

January 13, 2014

Charles Krauthammer writes on bigotry in the academic world.

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Given that Israel has a profoundly democratic political system, the freest press in the Middle East, a fiercely independent judiciary and astonishing religious and racial diversity within its universities, including affirmative action for Arab students, the charge is rather strange.

Made more so when you consider the state of human rights in Israel's neighborhood. As we speak, Syria's government is dropping "barrel bombs" filled with nails, shrapnel and other instruments of terror on its own cities. Where is the ASA boycott of Syria?

And of Iran, which hangs political, religious and even sexual dissidents and has no academic freedom at all? Or Egypt, where Christians are being openly persecuted? Or Turkey, Saudi Arabia or, for that matter, massively repressive China and Russia?

Which makes obvious that the ASA boycott has nothing to do with human rights. It's an exercise in radical chic, giving marginalized academics a frisson of pretend anti-colonialism, seasoned with a dose of edgy anti-Semitism.

And don't tell me this is merely about Zionism. The ruse is transparent. Israel is the world's only Jewish state. To apply to the state of the Jews a double standard that you apply to none other, to judge one people in a way you judge no other, to single out that one people for condemnation and isolation — is to engage in a gross act of discrimination.

And discrimination against Jews has a name. It's called anti-Semitism. ...

John Podhoretz tells us why the IRS scandal is ignored while the media flog bridgegate.

Most government scandals involve the manipulation of the system in obscure ways by people no one has ever heard of. That is why George Washington Bridgegate is nearly a perfect scandal — because it is comprehensible and (as they say in Hollywood) "relatable" to everyone who has ever been in a car. This is the reason this one is not going to go away so easily, even if one accepts the contention that Gov. Chris Christie had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

Government officials and political operatives working for Christie, for weird and petty reasons, chose to make traffic worse. That's the takeaway. When they are reminded of the fact that people working on Christie's behalf thought it was a good political game to mire tens of thousands of their fellow Americans in the nightmarish gridlock that is a daily dreaded prospect for tens of millions, they will be discomfited by that and by the politician in whose name it was done.

And yet, you know what is also something everybody would find “relatable”? Politicians who sic the tax man on others for political gain. Everybody has to deal with the IRS and fears it. Last year, we learned from the Internal Revenue Service itself that it had targeted ideological opponents of the president for special scrutiny and investigation — because they were ideological opponents.

That’s juicy, just as Bridgegate is juicy. It’s something we can all understand, it speaks to our greatest fears, and it’s the sort of thing TV newspeople could gab about for days on end without needing a fresh piece of news to keep it going.

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Why? Oh, come on, you know why. Christie belongs to one political party. Obama belongs to the other. You know which ones they belong to. And you know which ones the people at the three networks belong to, too: In surveys going back decades, anywhere from 80% to 90% of Washington’s journalists say they vote Democratic.

Scandals are not just about themselves; they are about the media atmosphere that surrounds them. ...

Canada's National Post reviews the Gates book.

A newly published account of Barack Obama’s White House confirms the worst that outsiders have imagined: The Obama staff is over-politicized, over-confident and desperate to oversee every aspect of government. In questions of national security, it’s the most controlling administration since Richard Nixon’s in the 1970s.

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Michael Goodwin says the Gates book just confirms what we already knew. The president is a fool.

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Still battered at home by the ObamaCare debacle and the permanently sluggish economy, the last thing the White House wanted was bad news on foreign policy. But that's exactly what it got, and then some, thanks to the shockingly scathing book by Robert Gates.

The former defense secretary offers the most devastating critique to come from an Obama insider. He paints the president as estranged from the very Afghan military surge he ordered and suspicious of and hostile toward top leaders of the armed forces.

Gates is especially critical of Vice President Joe Biden, writing that he has been "wrong on nearly every major foreign-policy and national-security issue over the past four decades."

He blames Biden and others for leading Obama to believe that military leaders were giving the president "the bum's rush" in seeking more troops in Afghanistan in 2009, according to excerpts.

...

Thinking about Valerie Jarrett's government requires some off-setting humor. Here's late night from **Andrew Malcolm**.

Leno: President Obama's approval is the lowest of any president after five years since Richard Nixon. Jimmy Carter says that's unfair. If he had a fifth year, he's sure he'd have won.

Leno: Over the weekend Obama's healthcare website was down again. Fortunately, no Americans were affected. Because they never knew it was up.

Leno: President Obama names an ex-Microsoft executive to fix the awful ObamaCare website. How about fixing Windows first? Can you start there please?

Washington Post

[How to fight academic bigotry](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

For decades, the [American Studies Association](#) labored in well-deserved obscurity. No longer. It has now made a name for itself by [voting to boycott Israeli universities](#), accusing them of denying academic and human rights to Palestinians.

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And discrimination against Jews has a name. It's called anti-Semitism.

Former Harvard president Larry [Summers called the ASA actions](#) "anti-Semitic in their effect if not necessarily in their intent." I choose to be less polite. The intent is clear: to incite hatred for the largest — and only sovereign — Jewish community on Earth.

What to do? Facing a similar (British) academic boycott of Israelis seven years ago, Alan Dershowitz and [Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Weinberg](#) wrote an open letter declaring that, for the purposes of any anti-Israel boycott, [they are to be considered Israelis](#).

Meaning: You discriminate against Israelis? Fine. Include us out. We will have nothing to do with you.

Thousands of other academics added their signatures to the Dershowitz/Weinberg letter. It was the perfect in-kind response. Boycott the boycotters, with contempt.

But academia isn't the only home for such prejudice. Throughout the cultural world, the [Israel boycott movement is growing](#). It's become fashionable for musicians, actors, writers and performers of all kinds to ostentatiously cleanse themselves of Israel and Israelis.

The example of the tuxedoed set has spread to the more coarse and unkempt anti-Semites, such as the thugs who a few years ago disrupted [London performances of the Jerusalem Quartet](#) and [the Israeli Philharmonic](#).

Five years ago in Sweden, [Israel's Davis Cup team had to play](#) its matches in an empty tennis stadium because the authorities could not guarantee the Israelis' safety from the mob. The most brazen display of rising anti-Semitism today is the spread of [the "quenelle," a reverse Nazi salute](#), popularized by the openly [anti-Semitic French entertainer](#), Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala.

In this sea of easy and open bigotry, an unusual man has made an unusual statement. Russian by birth, European by residence, Evgeny Kissin is arguably the world's greatest piano virtuoso. He is also a Jew of conviction. Deeply distressed by Israel's treatment in the cultural world

around him, Kissin went beyond the Dershowitz/Weinberg stance of asking to be considered an Israeli. On Dec. 7, he became one, defiantly.

[Upon taking the oath of citizenship](#) in Jerusalem, he declared: “I am a Jew, Israel is a Jewish state. . . . Israel’s case is my case, Israel’s enemies are my enemies, and I do not want to be spared the troubles which Israeli musicians encounter when they represent the Jewish state beyond its borders.”

Full disclosure: I have a personal connection with Kissin. For the past two years I’ve worked to bring him to Washington to perform for Pro Musica Hebraica, a nonprofit organization (founded by my wife and me) dedicated to reviving lost and forgotten Jewish classical music. We succeeded. On Feb. 24, Kissin will perform at the [Kennedy Center Concert Hall](#) masterpieces of Eastern European Jewish music, his first U.S. appearance as an Israeli.

The persistence of anti-Semitism, that most ancient of poisons, is one of history’s great mysteries. Even the shame of the Holocaust proved no antidote. It provided but a temporary respite. Anti-Semitism is back. Alas, a new generation must learn to confront it.

How? How to answer the thugs, physical and intellectual, who single out Jews for attack? The best way, the most dignified way, is to do like Dershowitz, Weinberg or Kissin.

Express your solidarity. Sign [the open letter](#) or write your own. Don the yellow star and wear it proudly.

NY Post

[Why Bridgegate made headlines but Obama's IRS scandal didn't](#)

by John Podhoretz

Most government scandals involve the manipulation of the system in obscure ways by people no one has ever heard of. That is why George Washington Bridgegate is nearly a perfect scandal — because it is comprehensible and (as they say in Hollywood) “relatable” to everyone who has ever been in a car. This is the reason this one is not going to go away so easily, even if one accepts the contention that Gov. Chris Christie had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

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Scandals are not just about themselves; they are about the media atmosphere that surrounds them. They are perpetuated and deepened by the attention of journalists, whose relentless pursuit of every angle keeps the story going. That is exactly what has been missing from the IRS scandal from its outset; Republicans in Congress have been the dogged pursuers, not the press.

There was plenty of material. Just as journalists remain skeptical today about who exactly might have gotten the idea for the lane closures, they could have been asking without letup who got the idea to dig into conservative tax-status applications. Several officials at the IRS resigned, retired and took the Fifth, just as was the case with Christie-aligned Port Authority officials.

It's pretty clear the questions about how high up Bridgegate went are going to be pursued far more diligently than they have been in the IRS case.

What gives?

There is a fundamental misunderstanding among conservatives about the causes of partisan media bias — the reason there is unequal coverage of scandals of this kind. It exists not because there is a conscious effort to soft-pedal bad news for politicians you like and to push hard on bad news for politicians you don't.

It's actually more personal — more relatable, shall we say—than that.

Journalists know the Obamans. Intimately. They know them from college, they know them from work, they know them from kids' soccer. They're literally married to them.

To the journalists, the Obamans don't look like crooks and cheats. Far from it. For them, it's like looking in a mirror.

In September, Elspeth Reeve of The Atlantic Wire took note of 24 major journalists who have taken posts at senior levels in the Obama administration. All of them have worked for decades in various news organizations, thus creating personal ties and bonds of affection with literally hundreds of working reporters and editors.

The journalists are not covering up for their friends and their spouses. They just believe the people they know could not be responsible for behaving badly, or cravenly, or for crass political advantage —and the tone they strike when such things are discussed is often one of offense, as though it is a sign of low character to believe otherwise. It would be, well, like believing the journalists themselves were crooks.

It's fair to say that most conservatives don't know people in the Obama administration, and they dislike and disagree with its policies. When they look at it, their dislike and lack of any personal connection make it easier for them to see officials mired in scandal and tush-covering cover-up. This is a direct analogue to the way liberals — of whom journalists comprise a central cohort — viewed the George W. Bush and Reagan administrations.

They saw people with whom they disagreed and who they thought were bad for the country and so found it much easier to believe they were acting out of malign motive and doing evil.

Christie may be entirely innocent of all wrongdoing. Or there may be some connection, even a very tenuous and suggestive one. But there will be little let-up now.

For in the end, because Christie is a Republican. Christie isn't them.

National Post (Canada)

[Barack Obama may be commander-in-chief, but he's a partisan at heart](#)

by Robert Fulford

A newly published account of Barack Obama's White House confirms the worst that outsiders have imagined: The Obama staff is over-politicized, over-confident and desperate to oversee every aspect of government. In questions of national security, it's the most controlling administration since Richard Nixon's in the 1970s.

This portrait emerges from Robert Gates' book, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, published this week. Till now, we have been given only a few private glimpses of the Obama team, such as the famous "home alone" anecdote in Ron Suskind's 2011 book, *Confidence Men*. He reported that in Obama's first year, the chairman of the National Economic Council warned a colleague: "We're really home alone. There's no adult in charge."

But that was second hand. The Gates book is an eyewitness account, and a rare one: Unlike most cabinet memoirs, it describes a president while he's still in office. Gates was secretary of defence for two years with George Bush and stayed for two more with Obama. Earlier, he had served in the CIA for two decades and directed it under George H. W. Bush. According to a *Washington Post* book reviewer, Gates is considered the best of the 22 defence secretaries since the Second World War.

During the 2008 election campaign, Obama said that Afghanistan, not Iraq, was the war the United States should be fighting. But when the military did focus on Afghanistan, Obama struck Gates as uncommitted and impatient. He recalls a meeting in March, 2011, when it became clear that Obama didn't trust the American commander, couldn't stand President Hamid Karzai

of Afghanistan, didn't believe in his own strategy, and didn't consider the war to be his: "For him, it's all about getting out."

Gates found Obama emotionally disconnected from much that happened in his administration. He noticed that only one military issue aroused deep passion in Obama, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell law that prohibited gays from serving openly in the military until Obama got it repealed.

When a plan for Afghanistan leaked to the newspapers, Obama took it as a personal affront. Though he had leakers of his own, he assumed this one came from the military. Angrily, he asked, "Is it a lack of respect for me? Do they resent that I never served in the military? Do they think because I'm young that I don't see what they're doing?"

According to Gates, Obama's staff were aggressive and suspicious when dealing with military leaders, sometimes condescending and insulting. It was routine for a member of the civilian national security staff to call up a four-star general and offer advice; Gates says this was unthinkable in earlier administrations.

He also found the political staff determined to take credit for every success while giving no credit to those who had done the work. The cluster of over-confident and isolated aides seems to have inflated the presidential ego. (On TV, Obama seems deeply pleased with himself, more than any earlier president I can recall — even when he's explaining away some horrendous blunder.)

From the beginning, Gates realized that he had joined a new, inexperienced president determined to change course — "and equally determined from day one to win re-election." After a while, he lost his faith in promises that came from above: "I felt that agreements with the Obama White House were good for only as long as they were politically convenient." Despite all his experience, Gates seems to have been unsettled by the force of domestic politics on military decisions. At every turn, Vice-president Joe Biden talked about the reaction of the Democratic base.

At one point, Hillary Clinton told Obama that she'd opposed the troop increase in Iraq in 2007 because she was facing him in the Iowa primary. Obama himself conceded that his own opposition to the Iraq surge had been political. Gates was startled: "To hear the two of them making these admissions, and in front of me, was as surprising as it was dismaying."

Gates now and then throws compliments to Obama, Clinton and even Biden, but what he has to tell us is mainly negative. He's angry sometimes, disappointed at other times. Overall, he clearly wants to describe the clumsy and thoughtless atmosphere in which some of the most important decisions in the world are made.

His book will be frequently and ruefully consulted in the remaining three years of the Obama Era. He creates in the reader an aching sense of regret that another dream of enlightened leadership has disappointed those who wanted to believe in America's 44th president.

NY Post

[Gates memoir reveals Obama's incompetence on foreign policy](#)

by Michael Goodwin

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Gates is especially critical of Vice President Joe Biden, writing that he has been "wrong on nearly every major foreign-policy and national-security issue over the past four decades."

He blames Biden and others for leading Obama to believe that military leaders were giving the president "the bum's rush" in seeking more troops in Afghanistan in 2009, according to excerpts.

"Suspicion and distrust of senior military officers by senior White House officials — including the president and vice president — became a big problem for me," Gates writes.

Hillary Rodham Clinton also comes off as a craven politician, with Gates saying he witnessed Clinton confess to Obama that she opposed the 2007 Iraq surge because she thought it would help her 2008 presidential campaign.

The book, set for release this week, carries extra sting because Gates is a widely respected team player who served presidents from both parties. The former head of the CIA, he led the Pentagon under George W. Bush and Obama.

His status as a kind of one-man blue-ribbon panel makes it impossible to refute his charges. The result is that the existing image of Obama as incompetent on domestic policies is now twinned with one of incompetence abroad. And those views are rapidly hardening into fixed conventional wisdom.

The implications are enormous for the three years left in his term. "It makes him even more of a lame duck," says Ed Rollins, a GOP wise man. He says Obama, whose approval number is stuck at about 40 percent, won't be welcome to campaign for most Democrats during this year's election.

"Most will say, 'Thanks but no thanks, just send the money,'" Rollins adds.

And Obama's lack of commitment to the war on terror is something our enemies already figured out and are exploiting.

Longtime al Qaeda expert Peter Bergen pulls together disturbing developments previously reported only in piecemeal fashion. "From around Aleppo in western Syria to small areas of

Falluja in central Iraq, al Qaeda now controls territory that stretches more than 400 miles across the heart of the Middle East,” Bergen writes for CNN, and adds, “Al Qaeda appears to control more territory in the Arab world than it has done at any time in its history.”

Others note that borders are being erased as terror groups carve out safe havens in several countries. Even The New York Times took a rare break from its propaganda approach to Obama, seeing a “power vacuum” and “a post-American Middle East in which no broker has the power, or the will, to contain the region’s sectarian hatreds.”

It later added a frightening note, reporting that intelligence officials say Syrian Islamists are trying to recruit Americans to carry out terror attacks here.

This “parade of horrors” largely reflects a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia for Muslim supremacy that is spreading because Obama has abdicated global leadership. Adding a nuclear-armed Iran to the dangerous mix is a terrifying prospect to many in the region.

But not to worry, the administration is on the case. Secretary of State John Kerry paid his 10th visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories in a frantic, and relatively pointless, effort to get a peace treaty.

And President Obama returned from his 17-day, \$4 million vacation in Hawaii and promptly denounced income inequality. On Friday, the Justice Department said it would recognize gay marriage in Utah, even though the state doesn’t.

And the band played on.

IBD

Late Night

by Andrew Malcolm

Conan: New research reveals that being attractive in high school leads to success later in life. So finally, some good news for hot, popular teenagers.

Leno: President Obama’s approval is the lowest of any president after five years since Richard Nixon. Jimmy Carter says that’s unfair. If he had a fifth year, he’s sure he’d have won.

Conan: A football player for Troy University in Alabama has been arrested for murder. So it sounds like he’s ready for the NFL.

Conan: When NORAD announced it would be tracking Santa Claus again at Christmas, the NSA said, “No need, we got him.”

Conan: The digital team behind both of President Obama’s campaigns is already preparing for a Hillary Clinton run. They’re starting early because they’ve got to delete 10 years of Bill Clinton’s browser history.

Leno: Over the weekend Obama's healthcare website was down again. Fortunately, no Americans were affected. Because they never knew it was up.

Leno: The Mega Millions jackpot was \$586 million recently. A 1-in-259 million chance of winning. The same odds as Tony Romo completing a fourth-quarter pass to a teammate.

Conan: An inventor has come up with a device to prevent the NSA from spying on you. It blocks your laptop's camera. The new high-tech device is called a small piece of Tape.

Conan: Engineers are testing a new drone to replace lifeguards. Here's how it works: If you're drowning, the drone flies out and then drops a bomb on you.

Conan: An LA mall last month year featured racially-diverse Santas. You could let your kids sit on a creepy white stranger's lap or a creepy black stranger's lap.

Conan: A new study claims that red-headed women are sexually desirable, but red-headed men are not. I wouldn't have minded, but the study mentioned me by name.

Leno: A new report says men cheat more around Christmas. Also around Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Easter, July 4th, Flag Day, Arbor Day, almost any day.

Letterman: Do you know about SantaCon? A bunch of guys come to New York City, dress up like Santa and go from bar to bar to bar. Well, this year the Santa from Kenya won again.

Leno: President Obama names an ex-Microsoft executive to fix the awful ObamaCare website. How about fixing Windows first? Can you start there please?

Letterman: You know whose birthday was last week? Pope Francis. Turned 77. In Pope years, that's LXXVII.

Letterman: So Khloe Kardashian and Lamar Odom are divorcing. Did you know though if Odom is ever arrested, his Kardashian marriage counts as time served.

Conan: Target had its credit card accounts breached for 40 million users. A spokesperson said, "Maybe we shouldn't have named ourselves 'Target.'"

Conan: Kim Jong Un recently had one of his uncles executed. Then again, during the holidays, who hasn't wanted to kill their uncle?

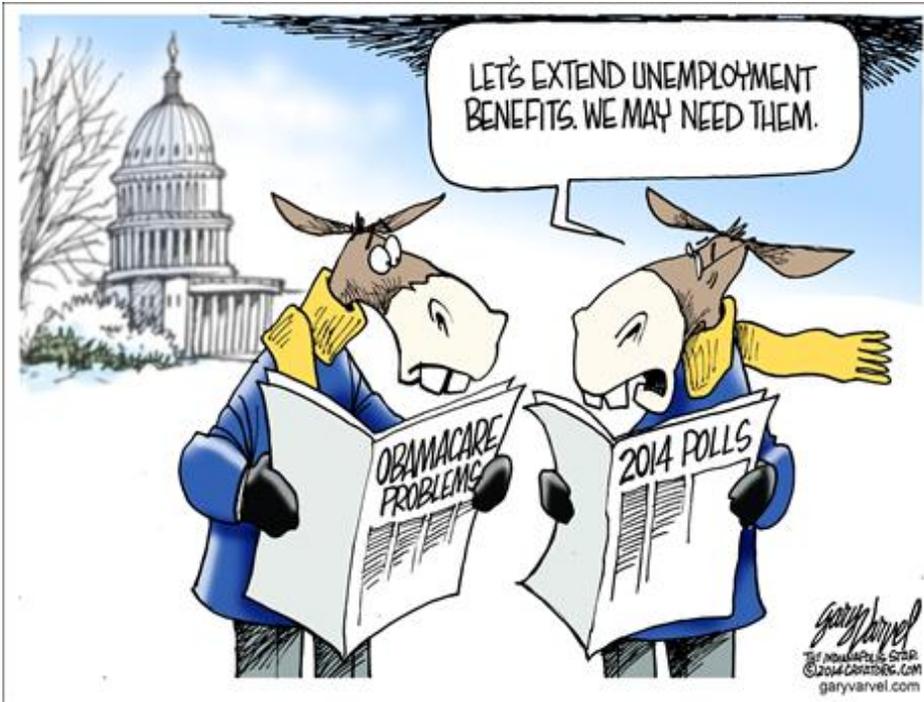
Conan: Some 40,000 Amazon workers went on strike. They were chanting, "What do we want? Higher Wages. When do we want it? In 2-to-5 Business Days!"

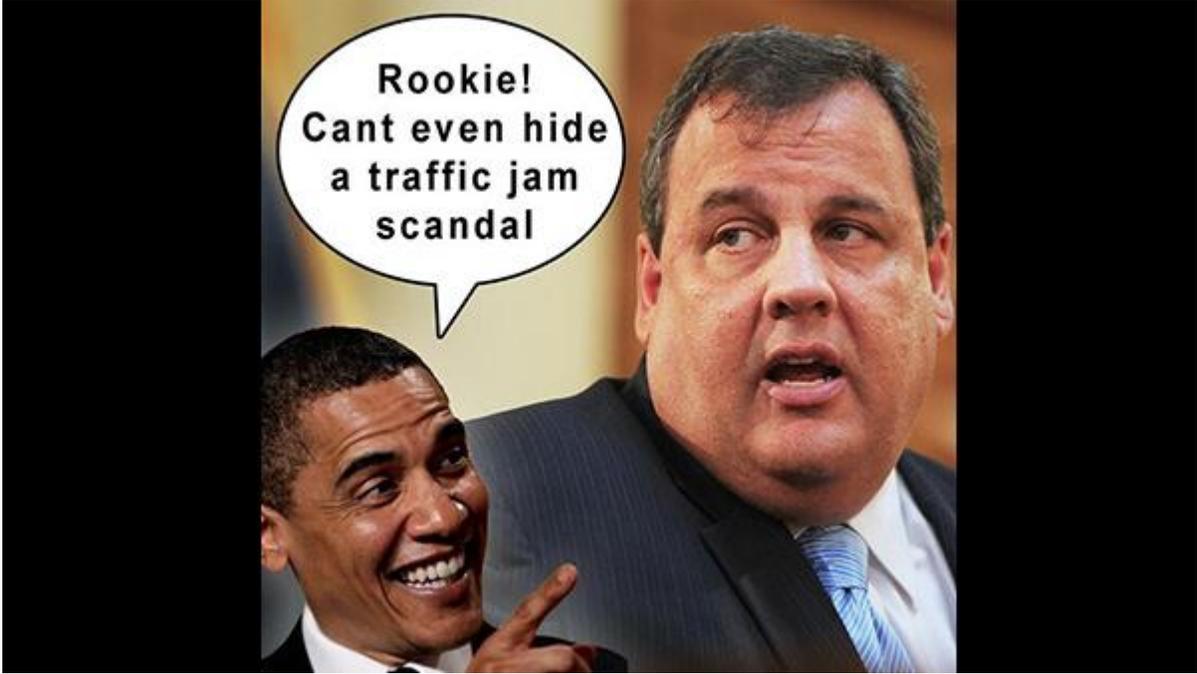
Leno: Researchers are studying grizzly bears to better understand obesity in humans. Now, I'm no scientist. But if you want to understand obesity in humans, why not just study obese humans? It's not like there's any shortage of fat people. And they're easier to catch.

Leno: Washington finally passed a budget. So instead of government shutting down and getting nothing done, government will stay open and get nothing done.

Leno: Gays were angry at Duck Dynasty's Phil Robertson for criticizing them. He also criticized drunks, swindlers and adulterers. So Congress got mad at him too.

Leno: British researchers find having a successful sports team in a town increases the birth rate there. Especially if it's an NBA team.





**Ladies, if a man says
he will fix it, he will.**



**There is no need to
remind him every
6 months about it.**