligations and see treaty obligations enforced on the other side in return. Renege, and forget about compliance on the other end."

Not surprisingly, Democrats are doing this for their special interests. The Teamsters are giddy over Obama's decision. They have long opposed the trucking plan -- and, not coincidentally, gave 97 percent of their \$2,496,356 in 2008 political contributions to the Democrat Party. As Joe Biden admitted last week, "We're going to make sure that in every policy, every decision, we don't lose sight of the folks that brought us to the dance." In other words, for this administration, treaty commitments and the economic interests of American consumers and businesses are secondary to the special interests of the unions that helped line Democrat coffers.

Taxes as an economic motivator

Last year, frightened by skyrocketing gas prices -- and endless media stories stating that the era of cheap gas was over -- consumers raced to buy hybrid vehicles. Car dealerships couldn't keep them on the lots and were able to charge thousands above the sticker price for the ugly ducklings. But only months later, the price of gas has dropped to less than \$2, and hybrid car sales have tanked.

Coincidentally, the unfortunately named Michael Jackson, chief executive of the large auto-dealer conglomerate AutoNation, Inc., in an incredible show of concern for the environment and our dependence on foreign oil, is advocating higher gas prices in order to force consumers to buy hybrid vehicles. "We need more expensive gasoline to change consumer behavior," Jackson said, "Otherwise, Americans will continue to favor big vehicles, no matter what kind of fuel-economy standards the government imposes on automakers. Four dollars a gallon is a good start."

Jackson also went so far as to say that without these higher prices, Americans would have the nerve not only to buy bigger cars, but also to buy homes far away from their jobs and "drive many more miles."

Some would suggest that the root of the problem lies with political strong-arming. Soon after taking office, President Obama spoke of future state and federal regulations mandating a fuel economy of about 40 miles per gallon. Other politicians are pressuring automakers to push hybrid sales; this is evidenced by the fact that both General Motors and

Chrysler used their promises of expanded hybrid production in their pitch to secure bailout money. It's a great plan: Create cars that aren't selling, then ask the government for more money to keep pushing the cars that aren't selling. Hmmmm...

CULTURE & POLICY

Second Amendment:

A tale of two court rulings

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly Thursday blocked a new rule implemented by the Bush administration allowing concealed carry of loaded firearms in national parks. The Second Amendment is once again void where prohibited. After the rule was put in place, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, the National Parks Conservation Association and the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees immediately sued, crying that law-abiding citizens carrying concealed weapons would suddenly endanger school children visiting the parks. They pointed to no evidence to back up their charge, but sued anyway. The judge found that the Bush administration failed to address environmental concerns adequately. Whatever that means.

Meanwhile, Judge Robert Gottsfield of Maricopa County Superior Court in Arizona dismissed charges against a Phoenix gun dealer. George Ikna-dosian had been accused of knowingly selling 700 weapons through intermediaries to Mexican smugglers. Gottsfield ruled that even though the purchasers made false statements on federal forms (that they were buying the weapons for themselves), the deception did not amount to "material falsification" in violation of state law. State attorney general Terry Goddard is seeking to appeal.

Climate change this week:

Little more than big government

Achim Steiner, head of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), called for a "Global Green New Deal" this week, as a way to bolster the world economy and protect the environment. Translated, "green" means regulations and "new deal" means that the regulations will cost a whole lot of money -- a double whammy. Steiner called for investments of \$750 billion in more energy-efficient buildings, renewable energies, better transport, improved agriculture and measures to safeguard nature. Perhaps funding would be aided by a tax on oil, which, if implemented at \$5 a barrel, "would be almost, if not totally, unnoticed by the consumer," Steiner said.

This UN plan comes on the heels of news that Obama's cap-and-trade system would cost nearly \$2 trillion over eight years, or about three times the White House's original estimate of \$646 billion. According to The Washington Times, "A study of an earlier cap-and-trade bill co-sponsored by Mr. Obama when he was a senator estimated the cost could top \$366 billion a year by 2015." For their part, Republicans plan a fight. "The last thing we need is a massive tax increase in a recession, but reportedly that's what the White House is offering: up to \$1.9 trillion in tax hikes on every single American who drives a car, turns on a light switch or buys a product made in the United States," said Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Minority Leader John Boehner. "And since this energy tax won't affect manufacturers in Mexico, India and China, it will do nothing but drive American jobs overseas."

Around the world:

UN declaration on homosexuality

The Obama administration plans to endorse a UN declaration that calls for the worldwide decriminalization of homosexuality. It urges states "to take all the necessary measures, in particular legislative or administrative, to ensure that sexual orientation or gender identity may under no circumstances be the basis for criminal penalties, in particular executions, arrests or detention." Former President George W. Bush had refused to sign the declaration when it was presented in December because there were legal questions that needed further review. Some of the questions include the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the military and also federalism issues -- laws regarding private employers and landlords, among other things, that are handled by the states. The Associated Press reports that "70 U.N. members outlaw homosexuality and in several, homosexual acts can be punished by execution." Sixty-six nations signed the declaration. Oddly enough, Iran is one of the nations that permit execution of homosexuals, while Iraq -- free because of George W. Bush -- does not. Seems actions really are louder than words.

Ron Silver, R.I.P

Ron Silver, a rare Hollywood liberal-turned-conservative, died Sunday of cancer. He was 62. Silver was perhaps best known for his role as a political consultant on the television series "The West Wing," but he also won a Tony Award in 1988 for his role in "Speed-the-Plow," written by another

former liberal, David Mamet. Like Mamet, 9/11 changed Silver's opinions about politics -- he called himself a "9/11 Republican." After his change of views, he spoke at the Republican convention in 2004, saying, "This is a war we did not seek. This is a war waged against us. This is a war to which we had to respond." Silver's career suffered for his "traitorous" patriotism. After his RNC speech, he said, "It's affected me very badly. I can't point to a person or a job I've lost, but this community is not very pluralistic. I haven't worked for 10 months." One job he did find was narrating "Fahrenhype 9/11," which deconstructed Michael Moore's Bush-bashing "Fahrenheit 9/11." The Wall Street Journal wrote, "His brother, Mitchell Silver, [said] that Silver's politics 'were not shared by anyone he knew.' His politics, in other words, were born of conviction, not convenience, which is one way to describe an honest patriot."

And last...

President Barry O'Bama's inability to think without his teleprompter was on comical display again this week during a St. Patrick's Day appearance with Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen. The event took an amusing turn when Cowen realized a few para-

graphs into his prepared remarks that the words sounded familiar. Indeed, he was reading Obama's speech all over again. Upon realizing the mistake, Cowen told the president, "That's your speech."

While he may be the leader of the most powerful nation on earth, Barack Obama isn't exactly the king of cool. He laughed, headed back to the podium and proceeded to read from his indispensable teleprompter. Unfortunately, the teleprompter was by that time displaying the proper speech for the Irish prime minister, causing Obama to read, "I want to thank President Obama" before he realized his mistake. Now if we could only find a way to slip our *own* script onto his teleprompter...

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot's* editors and staff.

(Please pray for our Patriot Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)