July 15, 2013

Roger Simon comments on the verdict.

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By injecting himself in a minor Florida criminal case by implying Martin could be his son, the president of the United States — a onetime law lecturer, of all things — disgraced himself and his office, made a mockery of our legal system and exacerbated racial tensions in our country, making them worse than they have been in years. This is the work of a reactionary, someone who consciously/unconsciously wants to push our nation back to the 1950s.

It is also the work of a narcissist who thinks of himself first, of his image, not of black, white or any other kind of people. It's no accident that race relations in our country have gone backwards during his stewardship.

Congratulations to the jury for not acceding to this tremendous pressure and delivering the only conceivable honest verdict. This case should never have been brought to trial. It was, quite literally, the first American Stalinist "show trial." There was, virtually, no evidence to convict George Zimmerman. It was a great day for justice that this travesty was finally brought to a halt.
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Mark Steyn posts on the trial.

Just when I thought the George Zimmerman "trial" couldn't sink any lower, the prosecutorial limbo dancers of the State of Florida magnificently lowered their own bar in the final moments of their cable-news celebrity. In real justice systems, the state decides what crime has been committed and charges somebody with it. In the Zimmerman trial, the state's "theory of the case" is that it has no theory of the case: might be murder, might be manslaughter, might be aggravated assault, might be a zillion other things, but it's something. If you're a juror, feel free to convict George Zimmerman of whatever floats your boat.

Nailing a guy on something, anything, is a time-honored American tradition: If you can't get Al Capone on the Valentine's Day massacre, get him on his taxes. Americans seem to have a sneaky admiration for this sort of thing, notwithstanding that, as we now know, the government is happy to get lots of other people on their taxes, too. Ever since the president of the United States (a man so cautious and deferential to legal niceties that he can't tell you whether the Egyptian army removing the elected head of state counts as a military coup until his advisers have finished looking into the matter) breezily declared that if he had a son he'd look like Trayvon, ever since the U.S. Department of so-called Justice dispatched something called its "Community Relations Services" to Florida to help organize anti-Zimmerman rallies at taxpayer expense, ever since the politically savvy governor appointed a "special prosecutor" and the deplorably unsavvy Sanford Police Chief was eased out, the full panoply of state power has been deployed to nail Zimmerman on anything.

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Naturally, **Jennifer Rubin** wants part of this.

... This is not an instance in which the prosecution dispassionately weighs the evidence and decides whether guilt can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutors stoked the fire, crafted a media show and concocted a second-degree murder charge that is flimsy at best. They have not been on the side of the angels in this one.

That is not to say that their approach won't "work," if by that one means that it will cajole a jury into conviction despite the voluminous (forget "reasonable") doubt raised in the trial. But it is that mound of evidence contributing to reasonable doubt that was in the prosecution's hands nearly from the get-go and because of which an ethical, restrained prosecutor would never have filed a second-degree murder charge. "Justice" is not cobbling a flawed case to quench the thirst for justice and then letting a jury decide; that is by definition an abuse of prosecutorial discretion and unethical.

The awesome power of prosecutorial discretion is easily abused, especially when the president shows no restraint and the media pile on.

Maybe the jury will be wise to all of this, but sometimes juries are not. I don't suppose the Justice Department would then help stage rallies for an Hispanic man unjustly charged and convicted in order to satiate the mob.

John Fund says it was Judicial Watch that discovered the DOJ involvement.

Judicial Watch, a conservative legal foundation, has used the Freedom of Information Act to uncover documents that show Eric Holder's Justice Department used a "community relations" unit to support and stage-manage public protests in Florida against George Zimmerman after his controversial February 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin.

Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS) even helped organize a meeting between Sanford, Fla., public officials and the local NAACP. The result was the resignation of police chief Bill Lee over his handling of the Martin case. While his resignation was rescinded after a few weeks by local officials, Chief Lee faced further pressure to leave his job and ultimately quit for good two months later. Valerie Houston, one of the pastors leading the protests against Zimmerman and Lee, praised the Community Relations Service as being "there for us."

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Trayvon Martin's shooting was an ideologically useful tragedy, and so the vultures did their worst.

For comic relief we go to San Francisco where a restaurant's neighbors have complained about smelling bacon. **Wall Street Journal** has the story.
The Haight-Ashbury district was all about peace and love until bacon entered the picture.

The trouble began in May, when this city's health department shut down a popular restaurant called Bacon Bacon after neighbors' complaints caused a permit delay. The neighbors' concern: the scent of bacon grease was blowin' in the wind.

Now bacon lovers have found out, and they're raising a stink.

Ahead of a permit hearing scheduled for Thursday, nearly 3,000 bacon advocates have signed a petition in support of Bacon Bacon. Phylis Johnson-Silk, who lives around the corner and loves the place, is making signs that say, "Bacon rules!" and "Really? You complained to the cops that you smelled bacon?"

The restaurant's owner printed up shirts that read, "Smell this!" and says they are selling like hot cakes.

Roger L. Simon
Obama Big Loser in Zimmerman Trial

Forget the over-zealous prosecutors and the repellent state attorney Angela Corey (who should be immediately disbarred or, my wife said sarcastically, elevated to director of Homeland Security) and even the unfortunate Trayvon Martin family (although it is certainly hard to forget them — they have our profound sympathies), the true loser at the Zimmerman trial was Barack Obama.

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We all know Al Sharpton, the execrable race baiter of Tawana Brawley and Crown Heights, agitated publicly for this trial more than anyone else. But he most likely would not have succeeded had it not been for Obama's tacit support. As far as I know this is unprecedented in our history (a president involving himself in a trial of this nature).

The media also followed Obama (as they always do) by enabling the demagogue Sharpton, as if he were a serious person. The media, as I wrote before, treated this case like pornography, something to be exploited, giving it all sorts of racial import it didn't have. *The New York Times*, acting like true reactionaries of the Obama era (how can we use the word "liberal" with these people?), even went so far as to invent the term "white Hispanic" to fit the case. *The National Enquire*r couldn't have done it better. (I take it back. *The Enquirer* behaves more ethically.)

The irony is that the people who suffer most from the media behaving in this manner are black people who are manipulated into acting as an interest group when they have no interest. They are literally victims of the media and of Obama.

Of course, they aren't the only ones. Almost everyone is a victim in in this case that should never have been tried. George Zimmerman will never live a normal life. The American public has been polarized with emotions stirred up for absolutely no reason. Racism is essentially manufactured, as if it were a commodity.

A further irony is that recent polls have shown racism in our culture at all-time lows. You don't hear that from the media or from our administration, however. This knowledge is not to their advantage.

As I type this article, I am listening to Geraldo, on the post-verdict show, nattering on about the possibility of the Justice Department initiating a civil rights prosecution of Zimmerman. If that happens, the Obama administration will have outdone itself in the creation of racism. The shame continues.

National Review

A Dagger at the Heart of Justice

The Zimmerman case has achieved its sublime reductio ad absurdum.

by Mark Steyn

Just when I thought the George Zimmerman "trial" couldn't sink any lower, the prosecutorial limbo dancers of the State of Florida magnificently lowered their own bar in the final moments of their cable-news celebrity. In real justice systems, the state decides what crime has been committed and charges somebody with it. In the Zimmerman trial, the state's "theory of the

case” is that it has no theory of the case: might be murder, might be manslaughter, might be aggravated assault, might be a zillion other things, but it’s *something*. If you’re a juror, feel free to convict George Zimmerman of whatever floats your boat.

Nailing a guy on something, *anything*, is a time-honored American tradition: If you can’t get Al Capone on the Valentine’s Day massacre, get him on his taxes. Americans seem to have a sneaky admiration for this sort of thing, notwithstanding that, as we now know, the government is happy to get lots of other people on their taxes, too. Ever since the president of the United States (a man so cautious and deferential to legal niceties that he can’t tell you whether the Egyptian army removing the elected head of state counts as a military coup until his advisers have finished looking into the matter) breezily declared that if he had a son he’d look like Trayvon, ever since the U.S. Department of so-called Justice dispatched something called its “Community Relations Services” to Florida to help organize anti-Zimmerman rallies at taxpayer expense, ever since the politically savvy governor appointed a “special prosecutor” and the deplorably unsavvy Sanford Police Chief was eased out, the full panoply of state power has been deployed to nail Zimmerman on anything.

How difficult can that be in a country in which an Hispanic Obama voter can be instantly transformed into the poster boy for white racism? Who ya gonna believe — Al Sharpton or your lying eyes? As closing arguments began on Thursday, the prosecutors asked the judge to drop the aggravated-assault charge and instruct the jury on felony murder committed in the course of child abuse. Felony murder is a murder that occurs during a felony, and, according to the prosecution’s theory du jour, the felony George Zimmerman was engaged in that night was “child abuse,” on the grounds that Trayvon Martin, when he began beating up Zimmerman, was 17 years old. This will come as news to most casual observers of the case, who’ve only seen young Trayvon in that beatific photo of him as a twelve-year-old.

In that one pitiful closing moment, the case achieved its sublime reductio ad absurdum: After a year’s labors, after spending a million bucks, after calling a legion of risible witnesses, even after the lead prosecutor dragged in a department-store mannequin and personally straddled it on the floor of the court, the state is back to where it all began — the ancient snapshot of a smiling middle-schooler that so beguiled American news editors, Trayvon Martin apparently being the only teenager in America to have gone entirely unphotographed in the second decade of the 21st century. And, if Trayvon is a child, his malefactor is by logical extension a child abuser.

Needless to say, even in a nutso jurisdiction like Florida, the crime of “child abuse” was never intended to cover a wizened old granny kicking the ankle of the punk who’s mugging her a week before his 18th birthday. But, if Aggravated Pedophilia is what it takes to fry that puffy white cracker’s butt, so be it. If, for the purposes of American show trials, an Hispanic who voted for a black president can be instantly transformed into a white racist, there’s no reason why he can’t be a child abuser, too. The defense was notified of this novel development, on which the prosecution (judging by the volume of precedents assembled) had been working for weeks or more likely months, at 7:30 that morning. If you know your Magna Carta, you’ll be aware that “no official shall place a man on trial . . . without producing credible witnesses to the truth of it.” But the rights enjoyed by free men in the England of King John in 1215 are harder to come by in the State of Florida eight centuries later. So the prosecutors decided, the day before the case went to the jury, that Zimmerman was engaged in an act of child abuse that had somehow got a bit out of hand: No “credible witnesses” to this charge had been presented in the preceding weeks, but hey, what the hell? Opposing counsel taking the reasonable position that they’d shown up to defend Mr. Zimmerman of murder and had had no idea until that morning that he was also on

trial for child abuse, check bouncing, jaywalking, an expired fishing license, or whatever other accusation took the fancy of the State of Florida, asked for time to research the relevant case law. Judge Debra Nelson gave them until 1 p.m. At that point, it was 10:30 a.m. By the time the genius jurist had returned to the bench, she had reconsidered, and decided that “child abuse” would be a reach too far, even for her disgraceful court.

The defining characteristic of English law is its distribution of power between prosecutor, judge, and jury. This delicate balance has been utterly corrupted in the United States to the point where today at the federal level there is a conviction rate of over 90 percent — which would impress Mubarak and the House of Saud, if not quite, yet, Kim Jong Un. American prosecutors have an unhealthy and disreputable addiction to what I called, at the conclusion of the trial of my old boss Conrad Black six years ago, “countless counts.” In Conrad’s case, he was charged originally with 17 crimes, three of which were dropped by the opening of the trial and another halfway through, leaving 13 for the jury, nine of which they found the defendant not guilty of, bringing it down to four, one of which the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional and the remaining three of which they vacated, only to have two of them reinstated by the lower appeals court. In other words, the prosecution lost 88 percent of the case, but the 12 percent they won was enough to destroy Conrad Black’s life.

Multiple charges tend, through sheer weight of numbers, to favor a result in which the jury convict on some and acquit on others and then tell themselves that they’ve reached a “moderate” “compromise” as befits the reasonable persons they assuredly are. It is, of course, not reasonable. Indeed, the notion of a “compromise” between conviction and acquittal is a dagger at the heart of justice. It’s the repugnant “plea bargain” in reverse, but this time to bargain with the jury: Okay, we threw the book at him and it went nowhere, so why don’t we all agree to settle? In Sanford, the state’s second closing “argument” to the strange, shrunken semi-jury of strikingly unrepresentative peers — facts, shmacts, who really knows? vote with your hearts — brilliantly dispenses with the need for a “case” at all.

We have been warned that in the event of an acquittal there could be riots. My own feeling is that the Allegedly Reverend Al Sharpton, now somewhat emaciated and underbouffed from his Tawana Brawley heyday, is not the Tahrir Square–scale race-baiting huckster he once was. But if Floridians are of a mind to let off a little steam, they might usefully burn down the Sanford courthouse and salt the earth. The justice system revealed by this squalid trial is worth rioting over.

Right Turn

Zimmerman prosecution: ‘Justice’ or travesty?

by Jennifer Rubin

If you thought the prosecution could not get any more overreaching in the Zimmerman murder trial, consider one scuffle in court today. The prosecution, no doubt understanding the weakness (nonexistence?) of its second-degree murder charge, persuaded the judge to let the jury also consider a manslaughter charge. The danger here — and the reason for the gross overcharging on second-degree murder — is that no matter how many times they are instructed not to, the jurors will compromise and feel compelled to convict Zimmerman of “something.”

But then the state asked the judge to include a third-degree felony murder charge:

Defense attorney Don West called the possible lesser charge of third-degree felony murder "outrageous" and a "trick" by the state. He said prosecutors asked for the inclusion at the last minute.

"Just when I thought this case couldn't get any more bizarre, the state is seeking third-degree felony murder based on child abuse?" West said.

The offense of third-degree felony murder would be premised on the idea that Zimmerman committed child abuse since 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was underage when he was fatally shot. Prosecutors said they will not pursue the lesser charge of aggravated assault, as they initially indicated.

This is as bizarre as it is desperate. (The judge said she'd let the defense brief that issue.)

The irony and the tragedy in this case are that in assuming this was a racially motivated crime, the federal and state authorities (including the president, who publicly identified with Martin by saying Martin could have been his son) turned a simple self-defense case into a racial circus. As Cornell law professor William Jacobson explained:

We also knew that Eric Holder had the DOJ investigate the case, and that the FBI found no evidence that Zimmerman was racist or motivated by racism. What we didn't know until [Wednesday] was that the DOJ supported some of the anti-Zimmerman rallies, as disclosed by Judicial Watch.

The way the trial has been conducted is an equal travesty.

The prosecution is throwing everything against the wall, including conflicting and inconsistent theories that Trayvon was on the bottom of the fight screaming and alternatively that Trayvon was on top pulling back.

Similarly the prosecution creates obsessive distractions such as whether Zimmerman "followed" Martin, even though that is legally irrelevant.

Moreover, CNN today interviewed the local police chief Bill Lee, who revealed, "There was, um, pressure applied. You know, I – I'm – the, you know, city manager asked several times during the process well, can an arrest be made now? And I think that was just from not understanding the process, the criminal justice process. And one of the city commissioners come to me on two different occasions and say, you know, all they want is an arrest."

This is not an instance in which the prosecution dispassionately weighs the evidence and decides whether guilt can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutors stoked the fire, crafted a media show and concocted a second-degree murder charge that is flimsy at best. They have not been on the side of the angels in this one.

That is not to say that their approach won't "work," if by that one means that it will cajole a jury into conviction despite the voluminous (forget "reasonable") doubt raised in the trial. But it is that mound of evidence contributing to reasonable doubt that was *in the prosecution's hands* nearly

from the get-go and because of which an ethical, restrained prosecutor would *never* have filed a second-degree murder charge. “Justice” is not cobbling a flawed case to quench the thirst for justice and then letting a jury decide; that is by definition an abuse of prosecutorial discretion and unethical.

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National Review

Obama’s Alinskyite Administration

The Justice Department’s involvement in the Zimmerman case is highly suspect.

by John Fund

Judicial Watch, a conservative legal foundation, has used the Freedom of Information Act to uncover documents that show Eric Holder’s Justice Department used a “community relations” unit to support and stage-manage public protests in Florida against George Zimmerman after his controversial February 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin.

Justice’s Community Relations Service (CRS) even helped organize a meeting between Sanford, Fla., public officials and the local NAACP. The result was the resignation of police chief Bill Lee over his handling of the Martin case. While his resignation was rescinded after a few weeks by local officials, Chief Lee faced further pressure to leave his job and ultimately quit for good two months later. Valerie Houston, one of the pastors leading the protests against Zimmerman and Lee, praised the Community Relations Service as being “there for us.”

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From top to bottom, the handling of the Zimmerman case was marinated in racial political correctness. Lee, the former Sanford police chief, told CNN this week that he faced severe pressure from outside forces to conduct his investigation in an unprofessional way so as to placate the public. “It was [relayed] to me that they just wanted an arrest. They didn’t care if it got dismissed later,” he said. “You don’t do that.” Lee told CNN that arresting Zimmerman based on the evidence he had collected would have violated Zimmerman’s Fourth Amendment rights. But he said political influence “forced a change in the course of the normal criminal-justice process. . . . That investigation was taken away from us. We weren’t able to complete it.”

It looks as if the trial of George Zimmerman on second-degree-murder charges will go to the jury today, but regardless of the verdict, the Justice Department has some questions to answer

about its role in the pressure campaign leading up to his indictment. “My guess is that most Americans would rightly object to taxpayers paying government employees to help organize racially charged demonstrations,” says Tom Fitton, the president of Judicial Watch, in a statement on the group’s website.

Sadly, I am not surprised that Eric Holder’s Justice Department engaged in suspect activity in the Trayvon Martin case. Barack Obama frequently touted his experience as a “community organizer” during his 2008 campaign. The media gave him almost a complete pass on the more controversial parts of his record, especially his role as a top trainer and lawyer for the infamous Saul Alinsky–inspired group ACORN, which by 2008 had had many of its employees convicted of voter fraud. After Obama’s election, the Justice Department dropped any pending investigations of ACORN. Congress finally revoked the group’s federal funding in 2010 after filmmaker James O’Keefe’s hidden cameras caught its employees giving advice on how to conceal money gained from a fictional teenage prostitution ring. It soon declared bankruptcy, and some of its affiliates continued operations under new mismanagement.

I wondered back in 2008 how the federal government’s focus would change with a left-wing “community organizer” installed as president. We now have a partial answer. It appears that some of the tactics and approaches ACORN used have been moved into the Justice Department and other federal agencies. In the old days, when individual appropriations bills for federal agencies were still passed by Congress, it was possible to defund groups like ACORN. But now, with congressional gridlock ensuring that federal agencies are financed by dubious annual spending resolutions that simply continue existing program funding, any effective oversight by Congress is a dead letter. The question now isn’t really how many other left-wing “community organizing” projects like the one at Justice are being subsidized by the Obama administration. The real issue is whether the entire Obama administration has basically become an enabler and cheerleader for every Saul Alinsky tactic its radical appointees want to embrace — from the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s bullying local officials over public-housing construction demands to the Environmental Protection Agency’s colluding with environmentalist groups to lose lawsuits the groups file against the EPA in court.

Real Clear Politics
A Morality Tale That Failed
by Rich Lowry

The George Zimmerman trial is the racial metaphor that failed.

Every day that passes makes it clear that none of the ideological baggage heaped on the case ever made any sense.

George Zimmerman is not a symbol of white America, or — to borrow the stilted phrase The New York Times used to refer to him in its reports — white-Hispanic America. The case is not about race relations. Incredibly enough, even the attorney for Trayvon Martin’s family now says, “We don’t believe the focus was really race.”

To the extent that the trial has any larger meaning, it is a tale of the left’s desperation to indict contemporary America as a land of rank racism, different in degree, perhaps, but not in kind

from 1950s Mississippi. That's where Emmett Till, to whom Trayvon Martin has often been compared, was brutally murdered for whistling at a white woman.

Mentioning Martin in the same breath as Till is an offense against history and common sense.

When the national controversy over Martin's killing first erupted, I thought it was wrong that Zimmerman wasn't charged. I still think it was foolhardy of Zimmerman to get out of his car and trail Martin and that if he had had the sense to leave the matter at his call to the police, a tragedy could have been avoided.

But that doesn't make him a murderer. There was always a perverse wishfulness to the Zimmerman-haters: Look how rotten and backward this country is. Look at what white-Hispanics are capable of. Look at the corruption of our criminal-justice system. Look at this poor child murdered in cold blood.

MSNBC tried and convicted Zimmerman, executed him by firing squad, then propped the body up at the defense table so it could do it all over again. Host Lawrence O'Donnell said Zimmerman shot "a black teenager to death for having done absolutely nothing," and opined that "I believe what we have here is evidence of a police cover-up." At a rally, another of the network's personalities, the Rev. Al Sharpton, compared the injustice done to Martin to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ — and that may have been one of his cooler-headed moments.

The most poisonous interpretation of Zimmerman's conduct — that he sought out and assassinated a black kid for being a black kid — was never plausible. Assassins generally don't call the police before closing in and gunning down their targets. But it looks positively ridiculous in light of all the evidence suggesting that right before Zimmerman fired, Martin was beating Zimmerman, not the other way around.

The prosecution has been in the odd habit of calling witnesses who contradict its case against Zimmerman. One of them, a neighbor named John Good, testified that Martin was mounted "MMA-style" on top of Zimmerman, drubbing him in a "ground-and-pound." A forensic witness called by the defense, Vincent Di Maio, testified that the muzzle of Zimmerman's gun was against Martin's clothing, which in turn was several inches away from Martin's body — facts consistent with Martin being on top of Zimmerman.

Accounts differ on who was crying out for help that night. Martin's family says it was Martin; Zimmerman's family says it was Zimmerman. But Zimmerman is the one who had the injuries, including a broken nose and lacerations on the back of his head, consistent with getting beaten up and being in distress.

All of this suggests that Zimmerman fired in self-defense. At this point, if he is convicted of second-degree murder as charged, he will be the one failed by the Florida criminal justice system — not Martin.

Justice, in the sense of a deliberate, lawful judgment consistent with the facts, was never the driving passion of the Zimmerman-haters. They wanted a racial morality play. If Trayvon Martin had been shot by another black person, no one would have cared. Al Sharpton wouldn't have made him a cause. Lawrence O'Donnell wouldn't have batted an eyelash. No one outside his immediate family and friends would have ever known his name.

Trayvon Martin’s shooting was an ideologically useful tragedy, and so the vultures did their worst.

WSJ

Today, It's the Bacon, Not the Pigs, That Has Haight-Ashbury Agitated

Sizzling Debate Over Smell Heats Up in San Francisco; 'Magical Ingredient'

by Vauhini Vara

SAN FRANCISCO—The Haight-Ashbury district was all about peace and love until bacon entered the picture.

The trouble began in May, when this city's health department shut down a popular restaurant called Bacon Bacon after neighbors' complaints caused a permit delay. The neighbors' concern: the scent of bacon grease was blowin' in the wind.

Jim Angelus, owner of Bacon Bacon restaurant, and his 'bacon bouquet.'

Now bacon lovers have found out, and they're raising a stink.

Ahead of a permit hearing scheduled for Thursday, nearly 3,000 bacon advocates have signed a petition in support of Bacon Bacon. Phylis Johnson-Silk, who lives around the corner and

loves the place, is making signs that say, "Bacon rules!" and "Really? You complained to the cops that you smelled bacon?"

The restaurant's owner printed up shirts that read, "Smell this!" and says they are selling like hot cakes. Bacon Bacon devotee Nick Barnes, a 24-year-old who tattooed the shop's logo on his wrist a year ago, says he is "devastated" and has posted on his Facebook page about the restaurant's closure.

On Twitter, supporters are flaming dissenting neighbors. San Franciscan Michael Siliski tweeted, "C'mon, who doesn't like the smell of bacon?"

The answer is neighbors whose complaints led to the permitting delay that prompted the restaurant's closure.

David Nevins, who lives nearby, describes the restaurant's odor as acrid—"not the bacon smell people like," he says. The backlash from supporters has gotten so intense that Mr. Nevins says he and his wife feel "outnumbered" and aren't looking forward to attending Thursday's hearing.

"Neither one of us wants to show up," says Mr. Nevins.

"It's almost like a religion or something with all these followers," his wife, Inge Nevins, adds.

The attorney for another neighbor, Whitney Gilkey, says his client is afraid to speak his mind to reporters for fear of retaliation by the bacon-lovers. On the Internet, "people say very ominous things, like, 'Tell us who made the complaint,' " says the attorney, Ryan Patterson.

The man behind the bacon didn't mean to start a war. Jim Angelus, 44, opened the Haight-Ashbury brick-and-mortar outpost of his bacon-slinging food truck in January of 2012. "It's, like, the magical ingredient," he remembers thinking at the time.

Mr. Angelus started serving grilled-cheese sandwiches layered with slices of bacon and smeared in bacon jam, along with "bouquets" of bacon strips drizzled in maple syrup. Soon, Mr. Angelus was cooking up 300 pounds of bacon a week. Bacon Bacon's motto (available on T-shirts): "You had me at bacon." He says he heard great things about the smell of his bacon.

But while Mr. Angelus was frying, some Haight neighbors were stewing. It was bad enough that the restaurant's patrons used neighbors' stoops for dining tables and that Mr. Angelus had a habit of parking his truck on the street, they say.

Then one day, Ms. Nevins was outside and noticed another problem: a "strong bacon smell," she noted on a pad where she and Mr. Nevins were logging issues with the restaurant.

A month later, she wrote, "bacon smell worse."

By April, the smell was "very, very stinky," according to her notes.

The scent of bacon involves a process called the Maillard reaction, says Ken Prusa, the head of Iowa State University's Sensory Evaluation Unit. It is a chemical process, also found in french fries and baked bread, in which an amino acid and a reducing sugar combine to release big

smells and a nice brown color. That and the reaction of sodium nitrite with protein gives bacon "a very pleasant cured aroma profile," says Prof. Prusa, who isn't involved in the San Francisco spat.

But when it comes to leftover bacon byproducts, like rendered lard that mixes with oxygen, the smell can get really unpleasant, he says—a little like paint or wet cardboard.

When Mr. Angelus applied for a permit from the city's department of building inspection to operate Bacon Bacon, Mr. Gilkey filed a request asking the city's planning commission to take a closer look because of the odor and other issues. He offered to help pay for an odor-abatement system, but Mr. Angelus declined because it was too expensive.

The back and forth delayed the planning commission's decision on the matter, and in May, the health department shut down the restaurant because it was still without a permit. Sharon Young, a planner at the planning department, says it is unclear whether Mr. Angelus had been operating earlier without the right permits because there was some confusion around permit requirements and rules have changed since he first opened the business.

After the closure, the atmosphere really got noxious on the famously peace-loving sidewalks of the Haight.

The shutdown got some attention from local newspapers and blogs. "Saturday Night Live" mentioned it. Bacon Bacon's supporters—offended that anyone could take issue with the smell of bacon—launched their offensive. Mr. Angelus taped to his restaurant's windows banners that read "Save Bacon Bacon."

Down on the corner of Frederick Street and Ashbury, resident Molly Breivis says she has known the Nevins for years but feels, frankly, that they are being "a thorn in people's sides." For her part, she usually can't smell a thing—but when she does get a whiff of bacon, she loves it.

"A lot of people got really carried away with condemning me," Mr. Nevins says. "I used to be much more of a bacon eater," says Ms. Nevins. "But now I'm not."

Jeremy Paul, the permit-expediting consultant for Bacon Bacon's owner, is practically salivating in anticipation of Thursday's hearing. "It's going to be a circus," he says.

As Mr. Angelus stood outside Bacon Bacon on a recent Friday taping a video message encouraging people to attend the hearing, a man in a nearby bus shelter seemed to recognize him and raised his fist in the air in solidarity. "Fight the power! Fight 'em!" Mr. Angelus called out. "Bacon!"


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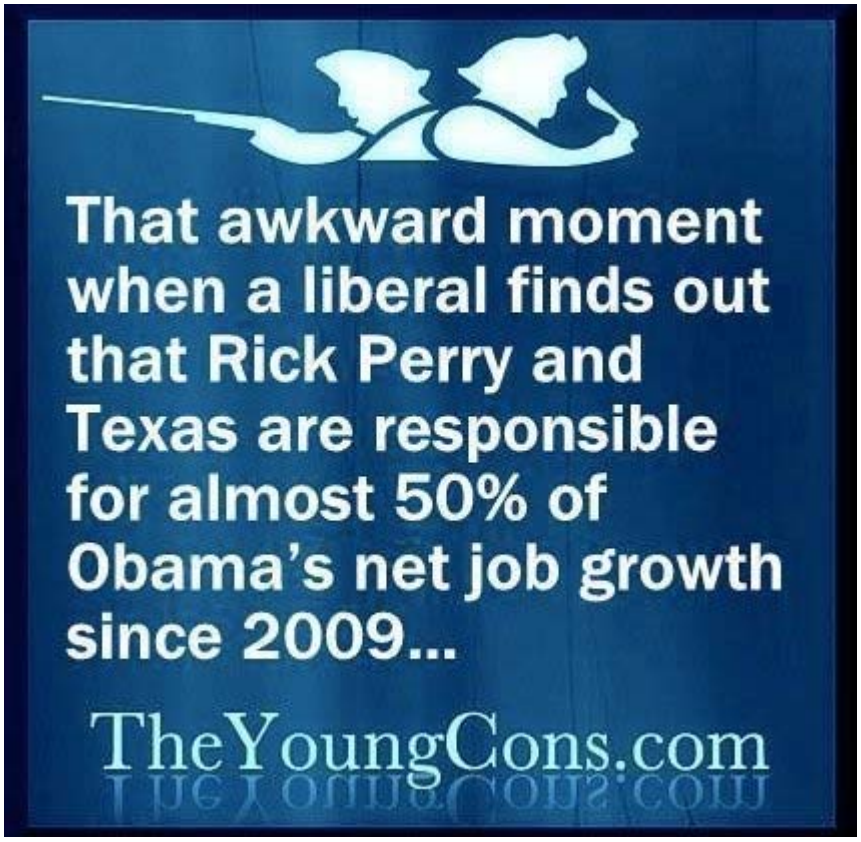
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