

August 14, 2013

Thomas Sowell asks if the left is serious about educating minority students.

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The painful irony in all this is that the original Dunbar High School building, which opened in 1916, housed a school with a record of high academic achievements for generations of black students, despite the inadequacies of the building and the inadequacies of the financial support that the school received.

By contrast, today's Dunbar High School is just another ghetto school with abysmal standards, despite Washington's record of having some of the country's highest levels of money spent per pupil — and some of the lowest test score results.

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Eliana Johnson keeps after new IRS information.

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"When we spoke last July, you had told us that the American Future Fund had not received an exemption letter from the IRS," an FEC attorney wrote in a February 2009 e-mail to Lerner.

But Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides that both "return information" and "taxpayer return information" are strictly confidential. An IRS source tells National Review Online that, within the agency, disclosing the information that Lerner appears to have provided is considered "a violation of Section 6103."

That's a felony punishable by up to \$5,000 in fines or five years in prison. If found guilty of such a violation, Lerner, who has been on paid administrative leave since May, would also lose her job: "If such offense is committed by any officer or employee of the United States," the law reads, he shall "be dismissed from office or discharged from employment upon conviction for such offense."

Tax-law experts, however, disagree about whether Lerner's apparent disclosure was a violation of Section 6103. Steven Willis, a professor of tax law at the University of Florida's Levin College of Law, argues that it was. The law "does not allow for disclosure of pending applications," Willis says, and though he acknowledges that the law is a "technicality," he maintains that Lerner's violation is something more serious. "In her position as director of Exempt Organizations, Ms. Lerner would surely have been aware of section 6103," Willis tells me. "She would have had responsibility to ensure that employees who reported to her not violate the sections." Further, her role as a senior IRS official "adds to the seriousness."

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The president's penchant for authoritarianism has not been limited to Obamacare. He has also altered immigration law and gone after the work requirement in welfare legislation. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (Va.) has put together a handy compendium of these power grabs. Couple those with his recess appointments and excessive use of executive privilege to deny Congress the ability to conduct oversight and you have a president attempting to exercise unprecedented powers.

The left is convulsed over the president's enforcement of duly passed anti-terror legislation that is subject to both judicial and legislative oversight. Yet when it comes to their favorite domestic initiatives, they muster no concern about an out-of-control executive. They should keep this in mind when the next GOP president comes along.

The left loves housing density and [Joel Kotkin](#) knows why.

Among university professors, government planners and mainstream pundits there is little doubt that the best city is the densest one. This notion is also supported by a wide number of politically connected developers, who see in the cramming of Americans into ever smaller spaces an opportunity for vast, often taxpayer-subsidized, profiteering.

More recently density advocates span a much-discussed study of geographic variations in upward mobility as suggesting that living in a spread-out city hurts children's prospects in life. "Sprawl may be killing Horatio Alger," quipped economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman.

Yet the study actually found the highest rates of upward mobility not in dense cities, but in relatively spread-out places like Salt Lake City, small cities of the Great Plains such as Bismarck, N.D.; Yankton, S.D.; and Pecos, Texas — all showed bottom to top mobility rates more than double New York City. And we shouldn't forget the success story of Bakersfield, Calif., a city Columbia University urban planning professor David King wryly labeled "a poster child for sprawl." Rather than an ode to bigness, notes demographer Wendell Cox, the study found that commuting zones (similar to metropolitan areas) with populations under 100,000 — smaller cities that tend to be sprawled by nature — have the highest average upward income mobility.

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There are at least three major problems with the thesis that density is an unabashed good. First, and foremost, Census and survey data reveal that most people do not want to live cheek to jowl if they can avoid it. Second, most of the attractive highest-density areas also have impossibly high home prices relative to incomes and low levels of homeownership. And third, and perhaps most important, dense places tend to be regarded as poor places for raising families. In simple terms, a dense future is likely to be a largely childless one. ...

Lat night humor from [Andy Malcolm](#).

Leno: *President Obama and the Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras met in the White House. Obama and the Prime Minister of Greece talking about the economy. If that isn't the blind leading the blind.*

Conan: *The NFL is cracking down this year on excessive celebrations. Players are being told not to show off too much after a touchdown, a sack or a murder.*

Fallon: *The New York City Education Dept. says only 26% of students passed the English portion of the latest standardized test. On the bright side, they're too bad at math also to know how bad that is.*

Jewish World Review

Are We Serious About Education?

by Thomas Sowell

Two recent events — one on the east coast and one on the west coast — raise painful questions about whether we are really serious when we say that we want better education for minority children.

One of these events was an announcement by Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., that it plans on August 19th to begin "an entire week of activities to celebrate the grand opening of our new \$160 million state-of-the-art school building."

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A recent example on the west coast is a charter school operation in Oakland called the American Indian Model Schools. The high school part of this operation has been ranked among the best high schools in the nation. Its students' test scores rank first in its district and fourth in the state of California.

But the California State Board of Education announced plans to shut down this charter school — immediately. Its students would have had to attend inferior public schools this September, except that a challenge in court stopped this sudden shutdown.

Why such a hurry to take drastic action? Because of a claim of financial improprieties against the charter schools' founder and former head, Ben Chavis.

Ben Chavis has not been found guilty of anything in a court of law. Nor has he even been brought to trial, though that would seem to be the normal thing to do if the charges were serious.

More important, the children have not been accused of anything. Nor is there any reason for urgency in immediately depriving them of an excellent education they are not likely to get in their local public schools.

What Ben Chavis and the American Indian Model Schools are really guilty of is creating academic excellence that shows up the public school system, both by this school's achievements and by the methods used to create those achievements, which go against the educational dogmas prevailing in the failing public schools.

If it seems strange that there would be a vendetta against an educator who has defied the education establishment and thereby improved the education of minority students, the fact is that Ben Chavis is only the latest in a long line of educators who have done just that — and aroused animosity, and even vindictiveness, as a result.

Washington's former public school head, Michelle Rhee, raised test scores in that city's school system and was demonized by the education establishment and politicians. She has left.

Years ago, high school math teacher Jaime Escalante, whose success in teaching Mexican American students was celebrated in the movie "Stand and Deliver," was eventually hounded out of Garfield High School in Los Angeles. Yet, while he was there, about one-fourth of all Mexican American students — in the entire country — who passed Advanced Placement Calculus came from that one school.

Marva Collins, who established a very successful private school for black children in Chicago, doing so on a shoestring, was likewise the target of hostility when she was a dedicated teacher in the public schools.

Other examples could be cited of educators who produced outstanding results for minority students — in New York, Houston and other places — and faced the wrath of the education establishment, which sees schools as places to provide jobs for teachers, rather than education for students, and which will not tolerate challenges to its politically correct dogmas.

National Review

Lerner's FEC Problem

Did she illegally disclose information to the FEC?

by Eliana Johnson

The “phony scandal” at the IRS keeps growing.

E-mail correspondence unearthed by the House Ways and Means Committee reveals that Lois Lerner, the figure at the center of the scandal, may have committed a felony by divulging information about a conservative group to the Federal Election Commission, in an incident that dates back at least to 2008, before President Obama took office. Though some conservatives have eagerly sought evidence that Obama's White House instigated the IRS's targeting of tea-party groups, the latest evidence suggests that an anti-conservative bias may instead be an endemic feature of the federal bureaucracy. And now, an FEC official is raising the specter of

systemic bias at that agency, too, calling the techniques its lawyers employ a “much more sophisticated way” of discriminating against conservative groups than those used by the IRS.

“When we spoke last July, you had told us that the American Future Fund had not received an exemption letter from the IRS,” an FEC attorney wrote in a February 2009 e-mail to Lerner.

But Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides that both “return information” and “taxpayer return information” are strictly confidential. An IRS source tells National Review Online that, within the agency, disclosing the information that Lerner appears to have provided is considered “a violation of Section 6103.”

That’s a felony punishable by up to \$5,000 in fines or five years in prison. If found guilty of such a violation, Lerner, who has been on paid administrative leave since May, would also lose her job: “If such offense is committed by any officer or employee of the United States,” the law reads, he shall “be dismissed from office or discharged from employment upon conviction for such offense.”

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However, it’s not clear that Lerner disclosed anything that could not have been inferred from information otherwise available to the FEC. Attorneys at that agency knew, based on information provided by the American Future Fund, that the group had applied for tax exemption. Further, once an organization is granted tax exemption, federal law mandates that its application as well as the IRS’s approval letter be made publicly available; since its application was *not* publicly available, lawyers could have deduced that its file was pending. For this reason and others, Bryan Camp of Texas Tech University’s law school does not believe Lerner broke the law. “Assuming the disclosure occurred, I don’t see that as a 6103 violation,” he says, citing a provision that allows the IRS to verify whether an organization is “currently held to be exempt.” But Camp adds a caveat. “The law of disclosure is complex and treacherous,” he says. “There are very few, even in the office of chief counsel, who understand all the ins and outs.”

The IRS, for its part, is defending Lerner’s actions. The agency told National Review Online in a statement, “The email . . . indicates that both Ms. Lerner and the FEC attorney recognized the IRS obligation to protect taxpayer information and that neither person wanted the IRS to provide the FEC with anything other than publicly available information.”

Regardless of whether Lerner broke the law, the e-mail exchange released by the Ways and Means Committee suggests that information was passed from the FEC to the IRS — and vice versa — and was used by both agencies to target conservative groups.

The American Future Fund is a grassroots group devoted to advocating conservative and free-market principles. Two months after an FEC attorney first contacted Lerner about the group in July 2008, an agent in Lerner's unit sent the American Future Fund a second request for more information about the group's activities. The group was eventually granted tax exemption in October 2008.

The handling of the matter by FEC bureaucrats is equally dubious. FEC vice chairman Don McGahn, who tells National Review Online that he has seen additional e-mails between the IRS and the FEC, describes the correspondence as "weird." According to McGahn, in July 2008, an FEC investigator, conceding he had not been able to find public information about the American Future Fund's tax status, asked Lerner to provide its application for exemption.

But under federal law, the FEC cannot open an investigation until at least four commissioners have voted that there is "reason to believe that a person has committed" a violation of campaign-finance law — and no such vote had yet taken place. Hans von Spakovsky, an NRO contributor who served as an FEC commissioner from 2006 to 2008, tells me that if the FEC attorney contacted the IRS before the commissioners voted on whether to open an investigation, "that attorney violated federal law." "The law is crystal clear — no investigation of any kind until the commission votes to open an investigation," he says.

McGahn views the American Future Fund's case as but one example of a systemic problem within the FEC. Attorneys in the agency's general counsel's office, he says, are less than candid about how they obtain information. With regard to the American Future Fund, they told FEC commissioners in September 2008, "The IRS has not yet issued a determination letter regarding AFF's application for exempt status. Based on the information from the response and the IRS website, it is likely that the application is still under review." The e-mail exchange between Lerner and the FEC attorney indicates, however, that FEC attorneys got that information not from the IRS website but from Lerner herself. Furthermore, by February 2009, when the commissioners voted on whether to prosecute the American Future Fund for violating campaign-finance laws, the group had received its tax-exempt status, but agency attorneys — despite reaching out to Lerner weeks before the vote — did not update their report.

FEC attorneys "don't always brief the commission on the information that they have," McGahn says; he describes this as "a longstanding frustration" in his five-year tenure as a commissioner. The behavior of career employees with regard to the American Future Fund, he says, reflects "a much larger culture of not telling the whole story when presenting a case to the commission," with the result being that commissioners at times vote to investigate groups without having the facts presented clearly before them.

He points, by way of example, to the case of Republican congressman Vern Buchanan, whose 2006 campaign was the subject of an FEC complaint. According to McGahn, agency attorneys had "obtained exculpatory information but kept the investigation going for a couple of years," shielding it from both Buchanan's attorneys and the commissioners themselves. Buchanan's attorney, William McGinley, told the commission in December 2010, two years after the initial complaint was filed, "All of the exculpatory information disclosed by the office of general counsel in the last 48 hours has been requested by us multiple times during this matter. This is now the second time in as many days that we have received previously undisclosed exculpatory evidence." FEC commissioner Caroline Hunter acknowledged as much in a hearing, telling the parties, "The issue about the exculpatory evidence is obviously troubling, and I apologize for having to deal with this at the last minute like this."

At the FEC, McGahn sees a system of discrimination more highly evolved than that employed by IRS officials. "Making a list of everybody who uses the word tea-party and giving them extra scrutiny, that's rather amateur," he explains. "The more sophisticated way is to look up all the complaints that come in" and, for those involving Republican and conservative organizations, "do an extra-statutory search to develop the facts and then decide on what the legal theory is." It comes down to "the rule of law versus case by case, ad hoc decision making," where federal bureaucrats are seeking to "decide who broke the rule of law after the fact."

National Review Online has also [drawn attention to](#) Lerner's own controversial tenure at the FEC, where she served as head of the enforcement office from 1986 to 2001. During that time, she launched a five-year investigation of the Christian Coalition after which the group was cleared of any wrongdoing. In a 1998 case, she recommended against the investigation of a donor, citing his "high profile as a prominent Democratic fundraiser" and "potential fundraising involvement in support of Mr. Gore's expected presidential campaign."

House Oversight Committee chairman Darrell Issa has now requested all documents potentially related to the "inappropriate coordination" between the FEC and the IRS between January 1, 2008, and the present. If McGahn and his fellow critics are correct, the scandal currently engulfing the IRS will extend deep into the bowels of another federal agency.

Right Turn

[Obama defends his lawlessness](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

Among President Obama's more outlandish comments at his Friday press conference was his utterance in response to a question as to whether, given his unilateral postponement of Obamacare's employer mandate, other presidents could be allowed to pick and choose what parts of laws to enforce.

He declared:

"With respect to health care, I didn't simply choose to delay this on my own. This was in consultation with businesses all across the country, many of whom are supportive of the Affordable Care Act, but — and many of whom, by the way, are already providing health insurance to their employees but were concerned about the operational details of changing their HR operations if they've got a lot of employees, which could be costly for them, and them suggesting that there may be easier ways to do this."

First off, this is duplicitous. The president may have consulted with others, but he unilaterally decided to change the law and threatened to veto any bill that would legally concretize his decision.

He compounds his misleading answer by adding: "We did have the executive authority to do so, and we did so. But this doesn't go to the core of implementation."

As for the "executive authority," I'd be curious to know where it comes from. Certainly not the law itself. Does he believe the Constitution allows him to only enforce parts of laws he thinks will work? Recall that as a senator Obama bitterly denounced "signing statements," which entailed a

presidential declaration that certain parts of a law were unconstitutional and therefore would not be enforced. Imagine what he would have said had President George W. Bush decided to ignore parts of laws simply because they were bothersome.

Finally, his assertion that the employer mandate doesn't go to the "core" of implementation is odd, to put it mildly. That delay will cost an estimated \$12 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It will unleash a torrent of fraud as recipients of the exchange subsidies are permitted to operate on the "honor system."

But of course no president is empowered to ignore parts of laws, even ones he dubs to be outside the "core" of legislation. The president should have been challenged at the press conference. Congress should not allow its job of making and amending legislation to be usurped by the president, whose theory would allow a President Chris Christie or President Scott Walker to announce he was unilaterally halting the individual mandate or the medical device tax.

The president's penchant for authoritarianism has not been limited to Obamacare. He has also altered immigration law and gone after the work requirement in welfare legislation. [House Majority Leader Eric Cantor \(Va.\)](#) has put together a handy compendium of these power grabs. Couple those with his recess appointments and excessive use of executive privilege to deny Congress the ability to conduct oversight and you have a president attempting to exercise unprecedented powers.

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Forbes

[How Can We Be So Dense? Anti-Sprawl Policies Threaten America's Future.](#)

by Joel Kotkin

Among university professors, government planners and mainstream pundits there is little doubt that the best city is the densest one. This notion is also supported by a wide number of politically connected developers, who see in the cramming of Americans into ever smaller spaces an opportunity for vast, often taxpayer-subsidized, [profiteering](#).

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Yet the study actually found the highest rates of upward mobility not in dense cities, but in relatively spread-out places like Salt Lake City, small cities of the Great Plains such as Bismarck, N.D.; Yankton, S.D.; and Pecos, Texas — all showed bottom to top mobility rates more than double New York City. And we shouldn't forget the success story of Bakersfield,

Calif., a city [Columbia University urban planning professor David King](#) wryly labeled “a poster child for sprawl.” Rather than an ode to bigness, notes demographer Wendell Cox, the study found that commuting zones (similar to metropolitan areas) with populations under 100,000 — smaller cities that tend to be sprawled by nature — have the highest average upward income mobility.

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There are at least three major problems with the thesis that density is an unabashed good. First, and foremost, Census and survey data reveal that most people do not want to live cheek to jowl if they can avoid it. Second, most of the attractive highest-density areas also have impossibly high home prices relative to incomes and low levels of homeownership. And third, and perhaps most important, dense places tend to be regarded as poor places for raising families. In simple terms, a dense future is likely to be a largely childless one.

Let’s start with something few density advocates consider: what people want and what they would choose if they could. Roughly four in five buyers, according to a [2011 study](#) commissioned by the National Association of Realtors, prefer a single-family home. This preference can be seen in the vastly greater construction of single-family houses in the past decade: Between 2000 and 2011, detached houses accounted for 83% of the net additions to the occupied U.S. housing stock. The percentage of single-family homes in the total housing mix last decade was more than one-fifth higher than in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the pattern is not likely to end, barring a longer-term recession or government edict. As the number of households [once again begins to rise](#) and birthrates [tick up](#), single-family homes are once again [leading](#) housing growth.

Buyers of single-family homes are not necessarily embracing exurban lifestyles so much as reacting to basic economic factors. In many cases the nicest single-family districts closest to work and amenities are prohibitively expensive — think Beverly Hills or Studio City in the L.A. area, Bethesda near Washington, or Evanston outside Chicago. People move further out in order to afford something better than an apartment.

The last decennial Census shows us definitively that people tend to head toward the periphery. Barely 6% of Americans live in densities of over 10,000 per square mile, and the fastest-growing central cities between 2000 and 2010 — such as Raleigh, Charlotte and Austin — have average densities less than a third as intense as places like New York, Chicago, Or Los Angeles.

Overall, domestic migrants tend to be moving away from these denser metropolitan areas. Between 2000 and 2010, a net 1.9 million people left New York, 1.3 million left Los Angeles, 340,000 left San Francisco, while 230,000 left San Jose and Boston. In contrast, some of the largest in-migration has taken place over the past decade, as well as since 2010, in relatively sprawling cities, including Houston, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Tampa-St. Petersburg and Nashville.

Our perceptions of density are often distorted by media coverage, which tends to revolve around city centers. To be sure many downtown areas have experienced impressive growth, but this

accounted for less than 1% of the 27 million expansion in the U.S. population between 2000 and 2010. In reality virtually all net population growth in the nation took place in counties with under 2,500 persons per square mile. The total population increase in counties with under 500 people per square mile was more than 30 times that of the growth in counties with densities of 10,000 and greater.

Some inner suburbs may be struggling adjacent to some hard-pressed cities, as is often highlighted by density advocates, but they are thriving in areas where prices are reasonable and the economy is strong. In Houston, arguably America's most economically vibrant big metro area, over 80% of homes sales in 2012 were [outside Beltway 8](#), the city's second ring. The city's inner ring, inside the 610 loop, has experienced an impressive revival, but still it only accounted for 6% of home sales last year.

There is clearly a growing chasm between affordable, family-friendly cities and those that, frankly, are not. Until the 1970s, in virtually all American metropolitan areas, a median-priced home cost roughly three years' median income. This equilibrium was smashed by the imposition in some states of "smart" land-use policies that seek to limit or even prohibit suburban building, huge impact fees, as well as in some markets, massive investment from speculators.

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As a result, many of the metro areas beloved by density advocates, such as New York and San Francisco, now have median home price multiples well over 6 or 7; if current trends continue, they could, as occurred during the last housing boom, reach upward of 10. Not surprisingly, these areas all have low rates of homeownership compared to the national average. For example, in New York and Los Angeles, the homeownership rate is half or less than the national figure of 65%. This is particularly true among working class and minority households. Atlanta's African-American home ownership rate is approximately 40% above those of San Jose and Los Angeles, approximately 50% higher than Boston, San Francisco and Portland, and nearly 60% higher than New York.

All these factors are particularly relevant to one group: families. Much of contemporary urban theory rests on the idea of weakening family connections: fewer marriages and lower birthrates will decrease the appetite for lower-density housing. Families do not make up the prime market for dense housing; married couples with children constitute barely [10% of apartment residents](#), less than half the percentage for the population overall.

Families also generally settle in less dense parts of cities, suburban or exurban areas; the places with the lowest percentage of households with children include favored abodes of the

density lobby such as New York (particularly Manhattan), as well as Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. In contrast the metropolitan areas with the strongest growth in their child populations — Raleigh, Austin, Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, Oklahoma City — have much lower densities and far smaller urban cores.

This flight from density among families is not merely an American phenomena. There are far higher percentages of families with children in the suburbs of Tokyo, London and Toronto than within the inner rings. The ultra dense cities of East Asia — Hong Kong, Singapore and Seoul — have among the [lowest fertility rates on the planet](#). Tokyo and Seoul now have fertility rates around 1 while Shanghai's has fallen to 0.7, among the lowest of any city ever recorded, well below China's "one child" mandate and barely one-third the number required simply to replace the current population.

Some have suggested that the Obama administration [is conspiring](#) to turn American cities into high-rise forests. But the coalition favoring forced densification — greens, planners, architects, developers, land speculators — predates Obama. They have gained strength by selling densification, however dubiously, as what planner and architect [Peter Calthorpe](#) calls "a climate change antibiotic." Not surprisingly, there's less self interest in promoting more effective greenhouse gas reduction policies such as boosting [work at home](#) and [lower-emissions cars](#).

The density agenda need to be knocked off its perch as the *summum bonum* of planning policy. These policies may not hurt older Americans, like me, who bought their homes decades ago, but will weigh heavily on the already hard-pressed young adult population. Unless the drive for densification is relaxed in favor of a responsible but largely market-based approach open to diverse housing options, our children can look forward to a regime of ever-higher house prices, declining opportunities for ownership and, like young people in East Asia, an environment hostile to family formation. All for a policy that, for all its progressive allure, will make more Americans more unhappy, less familial, and likely poorer.

IBD

[Late Night Humor](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

Leno: President Obama and the Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras met in the White House. Obama and the Prime Minister of Greece talking about the economy. If that isn't the blind leading the blind.

Conan: Major League Baseball has announced that Alex Rodriguez has been suspended for 211 games. So if you're familiar with the major league baseball schedule, it means he'll be out for about a month.

Conan: For his birthday President Obama played golf with friends. The winners got to ride in the presidential helicopter. The loser had to ride a Jet-ski with Joe Biden.

Conan: Accused sexual harasser San Diego Mayor Bob Filner has completed his weeks of therapy. But he got off to an awkward start when he asked his therapist if her couch was a pullout.

Conan: Google's founder finances a \$380,000 project to make the world's first synthetic hamburger. Which explains the new Google slogan, "We Have Too Much Money."

Conan: Latest trend is ATM machines where transactions are conducted by a human teller. The cutting-edge device is being called "a bank."

Fallon: The New York Times gets \$70 million for the Boston Globe after paying \$1.1 billion 20 years ago. I couldn't believe that story when I saw it FOR FREE on the Internet.

Conan: It's been announced that Chris Hansen, the long-time host of "To Catch a Predator," was let go. The network surprised Hansen with the news last night in his kitchen.

Fallon: They held a Washington meeting of people who want to go to Mars the other day. Joe Biden showed up in his Buzz Lightyear costume. It was weird because he didn't know what the meeting was about.

Conan: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has bought the Washington Post for \$250 million. He said like most Amazon customers he was drunk and buying crap on the Internet he didn't need.

Conan: A Connecticut man was arrested at an airport saying he had a bomb. He was released as soon as he showed police his DVD of 'The Lone Ranger.'

Conan: The NFL is cracking down this year on excessive celebrations. Players are being told not to show off too much after a touchdown, a sack or a murder.

Conan: President Obama's speech was interrupted by the crowd singing Happy Birthday. In a related story, Joe Biden's speech was interrupted when the crowd realized the speaker was Joe Biden.

Conan: Bill Clinton said he has nothing to do with Anthony Weiner's campaign. Clinton said, "When it comes to political sex scandals, always be sure to look for the Official Bill Clinton Seal of Approval."

Conan: Michelle Obama's new anti-obesity initiative uses hip-hop. Better than her previous one, Fighting marijuana use through reggae.

Conan: Obama cancels his summit meeting with Russian President Putin over diplomatic differences, including Edward Snowden. Also Obama didn't like Putin's demand that their meeting take place "shirtless on horseback."

Fallon: A new study finds that most Americans would NOT want to live until age 120. Except for that one group, people who are 119.

Conan: A new report says that over the past 30 years, the number of Americans speaking a language other than English has tripled. At least, I think that's what it said. It was written in Spanish.

Conan: The Secret Service is asking people on Twitter to report suspicious tweets. So if your boss catches you tweeting at work, just say, "I'm protecting our country!"

Fallon: Beyoncé's fans are really divided over her new haircut. Some say it's weird and unflattering. And others have lives.

Conan: A Colorado man wants marijuana classified as a vegetable. I have to say that's an ingenious way to get Americans to stop smoking pot.

Fallon: The New York City Education Dept. says only 26% of students passed the English portion of the latest standardized test. On the bright side, they're too bad at math also to know how bad that is.

Fallon: ABC-TV is seeking women contestants for the new season of "The Bachelor." They said if you're smart and interesting, feel free to recommend a slutty friend who's neither.

Fallon: The Prime Minister of Greece visited the White House. When he heard the leader of Greece had arrived, Joe Biden got all excited. "John Travolta's here?"





