

July 3, 2014

Roger Simon reviews *Blood Feud* by Edward Klein.

... And unlike the Times, Blood Feud is a compulsive read. I dare you to put it down. The book reminds you of nothing so much as an episode of Shonda Rhimes' television series Scandal — and a particularly excessive episode at that. Even at its most seemingly illogical, Klein's work has the ring of truth. He's on to something, even if he hasn't hit the bull's eye.

The main characters here — Hillary, Michelle, Barack, Bill and, to an extraordinary extent, real “power behind the throne” Valerie Jarrett — read like a group of Borgias set free on today's Washington, loathing each other and plotting revenge while living a lifestyle even the one percent could barely dream of.

The idea that these people could even utter the words “income inequality” is farcical. At some point they may have had political ideas of some sort — who knows — but that was in a galaxy far, far away and has been lost forever in the latest round of golf, \$200,000 speeches to Arab potentates or spur-of-the-moment trips to Maui to woo Oprah at her mansion.

A lot of the book too reads like a companion piece to Hillary's latest — well, not exactly, since no one appears to be interested in that door stopper —because most of the leaks appear to be from people anxious to differentiate Hillary from Obama. POTUS, as we know, is not exactly popular these days and anyone seeking the presidency would be well advised to separate herself from him as far as possible. This accounts for much of the amusing dish in the book, Hillary even dropping the F-bomb in front of some of her amazed old classmates from Wellesley when referring to Obama's undeniable executive incompetence. ...

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In another hint the media have had enough of Hillary's money grabs, **WaPo** with a story on the almost \$2 million she has sucked out of universities in the last nine months. *At least eight universities, including four public institutions, have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for Hillary Rodham Clinton to speak on their campuses over the past year, sparking a backlash from some student groups and teachers at a time of austerity in higher education.*

In one previously undisclosed transaction, the University of Connecticut — which just raised tuition by 6.5 percent — paid \$251,250 for Clinton to speak on campus in April. Other examples include \$300,000 to address UCLA in March and \$225,000 for a speech scheduled to occur in October at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

The potential 2016 Democratic presidential candidate also has been paid for speeches at the University at Buffalo, Colgate University and Hamilton College in New York, as well as Simmons College in Massachusetts and the University of Miami in Florida.

Officials at those five schools refused to say what they paid Clinton. But if she earned her standard fee of \$200,000 or more, that would mean she took in at least \$1.8 million in speaking income from universities over the past nine months.

Since stepping down as secretary of state in early 2013, Clinton has given dozens of paid speeches to industry conventions and Wall Street banks. But Clinton's acceptance of high fees for university visits has drawn particularly sharp criticism, with some students and academic officials saying the expenditures are a poor use of funds at a time of steep tuition hikes and budget cuts across higher education. ...

More on administration foreign policy errors from Mary Anastasia O'Grady. This time we learn how our ambassador has insulted Canada.

President Obama once promised to remake America's image around the globe. He has kept that promise—only not in the way many voters who backed him had hoped.

Mr. Obama's latest step in the image makeover is to tell Canada—the U.S.'s largest trading partner, largest supplier of energy and most loyal ally in war and peace—that its long-nurtured special relationship with the U.S. is not so special after all. To carry out the mission, Mr. Obama has sent a new U.S. ambassador to Ottawa.

Bruce Heyman, a former Goldman Sachs banker based in Chicago and a top Obama campaign bundler in both 2008 and 2012, may have deserved an ambassadorship for his services. But that's what all those tiny islands in the Caribbean are for. Appointing Mr. Heyman—who is diplomatically challenged, to put it diplomatically—his top representative to Canada says a lot about what the president thinks about his northern neighbor.

Mr. Heyman made his debut in Ottawa earlier this month with a dinner speech at the National Gallery followed by a Q&A with former Canadian ambassador to Washington Frank McKenna. Mr. McKenna used the event to raise what Canada sees as troubling "irritants" in the bilateral relationship. Mr. Heyman used it to explain to Canadians how insignificant they are in the eyes of Washington. ...

In 2008 the editors of the Billings, Montana paper endorsed the man who has become president petulant. They did this to show they can be just as insufferable as the bien pensants out East. At least the Billings people have come to see the error of their way and have recanted.

... The latest NBC/Wall Street Journal polls show that Americans are giving Obama lower marks than in 2006 when Iraq was going poorly for Bush and a tepid response to Hurricane Katrina sunk Bush's ratings.

It's not that popularity polling should be the final or even best measure of a president. There is that old saw that points out there's a difference between doing what is right and what is popular.

For us, though, it's the number of bungled or blown policies in the Obama administration which lead us to believe Obama has earned every bit of an abysmal approval rating.

Let's recap some of the mistakes:

- Maybe the worst and most widespread invasion of privacy occurred when the Obama administration continued a controversial National Security Agency program of spying on millions of citizens culling their phone records to intercepting online information. The administration has done nearly nothing to safeguard civil liberties or put in safeguards to protect our Constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

- The Obama administration has continued to ratchet down on emissions from coal-fired power plants while giving consumers little new innovation to replace the power supply. Meanwhile, Obama continues to thwart other energy projects that might be helpful to the economy, like the Keystone XL pipeline. The war on carbon might not be so bad if indeed it was being counterbalanced by true innovation.

- Iraq was an inherited quagmire from the Bush administration. But six years later, Obama has to own the current situation which, as this is being written, looks perilously close to civil war and a complete breakdown of government in Iraq. ...

Hugh Hewitt slams the Presbyterian Church's Middle East foolishness.

Prominently featured at the website of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an "An Open Letter of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to our American Jewish Interfaith Partners" which is signed by the denomination's three senior officials and which begins:

We are reaching out to you after our General Assembly's action, by a 310-303 vote, to recommend to the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions to divest from three North American corporations following extensive corporate engagement. The assembly concluded that further engagement would not bring an end to their pursuits that further the Israeli occupation in Palestine.

*Read the whole thing at pcusa.org. It is gibberish, nonsense of the worst sort: deeply disingenuous double talk intended to skim over the biased proceedings which produced it. Now the PCUSA, as its members call it, has taken an official position against Israel and so I, as an elder in the PCUSA -
- no longer a "ruling" elder in my congregation, having wrapped up my second such stint last year -
- have to take a position for or against the PCUSA based on it.*

Many PCUSA congregations across the country are already engaged in the process of "discerning" whether to remain within the splintering denomination, and this new assault on Israel and the virulent language employed — "occupation" — will no doubt make that process much easier for hundreds of thousands of us. If their congregations don't leave, they will. They will not be part of the American intifada against Israel. ...

An article from **Andrew Malcolm** sounds like bringing coals to Newcastle. Seems someone is pooping in the hallways of federal offices.

... On Wednesday, McCarthy informed the House Oversight Committee that, doggone it, a whole bunch of emails sought by Congress have just up and disappeared.

Quite a coincidence given the strange timing of a half-dozen crashed and trashed hard-drives over at the Internal Revenue Service containing subpoenaed evidence.

Fortunately, at least one EPA email survived and Government Executive's Eric Katz found it. In the message to Denver employees, EPA Deputy Regional Administrator Howard Cantor described several damaging incidents of inappropriate bathroom behavior, including toilet sabotage and disturbing deposits of human fecal material in adjacent hallways.

He said such material presented health hazards to fellow employees. Managers consulted with a workplace violence expert who warned that such anti-social behavior was not only unhealthy and unsafe but likely to escalate to something.

"Management is taking this situation very seriously," Cantor wrote, "and will take whatever actions are necessary to identify and prosecute these individuals." He asked EPA workers with any information on suspected hallway poopers to alert their supervisor.

An Environmental Impact Statement on the incidents is expected within a couple of years.

Roger L. Simon

Borgias, Anyone? Ed Klein's *Blood Feud*

Blood Feud, Ed Klein's new book on the Clintons and the Obamas currently rocketing to the top of the Amazon best seller list even before its official publication day, is a lurid, irresponsible work of yellow journalism filled with suppositions, inaccuracies, myriad anonymous sources, made-up dialogue and (often extreme) bias.

In other words, it is essentially like your average front page story in the *New York Times*.

But unlike the *Times*, Klein gets it essentially right about his subject — the Clintons and the Obamas despise each other.

And unlike the *Times*, *Blood Feud* is a compulsive read. I dare you to put it down. The book reminds you of nothing so much as an episode of [Shonda Rhimes'](#) television series [Scandal](#) — and a particularly excessive episode at that. Even at its most seemingly illogical, Klein's work has the ring of truth. He's on to something, even if he hasn't hit the bull's eye.

The main characters here — Hillary, Michelle, Barack, Bill and, to an extraordinary extent, real "power behind the throne" Valerie Jarrett — read like a group of Borgias set free on today's Washington, loathing each other and plotting revenge while living a lifestyle even the one percent could barely dream of.

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A lot of the book too reads like a companion piece to Hillary's latest — well, not exactly, since no one appears to be interested in that door stopper — because most of the leaks appear to be from people anxious to differentiate Hillary from Obama. POTUS, as we know, is not exactly popular these days and anyone seeking the presidency would be well advised to separate herself from him as far as possible. This accounts for much of the amusing dish in the book, Hillary even dropping the F-bomb in front of some of her amazed old classmates from Wellesley when referring to Obama's undeniable executive incompetence.

On a more serious matter, someone has given Klein an account of Benghazi that places the blame squarely on Obama for inventing the shameful video narrative. According to the book, the president directed his then-secretary of State to use the video as an excuse for what they both already knew was terrorism during the famous missing phone call between the two at 10 p.m. the night of the September 11, 2012 attack. If so, that was among the most reprehensible acts ever by

a sitting American president (straight out of *Scandal*, actually) and to be honest, I generally believe it.

Unfortunately, that doesn't much exonerate Hillary who, after a troubled phone call to an irate Bill, quickly gave up demurring and went along with the execrable coverup, going so far as, only two days later at Tyrone Woods' funeral, whispering in the ear of the dead hero's father that they were going to get that guy who made the video.

Borgias, anyone?

Lurid as they may be, Klein's insider profiles of those who lead us often make you think of serious matters more than many "serious" and dry political books. What we have here is a portrait of narcissism gone berserk. And maybe that's what most politics is. Who would want to go through the ordeal of running for national office but someone with a serious narcissistic personality disorder? Perhaps the job of us voters (and pundits) is to separate the good narcissists from the bad narcissists.

That's not an easy task. Barack Obama's brand of narcissism seemed quite attractive to many early on with all its soaring talk of hope and change. Voters had no idea this man had only scant interest in the nitty-gritty task of governing. And the person they were really electing, as *Blood Feud* makes abundantly clear, was someone almost none of them had then heard of and most still haven't — President Jarrett.

Washington Post

[At time of austerity, eight universities spent top dollar on Hillary Clinton speeches](#)

by Philip Rucker and Rosalind S. Helderman



Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton holds up UConn Huskies outfits given to her by university president Susan Herbst for Clinton's future grandchild at the end of a speaking appearance at the University of Connecticut in Storrs on April 23.

At least eight universities, including four public institutions, have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for Hillary Rodham Clinton to speak on their campuses over the past year, sparking a backlash from some student groups and teachers at a time of austerity in higher education.

In one previously undisclosed transaction, the University of Connecticut — which just [raised tuition by 6.5 percent](#) — paid \$251,250 for Clinton to speak on campus in April. Other examples include [\\$300,000 to address UCLA](#) in March and \$225,000 for a speech scheduled to occur in October at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

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Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was paid \$300,000 to speak to UCLA students and faculty in March. (/UCLA)

At UNLV, where officials have agreed to raise tuition by 17 percent over the next four years, student government leaders wrote a letter to Clinton last week asking her to return the planned \$225,000 fee to the university. If she does not, they say, they intend to protest her visit.

"The students are outraged about this," said Elias Benjelloun, UNLV's student body president. "When you see reckless spending, it just belittles the sacrifices students are consistently asked to make. I'm not an accountant or economist, so I can't put a price tag on how much we should be paying her, but I think she should come for free."

Clinton's spokesman, Nick Merrill, declined to comment on the UNLV students' request.

At seven of the eight universities listed, officials said her fee was paid through a lecture series endowment or private donations and not by tapping tuition, student fees or public dollars. A spokeswoman for Simmons declined to discuss the school's arrangement with Clinton.

Merrill said the UCLA and UNLV fees are dedicated to go to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation, the family's nonprofit group. Merrill said he did not know whether the other six payments went to the foundation. He also could not say whether the Harry Walker Agency, the speaker's bureau that manages Clinton's appearances, received a portion of the fees. Don Walker, the agency's president, did not respond to a request for comment.

Clinton's six-figure campus speaking fees could become a political liability for her in the 2016 campaign given that President Obama and other Democrats have made college affordability a

central plank of the party's agenda. Student debt is a signature issue for Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), whom some liberals would like to see challenge Clinton in a primary. It's also something Clinton has talked about.

"I worry that we're closing the doors to higher education in our own country," Clinton [said in March at a higher education conference in Texas](#). "This great model that we've had that's meant so much to so many is becoming further and further away from too many."

Clinton will headline the [UNLV Foundation's fundraising gala](#) on Oct. 13 at the Bellagio, a luxury hotel and casino, where seats cost \$200 each and tables of 10 sell for between \$3,000 and \$20,000.

Brian Greenspun, a Las Vegas media baron and UNLV trustee, strongly defended Clinton's fee, which he said is expected to be fully covered by proceeds from the dinner. He said her star power will boost foundation donations.

"If you bring the right speakers in, people will come listen to them," Greenspun said. "If you bring the wrong speakers in, no one will show up. The right speakers, in today's capitalistic world, cost more money."

Greenspun, who was former president Bill Clinton's roommate at Georgetown University, added: "All Hillary's doing is getting paid what she normally gets paid for giving speeches — not much more, not much less — and she does honor to the university by coming."

UNLV and several other schools also hosted Bill Clinton for paid speeches in recent years. UCLA paid him \$250,000 in 2012.

Devin Murphy, UCLA's undergraduate student body president, said, "You can't deny that Hillary Clinton has had vast experience in public service to our nation. But I am a bit concerned that \$300,000 was spent for her to come. I am personally a low-income student of color at our university, and I recognize the importance of being fiscally responsible."

In some instances, Clinton's collegiate visits were part of annual lecture programs endowed by wealthy donors to lure prominent speakers to campus. At Colgate, for instance, the lecture series is funded by Edward Kerschner, who has worked as a [senior executive at such financial firms](#) as UBS, Citi Group and Morgan Stanley Smith Barney.

Kerschner declined to comment but said through spokeswoman Michaela Kron that he plays no role in selecting the speakers or arranging their visits.

The practice is common at many institutions, especially those looking to raise their national prestige, but has drawn criticism in academia.

Harry R. Lewis, a professor and former undergraduate dean at Harvard University who has written critically about priorities in higher education spending, said speaking fees at Clinton's level amount to "an extravagant form of advertising" for colleges that should focus instead on more scholastic initiatives.

"What makes fees at this level outrageous ... is that one speaker's fee becomes comparable to what it costs to educate a student for several years," Lewis said. "At the same time you're putting

your students into serious debt, as most institutions do, it's an allocation of resources that's very suspect."

One ostensible benefit for students is exposure to a major global figure such as Clinton they might not otherwise get. But Lewis questioned that rationale, asking, "Isn't she on TV all the time?"

Anne Neal, president of the [American Council of Trustees and Alumni](#), which highlights waste in higher education, said Clinton's speaking fees raise "real questions about priorities of universities at time when many of them are crying poor."

Clinton has spoken on a few campuses for free, including St. Andrews University in Scotland, where she [was awarded an honorary degree](#) at a celebration last fall marking the school's 600th anniversary. Clinton also visited Yale Law School, her alma mater, celebrating her 40th-year reunion and [receiving the prestigious "Award of Merit."](#)

At UConn — a public university about 70 miles northeast of Yale — Clinton's quarter-million-dollar fee was [underwritten entirely by Edmund Fusco](#), a New Haven-based developer, and his family, according to Deb Cunningham, interim vice president for communications at the University of Connecticut Foundation.

"No taxpayer dollars went to support this," Cunningham said. "The purpose of this fund is really to bring engaging speakers to campus."

In her speech there, Clinton urged students to be tolerant and open-minded: "Let's make the millennial generation the participation generation for all of us." UConn President Susan Herbst gave Clinton, an expectant grandmother, a pair of onesies modeled after the basketball uniforms of the school's NCAA champion Huskies.

Mark Sargent, UConn's student body president, said he believed [Clinton's visit](#) was worth the money.

"Having a political figure with the prestige of Hillary Clinton I think is a positive thing," Sargent said. But he added, "I can see how some people might be upset with her pricing."

Related:

[How the Clintons went from 'dead broke' to rich](#)

[See how much Bill Clinton was paid for speeches — and who paid him](#)

WSJ

[The U.S. Tells Ottawa: O Canada, Stop Pouting](#)

An ex-Goldman Sachs bundler for Obama is starting to look like a diplomatic bungler.

by Mary Anastasia O'Grady

President Obama once promised to remake America's image around the globe. He has kept that promise—only not in the way many voters who backed him had hoped.

Mr. Obama's latest step in the image makeover is to tell Canada—the U.S.'s largest trading partner, largest supplier of energy and most loyal ally in war and peace—that its long-nurtured special relationship with the U.S. is not so special after all. To carry out the mission, Mr. Obama has sent a new U.S. ambassador to Ottawa.

Bruce Heyman, a former [Goldman Sachs](#) banker based in Chicago and a top Obama campaign bundler in both 2008 and 2012, may have deserved an ambassadorship for his services. But that's what all those tiny islands in the Caribbean are for. Appointing Mr. Heyman—who is diplomatically challenged, to put it diplomatically—his top representative to Canada says a lot about what the president thinks about his northern neighbor.

Mr. Heyman made his debut in Ottawa earlier this month with a dinner speech at the National Gallery followed by a [Q&A](#) with former Canadian ambassador to Washington Frank McKenna. Mr. McKenna used the event to raise what Canada sees as troubling "irritants" in the bilateral relationship. Mr. Heyman used it to explain to Canadians how insignificant they are in the eyes of Washington.

Mr. McKenna began with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a proposed free-trade agreement among 12 countries that Canada is eager to see completed. He thanked the U.S. for inviting his country to join but then pointed out that the members are "all hung up because we're waiting for fast track" negotiating authority, which would assure an up or down congressional vote on any deal. When will it happen, the Canadian wanted to know.

Mr. Heyman called this "focusing on the wrong things." With or without fast track, "I don't think that should be a reason for anybody not to negotiate." He even told Mr. McKenna that TPP "could be" completed without fast-track.

This is nonsense: No country is likely to put the opening of its most protected markets on the table until they know that the U.S. Congress will not be allowed to pick the deal apart. Mr. McKenna seemed incredulous that the ambassador was trying to spin it otherwise. He politely moved on.

The Keystone XL pipeline, he told Mr. Heyman, "in many ways is a proxy . . . for the relationship" with the U.S. That is to say, from Canada's perspective, things are not good and Keystone is the reason. He asked why, after five years, the pipeline has not been approved.

What followed was a lecture from Mr. Heyman that was more suited to children than a foreign-policy audience. The government has received three million comments from Americans since the beginning of the year, he said. "Maybe tonight on your drive home"—boys and girls—"you can think about how long it would take to process each individual memo." Then he added: "This is a very, very large and significant number of comments and we have to process it. It's going to take some time."

Things didn't go too well either when Mr. McKenna tried to get a U.S. commitment to fund the customs plaza that Canada needs to support a new bridge it is building at the Detroit-Windsor crossing, where the U.S. trade with Canada is greater than with all of Japan. "We support nice infrastructure between our two countries," Mr. Heyman said. "This is a financing issue and I think it's best that we wait and have those discussions privately."

When Mr. McKenna moved to raise "another issue that has turned out to be bothersome," Mr. Heyman cut in: "Do you have any good issues here you want to talk about? I try to take this at a high level and make this a lot of fun. I'm sorry you're all bummed out here. We have this incredible relationship. C'mon."

Mr. McKenna kept his cool: "When you're the small partner in a relationship the irritants do become quite significant," he calmly explained.

Mr. Heyman remained clueless. "Frank," he asked, "did you ever buy a new car? You get a new car? And you have that new car, it smells great and it looks beautiful and everything else. And you bring that new car home and you realize there's a scratch on the bumper that you didn't notice when you bought it. And you go inside and start thinking about the scratch all day long. Ever do that?"

Mr. McKenna deadpanned: "No." But the American went right on with his analogy that effectively belittled Canada's concerns as trivial next to its good fortune in being a U.S. neighbor.

Many Canadians have already been saying that they've given up on Mr. Obama and now count the days until he leaves office. That may be a good survival strategy for Canada. But it can't be good for the U.S., which doesn't have so many allies that it can afford to offend one of the most important.

Billings, Montana Gazette - Editorial **Obama earned the low ratings**

Sometimes, you have to admit you're wrong.

And, we were wrong.

We said that things couldn't get much worse after the sub par presidency of George W. Bush.

But, President Barack Obama's administration has us yearning for the good ol' days when we were at least winning battles in Iraq.

The latest NBC/Wall Street Journal polls show that Americans are giving Obama lower marks than in 2006 when Iraq was going poorly for Bush and a tepid response to Hurricane Katrina sunk Bush's ratings.

It's not that popularity polling should be the final or even best measure of a president. There is that old saw that points out there's a difference between doing what is right and what is popular.

For us, though, it's the number of bungled or blown policies in the Obama administration which lead us to believe Obama has earned every bit of an abysmal approval rating.

Let's recap some of the mistakes:

- Maybe the worst and most widespread invasion of privacy occurred when the Obama administration continued a controversial National Security Agency program of spying on millions of citizens culling their phone records to intercepting online information. The administration has done nearly nothing to safeguard civil liberties or put in safeguards to protect our Constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

- The Obama administration has continued to ratchet down on emissions from coal-fired power plants while giving consumers little new innovation to replace the power supply. Meanwhile,

Obama continues to thwart other energy projects that might be helpful to the economy, like the Keystone XL pipeline. The war on carbon might not be so bad if indeed it was being counterbalanced by true innovation.

- Iraq was an inherited quagmire from the Bush administration. But six years later, Obama has to own the current situation which, as this is being written, looks perilously close to civil war and a complete breakdown of government in Iraq. If that were to happen, the sacrifice of thousands of Americans' lives would be cheapened, if not in vain. His handling the situation seems uncertain and we can't help but wonder if the same type of inaction will lead to a civil war similar to Syria's?

- The Bowe Bergdahl situation is an example of right instinct, completely wrong handling of a prisoner exchange. The Obama administration should be lauded for not wanting to leave any American soldier behind. But, surprising Congress, trading possible terrorists and not doing enough to vet the background of Bergdahl had the net effect of looking incompetent. What should have been an easy public relations victory for bringing a lost soldier home turned into a public relations nightmare, and continued to erode public confidence, leading some to wonder if Obama's team can't even get something as important as bringing home a captive soldier correct, what can it be successful at?

- The VA scandal showed that wait times for veterans access to health care was so bad that some veterans actually died before they could get the medical care they were entitled to. While the VA system was not invented by the Obama administration, after six years of management, it's clear that problems were not be corrected quickly enough and that our nation was not living up to the promise it made to take care of soldiers. The most recent debacle led to the sacking of retired Gen. Eric Shinseki, but it was another black eye for the administration which appeared to look incompetent when it comes to taking care of wounded, or in-need veterans.

- Speaking of health care, Obama had also pledged that his administration would embrace new stem cell technology, and part of the hope and change we heard so much about would happen as lives improved through medical innovation. But as his presidency has continued, we see little evidence that Obama is pushing for new cures, science or solutions when it comes to medical problems.

- For years now, reports by watchdog organizations and journalists that have shown despite Obama's promises of being more transparent, his administration has actually cracked down on journalists, spied on citizens and retaliated against those who leak information to the press. In fact, the Obama administration has become so opaque and difficult that it has earned the reputation of being far worse than Nixon, the disgraced president whose terrible clampdown of information led to federal law being changed for more transparency.

- Finally, Obamacare has become synonymous with boondoggle. To be fair, there has not been enough time to judge whether the comprehensive health care reform program works, but one thing is certain: The public presentation and roll-out of the program was so riddled with technical glitches and problems, it greatly undermined the public's confidence in the system.

These are all signs — none of them definitive on their own, necessarily. However, when taken in completely, these demonstrate a disturbing trend of incompetence and failure. It's not just that Americans are in a sour mood about national politics. That's probably part of it. Instead, Obama has become another in a line of presidents long on rhetoric and hopelessly short on action.

Obama's hope and change have left liberals and conservatives alike hoping for real change, not just more lofty rhetoric.

Examiner

Anti-semitism and the shame of the PCUSA

by Hugh Hewitt

Prominently featured at the website of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an "An Open Letter of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to our American Jewish Interfaith Partners" which is signed by the denomination's three senior officials and which begins:

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[Read the whole thing](#) at pcusa.org. It is gibberish, nonsense of the worst sort: deeply disingenuous double talk intended to skim over the biased proceedings which produced it. Now the PCUSA, as its members call it, has taken an official position against [Israel](#) and so I, as an elder in the PCUSA - no longer a "ruling" elder in my congregation, having wrapped up my second such stint last year - have to take a position for or against the PCUSA based on it.

Many PCUSA congregations across the country are already engaged in the process of "discerning" whether to remain within the splintering denomination, and this new assault on Israel and the virulent language employed — "occupation" — will no doubt make that process much easier for hundreds of thousands of us. If their congregations don't leave, they will. They will not be part of the American intifada against Israel.

The PCUSA has raised its hand against Israel. So now either my congregation must depart the PCUSA or I must depart my congregation. I will not be a part, however small, in any campaign against Israel. No Christian who knows how the Church largely stood silent during the [Holocaust](#) should be. No thinking person who reads beyond the fringes of the Left would reason as this letter does. If a denomination insists on being ruled by a majority of ill-educated posers, it deserves the withering that has already set in and will now accelerate.

Strong language that, and I have never used it in any of the theological debates to date. Jesus was angry only with the Pharisees and the money-changers.

In this "open letter," the most tortured, pharisaical logic is employed to leverage money against the Jewish homeland. The "divestment" urged does not advance peace in the region. It does not thwart terror. It is silent on the fact that at the very moment of its sending an American teenager and two other Israeli teens have been kidnapped by [terrorists](#) operating in the territories the PCUSA blithely refers to as "occupied."

I posted a link to the "open letter" on Twitter and asked for reactions.

From Robert Kraychik: "I think I'll just keep siding with God's Chosen People over the people chosen by a bunch of whiny leftists."

Sherri Wells noted that "someone needs to tell the PCUSA it's the [Palestinians](#) that don't want a two state solution."

"Give the PCUSA a break," Gary Jacobsen urged. "SOMEBODY had to get the speck out of Israel's eye."

Noah Pollak picked up on the Ark-sized duplicity of the letter. "After sucker-punching Israel," Noah noted, "they ask US Jewish community to 'remain open' to them as if nothing happened."

"An antisemitic move like boycotting Israel does not make them a partner," tweeted Jeff Dunetz. "This Jew prayed on Shabbos they stop being morons."

"But it's a nuanced antisemitism ..." added Eric Hardie.

Indeed, that is the bottom line. Like [Franklin D. Roosevelt's State Department](#) throughout [World War II](#), like propagandists of the Left in more modern times, the PCUSA's deliberations ignored the attempts to destroy Israel in 1948, 1967 and 1973. It ignores the language of the [Hamas](#) charter, and the fact that Hamas has now been welcomed into the Palestinian Authority's government. Mostly it ignores the endless terror attacks, and the war crime of indiscriminate use of rockets against civilians, the language of [genocide](#) routinely employed by the mullahs in Tehran whose [Hezbollah](#) puppets occupy south [Lebanon](#).

It seems likely that most of the PCUSA's General Assembly voters are wholly ignorant of most of this, being anti-intellectual as well as anti-Israel.

This is not a theological dispute. As a guy who goes to Mass on Saturday afternoon and to the PCUSA on Sunday morning, I am not easily riled over theological disputes.

But an assault on a state for the Jews, on their historic land and state reconstituted after the Holocaust, and one launched by a bunch of poorly-educated, intentionally provocative praise-seekers? That doesn't take great theological training to see as a transparent attempt to curry favor with opinion elites that sneer at the very idea of religious belief based on Scripture.

The PCUSA made its choice. Now its ever-declining membership will make their decision on the circles they wish to travel in.

Herman Wouk's great character of his *Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance* epics, Aaron Jastrow, said he could smell anti-Semitism in the room when George Santayana was in it. I wasn't at the PCUSA's General Assembly, but I suspect Professor Jastrow would have caught the same whiff -- had his fictional being survived the Holocaust

IBD

EPA's own Hazmat situation: Someone's pooping in its office halls

by Andrew Malcolm



Hey, look what I found!

By now, everyone's become annoyingly familiar with the eagerness of Barack and Michelle Obama and their administrative minions across the country to tell Americans how to live their lives, according to Democrat dicta of what is healthy, desirable, proper and politically correct.

They've only got 938 days left to cram more rules, regulations and requirements down the national throat. Don't forget, the Chicagoan has a phone and a pen to circumvent Congress and now House Speaker John Boehner says he'll sue the administration over its self-granted powers.

So, there seems to have been a flood of new attempts to control more of American life. Using the Patent Office, for example, the black president's White House is trying to change the Redskins' team name.

Mrs. Obama, a known french-fry addict who serves nine pies at Thanksgiving. has never been accused of anorexia. But she's pushing restaurant chains across the country to modify the contents and portions of their menus' most popular items to make them healthy and less tasty.

Mrs. Obama has, unsolicited, instructed American parents what they should and should not be serving up for their family's consumption at the breakfast and dinner table.

And using the financial clout of federal subsidies, she's also driving school cafeterias to alter menus to follow her approved healthy guidelines, even if tons of that stuff then gets tossed uneaten into landfills because tomorrow's leaders disagree with the tastes of today's first lady.

Using regulations and permits, Obama has stunted energy explorations on federal land and stalled the Keystone XL pipeline because to him oil is a four-letter word. Remember too ObamaCare with its 15-foot tall stack of new rules and regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency, which intends to strangle the coal industry with unattainable rules on CO2 emissions, among other things, has its eyes set on regulating pretty much any collection of water down to private puddles.

But now it turns out Empress Gina McCarthy and her unfettered EPA regulation empire have encountered an environmental problem of their very own. And it stinks. *Really*.

Someone or someones has taken to defecating in EPA office hallways.

Yes, it's gross. But also hilariously karmic for environmental enforcers.

If this happened in a private business, government regulators would descend in funny rubber suits, ribbon off the contaminated ares and remove the unauthorized waste disposal for further analysis.

Then, they'd stand in a row behind their boss giving a full sit-rep for the TV cameras that answered the agency's news-release summons. Your tax dollars at work.

While not making it all the way to the EPA's restrooms might be a relief of sorts, it could also be considered a health threat. Ask New York City subway riders.

On Wednesday, McCarthy informed the House Oversight Committee that, doggone it, a whole bunch of emails sought by Congress have just up and disappeared.

Quite a coincidence given the strange timing of a half-dozen crashed and trashed hard-drives over at the Internal Revenue Service containing subpoenaed evidence.

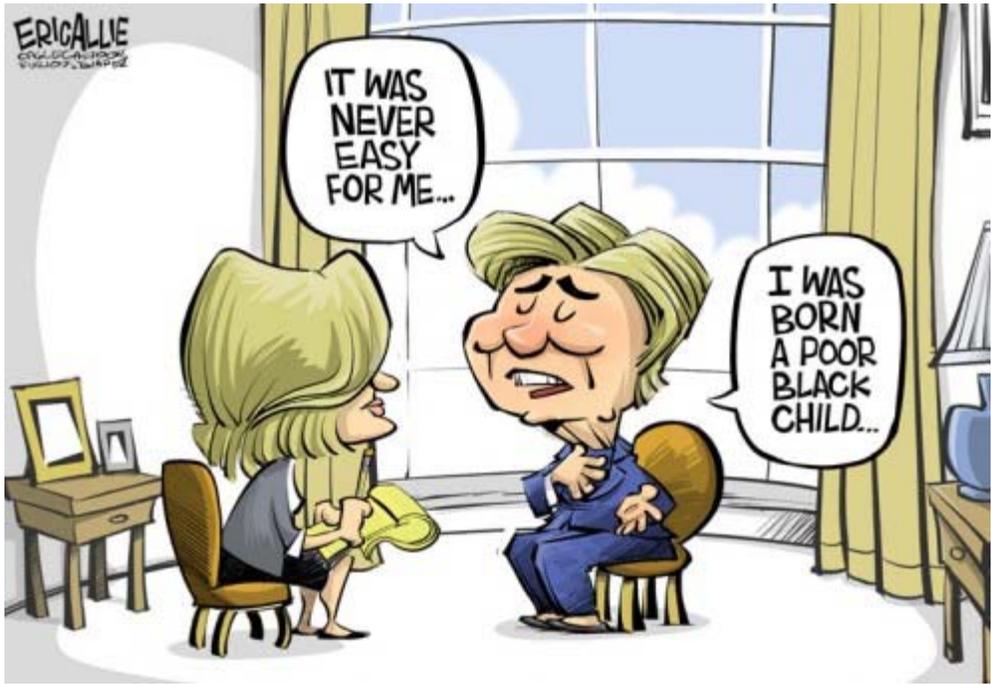
Fortunately, at least one EPA email survived and [Government Executive's Eric Katz](#) found it. In the message to Denver employees, EPA Deputy Regional Administrator Howard Cantor described several damaging incidents of inappropriate bathroom behavior, including toilet sabotage and disturbing deposits of human fecal material in adjacent hallways.

He said such material presented health hazards to fellow employees. Managers consulted with a workplace violence expert who warned that such anti-social behavior was not only unhealthy and unsafe but likely to escalate to something.

"Management is taking this situation very seriously," Cantor wrote, "and will take whatever actions are necessary to identify and prosecute these individuals." He asked EPA workers with any information on suspected hallway poopers to alert their supervisor.

An Environmental Impact Statement on the incidents is expected within a couple of years.

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