

December 29, 2014

Scott Johnson with a meditation on the ungrounded Peggy Noonan.

Peggy Noonan joined the crowd that turned on George W. Bush in what I thought was (in Noonan's case) a grossly unfair manner in 2008. I wrote critically about one of Noonan's weekly Wall Street Journal columns in which she identified with the public disapproval of Bush that April in "Season of the witch."

Having turned on George W. Bush, Noonan moved on to support the election of Barack Obama later that year. Noonan all but endorsed Obama in her 2008 column "Obama and the runaway train." The anti-Bush and pro-Obama columns fit neatly together. She wrote of Obama just before the election:

"He has within him the possibility to change the direction and tone of American foreign policy, which need changing; his rise will serve as a practical rebuke to the past five years, which need rebuking; his victory would provide a fresh start in a nation in which a fresh start would come as a national relief. He climbed steep stairs, born off the continent with no father to guide, a dreamy, abandoning mother, mixed race, no connections. He rose with guts and gifts. He is steady, calm, and, in terms of the execution of his political ascent, still the primary and almost only area in which his executive abilities can be discerned, he shows good judgment in terms of whom to hire and consult, what steps to take and moves to make. We witnessed from him this year something unique in American politics: He took down a political machine without raising his voice."

In a sense, Obama delivered, but in another sense Noonan got everything wrong. Obama has changed the direction and tone of American foreign policy, alright, yet the change hasn't yielded the results Noonan anticipated.

Noonan has now turned on Obama. ...

Same treatment for another who should have known better. Scott Johnson on David Brooks.

... But what are we to make of Brooks? In his day job, he is one of the regular columnists accorded prime journalistic real estate on the op-ed page of the New York Times. Brooks came to the Times from a conservative milieu. Life at the Times has domesticated him. Gabriel Sherman recounts in his 2009 New Republic piece on Brooks:

In the spring of 2005, New York Times columnist David Brooks arrived at then-Senator Barack Obama's office for a chat. Brooks, a conservative writer who joined the Times in 2003 from The Weekly Standard, had never met Obama before. But, as they chewed over the finer points of Edmund Burke, it didn't take long for the two men to click. "I don't want to sound like I'm bragging," Brooks recently told me, "but usually when I talk to senators, while they may know a policy area better than me, they generally don't know political philosophy better than me. I got the sense he knew both better than me."

That first encounter is still vivid in Brooks's mind. "I remember distinctly an image of—we were sitting on his couches, and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant," Brooks says, "and I'm thinking, a) he's going to be president and b) he'll be a very good president." In the

fall of 2006, two days after Obama's *The Audacity of Hope* hit bookstores, Brooks published a glowing *Times* column. The headline was "Run, Barack, Run."

Brooks's 2006 column is accessible online [here](#); P.J Gladnick excerpts the highlights of Sherman's 2009 *New Republic* article [here](#). Sherman documents Brooks's continuing infatuation with Obama as of 2009. Sherman quotes Brooks conceding his shift on the political spectrum and Obama's assessment of himself as "a Burkean," which Brooks took at face value. And they say journalists are cynics.

Now those of us who aren't as smart as Brooks had no problem pegging Obama's place on the political spectrum, and it wasn't a terribly difficult task. We didn't find him to be "a Burkean." We thought he was a left-wing ideologue who would do great damage to the United States at home and around the world, and I believe he has done so. Steve says that Brooks has gone silent on Obama, but, if so, he needs to open up. The man is a political columnist, after all, not a spiritual adviser. ...

Matthew Continetti profiles film maker John Milius.

... there may be no better moment than now to reflect on the life and work of John Milius, the Romantic genius whose influence spans the films he wrote, the films he directed, and the films such as *American Graffiti* (1973) and *The Big Lebowski* (1998) whose characters he inspired. The documentary *Milius* (2013) is available for free on Amazon Prime. It is the best place to start for someone eager to learn more about Hollywood's most notorious conservative, a natural storyteller attracted to, as his daughter puts it, "the extreme man who knows no fear."

Born in 1944 to a Jewish family in St. Louis, Milius' childhood heroes were Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and Chuck Yeager. His family moved to Los Angeles when he was seven years old. Milius was a troublemaker, a raconteur, a tall and hefty teenager who surfed and shot and dreamed of a military career. But he couldn't enlist: asthma. "It was totally demoralizing," he once said.

Milius' inability to fight in Vietnam led to a profound crisis of identity. What to do? One day he wandered into a retrospective of the films of Akira Kurosawa. He found his calling somewhere in the images of armored samurai enforcing ancient codes of honor. He enrolled in the film school at the University of Southern California. It was, he said, "the West Point of Hollywood."

Milius was among the early graduates of film programs at USC (George Lucas), UCLA (Francis Ford Coppola), and NYU (Martin Scorsese) who established the contemporary movie experience. They were joined early on by Steven Spielberg, who had been rejected from USC twice but won a job at Universal television nonetheless. The group socialized, promoted, and collaborated with each other.

Milius was known for his writing ability, his girth, his bravado, his hijinks, his politics. He was skeptical of government and defended the Second Amendment and supported the war in Vietnam. He mocked the counterculture that was on its way to becoming the dominant culture. The hero of the student revolutionaries was Ché Guevara. Milius' was Theodore Roosevelt.

These were not the dominant opinions in Hollywood. Hippies often wore buttons emblazoned with peace signs and the slogan, "Nirvana Now." Milius changed the peace sign into the silhouette of a B-52 and replaced the slogan with "Apocalypse Now." ...

Kevin Williamson with another example of an out-of-control government. This time NSA employees who spy on significant others. One commenter on Instapundit says; "The government is in open rebellion against its people."

A private investigator once explained to me why he always turned down husband-and-wife cases: If your marriage has gone so sour that the best course of action you can think of is hiring a guy to spy on your spouse, then you don't need an investigator — you need a minister, a therapist, or a good divorce lawyer. That has always seemed eminently sensible to me.

So how screwed up does your relationship have to be that getting the NSA involved sounds like a good idea?

Thanks to a Christmas Eve document dump, we learn that agents of the National Security Agency, the spookiest spooks in all our vast spookocracy, are a bunch of stalkers, using the effectively boundless surveillance powers of their organization to spy on husbands and wives, overseas girlfriends, and sundry romantic partners. And that's our government at work: While the guys who are supposed to be keeping an eye on Gordon Gekko are keeping their eyes on marathon porn sessions instead, the guys who are supposed to be putting a hurt on Durka Durka Mohammed Jihad are trying to figure out whether their girlfriends are browsing Tinder. One curious analyst targeted the numbers in her husband's telephone directory. Another spied on his wife, who was stationed overseas.

As usual, basically nothing happened to the wrongdoers — working for the government means facing no real consequences for real crimes. ...

Here's one bit of snooping we'll all like. **WaPo reports** DNA testing solves a messy problem.

Joe Gillmer had a problem. A big, stinky, sole-troubling problem plaguing Midtown Alexandria Station condos, where he serves as board vice president.

How to put this gently? Dog, er, waste in the vestibule, in the elevator (yes, really), and — this particularly incensed Gillmer — in the garage beside handicapped parking, making life difficult for residents with physical challenges.

"What were we going to do?" Gillmer says. "Put up 13 cameras for \$100,000 with the slim chance of catching the guy?"

Instead, the condo association hired a service called PooPrints to match evidence from the crime scene to registered DNA taken from all condo dogs.

Yes, yes, Gillmer has heard all the jokes: "CSI: Manure," you name it. "I got a lot of criticism," he recalls. "They called me the 'Czar of Poop.'" ...

Power Line

[A meditation on Peggy Noonan](#)

by Scott Johnson

Peggy Noonan joined the crowd that turned on George W. Bush in what I thought was (in Noonan's case) a grossly unfair manner in 2008. I wrote critically about one of Noonan's weekly Wall Street Journal columns in which she identified with the public disapproval of Bush that April in ["Season of the witch."](#)

Having turned on George W. Bush, Noonan moved on to support the election of Barack Obama later that year. Noonan all but endorsed Obama in her 2008 column ["Obama and the runaway train."](#) The anti-Bush and pro-Obama columns fit neatly together. She wrote of Obama just before the election:

He has within him the possibility to change the direction and tone of American foreign policy, which need changing; his rise will serve as a practical rebuke to the past five years, which need rebuking; his victory would provide a fresh start in a nation in which a fresh start would come as a national relief. He climbed steep stairs, born off the continent with no father to guide, a dreamy, abandoning mother, mixed race, no connections. He rose with guts and gifts. He is steady, calm, and, in terms of the execution of his political ascent, still the primary and almost only area in which his executive abilities can be discerned, he shows good judgment in terms of whom to hire and consult, what steps to take and moves to make. We witnessed from him this year something unique in American politics: He took down a political machine without raising his voice.

In a sense, Obama delivered, but in another sense Noonan got everything wrong. Obama has changed the direction and tone of American foreign policy, alright, yet the change hasn't yielded the results Noonan anticipated.

Noonan has now turned on Obama. She actually turned on him a while ago. In a recent column — ["The unwisdom of Barack Obama."](#) behind the Journal's subscription paywall but accessible via Google — Noonan condemned Obama on one of the grounds she had supported him in 2008: "His essential problem is that he has very poor judgment."

Now you tell us.

In her defense, Noonan might plead that she acknowledged the paltry evidence in support of her 2008 claim that Obama has "good judgment." If "judgment" were the issue, perhaps the excuse would mitigate the verdict that Noonan herself is guilty of incredibly poor judgment.

Yet the problems with Obama run much deeper than poor judgment. Noonan overlooks his sophisticated ignorance and leftist ideological rigidity. If you were following the news in 2008 and acquainting yourself with Obama's background, you had to work hard to miss the evidence. Indeed, Noonan must have worked hard to avoid mentioning any of it and to work up her lyrical tribute to Obama in her 2008 column.

We have written a lot over the years about Obama's ignorance and ideology. Bret Stephens focused on Obama's ignorance in the Wall Street Journal column "[What Obama knows](#)" (behind the Journal's subscription paywall but also accessible via Google). Noonan to the contrary notwithstanding, Stephens writes: "[E]ven at an elementary level, Mr. Obama often doesn't know what he's talking about. It isn't so much his analysis of global events that's wrong, though it is. The deeper problem is the foundation of knowledge on which that analysis is built."

I would go further than Bret Stephens in that column (as he would as well). Something beyond ignorance explains Obama's affinity for the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, and his hostility to Israel. The ideological component of Obama's failures is probably the most important.

He advertised it in his promise of "fundamental transformation" of the United States. He clearly meant it. He has done his best to deliver on it. He has another two years to work on it. And on this score, he knows what he is doing and it would be a serious mistake to count him a failed president.

Power Line

[A meditation on David Brooks](#)

by Scott Johnson

Reading [Steve Hayward's post](#) on David Brooks and his mistreatment by Jay Michaelson in the Daily Beast set me off. In his magnanimous style, Steve calls for attention to Brooks's religious reflections by all fair-minded readers. Steve urges us not to write Brooks off simply because his political judgment has gone haywire.

As Steve suggested, I have listened to Brooks's speech on Christianity in the public square. It's an interesting speech and well worth the time to take it in [by audio](#) or [by transcript](#).

But what are we to make of Brooks? In his day job, he is one of the regular columnists accorded prime journalistic real estate on the op-ed page of the New York Times. Brooks came to the Times from a conservative milieu. Life at the Times has domesticated him. Gabriel Sherman [recounts](#) in his 2009 New Republic piece on Brooks:

In the spring of 2005, New York Times columnist David Brooks arrived at then-Senator Barack Obama's office for a chat. Brooks, a conservative writer who joined the Times in 2003 from The Weekly Standard, had never met Obama before. But, as they chewed over the finer points of Edmund Burke, it didn't take long for the two men to click. "I don't want to sound like I'm bragging," Brooks recently told me, "but usually when I talk to senators, while they may know a policy area better than me, they generally don't know political philosophy better than me. I got the sense he knew both better than me."

That first encounter is still vivid in Brooks's mind. "I remember distinctly an image of—we were sitting on his couches, and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant," Brooks says, "and I'm thinking, a) he's going to be president and b) he'll be a very good president." In the fall of 2006, two days after Obama's *The Audacity of Hope* hit bookstores, Brooks published a glowing Times column. The headline was "Run, Barack, Run."

Brooks's 2006 column is accessible online [here](#); P.J. Gladnick excerpts the highlights of Sherman's 2009 New Republic article [here](#). Sherman documents Brooks's continuing infatuation with Obama as of 2009. Sherman quotes Brooks conceding his shift on the political spectrum and Obama's

assessment of himself as “a Burkean,” which Brooks took at face value. And they say journalists are cynics.

Now those of us who aren't as smart as Brooks had no problem pegging Obama's place on the political spectrum, and it wasn't a terribly difficult task. We didn't find him to be “a Burkean.” We thought he was a left-wing ideologue who would do great damage to the United States at home and around the world, and I believe he has done so. Steve says that Brooks has gone silent on Obama, but, if so, he needs to open up. The man is a political columnist, after all, not a spiritual adviser.

And what about the perfect crease he espied in Obama's pants? If I had seen it, I might have thought this was a man who could make it as a model for men's clothes if things didn't work out for him in politics. But Brooks thought it somehow suggested *this guy should be president!* The tingle up Chris Matthews's leg is far more understandable than Brooks's epiphany.

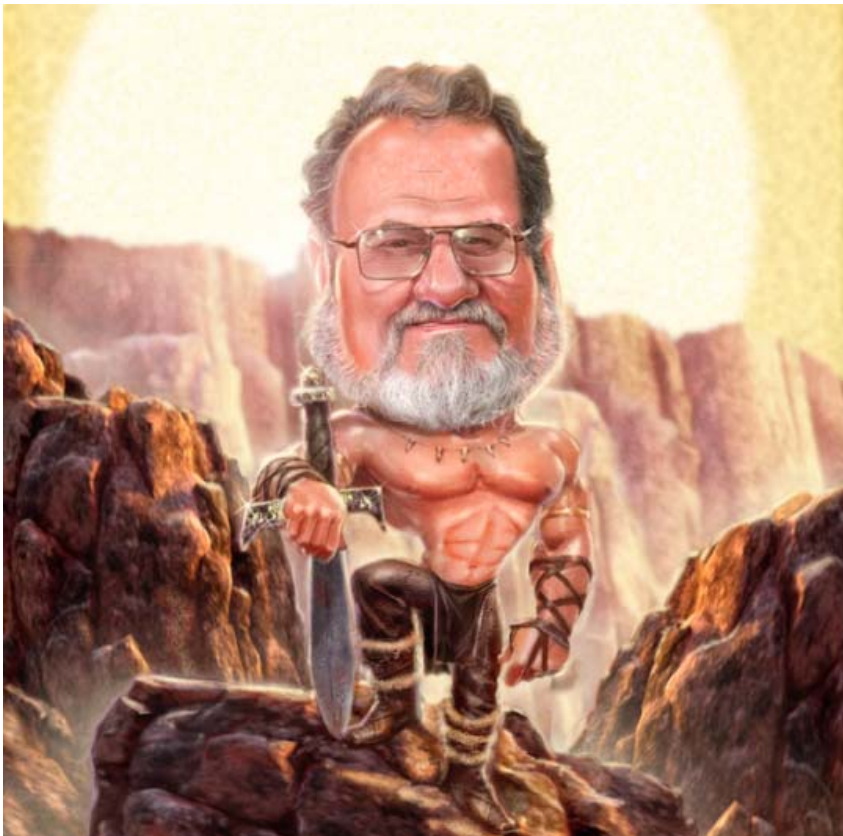
Along with Peggy Noonan and many others, Brooks was a reputed conservative who fell hard for Obama in the 2008 election. Brooks may no longer be a conservative, but his judgment of Obama has in any event proved embarrassingly wide of the mark. Brooks and Noonan et al. owe it to their readers to make an accounting. They have a reckoning due with what Brooks calls in his speech “a hardened appreciation of truth.” Let's hear it.

Free Beacon

[Hollywood Barbarian](#)

The Romantic genius of John Milius

by Matthew Continetti



Everyone has a favorite John Milius story. This is mine:

It is the mid-1980s. There is a party at the house of screenwriter Paul Schrader. Milius, who wrote *Dirty Harry* and *Apocalypse Now* and directed *Conan the Barbarian* and *Red Dawn*, is there when Pauline Kael arrives. Kael is the liberal *New Yorker* film critic. To her, a Milius film is only slightly better than a slime mold.

Milius has had some wine. He has an intermediary tell Kael that he would like a “conference” with her. A message comes back: Kael wants to know if Milius, who in meetings with executives was fond of displaying pistols, is armed.

“Tell her I’m not armed,” Milius says. “But I myself am a weapon.”

I love this episode because it illustrates the mythic dimensions of Milius’ reputation in Hollywood, the way in which he came to resemble the charismatic and unpredictable and dangerous heroes he created for the screen. And Kael’s reluctance to confront the filmmaker whose art she did so much to degrade, her alternation between rhetorical ferocity and social cowardice, is characteristic of certain types of left-wing movie folk, as we see today in the studio reaction to threats made against *The Interview*.

Indeed, there may be no better moment than now to reflect on the life and work of John Milius, the Romantic genius whose influence spans the films he wrote, the films he directed, and the films such as *American Graffiti* (1973) and *The Big Lebowski* (1998) whose characters he inspired. The documentary [Milius](#) (2013) is available for free on Amazon Prime. It is the best place to start for someone eager to learn more about Hollywood’s most notorious conservative, a natural storyteller attracted to, as his daughter puts it, “the extreme man who knows no fear.”



Born in 1944 to a Jewish family in St. Louis, Milius' childhood heroes were Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and Chuck Yeager. His family moved to Los Angeles when he was seven years old. Milius was a troublemaker, a raconteur, a tall and hefty teenager who surfed and shot and dreamed of a military career. But he couldn't enlist: asthma. "It was totally demoralizing," he once said.

Milius' inability to fight in Vietnam led to a profound crisis of identity. What to do? One day he wandered into a retrospective of the films of Akira Kurosawa. He found his calling somewhere in the images of armored samurai enforcing ancient codes of honor. He enrolled in the film school at the University of Southern California. It was, he said, "the West Point of Hollywood."

Milius was among the early graduates of film programs at USC (George Lucas), UCLA (Francis Ford Coppola), and NYU (Martin Scorsese) who established the contemporary movie experience. They were joined early on by Steven Spielberg, who had been rejected from USC twice but won a job at Universal television nonetheless. The group socialized, promoted, and collaborated with each other.

Milius was known for his writing ability, his girth, his bravado, his hijinks, his politics. He was skeptical of government and defended the Second Amendment and supported the war in Vietnam. He mocked the counterculture that was on its way to becoming the dominant culture. The hero of the student revolutionaries was Ché Guevara. Milius' was Theodore Roosevelt.

These were not the dominant opinions in Hollywood. Hippies often wore buttons emblazoned with peace signs and the slogan, "Nirvana Now." Milius changed the peace sign into the silhouette of a B-52 and replaced the slogan with "Apocalypse Now." Nor were his antagonisms limited to his generation. One day an instructor told George Lucas that a film of his could not be shown because it would make the other students feel inadequate. Milius punched the instructor in the face.

By the time he graduated in 1967 those traits of Milius' personality that would most inform his work were set: stubborn independence, an oppositional mentality, ambivalence toward authority, and a fascination with manliness, with [confidence in the face of risk](#), with extremity, violence, heroism, and honor. He was a cinematic Romantic trafficking in intense emotions, in heightened dangers, in pristine settings and noble savages.

And he was one of the first members of his class to get an actual job. The B-movie studio American International Pictures (AIP) hired Milius as a writer. His first script was a remake of the *Dirty Dozen* called *The Devil's Eight* (1969)—eight, because AIP couldn't afford 12 actors. Next George Hamilton asked him to script a biopic of daredevil *Evel Knievel* (1971). The subject of compensation arose. What do you want? Hamilton asked. Milius answered: "I want girls, gold, and guns."

It was the sort of exchange that one expects to find in a Milius screenplay: the uncompromising and emphatic demand of a rugged, authentic, and independent man. Milius became famous for the sound bite, the killer speech, the character or turn of phrase that would haunt audiences after repeat viewings. From *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *Magnum Force* (1973): "Do you feel lucky, punk?" "Go head, make my day." From the story of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* in *Jaws* (1975): "The bomb. The Hiroshima bomb." "The thing about a shark, he's got lifeless eyes, black eyes, like a doll's eyes." From *Apocalypse Now* (1979): "I love the smell of napalm in the morning." "Charlie don't surf."

Actor Sam Elliott sums up the Milius style when he says, "He doesn't write for pussies and he doesn't write for women. He writes for men." The typical Milius screenplay has no hugging or

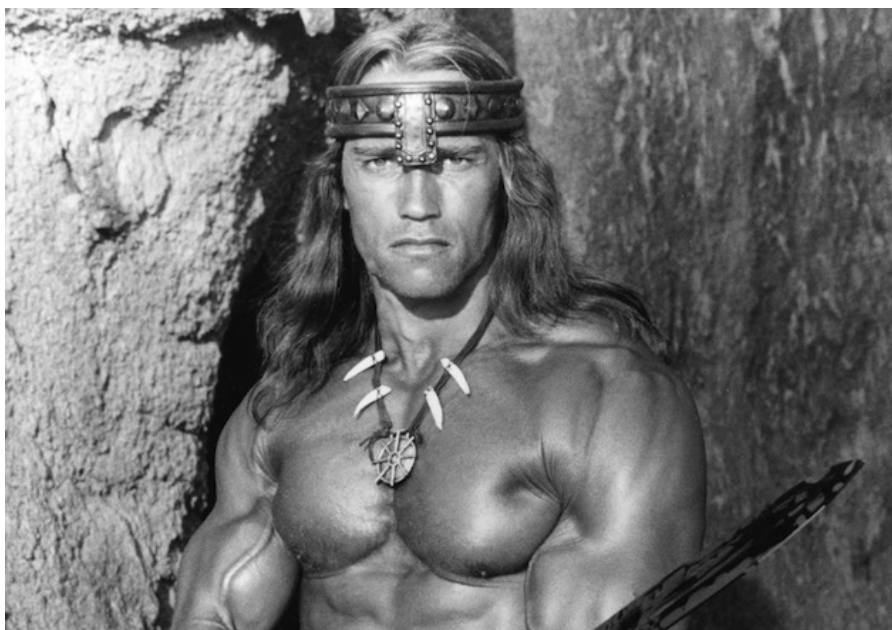
learning experiences, few roles for women and children, and lots of struggle and violence and gore. This emphasis on war, bravery edging on recklessness, feats of strength, and vengeance made him a popular screenwriter. Milius' script for *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972) became a hit for Robert Redford. He sold *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean* to Paul Newman and John Huston for \$300,000 in 1972—the equivalent of more than \$1.5 million today. *Apocalypse Now* originated in bull sessions with Lucas and Coppola and earned him an Academy Award nomination. “Everything memorable about *Apocalypse Now* was invented by John Milius,” says Coppola.

His directorial debut came in 1973 with *Dillinger*. The film is noteworthy for the complexity of its depiction of the title character, played by Warren Oates. Dillinger is less the picture's anti-hero than he is its antagonist, fleeing justice in the person of Special Agent Melvin Purvis (Ben Johnson), the true hero of Milius' story, an indefatigable lawman who recognizes the skill and fearlessness of his quarry.

With *The Wind and the Lion* in 1975, Milius appeared set to release a film every couple of years. Embellishing a historical episode in which President Teddy Roosevelt deployed the Marines against a Berber warlord who had kidnapped U.S. nationals, *Wind and the Lion* brought Milius into contact with Sean Connery, features historically accurate battle scenes and a thrilling score by Jerry Goldsmith, and in its speeches distills the essence of Milius' philosophy.

In 1978 he made a coming of age story, *Big Wednesday*, a beautifully shot and bittersweet exercise in nostalgia about a group of surfers in southern California divided by Vietnam and the onset of adulthood. It was a flop. Milius was bereft. He wondered whether audiences were interested in the movies he wanted to make. He considered joining the French Foreign Legion. “But I couldn't decide to fly to Marseilles in first class or coach.”

If *Wind and the Lion* and *Big Wednesday* are his most personal films, *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) and *Red Dawn* (1984) are the fullest expressions of Milius' artistic vision. It was Oliver Stone who wrote the initial screenplay adaptation of Robert E. Howard's pulp fantasy stories. Milius picked it up and re-worked it and sold it to producer Dino De Laurentiis.



Milius wanted bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger to star. De Laurentiis said absolutely not.

So, De Laurentiis said in his Italian accent, who's it going to be?

Milius paused and said: "Dustin Hoffman."

De Laurentiis exploded in curses. But Milius got Schwarzenegger.

Conan was a hit, a brutal and exciting and weirdly captivating two hours of beheadings, swordplay, orgy, and percussion. For his follow-up Milius chose an anti-war screenplay by Kevin Reynolds called *Ten Soldiers*. When he finished with his rewrite the script had become *Red Dawn*, a depiction of the insurgency that follows a Soviet-Cuban invasion of Colorado at the beginning of World War III. The film was released to box office success but withering disapproval from critics, who considered it obscenely violent and reactionary and implicitly fascist.

How you feel about Conan and *Red Dawn* is a good clue to your politics. A lot of liberals hate these movies; a lot of conservatives love them. And yet, when one watches closely, the caricature of Milius as a fire-breathing cigar-smoking NRA-board-member Republican is exposed as false.

Conan the Barbarian and *Red Dawn* are not partisan movies. It is not political scenarios that attract Milius but pre-political ones. He is drawn to landscapes where there is no law, no sovereign, no state, to the desolate places where men must make their own way. His characters are renegades. They either oppose the dominant order like Dillinger, Kurtz, and the Great Raisuli (Sean Connery), or they exist outside it entirely like Jeremiah Johnson and Conan the Cimmerian and the Wolverines. The authority figure Milius admires most is Teddy Roosevelt, exponent of muscular Christianity and the New Nationalism, frontiersman, soldier, hunter, dynamo. Not exactly a square.

Milius' characters do not reside in the United States. They reside in states of nature. And it is in this state, Milius believes, that the true character of an individual, his guile and wit and vitality and mettle, is revealed.

Nor are the relationships that most interest Milius political. His solitary men enter into attachments not out of biological or ideological loyalties but out of sentiment and memory and place. Dillinger's gang is a troubled and malformed simulacrum of a family. Raisuli leads a tribe of brigands. The protagonists of *Big Wednesday* share a love of the beach and of waves. Conan's mercenary fellowship bonds over tribulation. The Wolverines are a pack of insurgents. Indeed, one of the teenagers in *Red Dawn* is reduced to the point where he recognizes that they are not fighting the Communists for ideas or for glory but simply "because we live here!"

The apolitical nature of friendship and its importance to Milius is underscored by the fact that Schwarzenegger, Bryan Singer, Michael Mann, Coppola, Spielberg, Lucas, Richard Dreyfuss, Harrison Ford, Scorsese, Stone, Ed O'Neill, Robert Zemeckis, Kathleen Kennedy, Sylvester Stallone, and many other actors, writers, editors, directors, and producers appear in the 2013 documentary. These friends—the closest of which, Spielberg and Lucas, are prominent liberal donors—understand that the partisan can be separated from the personal and that Milius' views do not conform to the typical left-right divide.

These friends also know that Milius may not be a tragic writer but a comic one. "I have a healthy sense of the absurd," Milius has said. It is at the absurd extreme—consider *Apocalypse Now*—where the best black comedy is mined. In the late 1970s, Milius and Spielberg collaborated on *1941* (1979), a farcical send-up of Los Angeles at the beginning of the Second World War. There are moments throughout the filmography that cannot help being funny: The sex scene between Conan and the sorceress, Conan in the snake pit, the Soviet renovations to the local movie theater and drugstore, the reeducation camp in which Harry Dean Stanton's character pleads, "Boys!

Avenge me! Avenge me!" And anyone who casts Sean Connery as a Berber prince knows how to laugh.

While Milius is more interventionist and pro-military and unapologetically American than your average filmmaker—he understands the utility and necessity of force—the inherent silliness that runs through much of his work reveals a melancholy worldview that should not be ignored.



The very point of *Red Dawn* may be less obvious than its fans and critics believe it to be. "I think it shows the utter futility, a certain desperate futility, of war," Milius has said. "In the end of the movie, in spite of all that heroism and valor, the reasons and revenges on both sides, and everything else, all that's left is a plaque, a lonely plaque, on some desolate battlefield that no one ever goes to."

I do not mean to rob *Red Dawn* of its jingoistic charms. I mean only to suggest that Milius cannot be dismissed out of hand as an unthinking manufacturer of violence, to advocate the serious appreciation and consideration of his work. For the past decades have not been kind to him.

The reception of *Red Dawn* affected Milius more deeply than the commercial failure of *Big Wednesday*. Executives were reluctant to back his movies. He believed himself the victim of a liberal blacklist. And he was unwilling to make the artistic sacrifices necessary for steady work. Then studios interfered in the production and with the editing of *Farewell to the King* (1989) and *Flight of the Intruder* (1991).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century a corrupt accountant left Milius near bankruptcy. Looking for work so he could pay for his son to attend law school, Milius approached his friend David Milch and asked for a staff position on *Deadwood*. Milch was flabbergasted. There was no way he could walk into the office as Milius' superior. So Milch himself paid for Ethan Milius to go to Loyola. And then, after creating *Rome* for HBO, John Milius paid Milch back.

Milius fell victim to stroke in 2010. Now 70 years old, he is in recovery, and is said to be continuing his development of *Genghis Khan*. But the reality is that his presence was missing from Hollywood long before his illness. The absence is jarring: Where is the filmmaker today with the audacity, the

verve, the primal sense, the gift for the theatrical, the unapologetic love of soldiering and ribaldry and camaraderie and courage of John Milius? Who is the filmmaker today of whom Pauline Kael would be afraid?

Noting his size and demeanor, his gentility and ferocity, Milius' friends liken him to a bear. It is a comparison he has adopted. And it is the bear's fate to which Milius seems destined. "Loneliness," Teddy Roosevelt says of the bear in *The Wind and the Lion*. "The bear lives out his life alone. Indomitable, unconquered, but always alone. He has no real allies, only enemies. But none of them are as great as he."

National Review

Tinker, Tailor, Stalker, Spy

In violations not just of NSA policy but of the law, agents spy on their romantic interests.

By Kevin D. Williamson

A private investigator once explained to me why he always turned down husband-and-wife cases: If your marriage has gone so sour that the best course of action you can think of is hiring a guy to spy on your spouse, then you don't need an investigator — you need a minister, a therapist, or a good divorce lawyer. That has always seemed eminently sensible to me.

So how screwed up does your relationship have to be that getting the NSA involved sounds like a good idea?

Thanks to a Christmas Eve document dump, we learn that agents of the National Security Agency, the spookiest spooks in all our vast spookocracy, are a bunch of stalkers, using the effectively boundless surveillance powers of their organization to spy on husbands and wives, overseas girlfriends, and sundry romantic partners. And that's our government at work: While the guys who are supposed to be keeping an eye on Gordon Gekko are keeping their eyes on marathon porn sessions instead, the guys who are supposed to be putting a hurt on Durka Durka Mohammed Jihad are trying to figure out whether their girlfriends are browsing Tinder. One curious analyst targeted the numbers in her husband's telephone directory. Another spied on his wife, who was stationed overseas.

As usual, basically nothing happened to the wrongdoers — working for the government means facing no real consequences for real crimes. Yes, *crimes*: These actions do not represent mere violations of NSA policies — there were plenty of those, too; more on that in a bit — but willful violations of the law. One offender retired before the investigation of his crimes was complete; others were merely reprimanded; the fellow caught spying on his wife abroad was docked a month's pay. Who these offenders are remains unknown, as the reports are heavily redacted. Funny thing, that: These criminals, some of them still employed by the NSA, intentionally used the awesome power of a federal spy agency to violate American citizens' privacy, but the NSA is all discretion when it comes to the privacy of the criminals on its payroll.

Thought experiment: If you, citizen, were caught illegally using an NSA database to check up on that girl you met on OkCupid, what do you think would happen? Do you reckon that you'd get a cease-and-desist letter — or that you'd be scooped up by a team of thick-necked men with very short haircuts and dumped in the darkest oubliette Uncle Sam has available?

Of course, there is precedent for tolerating this sort of thing. If you're former presidential adviser Sandy Berger, you can loot classified documents out of the National Archives and face practically zilch in terms of real consequences: We still do not even know for sure what classified terrorism documents Berger stole and destroyed to protect Bill Clinton's reputation (Mrs. Clinton subsequently gave him a job as an adviser) in the course of his comical docs-in-my-socks caper. Nobody seems to want very badly to know what Berger stole, and of course some people want very badly not to know. For his crimes (which were knocked down to a misdemeanor) Berger received a small fine and a temporary — *temporary!* — revocation of his security clearance.

This is an inversion of the right order. In a sane society, people entrusted with state power — from NSA agents down to traffic cops — would be held to a higher standard rather than a lower one, and sanctioned more severely for wrongdoing rather than less.

The problem for the NSA and other intelligence organizations is that we expect their agents to do the occasional creepy and possibly illegal deed — in pursuance of their mission — but we cannot openly bless those deeds.

In a free and open society, there is a generally unspoken understanding between the citizens and the intelligence forces: We the people understand that they're going to necessarily conduct themselves in a nefarious fashion from time to time, bending or breaking some laws along the way. We know this: That's what spies do, being a necessary evil that is no less evil for being so acutely necessary. The spooks' end of the bargain is: being good at what they do, not comporting themselves like a bunch of jackasses, and getting really bendy with the situational ethics only when doing so advances some legitimate national-security interest. Operation Mincemeat we can live with; Operation Stalk My Girlfriend we cannot. Little hypocrisies are the lubricant of a free society. In the case of our spy agencies, we don't want to be paying too close attention to what they're up to, because, if we did, we'd probably feel the need to intervene more than we do. So it's in everybody's best interest — cynical though it may be — that they do not give us too much reason to give them the hairy eyeball.

And here is the second source of concern in the documents: NSA agents are not only naughty — they're sloppy. Records were sent to people without clearance to receive them, surveillance was conducted improperly inside the United States, data was stored in unsecured computers, records that were supposed to be destroyed slipped through the cracks, etc. For spy agencies, holding up their end of the unspoken bargain means not getting their secrets hijacked by a nobody such as PFC Bradley Manning or a contractor such as Edward Snowden. It means not forgetting to destroy files and not leaving them on computers that are vulnerable to intrusion. It means doing the job we entrust them to do.

And for you suspicious husbands and wives on the national-security payroll, it means doing your mate-stalking on Google like an ordinary schmo.

Washington Post

[Using DNA to catch canine culprits — and their owners](#)

by Karen Heller

Joe Gillmer had a problem. A big, stinky, sole-troubling problem plaguing Midtown Alexandria Station condos, where he serves as board vice president.

How to put this gently? Dog, er, waste in the vestibule, in the elevator (yes, really), and — this particularly incensed Gillmer — in the garage beside handicapped parking, making life difficult for residents with physical challenges.

“What were we going to do?” Gillmer says. “Put up 13 cameras for \$100,000 with the slim chance of catching the guy?”

Instead, the condo association hired a service called PooPrints to match evidence from the crime scene to registered DNA taken from all condo dogs.

Yes, yes, Gillmer has heard all the jokes: “CSI: Manure,” you name it. “I got a lot of criticism,” he recalls. “They called me the ‘Czar of Poop.’”

But here’s the thing: After the service was started a year ago, “we only had to test one sample,” Gillmer says of the only scatological crime since committed — only one! This in a building with 368 units and about 600 human and 60 canine residents. That’s the sort of success that law enforcement agencies can only dream of. Now, no one dares pooh-pooh the progress that has been made.

Among the great unresolved conflicts between neighbors is determining the provenance of unwanted, unseemly and often unwittingly trampled dog detritus.

Sometimes it leads neighbors to court, as in the case of a [2011 Fairfax dispute](#).

And sometimes the answer is treating a trouble area like a crime scene.

Two years ago, the Chase in Bethesda had an epic problem — 20 incidents, possibly more (who wants to keep count?), mostly indoors, one “parcel” described as being more the product of Sasquatch than a pooch. Until the introduction of scatological forensics, which basically ended the mess for good, and with stunning alacrity.

It seems there’s nothing like a fine for sloth and stupidity, plus a dollop of humiliation, to terminate bad behavior.

The dangers of poop

Thanks in part to a Tennessee scientist with the impeccable moniker of Chesleigh Winfree, managers at housing developments and apartment buildings and members of homeowners associations and condo boards such as Gillmer are using DNA samples to solve the mystery of nasty end products.

PooPrints, a self-described “dog poop DNA matching service,” is the most successful product of BioPet Vet Lab in Knoxville, which specializes in canine genetic testing. Launched in late 2010, the company has on record the DNA of more than 30,000 dogs from Canada and 45 states, including Maryland and Virginia, and recently signed a deal to launch in Great Britain.

Winfree, along with two scientists who have since left the company, developed a process for swabbing dogs’ mouths for a DNA sample. The profiles are stored in a company database. Marble-sized specimens of offending waste are mailed to the company in bottles containing a stabilizer, then checked against the property’s registry, consistently yielding “highly viable” matches.

“I had read in scientific journals about successfully using DNA samples in waste to identify animals in the wild,” says Winfree. She realized that the same process could be used to identify (somewhat) domesticated critters as well. “I think it’s a problem that’s not resolved by any other means.”

Yes, it has come to this: We live in a society where, rather than speaking to one another and gingerly asking neighbors to clean up their dogs’ messes, we mail a portion of said messes to Tennessee in a small bottle so that, using genetic sequencing and mathematical logarithms, the canine hooligan can be identified. Another case of technology taking the place of human interaction.

This is no laughing matter, though: Beyond the issues of odor, irritation and downright ickiness, pet mess poses serious problems. “Pet waste that is not disposed of properly can be harmful to human health and the environment and can increase bacteria and other pollution when entering into local waterways,” according to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#). Poop carries bacteria and viruses that can compromise the health of other animals. It does squat for grass. The EPA has awarded grants to help communities encourage cleanup, and many municipalities spend considerable amounts on cleanup stations and owner education.

The best deterrent

Many condo and rental complexes impose pet fees for wear and tear. Some buildings also require their dogs to register with PooPrints when signing leases. What happens when the poopetrator is identified? The cost of testing a sample (ranging from \$75 to \$100) is often charged to the guilty party, along with a fine.

At the Chase, two residents have been caught: one incident seems to have been truly an accident; the other involved a two-time offender, a renter and recidivist who was fined and elected to move out.

At Midtown Alexandria Station, where some residents have balked at registering DNA samples, the guilty tenant had initially been supportive of the measure. A board member informed him: “The good news is that we used the test and it worked. We found the culprit. The bad news is that it’s your dog.” He readily paid the fine of \$115 — \$65 for the testing, \$50 for the infraction. Gillmer recalls: “He was sort of mortified for his family.”

In two years, Michelle Mann of United Residential Properties, with seven properties in four Southern states that encompass almost 2,000 units, has had only one two-time offender. “The program instantly made an immediate impact,” she says. “At some properties, we haven’t had to fine anyone.”

Says Winfree: “A few of our properties have reached the point where they rarely, if ever, submit waste.”

Well, except for one besieged property in South Carolina. Recalls Winfree, “They sent 18 waste samples” — 18! — “that matched the same dog, but no match to a dog registered in the database.”

Ultimately, the offending dog was collared. Turns out the owner had never bothered to register the pet.

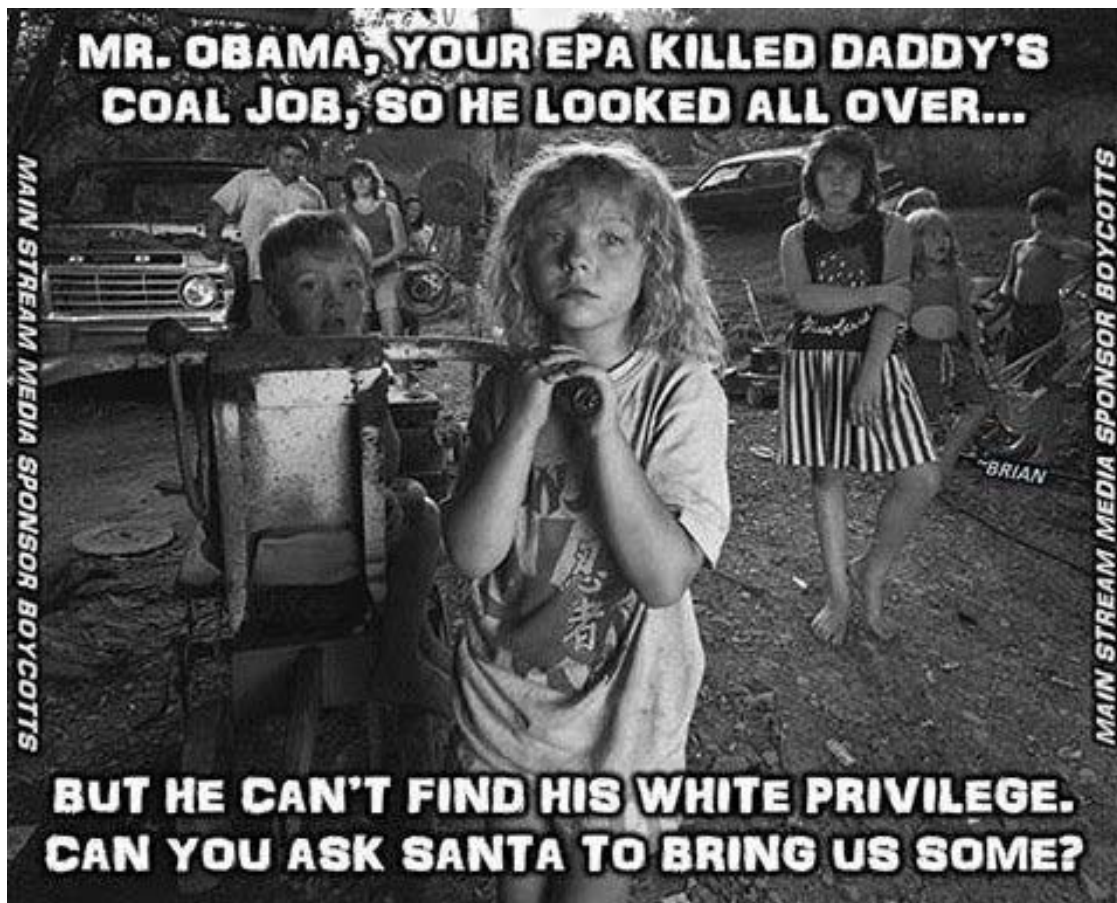
“The truth is we don’t want to interrogate every dog owner every time there’s an incident,” says Gillmer. “We just want to target the idiot who is doing this. We want people to be very aware that if you’re going to be that irresponsible, you’re going to get caught.”

Currently, PooPrints is used only in multi-unit properties, although municipalities including Dallas; Hoboken, N.J.; and Gaithersburg, Md., have expressed interest. A pilot study was conducted with an Israeli genetics lab after Jerusalem officials expressed interest in a DNA-waste matching database. There have been inquiries from the Netherlands and Malta. PooPrints should seriously consider making inroads in Paris, generally considered, for all its perfumed sophistication, to be the dog poop capital of the world.

Not every resident embraces the notion of having a beloved pet’s DNA sampled and registered.

“The blowback that we get is, ‘That’s against my rights,’ and yada, yada. ‘This is Communist. This is illegal,’” says Chris Fontaine, who distributes PooPrints in Maryland, the District and Pennsylvania. “I’m a retired Marine, so I’m kind of a right-wing conservative type,” and, really, he says he can’t quite believe he’s saying this, “but by taking care of the problem, you’re enhancing the safety of the environment.”

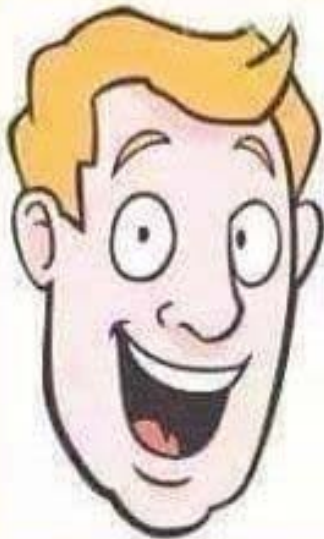
Fontaine has also noticed — and he’s not alone in the world of poop forensics — that “the 10 percent of residents who are the biggest resisters, who are dragging their feet about getting their dogs registered, they’re the ones that aren’t cleaning up after their dogs.”





**"I'm proud to be Black"
said the Black man.**

**"I'm proud to be Asian"
said the Asian man.**



**"I'm proud to be White"
said the Racist.**

THEY'RE PULLING A MOVIE

*Satirical
Analysis*



BECAUSE IT OFFENDS COMMIES???

WE DID WHAT



BECAUSE OF N.KOREA

imgflip.com



How to wash a cat

1. Put both lids of the toilet up and add 1/8 cup of pet shampoo to the water in the bowl...
2. Pick up the cat and soothe him while you carry him towards the bathroom.
3. In one smooth movement put the cat in the toilet and close the lid. You may need to stand on the lid.
4. At this point the cat will self agitate and make ample suds. Never mind the noises that come from the toilet, the cat is actually enjoying this!
5. Flush the toilet three or four times. This provides a 'Power-Wash' and 'Rinse'.
6. Have someone open the front door of your home. Be sure that there are no people between the bathroom and the front door.
7. Stand well back, behind the toilet as far as you can, and quickly lift the lid.
8. The cat will rocket out of the toilet, streak through the bathroom, and run outside where he will dry himself off.
9. Both the toilet and the cat will be sparkling clean.

Yours Sincerely,

The Dog