

May 14, 2013

Joe Klein of Time roughs up the administration again.

The Internal Revenue Service's targeting of conservative groups is outrageous. Those who did this should be fired immediately. That's obvious.

It continues a slovenly week for Barack Obama. The President has been very proud of the absence of scandal in his administration, and rightly so. The inability of his opponents to find any significant corruption in the historic \$800 billion stimulus package was a real achievement, given the speed of the payout. None of his top aides have been caught up in taking bribes while in office—although their race through the revolving door into lucrative private sector positions is well beyond nauseating.

As in most presidencies, there have been an awful lot of political hacks populating the mid-reaches of this Administration. In the Obama instance, these have shown an anachronistic, pre-Clinton liberal bias when it comes to the rules and regulations governing many of our safety net programs, like social security disability. And now they have violated one of the more sacred rules of our democracy: you do not use the tax code to punish your opponents.

Lois G. Lerner, the IRS official who oversees tax-exempt groups, said the “absolutely inappropriate” actions by “front-line people” were not driven by partisan motives.

Does anyone actually believe this?

Yet again, we have an example of Democrats simply not managing the government properly and with discipline. This is just poisonous at a time of skepticism about the efficacy of government. And the President should know this: the absence of scandal is not the presence of competence. His unwillingness to concentrate—and I mean concentrate obsessively—on making sure that government is managed efficiently will be part of his legacy.

Previous Presidents, including great ones like Roosevelt, have used the IRS against their enemies. But I don't think Barack Obama ever wanted to be on the same page as Richard Nixon. In this specific case, he now is.

Michael Barone asks if Hillary and Barack believed their Benghazi baloney.

What were President Barack Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton thinking? Why did they keep pitching the line that the Sept. 11, 2012 Benghazi attack that killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans started as a spontaneous protest against an anti-Muslim video?

One possible explanation is confusion. There was such an attack on our embassy in Cairo earlier that day that fit that description.

When Hillary Clinton on Sept. 14 talked of a “mob” and “violent attacks” over the caskets of the Americans slain in Benghazi, she could have been referring to the attacks in Cairo. In that case she would not exactly be lying, as many have charged.

But she would have been misleading people, quite possibly intentionally. We know she assured one victim's father, Charles Wood, that "we're going to prosecute that person that made the video."

Not entirely successfully, by the way. "I knew she was lying," Woods said after the House committee hearing on Benghazi last week.

It's hard to escape the conclusion that Clinton was knowingly attempting to mislead. She certainly knows the difference between Cairo and Benghazi.

And it's undisputed that Gregory Hicks, the No. 2 man in our Libya embassy, reported that it was an "attack" on Sept. 11. That was the word he heard in his last conversation with Chris Stevens. ...

Boston Globe tells us where some of the bogus "studies" came from.

A prominent Dutch social psychologist who once claimed to have shown that the very act of thinking about eating meat makes people behave more selfishly has been found to have faked data throughout much of his career.

In one of the worst cases of scientific fraud on record in the Netherlands, a review committee made up of some of the country's top scientists has found that University of Tilburg Prof. Diederik Stapel systematically falsified data to achieve the results he wanted.

The university has fired the 45-year-old Stapel and plans to file fraud charges against him, university spokesman Walther Verhoeven said Thursday.

Stapel acknowledged in a statement the accusations were largely true.

"I have manipulated study data and fabricated investigations," he wrote in an open letter published by De Volkskrant newspaper this week. "I realize that via this behavior I have left my direct colleagues stunned and angry and put my field, social psychology, in a poor light." ...

Ann Coulter defends John Lott, the author of "More Guns; Less Crime."

You can tell the conservatives liberals fear most because they start being automatically referred to as "discredited." Ask Sen. Ted Cruz. But no one is called "discredited" by liberals more often than the inestimable economist John Lott, author of the groundbreaking book More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws.

Lott's economic analysis of the effect of concealed-carry laws on violent crime is the most thoroughly vetted study in the history of economics, perhaps in the history of the world.

Some nut Dutch professor produces dozens of gag studies purportedly finding that thinking about red meat makes people selfish and that litter leads to racism — and no one bothers to see if he even administered questionnaires before drawing these grand conclusions about humanity.

But Lott's decades-long studies of concealed-carry laws have been probed, poked and re-examined dozens of times. (Most of all by Lott himself, who has continuously re-run the numbers controlling for thousands of factors.)

Tellingly, Lott immediately makes all his underlying data and computer analyses available to critics — unlike, say, the critics. He has sent his data and work to 120 researchers around the world. By now, there have been 29 peer-reviewed studies of Lott's work on the effect of concealed-carry laws.

Eighteen confirm Lott's results, showing a statistically significant reduction in crime after concealed-carry laws are enacted. Ten show no harm, but no significant reduction in crime. Only one peer-reviewed study even purported to show any negative effect: a temporary increase in aggravated assaults. Then it turned out this was based on a flawed analysis by a liberal activist professor: John Donohue, whose name keeps popping up in all fake studies purporting to debunk Lott. ...

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The health benefits of exposing skin to sunlight may far outweigh the risk of developing skin cancer, according to scientists.

Edinburgh University research suggests sunlight helps reduce blood pressure, cutting heart attack and stroke risks and even prolonging life.

UV rays were found to release a compound that lowers blood pressure.

Researchers said more studies would be carried out to determine if it is time to reconsider advice on skin exposure.

Heart disease and stroke linked to high blood pressure are estimated to lead to about 80 times more deaths than those from skin cancer in the UK. ...

WSJ reviews a book on the bird watcher's holy grail.

She's there in a 1957-era ornithologist's film, tossing her springy curled crest, whacking away at scaly pine bark and hitching vigorously up a tree. She is an imperial woodpecker, the largest woodpecker who ever lived: almost 2 feet tall; jet black and snow white, with a staring doll's eye, a Kewpie crest and an oversize bone-colored bill, stuck like an awl in a surprised-looking face. And she is, sadly, one of the last of her kind: No one has spotted an imperial woodpecker in the half-century since the film was made.

Even though Tim Gallagher reported seeing an ivory-billed woodpecker, the imperial woodpecker's northern cousin, fly across Arkansas's Bayou De View in 2004 (and wrote a 2006 book, "The Grail Bird," about his quest), you're aware from the get-go that his hunt for the imperial woodpecker in Mexico won't be a saga of discovery. There won't be a photo of an oversize, pied woodpecker on the book's cover, just an artist's rendering. Instead, "Imperial

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Time

IRS Mess

Democrats' Poisonous Mismanagement

by Joe Klein

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Examiner

Did Clinton and Obama believe their Benghazi baloney?

by Michael Barone

What were President Barack Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton thinking? Why did they keep pitching the line that the Sept. 11, 2012 Benghazi attack that killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans started as a spontaneous protest against an anti-Muslim video?

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And it's undisputed that Gregory Hicks, the No. 2 man in our Libya embassy, reported that it was an "attack" on Sept. 11. That was the word he heard in his last conversation with Chris Stevens.

It's undisputed as well, after testimony at the House committee hearing last week, that Beth Jones, acting head of State's Near Eastern division, emailed on Sept. 12 that "the group that conducted the attacks, Ansar al-Shariah, is affiliated with Islamic terrorists."

That email went to Clinton counselor Cheryl Mills and State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland, among others. You may remember Mills as one of the lawyers defending Bill Clinton in his impeachment trial.

On Sept. 15, the day after Clinton's assurances to Woods, State Department and White House officials prepared talking points for members of Congress and for U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice, who was scheduled to go on five Sunday talk shows the next day.

Who chose Rice as the administration's spokeswoman? As Obama said after the election, when she was reportedly under consideration to be the next secretary of state, Rice had "nothing to do" with Benghazi.

Selecting which officials go on the Sunday talk show is a White House function. Either the president or someone who had good reason to believe he was reflecting his wishes selected someone who was out of the loop on the issue.

The expectation must have been that she would say exactly what she was told -- and would not betray any inconvenient facts known to those in the loop, like Clinton.

The Weekly Standard's Stephen Hayes got hold of the series of Sept. 15 emails in which White House and State Department officials prepared the talking points.

Deleted were references to warnings State received before Sept. 11 of Ansar al-Sharia- and al Qaeda-linked attacks in Benghazi. Nuland describes these as "issues ... of my building leadership."

The final talking points said "the currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. diplomatic post and subsequently its annex." Rice went on TV and parroted the line.

That was refuted by Gregory Hicks. The video was a "non-event" in Libya, he told the House committee. And he testified that he was chastised by none other than Cheryl Mills for briefing Republican Rep. Jason Chaffetz without a lawyer present.

The FBI did not find time to interview Hicks. But State did find time to yank him out of his job and give him a desk job he regards as a demotion.

Obama continued to attribute the Benghazi attack to a protest against a video on Sept. 18 ("Letterman"), Sept. 20 (Univision) and Sept. 25 ("The View" and the United Nations).

There were obvious cynical political motives for attempting to mislead voters during a closely contested presidential campaign.

Obama did not want his theme of "Osama is dead, al Qaeda is on the run" to be undercut by an Islamist terrorist attack on our ambassador.

Clinton did not want her department's denial of pleas for additional security in Libya to become known.

But maybe they were also trying to deceive themselves. Which may be even more disturbing.

Boston Globe

[Committee: Dutch professor faked data for years](#)

by Toby Sterling

AMSTERDAM—A prominent Dutch social psychologist who once claimed to have shown that the very act of thinking about eating meat makes people behave more selfishly has been found to have faked data throughout much of his career.

In one of the worst cases of scientific fraud on record in the Netherlands, a review committee made up of some of the country's top scientists has found that University of Tilburg Prof. Diederik Stapel systematically falsified data to achieve the results he wanted.

The university has fired the 45-year-old Stapel and plans to file fraud charges against him, university spokesman Walther Verhoeven said Thursday.

Stapel acknowledged in a statement the accusations were largely true.

"I have manipulated study data and fabricated investigations," he wrote in an open letter published by De Volkskrant newspaper this week. "I realize that via this behavior I have left my direct colleagues stunned and angry and put my field, social psychology, in a poor light."

Stapel said he was ashamed and offered his apologies.

The committee set up to investigate Stapel said after its preliminary investigation it had found "several dozen publications in which use was made of fictitious data" in the period since 2004, though Stapel's career goes back to the early 1990s.

This year, Stapel co-authored a paper published in Science magazine that said white people are more prone to discriminate against black people when they encounter them in a messy environment, such as one containing litter, abandoned bicycles and broken sidewalks.

"These findings considerably advance our knowledge of the impact of the physical environment on stereotyping and discrimination and have clear policy implications," the paper's abstract says.

Science has now flagged the article with a note to readers that "serious concerns have been raised about the validity of the findings."

Although the paper that linked thoughts of eating meat eating with anti-social behavior was met with scorn and disbelief when it was publicized in August, it took several doctoral candidates Stapel was mentoring to unmask him.

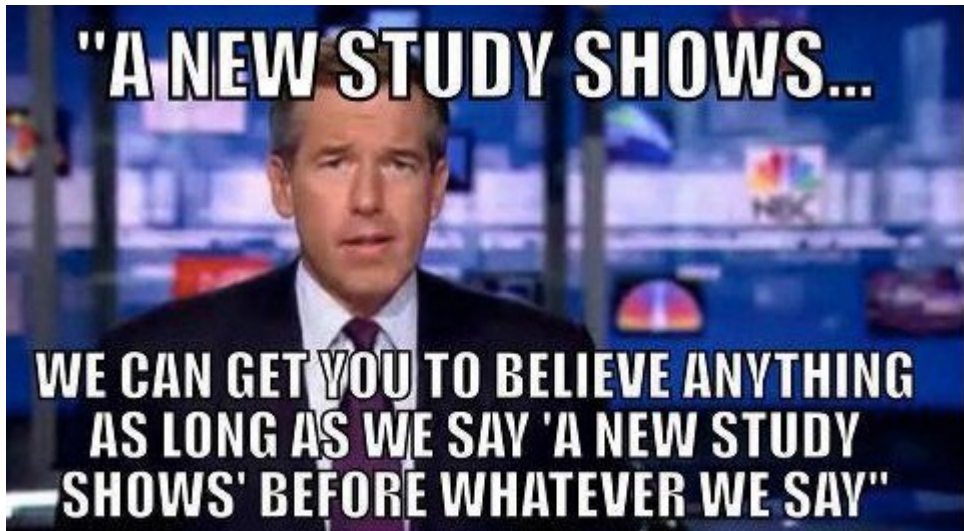
Verhoeven said the three graduate students grew suspicious of the data Stapel had supplied them without allowing them to participate in the actual research. When they ran statistical tests on it themselves they found it too perfect to be true and went to the university's dean with their suspicions.

In the future, the university plans to require raw data from studies to be preserved and made available to other researchers on request -- a practice already common in most disciplines.

The commission found that co-authors of Stapel's papers seem to have been unaware of the fraud, naively trusting in Stapel's reputation and fooled by elaborate preparations for tests that were never actually carried out.

In his statement, Stapel didn't directly say what his motivations were. He said he had succumbed to competitive pressures and the need to publish. But he said "it's important to me to underline that the mistakes I made weren't for selfish reasons."

The review panel noted Stapel had enjoyed a position of prestige as a professor and head of his department, and that he had access to subsidies and funding for his projects as a result of the fraud.



Human Events

[America's Most Feared Economist](#)

by Ann Coulter

You can tell the conservatives liberals fear most because they start being automatically referred to as “discredited.” Ask Sen. Ted Cruz. But no one is called “discredited” by liberals more often than the inestimable economist John Lott, author of the groundbreaking book [More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws](#).

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Tellingly, Lott immediately makes all his underlying data and computer analyses available to critics — unlike, say, the critics. He has sent his data and work to 120 researchers around the world. By now, there have been 29 peer-reviewed studies of Lott’s work on the effect of concealed-carry laws.

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In 1997, a computer crash led to the loss of Lott's underlying data. Fortunately, he had previously sent this data to his critics — professors Dan Black, Dan Nagin and Jens Ludwig. When Lott asked if they would mind returning it to him to restore his files, they *refused*. (One former critic, Carlisle Moody, conducted his own analysis of Lott's data and became a believer. He has since co-authored papers with Lott.)

Unable to produce a single peer-reviewed study to discredit Lott's conclusions, while dozens of studies keep confirming them, liberals have turned to their preferred method of simply sneering at Lott and neurotically attaching “discredited” to his name. No actual discrediting ever takes place. But liberals think as long as they smirk enough, their work is done.

Average readers hear that Lott has been “discredited” and assume that there must have been some debate they didn't see. To the contrary, the leading source for the claim that Lott's research doesn't hold up, left-wing zealot Donohue, has been scheduled to debate Lott, one-on-one, at the University of Chicago twice back in 2005. Both times, Donohue canceled at the last minute.

Donohue accuses Lott of libel for pointing this out. Suggestion for Mr. Donohue: Instead of writing columns insisting you've been libeled, wouldn't it be better just to agree to a debate? It's been *eight* years!

Scratch any claim that Lott's research has been “debunked” and you will find Donohue, his co-author and plagiarist Ian Ayres, or one of the three “scholars” mentioned above — the ones so committed to a search for the truth that they refused to return Lott's data to him. (Imagine the consequences if Lott had been forced to admit to plagiarism, as Ayres has.)

Donohue's previous oeuvre includes the racist claim that the crime rate declined in the 1990s as a result of abortion being legalized in the '70s. (Nearly 40 percent of the abortions since the 1973 case of *Roe v. Wade* were of black children.)

This study was discredited (not “discredited”) by many economists, including two at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, who pointed out that Donohue's study made critical mistakes, such as failing to control for variables such as the crack cocaine epidemic. When the Reserve economists reran Donohue's study without his glaring mistakes, they found that there was “no evidence in (Donohue's) own data” for an abortion-crime link.

Curiously, the failure to account for the crack epidemic is one of Donohue's complaints with Lott's study. It worked so well against his own research study he thought he'd try it against Lott. The difference is: Lott has, in fact, accounted for the crack epidemic, over and over again, in multiple regressions, all set forth in his book.

Donohue and plagiarist Ayres took a nasty swipe at Lott in the *Stanford Law Review* so insane that the editors of the Review — Donohue's own students — felt compelled to issue a

subsequent “clarification” saying: “Ayres and Donohue’s Reply piece is incorrect, unfortunate, and unwarranted.”

When you have to be corrected on your basic anti-gun facts by an ABC correspondent — as Donohue was by “Nightline” correspondent John Donvan in a 2008 televised panel discussion — you might be a few shakes away from a disinterested scholar.

But the easily fooled New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has repeatedly called Lott “discredited,” based on a 2003 article by charlatans Donohue and Ayres — a non-peer-reviewed law review article. In a 2011 column, for example, Kristof dismissed Lott’s book, “More Guns, Less Crime,” with the bald assertion that “many studies have now debunked that finding.”

The details of the chicanery of Donohue, plagiarist Ayres, as well as all of Lott’s other critics, are dealt with point by point in the third edition of Lott’s [More Guns, Less Crime](#). There, and in a number of published articles by Lott and others, you can see how his critics cherry-picked the data, made basic statistical errors, tried every regression analysis imaginable to get the results they want and lied about Lott’s work (such as Donohue’s claim that he neglected to account for the crack epidemic).

Suffice it to say that of the 177 separate analyses run by all these critics, only seven show a statistically significant increase in crime after the passage of concealed-carry laws, while 90 of their own results show a statistically significant drop in crime — and 80 show no difference.

“Discredited” in liberal lingo means, “Ignore this study; it didn’t come out well for us.”

BBC

[Sun's blood pressure benefits 'may outdo cancer risks'](#)

The health benefits of exposing skin to sunlight may far outweigh the risk of developing skin cancer, according to scientists.

Edinburgh University research suggests sunlight helps reduce blood pressure, cutting heart attack and stroke risks and even prolonging life.

UV rays were found to release a compound that lowers blood pressure.

Researchers said more studies would be carried out to determine if it is time to reconsider advice on skin exposure.

Heart disease and stroke linked to high blood pressure are estimated to lead to about 80 times more deaths than those from skin cancer in the UK.

Production of the pressure-reducing compound, nitric oxide, is separate from the body's manufacture of vitamin D, which rises after exposure to sunshine.

Researchers said that until now vitamin D production had been considered the sole benefit of the sun to human health.

During the research, dermatologists studied the blood pressure of 24 volunteers under UV and heat lamps.

In one session, the volunteers were exposed to both UV rays and the heat of the lamps.

In the other, the UV rays were blocked so that only the heat affected the skin.

The results showed that blood pressure dropped significantly for an hour after exposure to UV rays, but not after the heat-only sessions.

Scientists said that this suggested it was the sun's UV rays that brought health benefits.

The volunteers' vitamin D levels remained unaffected in both sessions.

'Reconsider our advice'

Dr Richard Weller, a senior lecturer in dermatology at Edinburgh University, said: "We suspect that the benefits to heart health of sunlight will outweigh the risk of skin cancer.

"The work we have done provides a mechanism that might account for this, and also explains why dietary vitamin D supplements alone will not be able to compensate for lack of sunlight.

"We now plan to look at the relative risks of heart disease and skin cancer in people who have received different amounts of sun exposure.

"If this confirms that sunlight reduces the death rate from all causes, we will need to reconsider our advice on sun exposure."

The study will be presented on Friday in Edinburgh at the world's largest gathering of skin experts. The International Investigative Dermatology conference starts on Wednesday and runs until Saturday.

WSJ

[The Birder's Holy Grail](#)

The imperial woodpecker—at two feet tall, the largest woodpecker that ever lived—has not been seen in more than half a century.

by Julie Zickefoose

She's there in a 1957-era ornithologist's film, tossing her springy curled crest, whacking away at scaly pine bark and hitching vigorously up a tree. She is an imperial woodpecker, the largest woodpecker who ever lived: almost 2 feet tall; jet black and snow white, with a staring doll's eye, a Kewpie crest and an oversize bone-colored bill, stuck like an awl in a surprised-looking face. And she is, sadly, one of the last of her kind: No one has spotted an imperial woodpecker in the half-century since the film was made.

Even though Tim Gallagher reported seeing an ivory-billed woodpecker, the imperial woodpecker's northern cousin, fly across Arkansas's Bayou De View in 2004 (and wrote a 2006 book, "The Grail Bird," about his quest), you're aware from the get-go that his hunt for the imperial woodpecker in Mexico won't be a saga of discovery. There won't be a photo of an oversize, pied woodpecker on the book's cover, just an artist's rendering. Instead, "Imperial Dreams" is more along the lines of Peter Matthiessen's "The Snow Leopard." It's yearning, put into words and wistfully unrequited.

Imperial Dreams

By Tim Gallagher
Atria, 277 pages, \$26



Our reviewer's rendering of the imperial woodpecker.

Sheer precipices abound in northern Mexico's Sierra Madre, but drug dealers known as *narcotraficantes* have turned this place into a foreboding nightmare landscape. It's there, in remnant old-growth pine savanna, that Mr. Gallagher seeks his dream bird, leaving home and family for five expeditions through one of Earth's most dangerous mountain ranges. This is where Geronimo surrendered to Gen. Nelson Miles in 1886; where Pancho Villa looted William Randolph Hearst's ranch; where the Tarahumara Indians, those fabled light-footed, long-distance runners, clung to their lifestyle well into the 20th century. Today it is a barely modernized place of adobe huts and wandering burros; the explorers' trucks jolt along two-track roads are faster walked than driven.

Mr. Gallagher paints vivid pictures of an impoverished populace under the thumb of the rapacious drug lords, who log illegally to clear patches for opium and marijuana, who kill indiscriminately and without legal consequence to maintain their duchies. In one harrowing passage, Mr. Gallagher and his friends ride in a narcotraficante's pickup, having fallen into

nervous collaboration with him in their quest for access to unlogged forest. As I read, I wondered why the author was going through it all, and wondered again and again as he rattled his teeth in old vehicles and collapsed from dehydration and exhaustion, or dodged thieves and druglords' spies, always chasing an ornithological phantasm.

The imperial woodpecker, like its smaller American cousin, the ivory-billed woodpecker, is almost certainly gone. These majestic Mexican birds were deliberately persecuted, with loggers shooting them and even poisoning the trees upon which they fed, under the false belief that the imperial woodpeckers damaged valuable timber. Yet the inaccessibility of what mature pine forest remains lures Mr. Gallagher ever onward—perhaps a pair or two still cling to life in these high cold mountains. He seeks out village elders who remember seeing the woodpeckers, each anecdote of their encounters throwing a little more propellant on his all-consuming fire. Finally, he must be content not with seeing the bird for himself but simply with speaking with those aging eyewitnesses who knew it. As his role subtly shifts from explorer to recorder, he loosens his obsessive determination to find the bird, relegating himself to a reporter's role and readying himself for an eventual escape from an underworld of fantasy and desire.

I'm glad that there are people in this world like Tim Gallagher: people who leave their armchairs, sweat bullets at armed roadblocks, and eat cold sardines, beans and noodles so the rest of us can marvel at their adventures. I'm glad that Mr. Gallagher is a wonderful storyteller and deeply knowledgeable ornithologist, who also has the nerve of a military commando. Every time I put this book down, I picked it up again to take in just one more chapter, lured onward by the same tantalizing bits of evidence that kept Mr. Gallagher going. Aghast at the risks he was taking, I was caught by the scimitar-clawed grip of the world's largest woodpecker on his—and my—imagination.

—Ms. Zickefoose is the author
of *"The Bluebird Effect: Uncommon Bonds With Common Birds."*

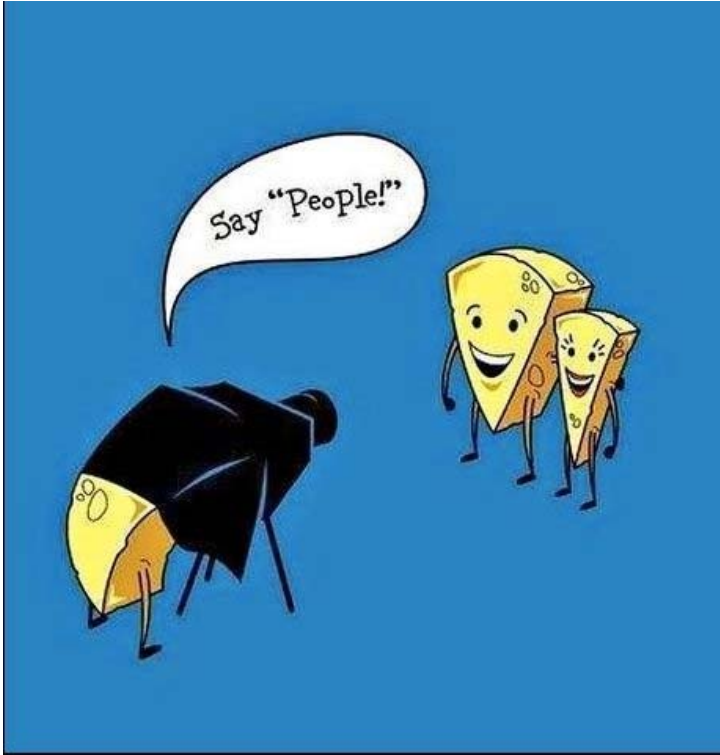


"I think it stands for, "Please Eat The Activist," which is exactly what I did!"



OH MY GOD

Look at those gas prices.



You need this App





HOW IRONIC.....

