Bloated Bureaucracy
"The Fighting Pencil" Group
B. Semenov
St. Petersburg, Russia (c. 1870)
Public Voices

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If we keep this many personnel  
Expenses will go up and swell.  
This bloated staff is a handicap...  
Those who are useless--clear the way!

Translated by Liudmila Kouznetsova and Vatche Gabrielian
Case Analysis

The Dream Is Dead

Dalton S. Lee

A little over thirty years ago, there was a tremendous upswelling of popular support for ending discrimination in America, culminating in the 1963 March on Washington, D.C. Much of our hope at the time was summarized by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his now famous "I have a dream" speech. Without a question, there have been many positive changes in our society that have ended the more blatant forms of discrimination such as Jim Crow laws, poll taxes, separate-but-equal educational accommodations, and the like. Yet I, like many other minorities, now feel that the dream is dead—not because discrimination has been eradicated and replaced with equality, but because it continues to exist in such a sophisticated form that it is increasingly difficult to detect. What is even more disturbing is that the public administration community, minorities included, may in fact be unwittingly contributing to the problem by, ironically, trying to stay neutral and rational. I will borrow from my own experiences to illustrate how subtle and arbitrary tactics and strategies are used within agencies to deliberately subvert the possibility of implementing public policy and related personnel practices designed to ensure that both merit and equal opportunity goals are attained.

The Seed of Doubt

When I first read the following in Dennis Dresang’s personnel textbook:

The fundamental reason for the establishment of the merit system was not so much a concern for ability as it was a triumph of educated, English-speaking whites over political machines based on patronage links to new-immigrant communities. ¹
By any measure Howard Nemerov was one of the greatest American poets of the twentieth century. Along with the National Book Award, he received the Pulitzer Prize for *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov*. He also was awarded the Bollingen Prize for Poetry, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry. He was poet laureate of the United States from 1988 to 1990. He served as the Edward Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis from 1976 to 1990.

Nemerov, who was born in New York City in 1920 and died in St. Louis on July 5, 1991, was also a prolific writer of critical essays and some fiction. He was a formalist poet; that is to say, most of his poetry is written with great attention to meter and, to a certain extent, both internal and external rhyme. He could be referred to as a poet's poet, one who attends carefully to the craft of poetry, or to put it another way, the sculpting of language. At the same time, like all truly good poets, he avoids cliche and seeming platitude. Beneath his occasional cynical phrases--especially when he deals with public issues--is an implicit idealism that seems to motivate the witty social criticism permeating many of his poems.

For this review we have selected a few Nemerov poems we judge to be "public." It is doubtful that Nemerov would have used this category. We use it here only to justify presenting poems that will
interest persons in public affairs—government, politics, and public administration.

We begin with "The Fourth of July." Nemerov, like many poets, was moved to respond to celebrations, ceremonies, and events, though much of the time, he viewed them with little sentimentality and even some cynicism. Here he reflects on the freedom and independence of a youthful celebration of the Fourth of July and compares this with the orderly, spectacular, collective, and public celebrations.

The compelling metaphors here are youth and age, closeness and distance, doing and observing, danger and safety, officials and taxpayers, and ultimately the individual and the state.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

Because I am drunk, this Independence Night,
I watch the fireworks from far away,
From a high hill, across the moony green
Of lakes and other hills to the town harbor,
Where stately illuminations are flung aloft,
One light shattering in a hundred lights
Minute by minute. The reason I am crying,
Aside from only being country drunk,
That is, may be that I have just remembered
The sparklers, rockets, roman candles, and
So on, we used to be allowed to buy
When I was a boy, and set off by ourselves
At some peril to life and property.
Our freedom to abuse our freedom thus
Has since, I understand, been remedied
By legislation. Now the authorities
Arrange a perfectly safe public display
To be watched at a distance; and now also

The contribution of all the taxpayers
Together makes a more spectacular
Result than any could achieve alone
(A few pale pinwheels, or a firecracker
Fused at the dog's tail). It is, indeed, splendid:
Showers of roses in the sky, fountains
Of emeralds, and those profusely scattered zircons
Falling and falling, flowering as they fall
And followed distantly by a noise of thunder.
My eyes are half-afloat in happy tears.
God bless our Nation on a night like this,
And bless the careful and secure officials
Who celebrate our independence now.

Using a rather free flowing blank verse, with a number of perfect and many deliberately imperfect lines of iambic pentameter (which creates a down-home feeling of conversationality), Nemerov's observations are gentle and uncharacteristically sentimental. He seems here to be indeed capable of tears, of happy memories and even some patriotic impulses: "My eyes are half-afloat in happy tears./God bless our nation on a night like this..." These are counterbalanced with wry contradictions like "Our freedom to abuse our freedom thus..." and an ironic suggestion that all taxpayers make a "contribution" to the expense of the fireworks display, with the subtle implication that it is compelled by legislation rather than given freely.

Beginning in the 1920s with the rise of Communism in Europe, public employees, including public university professors, were required to sign loyalty oaths, not only to the federal government but often to individual states as well. With characteristic good humor (though not suffering the bureaucratic fools very gladly), Nemerov signed his loyalty to Massachusetts when he took a position at Brandeis University. He expressed his feelings about this rather paranoid institutional requirement in "To the Governor and Legislature of Massachusetts." Of particular interest, and key to the scathing humor of the piece, is the way in which the poem's speaker fantasizes becoming a kind of "Gulliver": "And with state troopers dripping from my fingertips/Squeaking "You promised, you broke your promise!" Compared to a giant Gulliver who could "shove the Berkshire hills over the border..." a tiny state trooper would indeed have a squeaky voice. The suggestion that a professor could do such massive political damage is rendered ridiculous by this humorous image.
When I took a job teaching in Massachusetts
I didn't know and no one told me that I'd have to sign
An oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Now that I'm hooked, though, with a house
And a mortgage on the house, the road ahead
Is clear: I sign. But I want you gentlemen to know
That till today it never once occurred to me
To overthrow the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
By violence or subversion, or by preaching either.
But now I'm not so sure. It makes a fellow think,
Can such things be? Can such things be in the very crib
Of our liberties, and East of the Hudson, at that?
So if the day come that I should shove the Berkshire Hills
Over the border and annex them to Vermont,
Or snap Cape Cod off at the elbow and scatter
Hyannis to Provincetown beyond the twelve-mile limit,
Proclaiming apocalypsespetls to my pupils
And with state troopers dripping from my fingertips
Squeaking "You promised, you broke your promise!"
You gentlemen just sit there with my signature
And keep on lawyer-talking like nothing had happened,
Lest I root out your wagon tongue on Bunker Hill
And fungo your Golden Dome right into Fenway Park
Like any red-celled American boy ought to done
Long ago in the first place, just to keep in practice.

The irony of loyalty to Massachusetts, the center of a decided lack of loyalty to Britain, is not lost on Nemerov. Bunker Hill has come to symbolize our rebellion. Nemerov, if he were disloyal, would "root out that wagon tongue on Bunker Hill and fungo your Golden Dome right into Fenway Park," that site of the perennial humiliation that is so deeply understood by all citizens of Massachusetts.

Proximate to Nemerov's laureateship was the beginning of the third hundred years of the country's existence, and he wrote the following piece of advice to Congress. With the exception of the title, he chose not to use capitals to begin each line, or even each sentence, as if to underscore the idea in the first stanza that "reverence has never been america's thing" (note that even
"America" is not capitalized), perhaps especially reverence for institutions of government.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
ENTERING ITS THIRD CENTURY

because reverence has never been america's thing,
this verse in your honor will not begin "o thou."
but the great respect our country has to give
may you all continue to deserve, and have.

here at the fulcrum of us all,
the feather of truth, against the soul
is weighed, and had better be found to balance
lest our enterprise collapse in silence.

for here the million varying wills
get melted down, get hammered out
until the movie's reduced to stills
that tell us what the law's about.

conflict's endemic in the mind:
your job's to hear it in the wind
and compass it in opposites,
and bring the antagonists by your wits
to being one, and that the law
thenceforth, until you change your minds
against and with the shifting winds
that this and that way blow the straw.

so it's a republic, as Franklin said,
if you can keep it; and we did
thus far, and hope to keep our quarrel
funny and just, though with this moral:--

praise without end for the go-ahead zeal
of whoever it was invented the wheel;
but never a word for the poor soul's sake
that thought ahead, and invented the brake
Further underscoring the lack of reverence, perhaps, is the use of an informally varied meter and rhyme scheme, as well as slant rhyme (rhyme that is not exact). Note the placement of give with have in the first stanza and note in subsequent stanzas slant rhymes such as all with soul, balance with silence, mind with wind (the kind of wind that blows). This is varied with more exact rhymes such as wills/stills, out/about, and zeal/wheel.

There is hidden or implied rhetoric in passages like "the feather of truth," (suggesting how light and elusive truth can be) being balanced against "the soul," suggesting an ethical responsibility for Congress, since it is the "fulcrum of us all" and is engaged constantly in a balancing act of sorts.

Nemerov acknowledges the necessary art of political compromise (which frequently may get in the way of ethical purity) in stanza three: "the million varying wills/get melted down, get hammered out," and in the bridge from stanza four to five: "your job's to hear it [conflict] in the wind/and compass it in opposites,/and bring the antagonists by your wits/ to being one...." This process very well may be as good a description of the job of Congress as we have available.

More irreverence is suggested by the subtle zinger in stanza five: "...and that the law/thenceforth, until you change your minds/against and with the shifting winds "(italics added). There is added delight in the familiar allusion to one of the founding fathers: "so it's a republic, as Franklin said,/ if you can keep it;" and in the film metaphor of stanza three, "until the movie's reduced to stills/that tell us what the law's about;" and the wheel and brake metaphor of the final stanza, which suggests the congressional tendency to set rolling things that have a seemingly unstoppable life of their own.

Nemerov has choice words for both Johnson's Great Society and the Reagan administration. In "The Great Society? Mark X" he uses an automobile metaphor. There may be a subtle purpose in the use of the "Mark" series of automobile, which happens to be produced by Lincoln. Perhaps Nemerov quietly is suggesting once again with his formalist but conversational blank verse that we consider a contrast between the expedient and crafty Lyndon Johnson and the lionized honest Abe. Be that as it may, nothing is subtle or quiet in
the poet's judgment of the Johnson administration—as indicated by such words as greed, fear, and hypocrisy.

THE GREAT SOCIETY, MARK X

The engine and transmission and the wheels
Are made of greed, fear, and invidiousness
Fueled by super-pep high octane money
And lubricated with hypocrisy,
Interior upholstery is all handsewn
Of the skins of children of the very poor,
Justice and mercy, charity and peace,
Are optional items at slight extra cost,
The steering gear is newsprint powered by
Expediency but not connected with
The wheels, and finally there are no brakes.

However, the rear-view mirror and the horn
Are covered by our lifetime guarantee.

Here he sees it clearly: the optional items such as justice, mercy, charity, and children cost extra. Even today in the debate over welfare reforms we would prefer not to pay for the optional items. The poet tells us that the rear view mirror and the horn are on lifetime guarantee—if we will use them. Alternatively, we might ask: Of what use is a guarantee on a brash and noisy last minute warning or a vision only of what is past?

The lessons of Vietnam are the subject of "Ultima Ratio Reagan" which was written at the time of the contemplation of other wars.

ULTIMA RATIO REAGAN

The reason we do not learn from history is
Because we are not the people who learned last time.

Because we are not the same people as them
That fed our sons and honor to Vietnam
And dropped the burning money on their trees,
We know that we know better than they knew,  
And history will not blame us if once again  
The light at the end of the tunnel is the train.

The poet clearly is suggesting that the impulse to military action in various parts of the world by U.S. presidents is questionable and often disastrous. What he might have said about Desert Storm, or Bosnia, or Saddam's current and seemingly relentless and insatiable brinkmanship we can only guess at. His cynicism would likely always suspect that the light at the end of the tunnel is another train.

As suggested in the two previous pieces, Nemerov--like most poets of the 1960s and today--was strongly opposed to war. We have two even more explicit examples in "Authorities" and "For W____, Who Commanded Well." The first was published in a recent volume titled War Stories and reflects an attitude shared by many of the country's citizens about the Vietnam experience.

AUTHORITIES

Commanders, and behind them heads of state,  
Are said to care for and spend sleepless nights  
About the children they commit to war;  
You can't help wondering, though, whether they do  

Or whether, were you safely in their place  
Of power, as it's not likely you would be  
Nor weren't, but it's allowed to wonder,  
You might not say, "Poor bastards, little shits,  

They never learned their history in schools  
And now they never will, and cannot know  
They are the hinges on which the oily valves  
Of history will balance before they close  

Upon our reputations now, our fame  
In aftertimes, when children will be schooled  
Again in truths belatedly belied,  
To shoulder our burden and their hopeless charge."
Again, in his metered but not rhymed four line stanzas, the poet suspects a lack of altruism in heads of state, and he seems to put into their mouths words that suggest an ultimate lack of caring. Moreover, he suggests that were we in their place, we might very well do and say the same, implying that those positions of power almost compel leaders to make decisions that show a lack of caring for the young who are committed to going to war.

"For W____, Who Commanded Well" was published in Nemerov's first volume *Mirrors and Windows* (1947). Unlike "Authorities" it refers to World War II, a far more "popular" war, in which Nemerov served as an RAF pilot. He refers to it in another poem, "A Day on the Big Branch," as the "peaceful old war." Here is an excerpt:

After a time we talked about the War,  
about what we had done in the War, and how near  
some of us had been to being drowned, and burned,  
and shot, and how many people we knew  
who had been drowned, or burned, or shot:  
and would it have been better to have died  
in the War, the peaceful old War, where we were  
young?

Still, in "For W____ ..." the poet, even as a willing participant in popular WW II, reflects an antiwar attitude.

FOR W____, WHO COMMANDED WELL

You try to fix your mind upon his death  
Which seemed it might, somehow, be relevant  
To something you once thought, or did, or might  
Imagine yourself thinking, doing. When?

It was, once, the most possible of dreams:  
The hero acted it, philosophers  
Could safely recommend it to the young;  
It was acceptable, a theme for song.

And was it wrong? Daily the press commends  
A rationed greed, the radio denies  
That war is right, or wrong, or serious
And money is being made, and the wheels go round,
And death is paying for itself: and so
It does not seem that anything was lost.

In "At Sixties and Seventies," Nemerov views these two decades from the perspective of a child of the Depression. It turns out he was mostly right:

AT SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

Anything goes, they cried, incontinent,
And sure as death and taxes, everything went.

Let it all hang out, they used to say,
Who cannot stuff it all back in to stay.

Forgetting the rule about reaping what is sown;
First live it up, then try to live it down.

These rhymed couplets each reflect the formal poetic order of an iambic pentameter foundation, with which Nemerov characteristically takes some liberty. Beginning with the title of the well-loved Cole Porter song and Broadway musical Anything Goes, Nemerov, who frequently alludes to popular art and culture as well as to things political and administrative, puts a nice reversal on that title with the words "everything went." He repeats this balance of opposites in the other two couplets: It all "hang[s] out", but cannot be "stuff[ed]...all back in." In the final couplet the reversal is contained in the second line only, with its "live it up" and "live it down," balanced nicely against a reference to the adage about reaping and sowing. Note the slightly jarring slant rhyme of "sown" with "down."

Coming from Nemerov's often iconoclastic mind-set, this subtle suggestion that old-fashioned "family values" have been shown by recent history to be best after all carries more weight than Dan Quayle's frontal and less imaginative approach to the subject.

In "Imprecated Upon a Postal Clerk" he is a bit impatient with the Post Office.
IMPRECATED UPON A POSTAL CLERK

Nor rain nor snow nor heat nor gloom of night
Can stay this surly civil servant safe
Behind the counter from imposing his
Confusion, slothful rudeness and delay
Upon the simplest procedures of exchange.

May he bring his children up on Grade-B milk,
Continue less intelligent than lint,
Bid thirteen spades in No-Trump out of greed,
And have real trouble finding his own ass
With both hands and a mirror and a torch.

In the second stanza, the poet resorts to the classical mode
reminiscent of many a Shakespearean character and—appropriately
enough in blank verse—issues a curse, albeit it a highly contem­
porary one. Later, when he became a kind of civil servant himself,
we assume he developed a more favorable view of government
work.

But he was always a professor and no one understood the
professoriate better. In "A Full Professor" we understand the affects
of specialization, the struggle for job security (tenure) and the longer
range results of job security and specialization on behavior. This
poem is a little lesson in personnel administration, not to mention
higher education.

A FULL PROFESSOR

Surely there was, at first, some love of letters
To get him started on the routine climb
That brought him to this eminence in time.
But now he has become one of his betters.

He has survived, and even fattened on,
The dissertation and the discipline.
The eyes are spectacled, the hair is thin,
He is a dangerous committee man.

An organism high specialized,
He diets on, for daily bill of fare,
The blood of Keats, the mind of poor John Clare;  
Within his range, he cannot be surprised.

Publish or perish! What a frightful chance!  
It troubled him through all his early days,  
But now he has the system beat both ways;  
He publishes and perishes at once.

The abba rhyme scheme gives a subtle formalist suggestion of the stern methodical temperament ascribed to many a full professor. Here, Nemerov—as in a number of the other pieces considered here—resorts to the joke-poem, wherein the humor derives not only from our recognition of some standard characteristics of many a college faculty member, but from an actual punch line that makes use of the double meaning of the word "perish." Of interest, in this regard, is a Nemerov essay, "Bottom's Dream: The Likeness of Poems and Jokes" (in Nemerov, Reflections on Poetry and Poetics, Rutgers University Press, 1972, pp. 3-18).

Two or three years before Nemerov became poet laureate, he wrote a piece in response to the disaster of the space shuttle Challenger. His poem "On an Occasion of National Mourning" is a subtle, bittersweet, and wise assessment of the accident, the responses to it, and its meaning.

ON AN OCCASION OF NATIONAL MOURNING

It is admittedly difficult for a whole  
Nation to mourn and be seen to do so, but  
It can be done, the silvery platitudes  
Were waiting in their silos for just such  
An emergent occasion, cards of sympathy  
From heads of state were long ago prepared  
For launching and are bounced around the world  
From satellites at near the speed of light,  
The divine services are telecast  
From the home towns, children are interviewed  
And say politely, gravely, how sorry they are,

And in a week or so the thing is done,  
The sea gives up its bits and pieces and  
The investigating board pinpoints the cause
By inspecting bits and pieces, nothing of the sort
Can ever happen again, the prescribed course
Of tragedy is run through omen to amen
As in a play, the nation rises again
Reborn of grief and ready to seek the stars;
Remembering the shuttle, forgetting the loom.

We are all familiar with the annual plea to contribute to the United Way. In the national government, the equivalent is called the annual Combined Federal Campaign. Here, as poet laureate, is Nemerov's delightful and persuasive invitation to contribute. We do not know if it was included in the paperwork sent to federal employees urging them to contribute to the 1988 Combined Federal Campaign, but it should have been.

KICKING OFF THE COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN,
October 11, 1988

We who survived the IRS once more
At planting time last April, we citizens
Who coughed until we brought the money up
To go to hidden coffers and designs,
Are being asked, now that the harvest's here,
To tithe once more, and of our own sweet will.

It's tough, and no doubt tougher than enough,
To be brought in to bring our wallets out
To give for once instead of being taken;
But there's a difference that signifies:
We're doing it ourselves, and where it counts,
To help the helpless, who cannot help themselves.

Out at Free Enterprise, where the Needies fight
The Greedies for the great Grail of the World
And always lose, we can help to balance up
The scales of earthly good; not much, but some;
By a little and a little at a time--
Money like muck Sir Francis Bacon said,
No good but it be spread.

The poet laureate's willingness to write what seems clearly to be a commissioned poem suggests perhaps that for all his native cynicism the misty-eyed and nostalgic patriot in "The Fourth of July" is here dutifully industrious on another level: finding for his fellow citizens good reason to contribute money to a good cause.

Nowhere is Nemerov's sense of humor more irreverent or more characteristically rapier-like than in his wry description of the business of electing a president of the United States. In "The Process" he reminds us in practically every line of how human, after all, are the "gents" and (eventually) "dames" who campaign for and come to occupy this most legendary (for now) of all political offices.

THE PROCESS

Every four years or every eight,
A dozen gents and maybe a couple of dames
Announce they have received the money and the Word
That fits them for the highest office in the land.
And so begins The Process,
With winnowing and sorting, winter to spring
With travel and talk and too much chicken à la king,
Till by the summer's end but two remain
To take the road again,

Traducing each other's patriotism, race,
And putative paternity, with one hand out
For the money the other throws away
On balloons and signs and party favors,

Till come November the survivor is allowed to say
That providence, and guidance divine,
Have brought him to the highest office in the land.
And told to do this and that until
he either does it or he doesn't.

'th rough this he gets to live in a grand house
infiltrated by a thousand tourists in a day
and overseen by servants, while the same
'ain music is played wherever he walks--

uch is The Process, concerning which a couple of drunks
at a bar the next night after Election Day
challenged each other to say the Pledge
if allegiance they had to learn at school;

nd one drunk said "Mine eyes have seen
the Glory of the coming of the Lord,"
nd the other said "from sea to shining sea,"
nd the first drunk said "you said it, Jack."

ied presumption by some candidates that they have received
( notice the capital letter, implying both God and scripture)
ove and juxtaposing Word with money is typical of
's bubble-bursting humor. The poet becomes more direct
icism by calling "Hail to the Chief" "vain music." And how
an and imperfect is a person needing to be "Instructed what
how to smile/While saying it." The coda about the drunks
place the whole grand process in very common
ve. Indeed "The Process" seems to be one large, generic,
D political cartoon.

presented and reviewed here only a tiny fraction of
emerov's poetry. It is our hope that this sampling of his
ills, insight, love and irreverence will cause readers to
work further. More important, we believe there are
both bold and subtle, in his work that are deeply
ve to anyone trying to understand contemporary govern-
example, the trendy reinventing government movement is
ays ahistorical. This couplet from "Ultima Ratio Reagan"
enting government in perspective for us:

ie reason we do not learn from history is
ecause we are not the people who learned last time.
Acknowledgments

The reprinting of several Howard Nemerov poems in this article is done through the generous permission of Margaret Nemerov.

The following poems are taken from The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977 on the indicated pages:

"The Fourth of July" p. 183
"To the Governor & Legislature of Massachusetts" p. 374
"The Great Society, Mark X" p. 382
"For W____, Who Commanded Well" p. 36
"A Full Professor" p. 375


"To the Congress of the United States on Entering the Third Century" p. 142.
"Kicking Off the Combined Federal Campaign, October 11, 1988" p. 156

The following poems are taken from War Stories: Poems About Long Ago and Now. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, on the indicated pages:

"Ultima Ratio Reagan" p. 6
"Authorities" p. 7
"At Sixties & Seventies" p. 8
"On an Occasion of National Mourning" p. 5

The following poem is taken from Inside the Onion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984 on the indicated page:

"Imprecated Upon a Postal Clerk" p. 8

Ronald Q. Frederickson teaches theater at Emporia State University in Kansas. George Frederickson teaches public administration at the University of Kansas. They are cousins.
Academic Lapses

Marijane Ricketts

Where is she now, that ninny, that dreadnaught who dared to indent ten spaces on The Super's Letterhead? Surely she knows it's five.

Memo 57's verbiage hurtes the Deputy's desk: last year's do-or-die barrage, updated and required of all tormented teachers.

The mail cart thrusts it back crosshatched with red scratches, illegible scribbles, dual initials -- every day, a new opinion, and computer revision, fast-track.

A colored page! Pure excitement anywhere it breaks reams of white, white, white. Was ever snow piled so high, so hot, so likely not to melt away...?

Yesterday, a rush, a race -- today, no soul in sight to sign it. Why does she slumpsit back of her paper fortress, work stacking headache high?

She's flipping poetry pages, an antidote, safe-hidden inside her cluttered drawer.
Which Way, Please, For R&R?

Marijane Ricketts

Hang-it-all-sick of being
everyone's instant fix;
up at six, doors open eight-thirty,
the mind honed question-sharp,
answers questions the livelong day.

Hers to decipher: scribbled
memos, intercom garble,
the phone's fractured English;
transfers, enrollments, field trips;
calendars, supplies they need --
but never-ever an hour
to balance the school's ledger.

Hers to unravel, re-wind:
self-indentured parents,
fledgling cheeping underwing;
bloody noses, twisted glasses,
any broken thing, is

Hers to salvage:
a teacher's tender ego,
the do-it games she plays
with overseer and underling;

Not to burden the principal, he
barely makes it, wherever --
parents, teachers hounding...

Home again, six or seven,
late plate hassle to the table,
chores her children stumble through;
then, ten o'clock news, numbskullish,
and prone on the sofa, the A.S.S.
Abandons cantankerous commitments
and her contemptible title,
Administrative School Sec.

Marijane G. Ricketts, now retired, was secretary to three principals
during the course of her public school career. She presided over
the Writers' League of Washington for three years.
Bureaucratic Encounter

Seymour Z. Mann

"Take a number, wait in line, and carefully read the little square sign. Didn't you hear me? Look at your number, that's your code? It will go better for you if you do exactly what you're told."

After standing on line the window is reached where reception is held, Now it's explained there's a "rep" I must, of course, see. For this there's a new number to take and again an impatient wait Despite that my matter is easy to fix, it was, it seems, but a computer glitch.

So now I'm just a number, though I know I came with a name, And I pray I'm still a person to whom will be reattached the same, There are numbers upon numbers called by an assertive female voice While many also sit here waiting for their recognition by name.

Palpable tension fills the air. Necks are craned, ears are strained As the murmurings of those assembled moves to higher volume. As in musical composition it crescendos before the cymbal's crash. Then a diminuendo and over the room a sudden hush descends.
Now names are being called, and all ears
are strained still further
Eagerly awaiting the intoning of one's name
to serve as cloak and mantle
Verily restoring one's identity and returning
the meaning of being a person.
I hear it! It's my name, my most personal cover,
the non-persona waiting is finally over.

Seymour Z. Mann is Professor Emeritus at City University, New York.
The Promotion

Larry S. Luton

It seemed to be going so well.
I thought I had it made.
The departmental committee
and college committee
and, no small matter, the dean
all said,
"Yes, by all means!
Let's make him a Full Professor."

So, when the memo from the Provost said,
"I regret to inform you . . ."
in a matter of minutes
I went through shock,
and hurt,
and into anger
(that's the emotion men know best).

I filed a grievance:
"In accordance with the bylaws . . ."
and the Level One meeting was held.
"Can't you see that I have met all the criteria?"
"I don't think you're ready yet, but
keep on doing what you're doing . . ."

At the Level Two hearing
before a faculty grievance panel
"The Provost's decisions
must be in accordance
with the written standards."
"The candidate got a fair hearing."

The grievance panel's decision
"It's within the Provost's discretion . . ."
So I refiled the next year
and the departmental committee
and the college committee
and the dean
all said,
"Yes, by all means!"

The memo from the Provost said,
"I am pleased to recommend you . . ."
and the memo from the President said,
"I will be forwarding your name to the Board . . ."
and the letter from the Board said,
"Congratulations . . ."
But
instead of celebration
there was a sigh of relief.

Larry S. Luton teaches in the Graduate Program in Public Administration, at Eastern Washington University, Cheney.
Ode to the Bureaucracy

Elizabeth M. Eaton

Have you ever seen
the paper pushing people
aggressively compete for more
immaterial material
to initial their receipt
so as to cover their position
just to toss it to the next
canonic paper pusher in line?

or more particularly

a panicked paper pusher
at 6:15 a.m
racing down the
median strip of mediocrity
and through the congested
tunnel of conformity
to rapidly rectify the
revision of a revised memo
concerning the professionalism
of another memo without a date?

It's like a network of nettled caterpillars
unable to spin a credible cocoon
that will create a mode for change
and free them from the dirt.

Have you heard their pools of preaching
about productivity, loyalty and deference
to those with more valuable paper?

And do you know where that valuable paper goes?

It spins through the orb of offices
like a spit ball through a straw
until it is eventually declared
insufficient or obsolete.
And did you pledge allegiance to
the red tape of America,
swearing that even in death
you will not part with anything
that has not yet been approved?

And had they promised to promote you
when they ran out of paper
and politics got sticky
instead of callously stuffing you
in their shredding machine?

Elizabeth Eaton resides in Washington, D.C. She has previously
had work published in *Off Our Backs* and *Oxygen*. This poem was
previously published in *Oxygen*. 
I want to break up with myself

Michael Caufield

it's just a pose
perhaps
it's just a pose but what a difference
when juxtaposed with the strange hieroglyphic
of your attempt
to get it on in the name of literary
desire
is it my problem or yours? mine was
to claw a way into some heavenly art
yours -- what the hell was yours? was it really nothing more
than accepting the coos and kisses of salary-for-your-soul
negotiations in order to secure the
mindless propagation
of me more me more me more me more yes please
thank you
but have no fear I will not be deceived by the fine cut of your
three-piece-heart-shrinking suit -- the pen-stripes will
re-jog the nondescript face of all sanctimonious memos
whose petty pace
is the power and glory of the bureaucratic race
whose dictate
is nothing more than the warm and fuzzy machete
of the commonplace
you see I'm already distracted into feyness before I enter the stage
of this interrogation of how
the conflation of the possessives mine and yours
breaks the bank of IOUs
during this our lost generation
of
believable insults
Faculty Barbeque

Michael Caufield

the curse of being misunderstood
should be rescinded
at once
this I say because it forces abstract lyricism to bow
down to the 4th-grade
level of conservative prose
or so I thought that day I went to a faculty
get-together -- a mixer of sorts for those trying to sort
things out in the Chemical Engineering Department
the only reason I was there was because she was there
she who had spoken in great glowing depth about a recipe her
grandmother had given her
it would be there -- potato salad -- as prepared in Nuremberg for
three
generations
and as I stood with a heaping plate
wearing a flight jacket my father had worn while dropping bombs
on her grandmother
I watched
three Japanese students standing politely
close to her as she told them it was the caraway
seed that did it
and following their dark realist eyes follow her clear abstract blues
and realizing they would all go on to $85,000+ salaries
I began thinking how easily the Western world seemed
to be losing everything to some slithering worship of capital
I began explaining how idealism
is the only form ethics can take because all material modes of
production are
progressively being ruled by internationalizing forms of social
Darwinism
by those who end up with the reins
in their
hands
someone said, "You've either had too much or not enough wine."
somebody else, "He's from the English Department -- the only thing
they're
good at is complaining."
she said, "Even Shakespeare was a mercantile realist."
I said, "If the fate of the world really is tied up with justifiable
replication, whose child would you rather bear: Bill Gates or
William
Shakespeare's?"
one of the three Japanese said, "You stranger than caraway
in potato salad."
I gave a headfake and began loping towards the home of
the wayward abstract

Michael Caufield is currently completing a Ph.D. in English
Literature and Critical Theory at the University of Washington in
Seattle. His poems have appeared in many journals.
Work

Linda Reilly

WHAT AM I DOING INSIDE?!!

What is it about this office?
The sameness...
That's what gets to me...
The illusion of constancy
When out there somewhere
All of it is changing
But I don't get to see it.

The mind deceives us.
We look at the same walls,
The same desk,
The same floor.
The SAMENESS!!!
That's what gets to me.
Until a child I used to know
Gets married
or sadder still
A dear friend dies
Or I hear myself speculating
On the morals of youth.

When did I settle?
Something tells me I'm old.
I think they'll find me
Day old cold,
Propped against the coffee pot
(Dead before the final drip)
Not here - please God -
Not here.
Take me after five.

Linda Reilly is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Coordinator for the Southern Development Council, which manages the CDBG State Loan Program for the State of Alabama. She holds an MPA from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
Fiction

In Extremis

Richard Holder

The United Kingdom Government has, as part of its Health Service Reforms, decided to produce League Tables for Hospitals based on their mortality rates. A hospital with fewer deaths per 1000 patients will be ranked higher and, therefore, be one in which the chances of survival will apparently be greater than in a lower ranked hospital. Many of the hospitals in the UK are now self-governing trusts which are almost out of public control. The Board of Governors of a Trust Hospital generally consists of businessmen and ex-politicians with a sprinkling of the "great and the good."

We have the great fortune to eavesdrop on a meeting of one such Trust. The Chairman, Sir Terence Bartlett, failed to win election at last year's General Election standing as a Conservative candidate for a normally safe seat. He used to be a banker until his disastrous lending policy lost the bank £250 million. With his golden handshake he bought a major share of Crindon United Football Club. He is on the board of a number of Trust Hospitals and similar Government agencies. Mr. Reg Tristle is a used-car salesman who, strangely enough, is a local Conservative Councillor. Mrs. Cynthia Ogilvy is a member of Age Concern and has been an active member of the local community for over fifty years. How she came to be on the Board is a mystery to the other members. The other members of the Board do what is normally required of Board members. At the appropriate time they nod, in unison, their agreement with the Chairman. Now, to join the meeting.

"OK, settle down please. I want to keep this meeting as short as possible and we are all busy people. Right, firstly, I apologize for the short notice and appreciate you breaking other appointments to attend this Extraordinary General Meeting of the Three Acorns
Hospital Trust. We'll get the formalities over with and then proceed to item three of the agenda. Any apologies, Miss Trinder? Nope. Minutes of last meeting. Any problems? No. Reg, you'll propose acceptance and Dave, you'll second. Fine. Item 3. This is the reason for the meeting."

"Chairman, can you explain what this item is about? I feel we are all being rushed. What are the Mortality League Tables?"

"Been on a different planet, have you, Mrs. Ogilvy? No, don't answer that. I shall explain very simply, in words of one syllable, so that even you..., so that we can all get the picture. In its infinite wisdom the Government has decided to create a league table of mortality rates for hospitals. OK? It's a bit like the league that my club's in. We lose, no points. We win, three points. Only in reverse. We get a stiff, we lose a point, we avoid a stiff and we gain a negative point. Or something like that. Anyway, what it boils down to is ....the fewer corpses the better. Putting it bluntly my hospital will not be in Division Two but up there with the best, in the bloody Premier League, at the top. And if the damn EE bloody C get involved, I want us to be in Europe. At the top. I don't suppose they'll have some sort of cup?....no probably not. Shame. Any ideas?"

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Chairman. We're a hospital. We take patients, hopefully cure them, send most home but some poor unfortunates...well...die. What can we do to stop them dying? This is terrible...have you no thought for the patients?"

"Customers, Mrs. Ogilvy....Customers. We do not have patients, and I strongly object to the use of that word. It implies that they are ill and have no lifestyle choices. We have customers, or more precisely, we have inputs and outputs. Currently, we have an undesirable output from a league point of view and this happens to be....I can't put this in any other way...dead customers. We will look pretty damn foolish if we're bottom of the league. Would you send your mother to a hospital with a lousy death rate? I think not. No...what we need is some lateral thinking. Urgently!"

"Chairman, I only know about the used car business and your comment about input and outputs really hits the button. I can choose
the cars that I buy. Vary the input I 'spose you'd say, or titivate the output, clocking, respraying, filling up the dents with polyfilla, that sort of thing. This meeting is confidential, ain't it? Can we do that with our pati...customers?"

"Thanks for that, Reg. Choosing our customers would, of course, be the ideal way of avoiding any damage to our league position. But, I'm not sure it's possible. After all, we have contracts with GP's to take all the rubb...customers that they send us. Any other thoughts, anyone?"

"I ... think this whole meeting is a disgrace... I shall resign if we continue to behave in such a... a disgraceful way...."

"There's the door, Ms. Ogilvy. We can't carry passengers. Either you're with us, in our efforts to make this hospital the best or you're not... Make your mind up, either get up or shut up!"

"Chairman, I reckon our best bet is to alter the outputs."

"Not re-incarnation, Reg? Even used car salesmen can't do that."

"No, Terence. The customers are counted as dead when they die in the hospital, yeah?"

"I'm glad you've followed the meeting, Reg. Yes, the moment they die in the hospital is the moment we lose a bloody point."

"So.... they don't die in the hospital."

"Sorry, Reg, I'm not following you."

"Well, Chairman, they die somewhere else, somewhere which ain't our hospital."

"Absolutely brill! What you're saying is, anybody who dies, doesn't meet the grim reaper in the Three Acorns."

"Yeah. Here's some thoughts. Off the top of me head, so to speak. First, anybody who looks a likely goner is taken down a corridor into a different hospital. This'll need some setting up. Ideally with a Freepost address, so no one knows where it is, 'cept us of course.
That hospital would have a 100% mortality rate. Bloody terrible place. Could be run as a joint venture with a Stateside undertaker. Even better, if we set it up as a private hospital... could be a nice little earner, Terry. Or, we have the current building flexibly designated as the Three Acorns Hospital.

"Don't get you, Reg."

"Simple, Tel. Any bed which contains a dying customer is automatically allocated to a private hospital which would lease the bed from us. I can see the money rolling in now. So again, the Reg & Terry Hospital for the Unwell would be down in the relegation zone of Division Three...the Three Acorns would be up in top spot!"

"Reg, you're a treasure. Any other ideas? Nope. Are we all agreed then that Reg's first suggestion is the best? Absolutely brilliant! Graham, you're the Estates Manager. Any likely candidates for this new hospital?"

"There's a Portakabin stacked with spare beds at the end of the outer ring..."

"Say no more....That's it. Shouldn't be any legal problems. Sort that out Dave. Might need to be incorporated in the Cayman Islands. Reg and me as directors, the rest of you as paid advisors. Happy? Shut the door on your way out Mrs. Ogilvy. Any suggestions for a replacement? Any other business? Nope. Meeting finished at 7.45. Shred everything, Miss Trinder. Thanks, everyone. Reg, can I have a word?"

Dr. Richard Holder's working life has been entirely spent in the electronics industry.
Two Teak Cabinets

Jay S. Mendell

Professor Ewing Jones sat, staring bleakly out the window at a black cat which had crippled a lizard and was taking an hour to torture it; sat slouched in Dorothy Moot's favorite chair in Dorothy Moot's former laboratory-- which Ewing was pretty sure was the late Dorothy Moot's former laboratory-- sat and reflected on the stunning rebuff she had been handed that morning by the Standing Committee on Academic Prerogative.

One of the two huge teak cabinets-- the famous cabinets Moot had brought back from Ceylon by cargo ship, sleeping in them with a knife in one hand and a gun in the other, and one eye open-- was locked tight, and Ewing knew she simply must look inside. Dorothy Moot was almost certainly dead in that cabinet. Make that "surely dead." Who could doubt it?

So what? This was not a normal place. This was a university, and a bureaucrat-afflicted one, at that. Nobody was going to come in here with a locksmith and have a look-see inside in the cabinet. Suppose they were wrong, suppose Moot was just irresponsibly out of town and suddenly returned and found them rummaging through her private space? She would flay them, debone them, and add them to her bone collection, before anyone could say, "It was you, Dr. Moot, it was you we were looking for!"

In August, most of the department had gone to Boston for the blowout of anthropologists. Then they came back and Moot was missing, and the dean had rushed out to hire Ewing, to take the Great Woman's place. Still, doubt remained: was she or wasn't she? Dead, that is: were her bones rotting in that closet, or weren't they?
Here in the college, everyone was walking around in a blue funk, and Ewing was pretty sure she was going to slide into it, too, if she weren't resolute. She had seen Karlsson, the old boy across the hall, stare at a peanut butter and jelly sandwich like an alien artifact, though, being a bachelor, he had made it with his own hands ... then masticate it for forty minutes. You could barely see his jaws move. Yet she had heard that Karlsson had been a main hell-raiser in Boston. How he had fallen, on learning of Dorothy Moot's likely fate.

No one was normal; it was so damned hard to function, not knowing Dorothy Moot's fate for certain, being pretty sure the old witch was dead in a closet in her laboratory -- Ewing's laboratory, now -- but not having the nerve to flout the niles, and go in and find out for sure. Even though the building smelled awful, down at this end.

Moot was gone, Ewing realized, or, strictly, dead but not gone, yet there were framed pictures of Dorothy Moot all around the building, and she looked happy, unhappy, stern, friendly, nurturing, or hostile, as various indigenous camera-persons and research assistants had captured her moods; but there was an inexorable and regular chronological progression of striving to appear important, being almost important, being important, being used to being important, being used to being the most important person, and finally, in the photos snapped during her octogenarian years, being blasé about being such a very god-damned important old lady.

Moot had most recently been spending eighty hours a week in this very laboratory, stumping and grousing like a 90-year-old maniac hermit, measuring and rebuilding human remains because field work was too strenuous for a nonagenarian.

You could see her photo-image frowning or smiling down on you everywhere you went, and if she came grumpily out of the lab to warn you not to linger in the hall near her digs, you were surprised to see how old and infirm she had become, if at that moment you happened to be looking at a picture of the Great Woman in the 1950s or 1960s or 1970s or even the late 1980s when she was an octogenarian but at least a healthy one.
And in the last year, they say, she had turned mean, secretive, and territorial. Ewing had found evidence of this in a mouse trap left armed and dangerous in the recesses of a desk drawer, which nipped Ewing's fingernail (though it might have lacerated her digits, had she not been lucky). And a small steel locker stuffed with trash and garbage -- not good scientific material, but old beer cans and apple cores, and the like -- all of which came tumbling out when Ewing pulled open the door. The shelves had been unbolted, tilted forward, and re-bolted, to guarantee that a forager would be booby-trapped by cascading filth, which means someone must have helped Moot pull the locker away from the wall, tilt it backward, fill it with trash, close it, latch it, tilt it forward, and push it against the wall. A lot of work to punish whoever might innocently come through looking for a spare tool.

***

The Standing Committee had come out this morning and declared in advance their opposition to invading the Great Woman's private space, one of the famous cabinets Moot had paid for herself and brought back herself and had herself paid a locksmith to equip with brass locks and had featured in the frontispiece of her magisterial Purple Book. The three of them on the committee had groaned and moaned about having to come out on a Friday before lunch, when they had rather be home swilling martinis. She could tell right away they were not going to take responsibility for making a decision, they were going to torment her, they were going to torment her like that black cat out there was now playing with the crippled lizard. Then they were going to leave her stuck with Moot's decomposing body.

The committee member from Education seemed to have hardly any interest in the cabinets. He produced a carpenter's tape and measured the laboratory, and challenged Ewing with such questions as "Do you have an office in addition to this laboratory? Do you know you have 900 square feet, and I have only 300? What are you, an associate professor without tenure? How many phones do you have? Do you have long distance? Are these your own bookcases, or did the department give them to you?" He seemed to be building a case against Ewing, or if not Ewing, her college. Or maybe his own college. Who can understand the bureaucracy-
infected academic mind? The visit had nothing to do with the cabinet, she was convinced.

A smug little professor from History wanted to know how it felt "without Moot around to hold everyone's hand and wipe their noses and solve their problems and fight their fights and tell them what to do next," and Ewing allowed tartly that she was new here and had always wiped her own nose on the few occasions it was necessary.

Moot had been a ferocious fighter against bureaucracy, it was true. When the state issued its Uniform Standards for Public Edifices, Moot rushed out with her favorite graduate students and dug holes all around the building and filled them with big, green plastic bags, which she maintained contained the remains of native Americans. She brought in a priest and a shaman to consecrate the grounds; and then the bureaucrats howled with frustration, because, following their own rules, they were forbidden to build where Moot had planted the "remains." And so the social science building was surrounded by lawn and trees for 75 meters out, and beyond that radius the state crammed twelve grotesque classroom/office buildings, each one a replica of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles in Tallahassee, which had been identified as a model of cost effectiveness, each building surrounded by concrete, with a few glaucous ficuses flung about, in concrete planters.

The funny thing was, according to rumor, that the only remains in those plastic bags were those of Messrs. Schlitz, Miller, and Jack Daniels.

But that was not an instance of wiping people's noses, was it, or fighting their fights? Well, maybe an instance of fighting their fights, Ewing conceded, in her most private thoughts.

The chair of the committee sat by an open window and chased cats away and thumbed through the rule book. None of the three took much interest in her problem. Eventually they huddled and whispered loudly, and she heard "...they call themselves scientists!..." and "...serves them right to get their comeuppance..." and "...give me this roach trap, and I'll make something of it..." and then, sure enough, the chair told Ewing, "Call us for a life and death issue, Miss," thrusting at her a copy of the Faculty Privacy Code and Academic Ethics rule book. "Nothing else, Miss.
Remember: life and death." He did not have the courtesy to call her "Doctor."

Maybe someone had put them up to it, to sow trouble for Ewing or the college. "Some great start," everyone would say. Having to accept Moot's dead body as a roommate was intolerable. And they would slide deeper into their funk, all the professors and grad students, all the social science scholars, who hungered for leadership, and eventually the college's budget would be cut to ribbons. And so it would go.

Could Ewing Jones, the new woman, fill Moot's shoes? Should she be told to shoulder Moot's burdens?

The Standing Committee had left her without recourse.

Bad news travels fast. The Standing Committee left at 1:00, and at 1:15 promptly the dean called and asked to meet with her.

"I'll come right to the point," said the dean, an effete chap known as one of Dorothy Moot's many lackeys, a man with a wattle under his chin, thin, bright red hair, and a beaky little nose. "Dorothy was a wonderful woman, but not perfect. She refused to admit that one day she would...pass over...would be gone, so to speak .... She never chose a successor, never let us bring someone strong in -- though she often spoke of you, coming from the same hometown and all, having all the right traits and all. But she never talked of bringing someone in with the leadership someday to...to replace her...not waiting for her to...not be here." Straining to find the euphemisms for "dying" and "death," he was sweating little beads, and plenty of them. "So what we have here, Ewing, is a group of people...a group of professors...your colleagues, so to speak... who are terribly ambivalent about her passing...or not passing...as the case may be."

"We both know, Ewing, that early impressions count so very heavily," he continued. "We are terrifically distressed by the outcome of your meeting with the Standing Committee, coming as it did so early in your career here, at the very start, so to speak. Frankly, it was our expectation you might have induced the Standing Committee to open that cabinet . . . What makes this afternoon so agonizing, is that Dorothy would never have let those
committee members out of the lab until she had extracted what she wanted."

Ewing said, "They had the rule book on their side. Life and death situations, only, require attention."

"See here, Ewing," barked the dean, "you had no business calling for the Standing Committee, surely knowing they would have their knives out for us in this college, and not knowing how to handle them. If she were here, Dorothy would never have stumbled into such a trap. She was always the trapper, never the trapped."

"Well, dean, if Dorothy were here, I wouldn't have needed the committee, would I?"

He ignored her impertinence, and continued to catalog Moot's virtues. "She was resourceful. Why, in 1956, when I was her doctoral student, and this college was broke and could not even afford the price of a bus ticket to Atlanta, she rounded up three broken down Harleys, and she and I and another student headed north -- on motorcycles, for gosh sake! -- backpacking a bow and arrow and hook and line each, living off road kills and whatever we shot (and whomever we shot, though I'll deny telling you this), hauling as much film as we could stand to stagger under, and lots of pens and notebooks. We connected with an isolated bunch of locals above the Arctic Circle, took lots of pictures, lots of notes, stayed so long the people here gave up on us, stayed a little longer, and emerged with dissertations that needed only typing and photo development ...."

"Very resourceful, I'm sure. We all admired this in her."

The dean grasped her elbow and directed her attention to one of the photographs that decorated his office, one of those shots taken from a high point, a promontory. The picture was stunning. Looking down from this promontory, you could see a ditch or creek or very small river which is winding its way in a serpentine through a rock formation. The formation was like a thumb, sticking up from the bottom of the picture, the river outlining the thumb. It was quite desolate, just the rocks, and sand over the rocks, and the black stream -- and hundred of camels. The camels were all kneeling down, camels by the hundred, with their long necks stuck into the
creek, and you could hear each one of them sucking in ten, twenty, liters from the stream. And in enormous piles behind the camels were artifacts in crates, just hundreds of artifacts. There were camel drivers wrapped head to toe in white, so that nothing showed.

And posed in the foreground was a round figure on the back of the only standing camel, wrapped head to toe in black.

The dean fingered the picture's frame affectionately. Ewing had to admit that he was a great story teller when he warmed to his subject. "It was 1965. Moot rode off into the dessert trailing a ratty camel caravan and a gang of horrid nomads with bad teeth, but she came out with sufficient artifacts to occupy one hundred and fifty dissertation students, over ten years, at twenty-five universities, and she thereby bought her way -- and our college -- into the hearts of the academic community. Even the ratty camel jockeys came out looking like Lawrences of Arabia."

"She would have made the rules work for her, not against," he said abruptly. "Remember that, Ewing, if you want a career here."

His threat was appalling and he had scarcely bothered to bury it beneath euphemisms. "If you haven't got Dorothy Moot out of that closet by 5 p.m., when we lock this building, everyone is going to know of your failure of leadership, come Monday. See what you can do.

"Try anything," he insisted.

He had lobbed the threat into the space between them. She batted it back the best way she could. "Do you know what all this reminds me of, dean? I visited with a tribe in New Guinea, a bunch who lacked the trait of leadership. Yet they had an interesting way of coping with their deficiency. They relied on outsiders for succession to leadership, to tell them where to hunt, when to plant, when to harvest, what to build."

"When their leader died or became fuddled and indecisive -- when succession became an issue -- they would take their best-looking young woman -- they had the most beautiful women in their part of the island -- and send her out to marry exogamously. She and her family would return with an outsider as husband and the tribe would
say, this is it, you are our new head man, whether you like it or not. If he didn't work out in six months, he would be sent packing without his wife, in a canoe with a week's food and water, and another maiden would be sent forth to recruit a spouse. They just worked their way through the talent pool until they found the one who could handle the job."

"Your point is what?" asked the dean.

"My point is, no one in your tribe -- meaning our College of Social Science -- seems to know when to plant or what to build. So you romanced me into filling Moot's shoes, and now because I have not put spine into everyone and vanquished the hostile clans, you are threatening to put me on the first canoe out with a week's supply of food and water."

"Do you know what I have always admired about us anthropologists?" said the dean, mustering a crocodile's smile. "We have such penetratingly accurate insights."

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She hadn't expected it to be easy, coming into Moot's professorship as a visitor, moving into Moot's laboratory as a squatter. She had expected that it might be damned hard, that the professors would be skeptical, yet she never imagined the embarrassment of having to live and work maxilla by mandible with Moot's decomposing dead body.

Without inspection of the cabinet, the evidence of Moot's demise was inconclusive. There was a stink in the laboratory so bad she had to leave the windows open ... and cats came to the windows, pressing against the screens, wanting to prowl among the remains, wanting to carry away parts of people some of whom she had known briefly and personally. What did they think was causing that smell? She was a bone-collector herself, and was used that particular odor ... that odor that hovers everywhere, even in well-regulated laboratories. But in Moot's lab the stench came specially hard from that certain cabinet.

That certain cabinet. It smelled so foul that Ewing had to seal its seams with duct tape, and it still smelled.
The teak cabinets were famous: one unlocked, the other locked. You can't just kick in the front of a famous artifact, or rip off its hinges off. She had until the building was locked for the night to get that closet open, legally, and it was 2 p.m. now.

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Of the several cats who visited Ewing's window sill by climbing a tree and dropping onto the sill, one -- the lizard killer -- was wooly, black all over, and had blue eyes. It purred and rubbed against the screen when she approached. She let it into her lab at 2:15 and it came right to her, followed her to a chair, purred wildly for a minute, and fell asleep in her lap. She held the little fellow and petted him while she thought about the 5 p.m. deadline, thought about the two teak cabinets, pushed up flush against the wall, so there was no space in back of them at all and only an inch of clearance from the ceiling.

One of the Moot teak cabinets was empty. Eight feet high, four deep, and four across, with shallow shelves on its back wall sticking eighteen inches forward, the cabinet was laminated with brass sheets with native art work hammered into it, representations of people having sex, mostly, the women without exception being short and plump and middle-aged and looking like Dorothy Moot, the men being of different types.

How strange: to both of the cabinets Moot had taped pages torn carelessly from books: illustrations of pitcher plants and Venus flytraps, that fellow from the Poe story being walled up alive in a wine cellar, a wolf caught in a trap and gnawing off his own leg in order to escape. Bizarre.

But the locked cabinet was not empty, because Ewing had thumped all over it, in two hundred places at least, and heard solidness in a few places where there was definitely something leaning up against the front door which would come tumbling out when the door was opened.

There was a moment she considered attacking the cabinet with a bit and drill, to put just two small holes in the side of the cabinet, on the floor by the wall, where people might not see them, small holes, but
big enough to shove a pocket flashlight into, and put an eye to the other.

The cabinet's doors were hinged on the top edge, to extend like a canopy above the entry. She wondered if she could establish some sort of psychic connection with the locked cabinet by sitting and meditating in the unlocked empty cabinet, so she strained and grunted and lifted the door to a horizontal position; then snapped it backward two inches into a recess: her action locked it massively and precariously straight out, overhanging the closet.

Ewing brought the cat with her, into the cabinet. Right away Ewing's ankle snagged a trip wire, the door slammed down, and with a crisp snap, the lock engaged: the cabinet had swallowed Ewing. It's a man trap. That's what the pictures meant, taped to the cabinet. Fair warning not to mess with Moot's cabinet.

She might hollered for help and blown a pea-whistle she carried for protection on the walk across campus at night, but instead she used her Swiss Army knife and bore down hard and roughly sprung the lock from the inside, and she and the cat dashed out of the cabinet.

She stood outside the cabinet and trembled. How long might she and the cat have sat in the cabinet if she was ninety years old and feeble? She resolved to be careful if ever -- whenever -- she entered the cabinet's twin.

Recovering her composure, she lifted the canopy-door to a 45-degree inclination and used a chair to prop it open. On her hands and knees she examined the brasswork inside and out. It covered all surfaces of the cabinet, except the floor, except that in the lower left corner of the back wall, where the cabinet butted up against the concrete lab wall, a 4" x 4" opening had been left and a hole had been carefully cut through the teak, to allow an electrical connector to pass into the cabinet from the wall behind it. Ewing supposed the other teak was identical. It figured.

She had often heard rodents scampering in the airspace between the inner and outer walls, where there should have been insulation which explained why brass sheets were used on the cabinets, to partially seal them.
She pulled furniture away from the walls and revealed electrical wiring started and deserted, leaving gaps in the cement block.

She re-examined the brass-bound back wall of the unlocked teak cabinet, and the unbrassed strip, and thought, maybe there is an identical unbrassed strip in the locked cabinet. She paced off the distance from the cabinet to her lab window, then shinnied out the window with the black cat following her, dropped to the ground, and paced back the same distance along the outside wall. Sure enough there was a hole chopped in the wall and some flexible electrical duct sticking out, the remains of a botched or deserted wiring job. She crawled on her stomach and tried to see through into the cabinet, and when that did not work, she cut a rod from a bottle-brush tree and jammed it into the hole. It stopped short, so there had to be an obstruction in the path, which would not preclude quite a large rodent--or small cat--wiggling through, into the teak cabinet with Moot.

In a flash, she saw what must be done.

Looking every-which-way, she determined that no one was watching. She seized the black cat by the neck and tail and thrust it forcefully into the crack. Then Ewing shinnied back into the lab. The cat could be heard softly meowing. It was inside the cabinet with Dorothy Moot. She rapped on the cabinet, and the cat shrieked gleefully.

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"Dean," she said, "an adorable and helpless kitten has found its way into the cabinet -- the locked cabinet -- through, I believe, a crevice in the outside wall. It must have worked its way through the wall from the outside into the cabinet. Am I making myself clear? There is a cat in the locked cabinet, and its life is in danger."

The dean thought about this for maybe five seconds, then said, "Campus Security will want to handle this. They handle all the life and death emergencies which require immediate action. I'll ring them up myself. They'll want to be here when the locksmith arrives." And, in a voice thick with irony, "I am amazed that no one fixed that crevice, long ago. So I am most sorry that a creature in peril of its life. Yet taking into consideration that Security and the
locksmith will soon be on their way over here, and that we do not wish to waste their time, it now being late on a Friday afternoon, I am going to have a student run outside and build a pile of stones against the crevice, so that the little creature will not find its own way back out into the sunlight and waste our time."

"Fine. You've got the idea."

Back in her lab, she asked a graduate student, Ali, "Do you hear that? Do you hear that cat?" He heard it, yes, a cat inside the locked cabinet. Established: anything less than prompt action would be cruelty to an animal, the very "matter of life and death" the standing committee had demanded.

Security arrived and made a big deal of greeting Ewing—he was responding to an emergency call and had brought the locksmith in respect for the university's concern with treatment of animals, "be they wild, feral, domestic, or experimental." Then the locksmith inserted a pick and gave a twist, and something clicked loudly. "Ah," breathed a crowd of graduate students gathered in the hall. The locksmith nodded to Security, who stepped forward and heaved the canopy-door up and locked it horizontal.

The kitten tore out of the cabinet, headed straight for Ewing, and jumped into her arms. The graduate students applauded.

Security was caught by surprise and fell on his backside, as out of the cabinet spilled books, an avalanche of loose books, books spilling out of cartons, books that covered Security's feet and legs, his waist, and covered his chest part way up.

"Damn," he said. "I see Moot's foot," indicating a sneaker-clad extremity sticking out from under a pile of the Red Books.

"Sinistral or dextral?" asked student from the doorway.

"The left foot," said Security. He uncovered the foot and discovered that it had been gnawed loose from the leg. "Just a left foot," he said. The photographer came in and snapped Security holding the foot, then the photographer and Security staggered to the window, because the stench was now dreadful through the laboratory. The dean, meanwhile, labeled a carton "SIN-TARS" and
sent it in with a grad student in forensic anthropology who was less bothered by the stench. Ewing, meanwhile, held the door horizontal, taking no chances on its falling into place. That the cabinet was rigged as a man-trap -- and she believed it was -- would remain her secret, for the day she might put it to use.

After that, it was your basic grisly, smelly disinterment, except the body was excavated, piece by piece, from a mound of books. Security called out the body parts, a student labelled a box for each part, and another student took the empty boxes in and the full boxes out. They were coping with the smell really well.

The right arm came out, the hand clutching a brandy bottle. My god, thought Ewing, the poor old woman, who had lived all around the world among interesting people in dangerous places, went looking for a snort and ended her days in a cabinet because she was too feeble or too tipsy or too proud to put up a good holler.

People were standing around talking. Someone had found Moot's cache of brandy in the very back of the cabinet and shared it around. The funk was lifting.

The Standing Committee angrily reappeared, to complain that something was amiss, some trick or another had been employed. They drank Moot's brandy and complained increasingly loudly that Ewing was a tricky witch who had put something over on them, which, of course, was exactly what she had done and which gave her great pleasure.

By then crowd was leaving, most of them toting bottles. It was just Ewing and the Standing Committee, when the Education professor on the committee said Moot was an old drunk who couldn't turn a doorknob to save her life and there probably never was a cat in the closet or a hole in the wall.

Ewing told them, "Here is a flashlight. See for yourself... " She gave each of them a bottle to swig from, and took them to the fatal closet. "Wait-a-sec, give me a hand ... The door locks open, like this."

She excused herself, mentioning a dinner engagement. "Just turn off the lights, okay?"
Lingering in the hallway, with her hand on the doorknob and her ear against the door, she heard the Chair announce, "Never mind the smell, let's take a look." She heard the trap slam shut on the three of them and the muffled cries of the three of them, "My God ... the stench ... the darkness...."

She murmured "See you Monday morning. Enjoy," and bounced down the hall.

By the time the committee had started to puke and holler really loudly, Ewing had joined the wake in the dean's office, where the Afro-Cuban music was utterly deafening and the teak cabinets might have been a million miles away.

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I immediately dismissed the statement, believing that it was the usual "ivory tower" writing of an out-of-touch academic who had the not-unexpected "hidden" liberal agenda in mind. How could recruiting, screening, testing, and selecting the best possible candidate using proven personnel methods be anything but consistent with the objective and neutral competence that is an important hallmark of our profession? After all, is not one of the reasons why some minorities oppose affirmative action because personnel practices are based on scientific management and unquestionably fair?

I must now confess that I have changed my mind. Dresang was right. When I applied for a public sector supervisor position last year, I knew I not only met but exceeded the minimum qualifications. I had over 5 years of direct supervisory experience in the specialty area that was required. I had even been a management trainer who trained people to be better supervisors. I did not think that I would have a problem with my race since the public agency where I was seeking employment was under a current consent decree to eliminate discrimination in hiring practices.

Perhaps I was imagining things when one of the interviewers did not shake my extended hand. Was I being too sensitive because the interviewers were only asking me the questions on the civil service structured interview, and not responding with even a nod to any of my statements? Still, having interviewed many times and knowing myself fairly well, I left confident that I had given a thorough accounting of myself.

A month later, I was chagrined to find that I had flunked three of the four sections of the oral interview and gotten a "barely pass" on the other. On investigating what had happened, it was evident that discrimination had occurred. It was not my imagination that the one interviewer had deliberately not shaken my hand. Although he later denied remembering the incident, his fellow interviewer admitted that he had convinced her to change her rating of me from passing to fail. What was even better evidence was the fact that the cherished four-fifths rule--prima facie evidence of discrimination--had been blatantly violated. The impact is clear: while minorities made up less than 25% of the applicants, over 50% of the rejected applicants came from their ranks. Most heavily impacted were Latinos, Asians, and Filipinos.
Being a loyal organization person, I filed an internal complaint rather than sue. As I write this, I have just learned that the Civil Service Commission has denied my claim of discrimination in spite of the obvious violation of the four-fifths rule and corroborating testimony.

Here is how they got away with it.

**Getting Around the 4/5ths Rule**

1. **Blame the Numbers.** One way for an agency to disclaim violation of the 4/5ths rule is to keep the number of minority applicants small. In that way, when there is a disparate impact, the agency can throw doubt on the statistics. For example, if there are 5 minority applicants, each represents 20%; hence a failure rate of 40% is just two people—an insignificant number.

   If a disparate impact is found and the numbers do not add up, an alternate strategy is, as I found in my case, to give late examinations to majority candidates and fail them—increasing the failure rate of the majority and decreasing the 4/5ths gap.

   Ignoring the fact that most of the minority groups were *prima facie* cases of disparate impact, the agency put forth that one minority group was not discriminated against; therefore, there was no discrimination. The illogic here is that there was no disparate effect because *some* minorities did in fact pass without disparate impact. (In this case, it is suspected that the reasons African-Americans passed at almost twice the rate of other minorities is because the director of the agency is an African-American.)

   If all else fails, the *coup de grâce* to any discrimination complaint is to deliberately hire one or two from the same minority group as the complainant. This allows the organization to maintain the pretense that there was no discrimination because someone from my minority group was hired. The symbolic gesture is more important than the actual percentage represented. For example, one minority from my minority group was hired while two-thirds of the
subsequent hires were all from the majority group (thus preventing parity from every being reached within one's lifetime). A particularly nice touch was to make sure that the minorities hired were well deserving: one had been demoted from a supervisory position almost 10 years previously in a RIF and never re-promoted; another had been in an acting position for many years. This strategy worked so well that few asked why these minorities had been repeatedly passed over for so many years.

2. No Resources. To make good on the previous strategy, it is very important to keep the number of applicants down without appearing to discriminate against them. One approach is to conduct a minimal minority recruitment effort rather than an active recruitment involving advisory committees, minority networks, paid internships and scholarships, employee development, and so on. The excuse for not utilizing alternative recruitment methods and one that raises few questions is, of course, that the fiscal environment of government does not permit such extravagances of either time or money.

Even when an internal committee of minorities is appointed, the ability of the group to accomplish its mission can easily be subverted. In this case, the agency was quite sophisticated in its approach. It gave the committee an unclear mission: was its purpose to end discrimination in the organization, to create equal opportunity, increase everyone's appreciation of cultural diversity, or to increase the organization's cultural competence. The ability of the group to function was complicated by adding this assignment to regular duties of committee members, not providing the committee with any additional resources (such as staff or even data on hiring statistics), and blatantly putting non-minorities and loyal managers on this committee allegedly to insure "fairness" and to demonstrate that management was behind the committee's work. Having observed this committee in operation, the deference paid to organizational loyalists is quite obvious.
3. Blame the Suppliers. A backup position to the "No Resources" strategy is to assert that one's organization is not to blame for the low number of recruits. To justify the low number of minority applicants, a standard personnel practice has been to argue that the proportion of minorities in the applicant pool should be reflective of the actual work force rather than the general population. In this case, a 25% minority applicant pool is not very good compared to a 54% minority population. Yet the agency was able to argue that there was only a 37% minority agency work force and since the applicant pool was so small, the difference between 25% and 37% was only a few people. Thus, keeping minorities out perpetuates itself.

The agency has also found a convenient scapegoat in higher education. That is, it is not the agency that discriminates, but schools of higher education that do not recruit sufficient numbers of minorities. If no minorities can meet the university's qualifications for recruitment or retention (as often happens), then there will be a guaranteed shortage of minority applicants. This is an eloquent strategy: Not only can the agency pass the buck, but no one expects a mere public organization to dictate eligibility and graduation requirements to a lofty university or college where academic freedom reigns.

4. Blame the Victim. A corollary of the previous strategy is to blame the minorities themselves for not entering or finishing college. The beauty of this strategy is that it perpetuates the belief that we (as part of government and our community) can only help those who can help themselves. It is a posture that excuses us from sins of omission or even being responsible for the results of any efforts extended. It is a strategy that is backed by the popular American myth of self-made persons who pulled themselves up by their bootstraps and leapt from rags to riches through sheer determination.

No one questions the truth of the myth even though it misapplied to persons such as Donald Trump, who inherited his initial fortune. In the end, issues of chronic under-employment, the cycle of dependency caused by poverty,
disproportionate underfunding of inner-city schools, the impact of domestic and urban violence, class warfare based on socio-economic bias, and something as simple as lack of financial aid may explain why more minorities do not enter college. However, these issues are too controversial and too complex for the bounded rationality of the average public administrator and citizen. Thus, the old adage that one cannot help other people, they have to help themselves becomes an easy explanation for doing nothing.

Curiously, when someone does question why the organization is so hostile toward minorities, there are several stock "victimization" answers: (1) Why would you want to work for an agency that is so unappreciative? (2) I don't know, I'm a victim too; (3) I'd like to do something about it, but it is too complicated; (4) They're working on it, but it's going to take time.

5. Blame Your Competitors. One of the purposes of the Volcker Commission was to re-invigorate interest in serving the public because public sector talent was escaping into the more lucrative private sector economy. Thus, the embattled agency can argue that the minority recruitment effort was not a reflection of anything that the human resources department did, but the result of our widely held belief that government salaries are not competitive enough to attract the best and the brightest.

If someone should question why extra incentives are not given to attract minorities, few will find fault with the argument that it would be unfair to treat minority applicants differently from anyone else. Gotcha!

Getting Around the Consent Decree

6. Consent Decree Need Not Apply. Every good bureaucrat knows that when there is controversy, the best solution is a written set of rules, regulations, policies, and procedures that spells out in detail the fair and equitable provision of services. Public administrators realize, of course, that whoever has control of the rule-making process has the
power to make or break any mandate passed. Thus, when the public organization in question stated in its first Consent Decree some 20 years ago that it would not discriminate, it only listed those jobs where there was an obvious disparate impact--limiting needed changes to parts of the system rather than the entire system.

Because the agency could outwait the underfunded opposition, it was able to argue that there were not enough minorities in the labor pool to fill the positions; consequently, the agency changed the language of the decree to allow the substitution of white women for people of color. With that caveat and without the court directly administering the agreement, it was not long before the agency asked to be relieved of the decree's requirements, arguing that the disputed categories of workers reflected reasonable levels of recruitment effort. Fortunately, the minority groups managed to present evidence of disparate impact in new categories of workers and a second Consent Decree was written almost 10 years ago. At present, the agency is again renewing its efforts to overturn the Consent Decree using the same arguments from the past.

What this case illustrates is bureaucracies are tenacious and through the rule-making process can be virtually impene-trable by legislature, law, or court.

Was the Test Discriminatory?

7. Coopting the Minority. Since virtually everyone thinks that the purpose of civil service tests are to screen out ill-prepared applicants rather than to screen in the widest pool of competent applicants, it is easy to prey upon people's belief that any civil service examination (whether a structured interview, pencil and paper test, or assessment of training and experience) is a valid instrument. The agency can further bolster this claim by having minorities serve on the test writing committee. By having them on the committee, any complaints about the quality of the examination can be deflected by a simple statement that the test was devised by
minorities themselves. After all, who is going to question that minorities would write an examination that would intentionally disadvantage themselves?

The key here is to have them on the committee, but to not accept their input because they are amateurs, not personnel experts; ignore their input because the personnel specialist must write the examination from the job analysis specifications (in this case 5-10 years old); or to have them make minor alterations to an examination that has already been written. As happened in this case, the test writers were never made aware of the content of the examination so that they did not see what changes (or lack of changes) were made. A last ditch approach to get them to accept the personnel specialist's authority was to suggest a truism that would not be questioned: there never is enough time, energy, or resources to get it right this time, but next time....

8. The Bait and Switch. Another advantage to having minorities on the committee, especially people ignorant of personnel methods, is that they do not know the difference between content validity and predictive validity. When a test is questioned, simply say it is valid (especially if the test construction in any way, shape, or form involved minorities). People assume that "valid" means that the test does not discriminate.

It is not inconceivable that a personnel specialist would not have the time to tell anyone about the differences between content and predictive validity. Content validity usually means that the test was probably put together by job specialists or people working the job who also believe that the contents of the test reflect the types of activities normally engaged in. A content valid test bears no relationship to predictive validity. Predictive validity means that there should be a direct correlation between one's test score and success or failure on the job: that is, someone who scored high on the examination should do well on the job whereas someone who scored low would do poorly. Predictive validity was one of the bases for the Supreme Courts ruling in Griggs, et al. v. Duke Power Company (1971), wherein it was shown that tests had to be job related.
If the complainant does know about predictive validity, the agency can argue that in these recessionary times it is not cost-beneficial to conduct such a study, and/or that positions need to be hired now and there is not enough time to conduct a proper test validation. A more sophisticated variation of this approach is to imply that predictive validity can only be done through a longitudinal study (that is, how successful were high scorers 1, 2, 5, or 10 years from now) rather than concurrent validity (currently successful supervisors should score higher on the test than their less successful counterparts). Of course, the agency need not worry since there is not enough time to do such a study, and if such a study were commissioned, the test instruments would surely be out of date and useless.

A weaker, but still effective argument, is to assert that few have complained about the test or those who were selected were successful. No one will question that someone with a low score might also have very easily succeeded. The merit system ranking mystique is too deeply ingrained in our lore to ever be questioned.

**Getting Around Selection Problems**

9. **Rater Reliability.** It takes a lot of work to train an interview panel if the goal is to be fair. Not only do they have to be apprised on what to score and how to score, but they must all be checked to be sure that they score consistently (that is, rater reliability). In my case, it is documented that some raters did not attend the training. Those who did attend felt that the training was not sufficient. Yet, the agency found nothing wrong with this process.

To top it off, the agency pointed out that the training was done by a minority. Implying, of course, that if there was any problem, minorities did it to themselves.

10. **Collusion.** In some jurisdictions, absolute fairness is assured by not having anyone from the internal organization participate in the testing process. This eliminates organizational politics from skewing scores. In my case, at least one
member of each interview team was from the hiring organization. It was that person who did not shake my hand but instead walked past me to greet another interviewee. He then had a personal conversation with the other interviewee which included a comforting hand on the shoulder.

Although raters are usually expected to score independently, this rater actually convinced the other rater to change her evaluation of me from passing to fail, according to notarized statements made by the second rater.

11. Fractionated Voting. Fractionated voting is an extension of the collusion described above. Fractionated voting consists of giving 100% of the points to your friends and 0 points to non-allies so that friends end up with higher total points (and therefore higher placement on the certification list). Fractionated voting works best when the other members of the interview panel score fairly, because their fair score and the highly "negative" score eliminates the competition. It is almost like voting several times. An analysis of voting patterns indicates that fractionated voting was characteristic of several interview teams, including the one that interviewed me.

13. The Fake Interview. My investigation of hiring practices at this agency indicates that several minority persons complained that they were passed up for positions where the eventual hiree had scored lower (usually from the majority group--an ironic twist on the usual claim that qualified whites were passed over by unqualified minorities).

What I learned was that minorities were alleged to have participated in interviews and been rejected when there had been in fact no interview. To cover their tracks, the agency claimed to have left messages and blamed the minorities for never calling back.

14. The Undesirable Assignment. Another neat trick that this agency is known for is to hire the minority but give them an undesirable location. One minority woman disclosed that she was forced to turn down a supervisory promotion
because the "only" opening was 60 miles from her home. Of course, by turning down the assignment, her name was no longer considered and she was labeled as difficult to get along with.

Another minority talked about being offered a promotion to a job where the work hours meant that he could not spend time with his new-born baby daughter. He suspected that the job offer was deliberately made to remind him that no matter how much his cultural heritage valued "La Familia," it would always be secondary to loyalty to the organization. Now that his daughter is grown, he still finds that his career choices are limited by an undeserved reputation--even for transfer to an equivalent position within the agency.

15. More Than Hazing. Everyone expects a bit of job hazing as a part of normal organizational dynamics. But several new appointees talked about unusual delays in getting telephones connected, getting supplies, and even obtaining something as simple as a telephone. One supervisor was made to share an office with a worker because there allegedly was not enough office space. Yet, the new supervisor noted that other people were moving in and out of offices on the same floor where she worked.

Another technique that was discovered involved the agency not telling new employees about the job expectations, or far worse, to "forget" to mention important idiosyncracies about management and staff. Not including someone in the communication network, of course, is a fairly effective method for insuring failure.

Because everyone is so busy, proper initial training is easily overlooked. Being unprepared for the job, in turn, means that the first performance evaluation will be less than acceptable. "If you needed help, why didn't you ask?" is a great statement to put someone on the defensive. If you say that you did know enough to ask, you have admitted to incompetence and/or making false claims about being prepared to do the job.
16. An Affirmative Action Hire. Another sure way to set up a new employee is to let everyone know that it was an Affirmative Action hire. As Rush Limbaugh has clearly opined on his talk-radio show, Affirmative Action is a battle cry signifying that more qualified candidates were passed up. The average person focuses on the negative stereotype of the "Q-word"--quotas--rather than examining whether the test scores have any relationship to one's ability to do the job.

Dealing with the Grievance Process

17. Stall. At one point in the complaint process, the agency indicated it was planning to cancel the certification list because of the adverse impact on minorities. I was told that those already hired would keep their positions but I could reapply. It was implied that I did not, therefore, need to pursue my complaint. However, it has now been almost two years since that "conciliatory" gesture, and workers continue to be promoted from the old certification list; there has been no new job announcement.

18. Hire Lackeys. A surreptitious way for the agency to show that discrimination could not have occurred is to hire minorities to be internal EEO investigators. The advantages are several. First, the public (and the complainant) will assume that minorities will favorably investigate minorities, a prejudice that is hard to dispel; therefore, if a negative finding is made against a minority complainant, it could not possibly have been due to unfair treatment by the internal EEO. Second, few will realize that the EEO investigator's real job is to find evidence to counter any allegations by the complainant. This factor is facilitated by brochures and pamphlets that describe the EEO office's function as fact-finding, and utilize such neutral phrases as "investigate complaints of discrimination." I have personally witnessed an EEO specialist deliberately divulge and use information against a complainant after the complainant told her the information in confidence.
Third, the potentially pro-complainant EEO specialist can be kept in line by several non-discriminatory techniques: neutral accountability systems that reward "resolution" of complaints in the organization's favor; a promotion system and merit pay system that reward loyalty to the organization rather than loyalty to the truth; the assignment or non-assignment of "easy" and "tough" cases such that workers leaning toward advocacy have no choice but to place their careers in jeopardy; wide circulation of stories about former EEO workers who have been banned from government work because they were not politick; and using the perception of prejudice to create a prejudice--that is, reminding workers that they must bend over backwards to be neutral or they will be perceived as biased and incompetent.

19. Keep It Secret. It is clear that the internal EEO investigation is not a true neutral investigation. In my case, I was told that records kept were for internal use only; therefore, I was not privy to all of the information that had been gathered. If there was information that might reflect positively on the complaint, I did not know about it. Nor could I rebut any counter-allegations, misrepresentations of fact, etc. Finally, the internal EEO report went unchallenged before the Civil Service Commission because I was told that I was not a party to their deliberations.

By claiming that this is a neutral and impartial internal investigation, the complainant is quickly discouraged from further fact-finding and denuded of legal representation.

Conclusion

The idea behind disclosing these questionable personnel practices is not to provide agencies and individuals with new weapons for continuing discrimination, but rather to call into question certain activities that have passed for "fair" and "equal" treatment, or have been tolerated because of the perception that time and resources are limited.

We need to step outside our comfort zone and ask if enough is being done to level the playing field so that all people, regardless of race,
color, creed, age, gender, or gender preference, have a chance to make a contribution to our government and society. I think not.

From our earliest times, we have always struggled with the meaning of the phrase "all men are created equal." Equal treatment too easily becomes contaminated with the competing values of friendship, conformity, loyalty to one's organization, the cozy comfort of the status quo, and in some cases, protecting one's own job. The least we can do is to think about what we are doing. The best we can hope for is to have the courage to do what is right. The task will not be easy, especially for those who no longer have a dream.

Endnotes


2. The four-fifths rule is an accepted legal standard that asserts that if the acceptance rate of the minority group does not fall within 80% (4/5ths) to 100% of the acceptance rate of the majority group, a prima facie case has been made for the test having a disparate impact upon the minority group. Thus, if the passing rate of the majority is 90%, minority passing rates falling below 72% (90% x .8) may be considered to be prima facie evidence of discrimination.

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Movie Reviews

Dave

(Warner, 1993)

Reviewed by John Larkin

"Cute" is the word I have most often overheard used to describe the movie Dave. Its use of technique, its self-conscious treatment of the image of the presidency, and the superficial development of the main character make for a clever and entertaining variation on an old and tired formula: innocent protagonist gets sucked into an enchanted land and his development depends on mastering the new "magical" powers without becoming tainted by them (we've seen the same theme in Star Wars, The Firm and dozens more). Nevertheless, the subtle messages upon which the plot depends should be of concern to public administrators, and all other advocate of democratic institutions.

Dave is the story of a small-town type named Dave who is enlisted by the White House to double for President Bill Mitchell, whom he strikingly resembles. After the real president delivers a speech, Dave is instructed to walk through the crowd to a limousine while Mitchell tends to some extra-marital endeavors. When president suffers a debilitating stroke "in action," Dave is required to continue filling in for the chief executive. At first merely a puppet of the chief of staff and the press secretary, Dave soon gets a feel for the job and begins to influence policy on his own.

Prevailing assumptions within Dave and the perceptions surrounding the modern presidency are too similar to casually dismiss. The tenor of recent news reports lends credence to the belief that Dave depicts the true depths to which citizens believe the
policy-making process has sunk. Bills are no longer analyzed on their merits or faults, but on how they weigh upon the president’s political dance card. So it comes as no surprise that Dave (and its audience) can so easily reduce the complexity of a proposed spending bill, easily finding $650 million for homeless shelters. In reality, if the bill were so obviously a blow to the homeless, it could never have been vetoed so easily—even by a cold and heartless, poor-person-hating, latent Republican chief of staff, who forges the President’s signature on the bill and is obviously politically accountable to no one.

Before he “takes office,” Dave, the ordinary citizen, requires a civics lesson on the basic structure of Congress; Dave has no clue as to the names of cabinet members. However, he knows President Mitchell’s campaign speech word for word. He knows every hand motion and every nauseating cliché: “America is...a distant light on rocky shoals...the faces, smiles of a Sunday afternoon...” At first glance, it may seem that the director is poking fun at the American public’s misguided attention. The movie, for that brief five minute period, seems aware of the fact that Americans in general are swayed more by cliché than by carefully argued policy statements—and that there is something wrong with that.

However, the outcome of a cabinet meeting seems to overrule that interpretation. The chief of staff demands that Dave find $650 million to pay for the shelters if he wants them so badly—so Dave does just that. Dave’s successful attempt to railroad his agenda through the cabinet meeting seems to imply that knowledge of the inner workings of government and deference to political considerations are not necessary, and, in fact, hinder any president whose heart is in the right place. Most importantly (this is where we, the public administration community, come in) the audience need not be concerned with implementation at all. The protagonist is fighting for funding for shelters. That is all the audience needs to know before giving Dave its unquestioning support to cut all those other programs which he finds unnecessary.

Anyone watching the film and feeling sympathy for Dave’s agenda probably subscribes to the formula: “poverty = bad,” and therefore its corollary: “shelters = good.” It is reasonable to assume that many of those same people agree with “peace = good,” and therefore “production of nuclear submarines in a post-cold war
environment = bad.” How would this movie have played in Connecticut where Bush tried to scrap the Sea Wolf project, apparently under the influence of “Davelogic”? And yet, the audience is so ready to invest so much power into the hands of one man. Sure, Dave’s intentions are inarguably noble, and that should be enough for any president wishing to do the right thing. Such attitudes, I believe, spill over into real life and become part of the debate, be it Rush Limbaugh or Ralph Nader doing the debating. Dave reinforces the fallacious argument that the only reason “good” legislation does not get through Washington is because “bad” politicians allow ambition, greed and “insider politics” to cloud good judgment.

A turning point (inasmuch as the film turns at all) occurs when Dave, after sneaking out to Virginia for a really sincere evening with the First Lady, decides to return to the White House, continue the masquerade, and continue influencing (i.e.: dictating) policy without ever weighing the fact that he was not elected to the position. Without letting anyone on the White House staff know the reason, he calls a press conference to announce the most sweeping social program since the New Deal. A job for everyone in the country is his goal. He then leaves the podium without taking a single question, without an ounce of accountability, and without a clue as to how the public administrators of the country are going to implement his lofty ideal. An accountant friend of Dave, after looking over the federal budget, announces, “If I ran my business the way the government keeps its books, I’d be out of business.” In his other life, Dave runs a temporary employment agency. If he tried to implement his jobs program the way he runs his business (begging local employers to take on employees they neither need nor can afford to pay), the results would be dire.

Dave’s character does not develop in any way that is useful to the audience. Successful character development depends on conflict and choices. Should Hamlet murder his stepfather, kill himself, or brood for five acts? Protagonists find themselves in situations that demand action. They act and then develop (or die) because of the consequences.

Dave is never required to face any critical, self-defining choice. He enters the picture with a disturbingly vague sense of what is right
which is never challenged. What is challenged is his equally vague plan for acting on what is right. The wicked chief of staff serves as the only threat, but is quickly and easily dismissed by the audience as merely power hungry and dismissed by Dave with a pink slip.

A number of unrealistic and potentially dangerous assumptions underlie both the action of the movie and of the real-life federal policy-making spectacle:

• Congress holds no sway over a President (checks and balances...what a nuisance!).

• The intention of the policy is infinitely more important than the implementation.

• Bills touted as “good for the poor” are inherently good and free from pork.

• Pork is easily identifiable and any sufficiently humble president, unfettered by insider politics, can erase it with the flick of a pen.

• The only barriers to 100 percent employment in this country are greedy politicians and incompetent bureaucrats.

We are therefore encouraged to fault our political system for not allowing our presidents to be dictators. Of course, once the movie is over, the audience is allowed to return to their clear-thinking, critical selves; understanding that Presidents are bound by more than the demands of rich lobbyists, by more than ambitious chiefs of staff, and by more than a desire to rate highly in the opinion polls.

Dave, the character, is left deliberately vague enough to absorb the projections of a wide number of audience members. In one sense, this is healthy, because when he tells his accountant friend that “I’m the government,” he is saying that we, the people are the government. By projecting ourselves subconsciously (through drama and films) onto the image of the presidency, we can experience more deeply a sense of ownership of government. However, this movie stops half-way, because “we, the people,” are the government warts and all, but Dave sanctions ignoring the warts. Being government, “we, the people,” have a responsibility
to understand how it works. When policy debates can be framed in simplistic, moralistic terms (by Capitol Hill, 1600 Pennsylvania, or by Hollywood), democracy suffers. *Dave* did not delve into the real political drudgery of his policies because audiences would not have found that as interesting.

It is potentially dangerous when a film depends upon such a distorted view of government functions for its action; it would be certainly frightening if a majority of the audience didn’t notice.

John Larkin is a member of the publications staff at the American Society for Public Administration and happily has agreed to accept “hey, lighten up, *Dave* is a supposed to be a comedy” as a response to his review.
Repentance

(Georgia-film; 1984)

Reviewed by Vatche Gabrielian

Repentance is the last film in a famous trilogy (Rumors, Tree of Desires and Repentance) of the celebrated Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze. The powerful film was shot in 1984, but due to its "wrong" political and ideological content, was not released until the Soviet Union was well into Gorbachev's perestroika in 1986-1987. Repentance was the first film that openly addressed some of the "dark spots" of Soviet history (at least for Soviet viewers)--the reign of absurd, omnipotent and ubiquitous terror of the Stalinist era--in frankly a political manner and through the images and philosophy of Orthodox Christianity. The film was very different for Soviet viewers not only because it treated taboo subjects that many would like to forget or did not consider shameful at all; it stated once again that guilt will not be washed away by silence or superficial admittance, but can be dealt with only through repentance. The film stunned Soviet viewers, and had critical and popular success. Director Tengiz Abuladze was awarded the Lenin prize (the highest possible prize in any field in the former Soviet Union). The film was the winner of a Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1987, and overnight fame came to the fine actor Avtandil Makharadze. The film addresses more the political, rather than the administrative, realm of public affairs, but can be a valuable resource for creative and unorthodox study of administration; it especially highlights ethical issues and dilemmas that administrators face in their practices.

The plot of the movie, in short, is the following. Ketevan Baratelli--a confectioner in a small Georgian town--hears that the former mayor of the city, Varlam Aravidze, has just died. Obituaries praise the virtues and leadership abilities of the deceased, but Ms. Baratelli has a totally different vision of what should happen.

After the mayor is buried with all honors, he is exhumed several times from his grave (an extreme dishonor in Orthodox Christian
tradition) and brought back to the house of his son, powerful functionary Abel Aravidze. The police, with the active help of Tornike Aravidze, the grandson of the deceased mayor, hunt down the graverobber, who turns out to be the confectioner. During her trial she admits the fact of graverobbing, but does not consider herself guilty. As justification for her action, she recounts in the court the "real" life of Varlam, who, while the mayor of the town, sent to death and exiled thousands of innocent people into Siberia and the Arctic regions of Russia. Among those people are the parents of Baratelli—a gifted artist and his wife. She vows to dig out the dead body of Varlam as many times as it takes, until she is alive and free—and that it is her cross to carry. This powerful testimony in the court moves the grandson of Varlam Aravidze, who recounts how, just before his death, his grandfather was afraid of sunlight, imagining that he saw the blood of innocent people dripping from his fingers, and trying to hide from rays of sunlight behind thick concrete walls. Tornike (the grandson) confronts his father, who does not want to acknowledge any wrongdoing by the deceased mayor, and asks forgiveness from Ketevan Baratelli whom he has shot and wounded. Tornike again confronts his father when he learns that, upon his powerful efforts, Baratelli was found insane by doctors and institutionalized in a mental hospital for good (a common practice in the former Soviet Union for dealing with dissidents). After his father slaps him in face for his accusations, Tornike commits suicide. The loss of a son is the last straw for Abel Aravidze, who was in a state of doubt and remorse for a long time, but was trying to keep calm. Now Abel himself digs out his father's corpse and throws it away, denying it the right to be buried as other people.

Here the dream-vision of the confectioner ends, and she is again with her cakes. An old lady comes to her window and asks for the road that leads to church. The confectioner's answer is that this is Varlam's street, and it has never led to church. In the final scene of the film, the astonished old lady asks her metaphorical question: "What's the use of the street that does not lead to a church?"

The movie is heavy with metaphors and references to peculiar Soviet experience. The character of Varlam Aravidze resembles the personality of Lavrenti Beria, the notorious chief of the notorious Soviet secret police, although Varlam is a fictional character, and combines some universal features of all dictators and their hand-
servants. As of now, the only person in Russia who is not buried (excluding victims of terror) is Lenin, the founder of practical Communism. The movie does not take place in a concrete place and at a particular time; it has conflicting images of medieval guards and judges wearing wigs and dressing in Western manner, the urban atmosphere of a small Georgian town, police chiefs reminiscent of military dictators from Latin America, and automobiles and modern laboratories. Although referring to real and painful events of the past, the movie is told more as a parable than as a docudrama.

There are several episodes worth the attention of students of bureaucracy, organization, and administration. The episode of Varlam's inauguration as the mayor of the town (relating to the 1920s and 1930s) is delivered in a comic key. At a very important moment of the ceremony the water pipe in the street blows up, fountaining all orators with gallons of water. During the time of this window-dressing capitalist-denouncing ceremony, there are three people (along with wet orators and cheering crowd) conspicuously working in vain: two plumbers trying to block the stream of water with their bodies, and the secretary, who is typing all the speeches on wet paper.

Other episodes are more serious. For instance there is an episode when Varlam, the newly appointed (maybe even elected) mayor, receives a delegation of citizens appealing to stop the use of a medieval Christian monastery as a scientific laboratory, because the lab ruins the temple. In this episode, the actor Avtandil Makharadze (Varlam) displays the widest range of bureaucratic/official metamorphosis--from tragically uninformed but caring, to understanding but having no other choices, to educated and artistic but burdened by the weight of administration, and finally, to the powerful, confident and threatening enforcer of autocratic statutes, one who enjoys his power and shows it.

The most relevant episodes concern purges--the notorious practice of the Stalinist period when innocent people were summoned (usually during the night) on the basis of fabricated accusations, were sentenced as "enemies of the people," and then killed, or put in jail, or exiled to the Gulag. There is an episode when artist Baratelli appeals to his teacher and friend Mikhail (who is Varlam's boss) the arrest of innocent old people. Mikhail, although understanding that it is definitely wrong, is still hesitant and unwilling to interfere with
the clock-work apparatus under his leadership, and is relieved when Varlam himself calls, saying he has released the old people.

In another episode, Varlam brings a letter accusing Baratelli of ideological wrongdoing (or more precisely, of not being devoted to the Party's causes) to Mikhail. Varlam refers to the fabricated letter full of hatred and envy as *vox populi*, and urges action. When Mikhail tears up the letter, calling it nonsense, Varlam subtly threatens him on counts of negligence of accountability: being unresponsive to the "will of the people," i.e. public opinion (*responsiveness*), destroying a document that has been registered in thousands of important registers (*legal accountability*), and not working hard in the direction of the political goal, which is to reveal the enemies of the people (*political accountability*).

In an episode in a surrealistic court, where the goddess of justice plays the piano during the court recess, Baratelli is confronted with arrestee Mikhail Korisheli, who is already insane. Korisheli testifies that he headed a 2,700 member-strong conspirative group, whose aim was to dig a tunnel from Bombay, India to London, UK. With the same absurdity he testifies that he was spying for Pontos, a state that has not existed for about two millennia. Korisheli explains to Baratelli his insane plot: to exaggerate everything to absurdity, to include everybody possible in the lists of enemies of the people, until the leaders of the country see that this is not real, that they have been misinformed and misguided. As they realize it, Korisheli hopes, they will call an extraordinary meeting of the government, set all the innocent people free and punish the guilty saboteurs. His plan, based on the sanity of the atrophied bureaucratic communication process, of course, fails.

The next episode, which features Varlam's speech (with references to the styles of Hitler and Stalin), gives a perfect example of bureaucratic math. Varlam claims that "4 out of 3 persons are enemies," because "numerically one foe is greater than one friend." This kind of math, coupled with zeal, Varlam claims, will help us to find "a black cat in a dark room, even if the cat is not there."

The following episode is the most powerful and characteristic for our purposes. If the previous episodes concentrated mainly on intra-bureaucratic relations, this episode also shows bureaucracy's external relations—how Communist bureaucracies at their worst
treated their clients. A right-hand man for Varlam, Doskopulo, enters Varlam's office and reports that he has succeeded and summoned all Darbaiselis (a common Georgian last name). When bewildered Varlam asks which Darbaiselis, Doskpulo says the ones Varlam has mentioned some period before. He tried very hard and brought whomever he could find, and now all of them are in the truck down in the yard. When Varlam orders him to release all those people (among them children and women), Doskopulo, offended that his industriousness is not rewarded, proposes to "put them in a cellar," because they "might come in handy." When angry Varlam orders him to let them go and to write a letter of resignation, Doskopulo responds that he cannot do it, because he is illiterate. For a moment, Varlam is totally lost, and has the look of a person who does not understand what is happening around him. After the secretary (a powerful and enigmatic figure-symbol) whispers something to Varlam, Varlam calls back Doskopulo and, smiling, tells him: "All right. To hell with you and them. We'll jail them all." When grateful Doskopulo leaves, the smile is wiped off Varlam's face and anxiety and confusion return. This episode illustrates the feeling of horror and impotence against a grandiose state apparatus already put in motion that bureaucrats and functionaries sometimes experience, as well as more than vividly portraying the practice of considering people not even as cases, but as objects.

In an episode when Abel and Tornike (Varlam's son and grandson) argue about Varlam's life in the courtroom, Abel--a functionary himself--defends Varlam on the grounds of complicated times and his overall achievements. He states: "What are the lives of one or two, when the well-being of millions is at stake? There was so much accomplished," and "Varlam acted always for the interests of society, sometimes against his will." Here again we deal with the concept of "statistical" handling of the population (not people), when all that counts is the overall benefit (calculated somehow), and injustice for this purpose is perfectly legitimate. Interestingly, although this concept was rejected most strongly by Dostoyevsky--a Russian--among all its opponents throughout the world, it was a more-than-common practice in Russia (and the former Soviet Union, including Georgia) under Communist rule. This episode directly formulates this concrete issue of ethical choice of distributive justice.
Finally, there is the episode of Abel's surrealistic talk with his father's ghost or his second self. Abel is remorseful, thinking that he has lost his faith, that he has dual personality. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that his identity was connected to his status—a place in society, a position in the bureaucracy, and that by losing his status, he is losing the meaning of his life. Finally, Abel concludes that he has an identity crisis, and is powerless to move forward—that his life is over. This episode clearly can be useful when studying the bureaucracy from a phenomenological perspective, and analyzing experiential understanding of bureaucracy.

*Repentance* can be used in the classroom, focusing on different episodes that highlight different aspects of bureaucracy: bureaucratic communication, inhuman treatment of clients, identity crisis, forms of accountability, public opinion, distributive justice, etc. Perhaps the best use of the movie will be in an ethics class, where the film can be discussed as a whole. In any case, because of the heavy context of the film, complete viewing of the movie is preferable.

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*Politics in the Purple Kingdom* is a profoundly insightful work of organizational behavior and theory. It focuses on the management of a large complex not-for-profit organization that has for millennia dominated the structure and administration of western bureaucracies across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. The Roman Catholic Church has been the model for the development of most large-scale organizations--the military, big business, and big government. And, this despite the fact that democratic models for
the conduct of group activity pre-dated the Catholic Church in the Athenian polis and later powerfully challenged Catholicism in the Protestant Reformation. Furthermore, this has continued to be the case well into the twentieth century and up to the moment, even though much contemporary organizational theory, propagated by modern schools of business and public administration, has challenged closed models and advocated the collegial, consensual decision-making of open models.

As Schlichte’s account, as well as the dwindling ranks of those entering holy orders attest, the Roman Catholic Church has been suffering from organizational decline for decades. Schlichte’s analysis of what has gone wrong will be of interest, however, to a far broader audience than Roman Catholics; it will also be of tremendous relevance to all of us who work in, study, or just generally come in contact with large-scale bureaucracy. Students of organizational culture will be fascinated by the picture he draws of the connections between national culture and church rules and practices both in the United States and abroad. For example, he notes that American seminaries treated aspiring priests, who were adults, like children owing to the fact that American seminaries based their training on the Italian model. Italian seminaries recruited boys in the fifth grade and built education for the priesthood around the needs of young boys. And, he maintains that Americans were more obsessed with canon law and rule following their European counterparts, owing to such factors as American tendencies to conformity and the siege mentality of Catholics in the United States who “unconsciously...circled the wagons by thorough application of the rules.”

Moreover, people interested in organizational change in large, complex organizations will find his comparisons between the Roman Catholic Church, which has resisted change, and the United States Naval Academy, which has embraced change, extremely thought-provoking. And, finally both students of organizational ethics, as well as people who routinely confront the tension between the claims of individual conscience and organizational demands, will be inspired by the author’s struggle.

In any case, even though this is a great management case study, it remains a carefully crafted autobiography that flows like a good
Schlichte grew up in a devoutly religious Roman Catholic family in the years of the Great Depression. When his dentist father applied for a desperately needed hospital staff position, the entire family went off to Holy Trinity for nine evenings to make a novena to one of the Jesuit saints who they believed would intercede with God for their father to get the job. Such was their faith that when he failed to get the job they knew that God simply has something better in mind. In the author's words: "The state of the economy and the power of the rules handed the clergy a stacked deck. Through their prayers, clergy held out hope for a job without having to deliver the contract. If the job came through, their prayers worked. If no job came through, God had other plans. Clergy could not lose."

Schlichte has planned to go to Boston College in "pre-med," but concern over family finances led him to accept a "free-ride" at the United States Naval Academy. There he encountered his second hierarchical, rule-bound organization and followed the rules as unquestioningly as he had those of the Church (although he had questioned even then how the Church could tolerate the segregated services he attended in Maryland in these years). The author explains: "Life under the military differed little from full-time compliance with the Roman Catholic religion. Rules engulfed us... The Academy and the church made a virtue of obedience. The Church held out rewards and punishments for a future life. The Navy dished them out on the spot."

In World War II, he made his way in the Navy aboard the U.S.S. Philadelphia, attending daily mass, and remaining steadily obedient and relatively unquestioning of authorities ecclesiastical and military, at least in the early years of combat. However, as the war wound down and some contemplation became possible, Schlichte began to ruminate about the human condition and man's inhumanity to man--especially after visiting a liberated concentration camp in Antwerp where Belgians had tortured other Belgians. In addition, he began to think about what he would do when the war ended. He recounts: "Contrasting mental pictures of the Pope embodying good and the concentration camp symbolizing evil stayed in my head. To tackle the grand issues of life as a full-time occupation became an attractive option...To work directly for good in place of evil soon became my life's ambition. My employer would be no less than God." Schlichte entered St. John's Seminary in Boston in 1945.
He began his religious career as a parish priest in Charlestown, Massachusetts, where he scrupulously followed the rules of the Church and ministered to his parishioners' needs accordingly by offering up standard church teachings on contraception, divorce, and so forth. He then accepted an appointment at the North American College, where he remained for eight years. Here he began to experience the organizational politics of the Vatican and other Church hierarchy in the United States, as well as their grand lifestyles (with which Schlichte was clearly uncomfortable). While in Rome he stood watch over the body of Pope Pius XII at his death and worked as an assistant to Cardinal Spellman in the selection of Pope John XXIII. Schlichte was clearly making a success of his priestly career and obviously was highly regarded by those in positions of authority.

In 1961, however, he returned to Boston to work in the Chancery of Cardinal Cushing. He shortly thereafter moved from Vice-Chancellor to Rector of Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts—a new seminary for delayed vocations in which older men could pursue the priesthood. And, here Schlichte's troubles really began. Just as the seminary was beginning, the ideas of Vatican II were beginning to percolate throughout the church. The author spent his first three years as Rector in the company of expert theologians attempting to reconcile old and new church ideas with a group of older seminarians. He encouraged debate and defended academic freedom. But, allowing the espousal of these new ideas threatened the hierarchy, for such ideas challenged such Catholic orthodoxy as to the absolute authority of the Pope and the Church.

It was ultimately Schlichte's position on birth control that spelled the beginning of the end of his career as a priest. Pope Paul had authored a Papal Encyclical condemning any kind of artificial birth control as essentially evil. Schlichte and several seminarians went public in The Boston Globe with their opposition, much to the consternation of conservative American bishops throughout the country and the hierarchy of the Boston Archdiocese. Cardinal Cushing remained unmoved by Schlichte's contention that: "The issue is not birth control; it is the role of conscience." Schlichte was removed from the rectorship. Several years later, Schlichte was
forced to resign from the priesthood. As with so many other organizational men, he was forced to choose between his job and his conscience. He chose moral principle over career advancement.

And, in his case it was an even greater sacrifice than simply losing one's job for exercising one's principles; he sacrificed his career.

Between St. John's Seminary and his departure from the Church, Schlichte has gone back for another degree--this time a doctorate in business--which he was able to put to good advantage in his re-entry into the secular world. He joined Blue Shield as part of a planning group working on new ways to finance health care. They came up with many innovative blueprints, but the company proved too hidebound to embrace the inevitable changes that were coming in this area. Many of the ideas of Schlichte's group later found expression in a competitor HMO.

Schlichte's explicit theme throughout this book chronicling his career is that organizations frequently lose sight of their mission in favor of the rules. To the extent that they do so, they ultimately sacrifice the mission. One of the most interesting facets of the book is its implicit theme, which is that for an individual to honor his own mission, he must also often seek to change. Thus, this is finally a book about a man who never lost sight of his own mission of working "directly for good in place of evil" and his efforts to change his ideas and the rules he followed in order to realize it.

Candace Hetzner is Associate Professor, Department of International Business/Business Environment, Rutgers University.
Call for Books to Review and Book Review Essays

Suggestions for books to review, particularly fictional works, and book review essays about fictional literature regarding organizational life and bureaucracies, are requested for future issues of Public Voices. Books being suggested for review should have complete citations, including title, author(s), publisher and date. A brief explanation of why the book is an important contribution and should be reviewed would be helpful. Books and book reviews selected should conform to the mission of Public Voices and the ASPA Section on Humanistic, Artistic and Reflective Expression, which include unorthodox and controversial perspectives on bureaucracy; explanations of how novels, short stories, poetry and other genre contribute to our understandings of society; and how society is reflected in the creative writings of novelists and others.

Please send your suggestions for books to review or completed book review essays to Michael W. Popejoy, Book Review Editor, Public Voices, Rinker School of Business, Palm Beach Atlantic College, 901 South Flagler Avenue, P.O. Box 24708, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4708 Office: 407-835-4475; Fax: 407-835-4342. Submissions on disk using WordPerfect 5.1, Wordperfect for Windows 5.2, or Professional Write are acceptable. E-Mail submissions can be sent via America On-Line, address: ARSCoordn
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Manuscripts should be submitted with two cover pages: the first with the author's name and full contact information, the second with only the title. Five copies of each manuscript should be sent to:

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Movie Reviews Invited

The movies contain a vast wealth of information about and illustrative of management and public administration. Unfortunately much of this is "hidden" in war films, westerns, prison dramas and other genres that do not immediately appear to be relevant. Fortunately, now that most films are readily available on tape, it is easier than ever to find and use this treasure trove of light and sound that so often illuminates the administrative world far better than any text. Thus Public Voices encourages and invites reviews and analyses of pertinent films. Many films stand by themselves; but it is often useful to consider several films by a single actor. For example, consider Gregory Peck. In Gentleman's Agreement (1949) he demonstrated the subtlety of racism in the corporate world. In Twelve O’Clock High (1950) he illustrated the life cycle theory of leadership behavior. In The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit (1956) he coped with the ethical dilemmas of the modern organization man. And in To Kill a Mockingbird (1963) he showed how one person of unstinting integrity could make a difference.

Gary Cooper was more than just a lanky cowboy. In The Fountainhead (1949) he was a premature supply-side philosopher. In High Noon (1952) he offered a case study of the need for more effective pre-retirement planning. In Vera Cruz (1954) he dealt with the problems of Americans offering technical assistance to the Third World. And in The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell (1955) he portrayed a martyred organizational dissident. And Clark Gable was more than Rhett Butler, the war profiteer in Gone With the Wind (1939). In Mutiny on the Bounty (1935) he rebelled against a famous practitioner of the Theory X management style. In The Hucksters (1947) he led a revolution against an organizational tyrant and transformed the company. In Command Decision (1949) he coped with the myriad political and administrative factors that so often frustrate public policymakers.

Similar summaries apply to the work of many other leading actors. The point is that we have within our collective memories hundreds of films that bear upon public policy and administration, but that have never been looked at in this light. So please accept the invitation of Public Voices and consider contributing your reviews of specific films or specific actors. Films are like great literature or history itself in that each new generation offers its own interpretations. The enormous backlist of U.S. and foreign film has hardly been interpreted at all by the public affairs community.

Reviews of 500-750 words should be submitted to:
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