

July 30, 2015

The man who said "if you like your doctor, you can keep you doctor" has another lie in play; this time in the Iran agreements. Marc Thiessen, writing in WaPo, outlines the latest travesty.

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Worse, Obama didn't even reveal the existence of these secret side deals to Congress when he transmitted the nuclear accord to Capitol Hill. The agreements were uncovered, completely by chance, by two members of Congress — Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) — who were in Vienna meeting with the U.N.-related agency.

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David Harsanyi says ordinary American citizens understand Iran a lot better than John Kerry.

At a Tehran mosque last week, the Ayatollah Khamenei—amid chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel"—explained to a crowd that his nation's interests were "180 degrees" in opposition to the United States. "Even after this deal our policy toward the arrogant U.S. will not change," he explained.

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Speaking of wishful thinking, I suspect many Americans are less confused about Iran's intentions than our gullible secretary of State, even if they support a deal for partisan

reasons. Take a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll that tells us a couple of things—neither of those things what fans of the deal purpose. Americans, even if they don't know much about foreign affairs, much less grasp the intricacies of this Iranian deal, intuitively understand the Islamic Republic better than Kerry. ...

Now for a real treat, we have an interview of [Camille Paglia](#) by Salon editor David Daley. Long time readers may remember three or four years ago when Camille Paglia would pen a monthly piece for Salon. We never missed an opportunity to include items written by this original unconventional mind.

... Right from the start, when the Bill Cosby scandal surfaced, I knew it was not going to bode well for Hillary's campaign, because young women today have a much lower threshold for tolerance of these matters. The horrible truth is that the feminist establishment in the U.S., led by Gloria Steinem, did in fact apply a double standard to Bill Clinton's behavior because he was a Democrat. The Democratic president and administration supported abortion rights, and therefore it didn't matter what his personal behavior was.

But we're living in a different time right now, and young women have absolutely no memory of Bill Clinton. It's like ancient history for them; there's no reservoir of accumulated good will. And the actual facts of the matter are that Bill Clinton was a serial abuser of working-class women—he had exploited that power differential even in Arkansas. And then in the case of Monica Lewinsky—I mean, the failure on the part of Gloria Steinem and company to protect her was an absolute disgrace in feminist history! ...

... In most of these cases, like the Bill Clinton and Bill Cosby stories, there's been a complete neglect of psychology. We're in a period right now where nobody asks any questions about psychology. No one has any feeling for human motivation. No one talks about sexuality in terms of emotional needs and symbolism and the legacy of childhood. Sexuality has been politicized—"Don't ask any questions!" "No discussion!" "Gay is exactly equivalent to straight!" And thus in this period of psychological blindness or inertness, our art has become dull. There's nothing interesting being written—in fiction or plays or movies. Everything is boring because of our failure to ask psychological questions.

So I say there is a big parallel between Bill Cosby and Bill Clinton—aside from their initials! Young feminists need to understand that this abusive behavior by powerful men signifies their sense that female power is much bigger than they are! These two people, Clinton and Cosby, are emotionally infantile—they're engaged in a war with female power. It has something to do with their early sense of being smothered by female power—and this pathetic, abusive and criminal behavior is the result of their sense of inadequacy. ...

In the second part of the interview with [Camille Paglia](#), she discourses on the many news sources available today. First we have her rant on Jon Stewart of the Daily Show. Then the surprising news outlets she follows.

... I think Stewart's show demonstrated the decline and vacuity of contemporary comedy. I cannot stand that smug, snarky, superior tone. I hated the fact that young people were getting their news through that filter of sophomore snark. Comedy, to me, is one of the major modern

genres, and the big influences on my generation were Lenny Bruce and Mort Sahl. Then Joan Rivers had an enormous impact on me—she's one of my major role models. It's the old caustic, confrontational style of Jewish comedy. It was Jewish comedians who turned stand-up from the old gag-meister shtick of vaudeville into a biting analysis of current social issues, and they really pushed the envelope. Lenny Bruce used stand-up to produce gasps and silence from the audience. And that's my standard—a comedy of personal risk. And by that standard, I'm sorry, but Jon Stewart is not a major figure. He's certainly a highly successful T.V. personality, but I think he has debased political discourse. I find nothing incisive in his work. As for his influence, if he helped produce the hackneyed polarization of moral liberals versus evil conservatives, then he's partly at fault for the political stalemate in the United States. ...

... Historically, talk radio arose via Rush Limbaugh in the early 1990s precisely because of this stranglehold by liberal discourse. For heaven's sake, I was a Democrat who had just voted for Jesse Jackson in the 1988 primary, but I had to fight like mad in the early 1990s to get my views heard. The resistance of liberals in the media to new ideas was enormous. Liberals think of themselves as very open-minded, but that's simply not true! **Liberalism has sadly become a knee-jerk ideology, with people barricaded in their comfortable little cells. They think that their views are the only rational ones, and everyone else is not only evil but financed by the Koch brothers.** It's so simplistic! ...

... The first thing I always turn to is the Drudge Report, which I've done around the clock since the birth of that page. In fact, my column in Salon was the first to take the Drudge Report seriously as a major new force in the media. I loved it from the start! Its tabloid format is great—so easy and accessible and such a pleasure to read. I'm so happy that Matt Drudge has kept that classic design. Silly people claim he's stuck in the past, but that's absurd. Drudge is invoking the great populist formula of tabloids like the New York Post and the New York Daily News, which were pitched to working-class readers. Andy Warhol, who came out of a working-class immigrant factory family in Pittsburgh, adored the tabloids and reproduced their front pages in big acrylic paintings. The tabloids were always the voice of the people. I admire the mix on Drudge of all types of news stories, high and low. The reason that nobody has been able to imitate Drudge is because he's an auteur, stamping the page with his own unique sensibility and instincts. It must be exhausting, because he must constantly filter world news on a daily basis. He's simply an aggregator, not a news source, but he has an amazing sense of collage. The page is fluid and always in motion, and Drudge is full of jokes and mischief. ...

The cartoonists continue with Planned Parenthood.

Washington Post

[Obama's secret Iran deals exposed](#)

by Marc A. Thiessen

President Obama [promised](#) that his nuclear deal with Iran would not be “based on trust” but rather “unprecedented verification.” Now it turns out Obama's verification regime is based on trust after all — trust in two secret side agreements negotiated exclusively between Iran and the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that apparently no one (including the Obama administration) has seen.

Worse, Obama didn't even reveal the existence of these secret side deals to Congress when he transmitted the nuclear accord to Capitol Hill. The agreements were uncovered, completely by chance, by two members of Congress — Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) — who were in Vienna meeting with the U.N.-related agency.

In an interview, Pompeo told me that he and Cotton were meeting with the deputy director of the IAEA and the agency's two top Iran negotiators just days after the nuclear accord was announced, when they asked how the agency will carry out verification at the Iranian military complex at Parchin. IAEA officials told them, quite casually, that the details were all covered in agreements negotiated between the IAEA and the Iranian government. It was the first they had heard of the side deals.

Pompeo says they asked whether they could see those agreements. He says IAEA officials replied, " 'Oh no, of course not, no, you're not going to get to see those.' And so everybody on our side of the table asked, 'Has Secretary Kerry seen these?' 'No, Secretary Kerry hasn't seen them. No American is ever going to get to see them.' "

It turns out that only the two parties — the IAEA and Iran — get to see the actual agreements (though you can see a picture of Iranian and IAEA officials holding up what appear to be the [secret accords here](#)).

In other words, Obama is gambling our national security and handing over \$150 billion in sanctions relief to Iran, based on secret agreements negotiated between the IAEA and Iran that no U.S. official has seen.

"We need to see these documents in order to evaluate whether or not verification is ample to make such a big concession to the Iranians," Pompeo says. "No member of Congress should be asked to vote on an agreement of this historic importance absent knowing what the terms of the verification process are."

In fact, the Obama administration's failure to transmit these side deals to Congress is a violation of the law. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which Obama signed into law, explicitly states that the president must transmit the nuclear agreement along with "all related materials and annexes." That clearly covers any side agreements covering the verification of Iran's compliance.

[Susan Rice told reporters](#) the administration "provided Congress with all of the documents that we drafted or were part of drafting and all documents shared with us by the IAEA." Sorry, that's not what the law requires.

But the administration cannot hand over what it apparently does not have. For Pompeo, that raises even more troubling questions. "Why on earth is the president letting the negotiations [on verification] be negotiated by someone other than us?" he asks. How can it be that the administration would "do a deal with the world's largest state sponsor of terror, that's spent its entire existence cheating, and we would sign off on a deal with them whose core provisions are completely unknown to our side? It's remarkable."

What is in the secret side deals? According to Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), one of the side deals governing inspections of the Parchin military complex allows Iran to collect its own soil

samples, instead of IAEA inspectors. That is like letting Lance Armstrong collect his own blood samples for a doping investigation. “I suspect if we’re able to actually go over [these agreements], you find half a dozen that you would stare at and realize we really didn’t get verification,” Pompeo says.

Congress should insist on seeing the side deals before it votes on the Iran accord. The only way to stop the agreement is for Congress to override the president’s veto through a resolution of disapproval with a two-thirds vote in both houses. That would require 13 Senate Democrats and 45 House Democrats to vote no — which would have been highly unlikely until the revelation of these secret deals.

It remains to be seen whether the revelation of the secret side deals will make it impossible for Democrats to vote in favor of the Iran agreement. How, Pompeo asks, can they explain to their constituents that they voted for a nuclear deal with Iran without knowing how it will be verified?

“My mission in the next 45 days is to convince 45 House Democrats to override the veto,” Pompeo says. “It’s a long climb, but this is important.”

The Federalist

Americans Understand Iran A Lot Better Than John Kerry

Polls show that voters are realistic about the Islamic Republic's intentions. Or, at least, more realistic than our secretary of State.

By David Harsanyi

At a Tehran mosque [last week](#), the Ayatollah Khamenei—amid chants of “Death to America” and “Death to Israel”—explained to a crowd that his nation’s interests were “180 degrees” in opposition to the United States. “Even after this deal our policy toward the arrogant U.S. will not change,” he explained.

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Speaking of wishful thinking, I suspect many Americans are less confused about Iran’s intentions than our gullible secretary of State, even if they support a deal for partisan reasons. Take [a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll that tells us a couple of things](#)—neither of those things what fans of the deal purpose. Americans, even if they don’t know much about foreign affairs, much less grasp the intricacies of this Iranian deal, intuitively understand the Islamic Republic better than Kerry.

Here's the first question in the poll:

Q: The U.S. and other countries have announced a deal to lift economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for Iran agreeing not to produce nuclear weapons. International inspectors would monitor Iran's facilities, and if Iran is caught breaking the agreement economic sanctions would be imposed again. Do you support or oppose this agreement?

When asked about the deal in this highly favorable light, 56 percent support it. Hey, I'd support that deal, as well.

But, of course, the debate *is* the question. And this one is lacking vital context. The debate is about international inspectors [and their ability to get the job done](#). We know those sanctions will be almost impossible to reengage once the United Nations lifts them. Nor does the question let on what we have given up: the deal lifts an embargo on ballistic weapons in under a decade; we allow Iran to keep 6,000 centrifuges that could allow them to be on the threshold of nuclear weapons; we are reinstating \$140 billion that Iran can use, as Kerry [has pointed out](#), in aiding proxies as the largest state funder of terrorism in the world.

That's if the regime *keeps* its promises. Here's the second question in that *Washington Post* poll:

Q: How confident are you that this agreement will prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons?

Sixty-four percent are not confident that Iran will not produce or acquire highly enriched uranium. Do these people realize the entire point of this deal—as laid out by the president and his surrogates—is to stop the Iranians from obtaining nuclear weapons? It's not like we brought home any hostages or put an end to Iran's actions in Bahrain, Yemen, or Lebanon. How could they support a deal that they claim won't work? I suspect it's because the first question is a theoretical framework. The second question can be based on evidence.

Pew offers [a more full realized view of American opinion](#) on the matter. Among the 79 percent of Americans who have heard about the agreement, only 38 percent approve, while 48 percent disapprove, and 14 percent do not offer an opinion. Only 26 percent of those who claim to have heard at least a little about the agreement contend they have a "great deal" or "fair amount" of confidence that Iran's leaders will abide by its terms. (To put this in some perspective, 29 percent of Americans believe the far more plausible notion that horoscopes, tarot cards, and psychic readings tell them something about their future.)

Twenty-nine percent of Americans believe the far more plausible notion that horoscopes, tarot cards and psychic readings tell them something about their future.

Who are these 26 percent who believe White House claims that the agreement in place [offers](#) to "verifiably prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and ensure that Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful going forward"? I imagine some are partisans. Some believe it's the best we can do. Some don't understand the Middle East. Some believe that diplomacy—no matter what results it generates—is worth supporting before ever contemplating military action. Then, there are those who want to see a nuclear Iran, either because they believe the United States has meddled far too often in the Middle East, or they're eager to see Israel thwarted. Or, probably both.

But, for the most part, liberal pundits do not argue, as Kerry does, that this pact will stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons in the long run. Instead we are bombarded with a fallacy: Do you want war or do you want this deal?

Kerry argues there is no realistic alternative to the administration's position, and that any action that doesn't accept his deal is a call to war. Building on this false choice, the president has demanded Republican offer their own plans, saying, "If the alternative is that we should bring Iran to heel through military force, then those critics should say so. And that will be an honest debate."

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Well, there are thousands of positions a person can have between bringing an entire nation into submission or our own capitulation—like, for example, continuing sanctions, increasing sanctions, or even negotiating a better agreement.

Kerry says a veto override would mean Iran would only becomes stronger. But is an override even a possibility? Thanks to senators Bob Corker and Mitch McConnell's ceding all power on the issue to the president, it seems improbable. Although, [using a vote in the United Nations to create inevitability](#) rather than first allowing debate in Congress not only demonstrates Obama's contempt for process, but it might be the pretext some apprehensive Democrats need to oppose the deal. And bad polling like we've seen so far, will go a long way [in determining if the Sen. Chuck Schumers of the world capitulate](#) to the pressure coming from administration.

For now, though, it seems that the American public is realistic about Iran's intentions. Or, at least, more realistic than our secretary of State pretends to be.

Salon

[Camille Paglia: How Bill Clinton is like Bill Cosby](#)

In exclusive Salon interview, the cultural critic finds parallels between Cosby and Clinton, takes down modern p.c.

by David Daley



Camille Paglia, the political and cultural critic, has been a brave and brilliant provocateur on Salon for almost 20 years now. Paglia seemed to be on the winning side of the wars over feminism and political correctness in the 1990s, but recently those battles have been reopened. Suddenly we're talking again and in very different ways about sexual culture on campus. Comedians like Jerry Seinfeld and Bill Maher talk about the return of a stifling political correctness. And we're staring at the potential rematch of a Clinton and a Bush.

There were so many stories that we wanted Paglia's take on: Bill Cosby, Donald Trump, the state of the Democratic Party. So we spent two hours discussing all of them on Monday, and we'll present her thoughts over the next three days. Stand back: Paglia does not hold back on anything.

Over the next two days, she'll hold forth on the GOP presidential field in devastating ways, and offer surprising thoughts on how she thinks Clinton vs Sanders will end. We start today with thoughts on Bill Cosby, Bill Clinton, campus political correctness and modern feminism.

The banner on the Drudge Report this morning is that Kathleen Willey is starting a site to collect harassment claims against Bill Clinton. New York magazine, meanwhile, has the stories of 35 women who say they were raped or assaulted by Bill Cosby. I wonder if you see a connection between the two stories: Would Bill Clinton's exploits be viewed more like Cosby's if he was in the White House now, instead of in the 1990s?

Right from the start, when the Bill Cosby scandal surfaced, I knew it was not going to bode well for Hillary's campaign, because young women today have a much lower threshold for tolerance of these matters. The horrible truth is that the feminist establishment in the U.S., led by Gloria Steinem, did in fact apply a double standard to Bill Clinton's behavior because he was a Democrat. The Democratic president and administration supported abortion rights, and therefore it didn't matter what his personal behavior was.

But we're living in a different time right now, and young women have absolutely no memory of Bill Clinton. It's like ancient history for them; there's no reservoir of accumulated good will. And the actual facts of the matter are that Bill Clinton was a serial abuser of working-class women—he had exploited that power differential even in Arkansas. And then in the case of Monica Lewinsky—I mean, the failure on the part of Gloria Steinem and company to protect her was an absolute disgrace in feminist history! What bigger power differential could there be than between the president of the United States and this poor innocent girl? Not only an intern but clearly a girl who had a kind of pleading, open look to her—somebody who was looking for a father figure.

I was enraged! My publicly stated opinion at the time was that I don't care what public figures do in their private life. It's a very sophisticated style among the French, and generally in Europe, where the heads of state tend to have mistresses on the side. So what? That doesn't bother me at all! But the point is, they are sophisticated affairs that the European politicians have, while the Clinton episode was a disgrace.

A cigar and the intern is certainly the opposite of sophisticated.

Absolutely! It was frat house stuff! And Monica got nothing out of it. Bill Clinton used her. Hillary was away or inattentive, and he used Monica in the White House—and in the suite of the Oval Office, of all places. He couldn't have taken her on some fancy trip? She never got the perks of being a mistress; she was there solely to service him. And her life was completely

destroyed by the publicity that followed. The Clinton's are responsible for the destruction of Monica Lewinsky! They probably hoped that she would just go on and have a job, get married, have children, and disappear, but instead she's like this walking ghoul.

Fifteen years later, that's still the sad role left for her to play.

Yes, it's like something out of "Wuthering Heights" or "Great Expectations"—some Victorian novel, where a woman turns into this mourning widow who mopes on and on over a man who abused or abandoned her. Hillary has a lot to answer for, because she took an antagonistic and demeaning position toward her husband's accusers. So it's hard for me to understand how the generation of Lena Dunham would or could tolerate the actual facts of Hillary's history.

So have the times and standards changed enough that Clinton would be seen as Cosby, if he was president today?

Oh, yes! There's absolutely no doubt, especially in this age of instant social media. In most of these cases, like the Bill Clinton and Bill Cosby stories, there's been a complete neglect of psychology. We're in a period right now where nobody asks any questions about psychology. No one has any feeling for human motivation. No one talks about sexuality in terms of emotional needs and symbolism and the legacy of childhood. Sexuality has been politicized—"Don't ask any questions!" "No discussion!" "Gay is exactly equivalent to straight!" And thus in this period of psychological blindness or inertness, our art has become dull. There's nothing interesting being written—in fiction or plays or movies. Everything is boring because of our failure to ask psychological questions.

So I say there is a big parallel between Bill Cosby and Bill Clinton—aside from their initials! Young feminists need to understand that this abusive behavior by powerful men signifies their sense that female power is much bigger than they are! These two people, Clinton and Cosby, are emotionally infantile—they're engaged in a war with female power. It has something to do with their early sense of being smothered by female power—and this pathetic, abusive and criminal behavior is the result of their sense of inadequacy.

Now, in order to understand that, people would have to read my first book, "Sexual Personae"—which of course is far too complex for the ordinary feminist or academic mind! It's too complex because it requires a sense of the ambivalence of human life. Everything is not black and white, for heaven's sake! We are formed by all kinds of strange or vague memories from childhood. That kind of understanding is needed to see that Cosby was involved in a symbiotic, push-pull thing with his wife, where he went out and did these awful things to assert his own independence. But for that, he required the women to be inert. He needed them to be dead! Cosby is actually a necrophiliac—a style that was popular in the late Victorian period in the nineteenth-century.

It's hard to believe now, but you had men digging up corpses from graveyards, stealing the bodies, hiding them under their beds, and then having sex with them. So that's exactly what's happening here: to give a woman a drug, to make her inert, to make her dead is the man saying that I need her to be dead for me to function. She's too powerful for me as a living woman. And this is what is also going on in those barbaric fraternity orgies, where women are sexually assaulted while lying unconscious. And women don't understand this! They have no idea why any men would find it arousing to have sex with a young woman who's passed out at a fraternity house. But it's necrophilia—this fear and envy of a woman's power.

And it's the same thing with Bill Clinton: to find the answer, you have to look at his relationship to his flamboyant mother. He felt smothered by her in some way. But let's be clear—I'm not trying to blame the mother! What I'm saying is that male sexuality is extremely complicated, and the formation of male identity is very tentative and sensitive—but feminist rhetoric doesn't allow for it. This is why women are having so much trouble dealing with men in the feminist era. They don't understand men, and they demonize men. They accord to men far more power than men actually have in sex. Women control the sexual world in ways that most feminists simply don't understand.

My explanation is that second-wave feminism dispensed with motherhood. The ideal woman was the career woman—and I do support that. To me, the mission of feminism is to remove all barriers to women's advancement in the social and political realm—to give women equal opportunities with men. However, what I kept saying in "Sexual Personae" is that equality in the workplace is not going to solve the problems between men and women which are occurring in the private, emotional realm, where every man is subordinate to women, because he emerged as a tiny helpless thing from a woman's body. Professional women today don't want to think about this or deal with it.

The erasure of motherhood from feminist rhetoric has led us to this current politicization of sex talk, which doesn't allow women to recognize their immense power vis-à-vis men. When motherhood was more at the center of culture, you had mothers who understood the fragility of boys and the boy's need for nurturance and for confidence to overcome his weaknesses. The old-style country women—the Italian matriarchs and Jewish mothers—they all understood the fragility of men. The mothers ruled their own world and didn't take men that seriously. They understood how to nurture men and encourage them to be strong—whereas current feminism simply doesn't perceive the power of women vis-a-vis men. But when you talk like this with most men, it really resonates with them, and they say "Yes, yes! That's it!"

Currently, feminists lack sympathy and compassion for men and for the difficulties that men face in the formation of their identities. I'm not talking in terms of the men's rights movement, which got infected by p.c. The heterosexual professional woman, emerging with her shiny Ivy League degree, wants to communicate with her husband exactly the way she communicates with her friends—as in "Sex and the City." That show really caught the animated way that women actually talk with each other. But that's not a style that straight men can do! Gay men can do it, sure—but not straight men! Guess what—women are different than men! When will feminism wake up to this basic reality? Women relate differently to each other than they do to men. And straight men do not have the same communication skills or values as women—their brains are different!

Are we letting the behavior of straight men off the hook here? They're just wired differently?

Wherever I go to speak, whether it's Brazil or Italy or Norway, I find that upper-middle-class professional women are very unhappy. This is a global problem! And it's coming from the fact that women are expecting men to provide them with the same kind of emotional and conversational support and intimacy that they get from their women friends. And when they don't get it, they're full of resentment and bitterness. It's tragic!

Women are blaming men for a genuine problem that I say is systemic. It has to do with the transition from the old, agrarian culture to this urban professional culture, where women don't have that big support network that they had in the countryside. All four of my grandparents and my mother were born in Italy. In the small country towns they came from, the extended family was the rule, and the women were a force unto themselves. Women had a chatty group

solidarity as they did chores all day and took care of children and the elderly. Men and women never had that much to do with each other over history! There was the world of men and the world of women. Now we're working side-by-side in offices at the same job. Women want to leave at the end of the day and have a happy marriage at home, but then they put all this pressure on men because they expect them to be exactly like their female friends. If they feel restlessness or misery or malaise, they automatically blame it on men. Men are not doing enough; men aren't sharing enough. But it's not the fault of men that we have this crazy and rather neurotic system where women are now functioning like men in the workplace, with all its material rewards. A huge problem here is that in America, we have identified ourselves totally with our work lives. In most parts of southern Europe, on the other hand, work is secondary to your real life. It's often said that Americans live to work, as opposed to working to live.

Are we back in the 1990s? We're talking about Clinton scandals, about a potential Clinton/Bush presidency. We're debating sexual codes on campus again, political correctness in comedy. There's a would-be "billionaire" populist. Have things circled back around to 1992 all over again? I thought we'd settled some of these debates.

Yes, and it seems so strange that we're having to argue everything all over again! When I burst on the scene in the early 1990s, one of the things that made me notorious was my attack on the date-rape rhetoric of the time. The date-rape issue had been heavily publicized since the late 1980s: there were date-rape victims on the cover of *People* and being treated like heroines on CNN's Larry King Show. So my statements on the topic, such as my 1991 op-ed in *New York Newsday*, caused a firestorm. I wasn't automatically kowtowing to the standard rhetoric that men are at fault for everything and women are utterly blameless. I said that my 1960s generation of women had won the right to sexual freedom—but with rights came personal responsibility. People went crazy! There was this absurd polarization where men were portrayed as demons and women as frail, innocent virgins. It was so Victorian! And there was also a big fight about pornography, which I strongly supported. In the 1990s, pro-sex feminism finally arose and took power. It was an entire wing of feminism that had been suppressed by the Gloria Steinem power structure—by *Ms. Magazine* and *NOW*—since the 1970s. It had been forced underground, but it started to emerge in San Francisco with the pro-sex and lipstick lesbians in the mid to late 1980s, but it got no national attention. Then all of a sudden, there was this big wave in the early 1990s. I became one of the outspoken figures of it after "Sexual Personae" was published in 1990. My views had always been suppressed, and I had had a lot of difficulty getting published—"Sexual Personae" had been rejected by seven publishers and five agents. So we fought those fights, but by the late 1990s, the controversies subsided, because my wing of pro-sex feminism had won!

Take Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon— you would not believe how lionized those two women were. MacKinnon was splashed on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine* and hailed as the enlightened future of the world. Meanwhile they were fanatical sex phobes. Dworkin was a raving hysteric about sexuality, so overtly anti-male. So anyone who took the pro-sex stance really had to fight hard for years. Everywhere I went to speak there were organized pickets, often fomented by the *Village Voice*, which organized a fax campaign against me wherever I went. It was insane. And I had been a student of the *Village Voice*! I had subscribed to it for years during its great high point. But things had gotten so stupidly p.c. that instead of being hailed as a product of that publication, I was viciously defamed and libeled by it. You would not believe what it was like!

Now, of course, everything has gone full circle. But how? What the heck has happened? It's very bizarre. There's been a reactionary reversion. Like that woman at Columbia hauling around her mattress!

I wanted to ask you about that. If Emma Sulkowicz were a student of yours, in an art class you were teaching, how would you grade her work?

[laughs] I'd give her a D! I call it "mattress feminism." Perpetually lugging around your bad memories—never evolving or moving on! It's like a parody of the worst aspects of that kind of grievance-oriented feminism. I called my feminism "Amazon feminism" or "street-smart feminism," where you remain vigilant, learn how to defend yourself, and take responsibility for the choices you make. If something bad happens, you learn from it. You become stronger and move on. But hauling a mattress around on campus? Columbia, one of the great Ivy League schools with a tremendous history of scholarship, utterly disgraced itself in how it handled that case. It enabled this protracted masochistic exercise where a young woman trapped herself in her own bad memories and publicly labeled herself as a victim, which will now be her identity forever. This isn't feminism—which should empower women, not cripple them.

It's yet more evidence of the current absence of psychology. To go around exhibiting and foregrounding your wounds is a classic neurotic symptom. But people are so lacking now in basic Freudian consciousness—because Freud got thrown out of mainstream feminism by Kate Millett and Gloria Steinem and company. So no one sees the pathology in all this. And for Columbia to permit this girl to carry her mattress onstage and disrupt the commencement ceremony was absolutely ludicrous. It demonstrates the total degradation of once eminent and admirable educational institutions to caretaking nursery schools. I prophesied this in a piece I wrote in 1992 for the Times Literary Supplement called "The Nursery-School Campus". At the time, nobody understood what I was saying. But I was arguing that the obsessive focus by American academe with students' emotional well-being was not what European universities have ever been concerned with. European universities don't have this consumer-oriented view that they have to make their students enjoy themselves and feel good about themselves, with everything driven by self-esteem. Now we have people emerging with Ivy League degrees who have no idea how little they know about history or literature. Their minds are shockingly untrained. They've been treated as fragile emotional beings throughout their schooling. The situation is worsening year by year, as teachers have to watch what they say and give trigger warnings, because God forbid that American students should have to confront the brutal realities of human life.

Meanwhile, while all of this nursery-school enabling is going on, we have the entire world veering towards ISIS—with barbaric decapitations and gay guys being thrown off roofs and stoned to death. All the harsh realities of human history are erupting, and this young generation is going to be utterly unprepared to deal with it. The nation is eventually going to be endangered by the inability of several generations of young people to make political decisions about a real world that they do not understand. The primitive realities of human life are exploding out there!

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Salon

Camille Paglia takes on Jon Stewart, Trump, Sanders: “Liberals think of themselves as very open-minded, but that’s simply not true!”

Trump's a carnival barker, but funnier than Stewart. Richard Dawkins is a joke. Sanders and Drudge earn approval

by David Daley

[In part one](#) of our three-day conversation with Camille Paglia, the brilliant cultural critic talked Bill Cosby, Bill Clinton and the odd, persistent return of '90s political correctness. Today she takes on even hotter-button topics: Religion and atheism, Jon Stewart's "Daily Show" legacy, liberals and Fox News, and presidential candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders.

You're an atheist, and yet I don't ever see you sneer at religion in the way that the very aggressive atheist class right now often will. What do you make of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and the religion critics who seem not to have respect for religions for faith?

I regard them as adolescents. I say in the introduction to my last book, "Glittering Images", that "Sneering at religion is juvenile, symptomatic of a stunted imagination." It exposes a state of perpetual adolescence that has something to do with their parents— they're still sneering at dad in some way. Richard Dawkins was the only high-profile atheist out there when I began publicly saying "I am an atheist," on my book tours in the early 1990s. I started the fad for it in the U.S, because all of a sudden people, including leftist journalists, started coming out of the closet to publicly claim their atheist identities, which they weren't bold enough to do before. But the point is that I felt it was perfectly legitimate for me to do that because of my great respect for religion in general—from the iconography to the sacred architecture and so forth. I was arguing that religion should be put at the center of any kind of multicultural curriculum.

I'm speaking here as an atheist. I don't believe there is a God, but I respect every religion deeply. All the great world religions contain a complex system of beliefs regarding the nature of the universe and human life that is far more profound than anything that liberalism has produced. We have a whole generation of young people who are clinging to politics and to politicized visions of sexuality for their belief system. They see nothing but politics, but politics is tiny. Politics applies only to society. There is a huge metaphysical realm out there that involves the eternal principles of life and death. The great tragic texts, including the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, no longer have the central status they once had in education, because we have steadily moved away from the heritage of western civilization.

The real problem is a lack of knowledge of religion as well as a lack of respect for religion. I find it completely hypocritical for people in academe or the media to demand understanding of Muslim beliefs and yet be so derisive and dismissive of the devout Christian beliefs of Southern conservatives.

But yes, the sneering is ridiculous! Exactly what are these people offering in place of religion? In my system, I offer art—and the whole history of spiritual commentary on the universe. There's a tremendous body of nondenominational insight into human life that used to be called cosmic consciousness. It has to be remembered that my generation in college during the 1960s was suffused with Buddhism, which came from the 1950s beatniks. Hinduism was in the air from every direction—you had the Beatles and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Ravi Shankar at Monterey, and there were sitars everywhere in rock music. So I really thought we were entering this great period of religious syncretism, where the religions of the world were going to merge.

But all of a sudden, it disappeared! The Asian religions vanished—and I really feel sorry for young people growing up in this very shallow environment where they're peppered with images from mass media at a particularly debased stage.

There are no truly major stars left, and I don't think there's much profound work being done in pop culture right now. Young people have nothing to enlighten them, which is why they're clinging so much to politicized concepts, which give them a sense of meaning and direction.

But this sneering thing! I despise snark. Snark is a disease that started with David Letterman and jumped to Jon Stewart and has proliferated since. I think it's horrible for young people! And this kind of snark atheism—let's just invent that term right now—is stupid, and people who act like that are stupid. Christopher Hitchens' book "God is Not Great" was a travesty. He sold that book on the basis of the brilliant chapter titles. If he had actually done the research and the work, where each chapter had the substance of those wonderful chapter titles, then that would have been a permanent book. Instead, he sold the book and then didn't write one—he talked it. It was an appalling performance, demonstrating that that man was an absolute fraud to be talking about religion. He appears to have done very little scholarly study. Hitchens didn't even know Judeo-Christianity well, much less the other world religions. He had that glib Oxbridge debater style in person, but you're remembered by your written work, and Hitchens' written work was weak and won't last.

Dawkins also seems to be an obsessive on some sort of personal vendetta, and again, he's someone who has never taken the time to do the necessary research into religion. Now my entire career has been based on the pre-Christian religions. My first book, "Sexual Personae," was about the pagan cults that still influence us, and it began with the earliest religious artifacts, like the Venus of Willendorf in 35,000 B.C. In the last few years, I've been studying Native American culture, in particular the Paleo-Indian period at the close of the Ice Age. In the early 1990s, when I first arrived on the scene, I got several letters from Native Americans saying my view of religion, women, and sexuality resembled the traditional Native American view. I'm not surprised, because my orientation is so fixed in the pre-Christian era.

You mentioned Jon Stewart, who leaves the "Daily Show" in two weeks. There's handwringing from folks who think that he elevated or even transcended snark, that he utilized irony very effectively during the Bush years. And that he did the work of critiquing and fact-checking Fox and others on the right who helped create this debased media culture? What's your sense of his influence?

I think Stewart's show demonstrated the decline and vacuity of contemporary comedy. I cannot stand that smug, snarky, superior tone. I hated the fact that young people were getting their news through that filter of sophomoric snark. Comedy, to me, is one of the major modern genres, and the big influences on my generation were Lenny Bruce and Mort Sahl. Then Joan Rivers had an enormous impact on me—she's one of my major role models. It's the old caustic, confrontational style of Jewish comedy. It was Jewish comedians who turned stand-up from the old gag-meister shtick of vaudeville into a biting analysis of current social issues, and they really pushed the envelope. Lenny Bruce used stand-up to produce gasps and silence from the audience. And that's my standard—a comedy of personal risk. And by that standard, I'm sorry, but Jon Stewart is not a major figure. He's certainly a highly successful T.V. personality, but I think he has debased political discourse. I find nothing incisive in his work. As for his influence, if he helped produce the hackneyed polarization of moral liberals versus evil conservatives, then he's partly at fault for the political stalemate in the United States.

I don't demonize Fox News. At what point will liberals wake up to realize the stranglehold that they had on the media for so long? They controlled the major newspapers and weekly newsmagazines and T.V. networks. It's no coincidence that all of the great liberal forums have been slowly fading. They once had such incredible power. Since the rise of the Web, the nightly network newscasts have become peripheral, and the New York Times and the Washington Post have been slowly fading and are struggling to survive.

Historically, talk radio arose via Rush Limbaugh in the early 1990s precisely because of this stranglehold by liberal discourse. For heaven's sake, I was a Democrat who had just voted for Jesse Jackson in the 1988 primary, but I had to fight like mad in the early 1990s to get my views heard. The resistance of liberals in the media to new ideas was enormous. Liberals think of themselves as very open-minded, but that's simply not true! Liberalism has sadly become a knee-jerk ideology, with people barricaded in their comfortable little cells. They think that their views are the only rational ones, and everyone else is not only evil but financed by the Koch brothers. It's so simplistic!

Now let me give you a recent example of the persisting insularity of liberal thought in the media. When the first secret Planned Parenthood video was released in mid-July, anyone who looks only at liberal media was kept totally in the dark about it, even after the second video was released. But the videos were being run nonstop all over conservative talk shows on radio and television. It was a huge and disturbing story, but there was total silence in the liberal media. That kind of censorship was shockingly unprofessional. The liberal major media were trying to bury the story by ignoring it. Now I am a former member of Planned Parenthood and a strong supporter of unconstrained reproductive rights. But I was horrified and disgusted by those videos and immediately felt there were serious breaches of medical ethics in the conduct of Planned Parenthood officials. But here's my point: it is everyone's obligation, whatever your political views, to look at both liberal and conservative news sources every single day. You need a full range of viewpoints to understand what is going on in the world.

What is your media diet like?

The first thing I always turn to is the Drudge Report, which I've done around the clock since the birth of that page. In fact, my column in Salon was the first to take the Drudge Report seriously as a major new force in the media. I loved it from the start! Its tabloid format is great—so easy and accessible and such a pleasure to read. I'm so happy that Matt Drudge has kept that classic design. Silly people claim he's stuck in the past, but that's absurd. Drudge is invoking the great populist formula of tabloids like the New York Post and the New York Daily News, which were pitched to working-class readers. Andy Warhol, who came out of a working-class immigrant factory family in Pittsburgh, adored the tabloids and reproduced their front pages in big acrylic paintings. The tabloids were always the voice of the people. I admire the mix on Drudge of all types of news stories, high and low. The reason that nobody has been able to imitate Drudge is because he's an auteur, stamping the page with his own unique sensibility and instincts. It must be exhausting, because he must constantly filter world news on a daily basis. He's simply an aggregator, not a news source, but he has an amazing sense of collage. The page is fluid and always in motion, and Drudge is full of jokes and mischief.

So I begin with that, and then I check the New York Post, the New York Times, Salon.com, Lucianne.com, and Arts & Letters Daily. The Washington Post online is far more ideologically diverse than the printed newspaper ever was. I'll look at British papers of opposing sides, like The Guardian and The Telegraph, and I'm a big fan of the tabloid Daily Mail. I like Google News a lot—I can type in a topic like "Hillary" and get a whole range of articles, both liberal and

conservative, including on obscure fringe web sites. I think it's an absolute civic obligation for people to at least briefly review the full political spectrum of viewpoints on any major issue.

I was looking back at some of your old Salon columns, and was surprised to see some kind words for Donald Trump. There was one in particular when you were [quite delighted by the way Trump went after Rosie O'Donnell](#) on "The View."

[laughs] Well, my view of Trump began in the negative. When he was still relatively unknown nationally, he jackhammered a magnificent Art Deco sculpture over the main doorway of the Bonwit Teller department store on 5th Avenue. It was 1980, and he was demolishing the store to build Trump Tower. The Metropolitan Museum of Art had offered to take the sculpture, but Trump got impatient and just had it destroyed. I still remember that vividly, and I'm never going to forget it! I regard Donald Trump as an art vandal, equivalent to ISIS destroying ancient Assyrian sculptures. As a public figure, however, Trump is something of a carnival barker.

But as a provocateur yourself, you must admire the very interesting his game he is playing.

So far this year, I'm happy with what Trump has done, because he's totally blown up the media! All of a sudden, "BOOM!" That lack of caution and shooting from the hip. He's not a president, of course. He's not remotely a president. He has no political skills of any kind. He's simply an American citizen who is creating his own bully pulpit. He speaks in the great populist way, in the slangy vernacular. He takes hits like a comedian—and to me he's more of a comedian than Jon Stewart is! Like claiming John McCain isn't a war hero, because his kind of war hero doesn't get captured—that's hilarious! That's like something crass that Lenny Bruce might have said! It's so startling and entertaining.

It's as if the stars have suddenly shifted—because we're getting a mix-up in the other party too, as in that recent disruption of the NetRoots convention, with all that raw emotion and chaos in the air. To me, it feels very 1960s. These sudden disruptions, as when the Yippies would appear to do a stunt—like when they invaded Wall Street and threw dollar bills down on the stock exchange and did pig-calls! I'm enjoying this, but it's throwing both campaigns off. None of the candidates on either side know how to respond to this kind of wild spontaneity, because we haven't seen it in so long.

Politics has always been performance art. So we'll see who the candidates are who can think on their feet. That's certainly how I succeeded in the early 1990s. Before that, the campus thought police could easily disrupt visiting speakers who came with a prepared speech to read. But they couldn't disrupt me, because I had studied comedy and did improv! The great comedians knew how to deal with hecklers in the audience. I loved to counterattack! Protestors were helpless when the audiences laughed.

So what I'm saying is that the authentic 1960s were about street theater—chaos, spontaneity, caustic humor. And Trump actually has it! He does better comedy than most professional comedians right now, because we're in this terrible period where the comedians do their tours with canned jokes. They go from place to place, saying the same list of jokes in the same way. But the old vaudevillians had 5,000 jokes stored in their heads. They went out there and responded to that particular audience on that particular night. They had to read the crowd and try out what worked or didn't work.

Our politicians, like our comedians, have been boring us with their canned formulas for way too long. So that's why Donald Trump has suddenly leapt in the polls. He's a great stand-up

comedian. He's anti-PC—he's not afraid to say things that are rude and mean. I think he's doing a great service for comedy as well as for politics!

Does Bernie Sanders remind you at all of the other side of the '60s ethos? That rumpiled, socialist Clean Gene?

Totally! It's been such a long time—I thought it was gone forever! Bernie Sanders has the authentic, empathic, 1960s radical voice. It's so refreshing. Now, I'm a supporter of Martin O'Malley—I sent his campaign a contribution the very first day he declared. But I would happily vote for Sanders in the primary. His type of 1960s radical activist style descends from the 1930s unionization movement, when organizers who were sometimes New York Jewish radicals went down to help the mine workers of Appalachia resist company thugs. There are so many famous folk songs that came out of that violent period.

When I was in college—from 1964 to 1968—I saw what real leftists look like, because a lot of people at my college, which was the State University of New York at Binghamton, were radicalized Jews from downstate. They were very avant-garde, doing experimental theater and modern dance, and they knew all about abstract expressionism. Their parents were often Holocaust survivors, so they had a keen sense of history. And they spoke in a very direct and open working-class style. That's why, in the 1990s, I was saying that the academic leftists were such frauds—sitting around applying Foucault to texts and thinking that was leftism! No it wasn't! It was a snippy, prim, smug bourgeois armchair leftism. Real '60s radicals rarely went to grad school and never became big-wheel humanities professors, with their fat salaries and perks. The proof of the vacuity of academic leftism for the past forty years is the complete silence of leftist professors about the rise of the corporate structure of the contemporary university—their total failure to denounce the gross expansion of the administrator class and the obscene rise in tuition costs. The leading academic leftists are such frauds—they've played the system and are retiring as millionaires!

But what you see in Bernie Sanders—that is truly the voice of populism. I love the way he says, "This is not about me, it's about you—it's about building a national grassroots organization." That is perfect! I doubt Sanders can win a national election with his inflammatory socialist style—plus you need someone in the White House who knows how to manage a huge bureaucracy, so I'm pessimistic about his chances. However, I think that he is tonic—to force the Democratic party, which I belong to, to return to its populist roots. I applaud everything that Sanders is doing!

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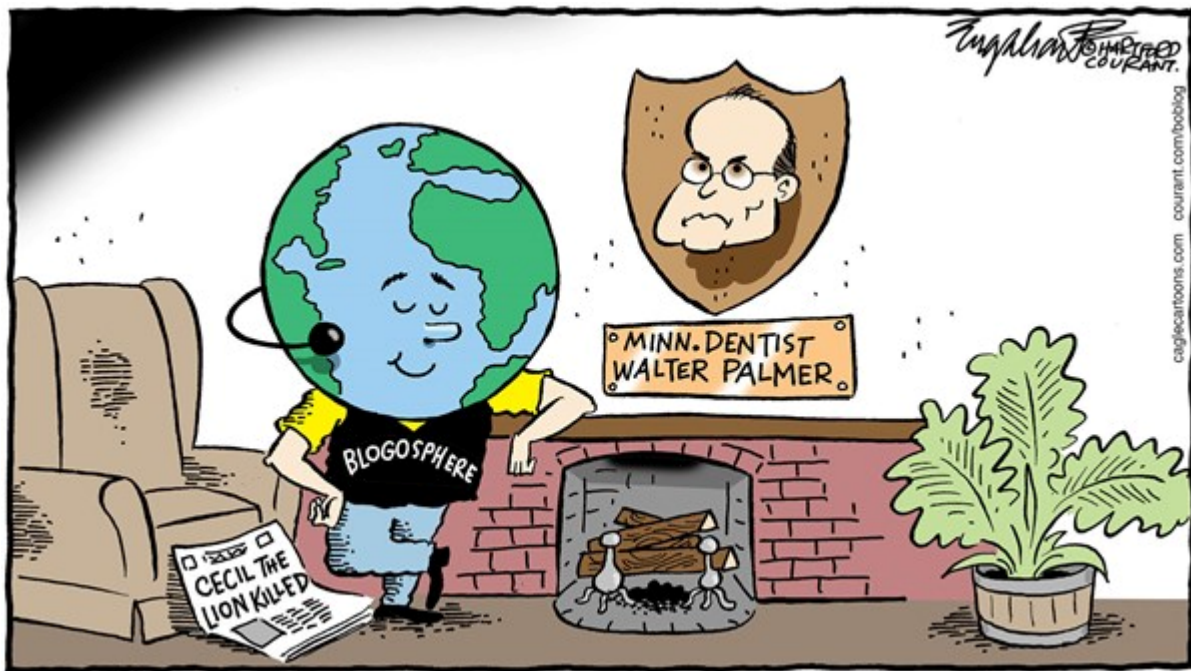
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