

Public Voices

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Number 2



Relief Blues

O. Louis Guglielmi
(1938-39)

Public Voices

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Essay

Humanities Backgrounds of British Civil Servants: The Use of a Common Language

Candace Hetzner

"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"--It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.

Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*.

The study of language seems to me as if it was given for the very purpose of forming the human mind in youth; and the Greek and Latin languages seem the very instruments by which this is to be effected."

Dr. Thomas Arnold in *Eminent Victorians*.

"You see, now you know personally, even if you don't know officially, you can use your personal knowledge to start official enquiries to get official confirmation of personal suspicions so that what you now know personally but not officially you will then know officially as well as personally." "This is the language of the governing classes as they try--as always--to have everything both ways...I agreed, at my most understanding. "Well, now I know. Personally." Two could play the game.

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Preface

During the Thatcher and Reagan years in the United Kingdom and the United States respectively, government leaders alleged that public administration was vastly inferior to business administration in terms of skills and productivity. Both Thatcher and Reagan moved to downsize the public sector through privatization of government-owned entities and government-provided services as well as through deregulation. In the United States the effect on public administrators and, in turn, public administration programs was profound. This was an era--not yet concluded owing to deficits and slow growth--of cut-backs and learning to do more with less. Not surprisingly, it was also an era demanding increasing skill and resourcefulness on the part of public administrators. Thus, the focus of the profession both in the workplace and in academic programs was on how to bolster the technical skills and expertise of top-level public administrators in order to enhance public sector productivity.

During this period and subsequently, American public administration programs tended to emphasize public productivity issues and to examine how to make the curriculum more immediately, practically relevant to the new workplace--a workplace characterized by diminishing self-confidence under the steady barrage of charges of incompetence, inefficiency, and waste, especially in contrast to business. Hence, the public administration curriculum of the last decade has emphasized more quantitative and systems work in an effort to achieve enhanced bottom-line efficiency and to acquire an educational profile much more like the highly touted M.B.A.s.

At the same time that the profession and the programs which serve it have been under the spell of quantitative technique and business mystique, public administrators and scholars alike have more recently begun having another set of worries--that public administration education has been inadequately preparing public servants to think, speak, and write clearly and act ethically. In this, we have been at one with most other professional schools, including those of business management, which have become increasingly concerned that their emphasis on technical expertise, especially of the quantitative variety, has led to a neglect of equally important critical thinking and communications skills as well as ethical

sensitivity and capacity for moral reasoning. For example, the Harvard Business School has been concerned enough about these issues to have started offering writing courses as well as courses in ethics.

In addition, public administrators and faculties of public administration have even more recently recognized the need for greater understanding of the international and comparative dimensions of their field. This has occurred primarily as a response to the globalization of free trade, technology transfer, and finance which has internationalized American business. As a result, public administrators at all levels of government have been confronting the need to know more about how other nations' systems of business-government relations work, particularly because the public and private sectors in most other countries are so inextricably bound up in command or corporatist modes of policy-making.

For example, federal agencies must understand other economies and other ways of doing things, whether regulating aspects of international finance and trade or figuring out multi-nationals' tax liabilities or working on immigration and labor policies. Furthermore, state and local governments have become actively involved in economic development strategies revolving around efforts to attract industry from abroad. It is in the context of these recent developments in public administration--a heightened awareness of the need for public managers with superior capacities for thinking critically and communicating, for ethical sensitivity and moral reasoning, as well as the need for greater comparative knowledge of both public and private management in other countries--that this essay examines the role of humanistic education in the preparation of British upper level civil servants. (This essay actually re-examines the British model, for at one time, before public administration in this country became nearly exclusively pre-occupied with matters American, a standard part of the public administration curriculum involved studying the British Civil Service.)

Interestingly, although Lady Thatcher had many of the same criticisms of the British Civil Service as President Reagan and also had some substantial impact on the operation of the British bureaucracy--both by paring it back significantly and by effecting greater managerialism through such measures as the Efficiency Scrutinies, the Financial Management Initiatives (F.M.I.), and the

Next Steps Program--she did little with regard to changing the educational profiles of civil servants. Britain has not broken with its tradition of having neither professional schools of public administration acting as feeders to the Civil Service, nor required technical coursework in preparation for Civil Service careers, nor much "on-the-job" training.

There are a number of very good reasons for examining the British tradition of education for top public service positions, for though there are many drawbacks to the non-technical nature of British academic preparation for the Civil Service (which have been amply documented elsewhere and, thus, will not be discussed here) (Great Britain, Fulton Report, 1968 and Chapman, 1970), there are also a number of advantages. The British have traditionally produced public administrators who appear to be strong in precisely those areas in which American public administrators have seemed to be weakest. By and large British public administrators think more analytically, speak more articulately, write with greater facility, and conduct themselves with greater sensitivity to the public interest than do their American counterparts. Not all of these qualities of British civil servants can be laid at the feet of academic institutions. Certainly, primary and secondary schools and the social class backgrounds of those recruited, for example, have played a sizeable role; nevertheless, institutions of higher education have made significant contributions.

In addition, Great Britain makes an excellent case for exploration, because despite the many differences in terms of both educational and governmental institutions between Britain and the United States, the British system is more accessible to us than those of the other western industrialized democracies (with the exception of Commonwealth countries with British inspired systems). We share with the British the common law tradition rather than that of Roman law which has so heavily influenced public service education in so many other Western European nations. Because of their common law tradition, the British, as with the Americans and others influenced by the British politico-legal systems, have had less need for law degrees in order to engage in public administration than, for example, the Swedish and the Germans. Furthermore, as with the United States, Great Britain has had no formal educational tracks leading from the universities to positions in the bureaucracy as do many continental countries; the British have had no equivalent, for example, of the *École Nationale d'Administration*. They do,

however, have a system of informal links primarily at the undergraduate level between certain universities and the Civil Service, though these are by no means the only links. These connections are not unlike those which have been developing between certain universities and government at the state, local and federal levels in the United States, with the exception of the fact that in the United States these links are more often than not forged with graduate programs.

This essay will, thus, undertake an examination of the role of Oxford and Cambridge and the imparting of the humanities--or what the English call "arts"--to future civil servants. The essay will begin by laying out the historical reasons for the centrality of the humanities in the recruitment of the top levels of the bureaucracy--a phenomenon unknown in other Western industrialized democracies. The essay will then attempt to assess the contributions such education has made to the character of and quality of British public administration primarily in terms of its positive, but not to the exclusion of its negative, effects.

Historical Background

In the mid-nineteenth century, the historian and political figure Thomas Babington Macaulay, as a member of the Supreme Council of the East India Company, was asked to chair a committee charged to reform recruitment to and the curriculum of Haileybury, the college that prepared young men for Civil Service in India. Macaulay, a former fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, along with the Oxford classics don, Benjamin Jowett of Balliol, were the primary architects of a reform designed to increase the professionalism of the East India Company administrators (Chapman, 1970, pp. 20-21; Fry, 1969, pp. 67-69; and Hetzner, 1985, pp.101-102). The Macaulay Report subsequently significantly influenced the later Northcote-Trevelyan Report which reformed recruitment to the late-nineteenth century British home Civil Service in ways which affect it to this day. Thus, the recommendation which the Macaulay Report made with respect to the kind of educational backgrounds appropriate to Indian civil servants is of substantial interest in understanding the continuing bias toward the humanities in the educational backgrounds of present-day civil servants.

The Macaulay Report first argued for recruits with bachelor's degrees who were generally educated rather than professional specialists:

We believe that men who have been engaged, up to one or two and twenty, in studies which have no immediate connexion with the business of any profession, and of which the effect is merely to open, to invigorate, and to enrich the mind, will generally be found, in the business of every profession, superior to men who have, at 18 or 19, devoted themselves to the special studies of their calling. The most illustrious English jurists have been men who have never opened a law book till after the close of a distinguished academical career; nor is there any reason to believe that they would have been greater lawyers if they had passed in drawing pleas and conveyances the time which they gave to Thucydides, to Cicero, and to Newton. The duties of a civil servant of the East India Company are of so high a nature that in his case it is peculiarly desirable that an excellent general education, such as may enlarge and strengthen his understanding, should precede the special education which must qualify him to despatch the business of his cutcherry. (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, p.121).

The Report then laid out those areas of university study which were appropriate sources of preparation for the Indian Civil Service and, hence, the proper subject matter for the entrance examinations to Haileybury. The examinations were to include a heavy weighting toward English composition, English history, and English literature; mathematics; and Greek and Latin translation both from and into English (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, pp. 121-123). Although the Report recognized that not all universities in Great Britain emphasized the classics, e.g., the Scottish universities, and therefore the entrance examinations had to provide for a wider range of topics than those emphasized in the Oxbridge curricula, the committee nevertheless maintained:

It would be grossly unjust, for example, to the great academical institutions of England not to allow skill in Greek and Latin versification to have a

considerable share in determining the issue of competition. Skill in Greek and Latin versification has indeed no direct tendency to form a judge, a financier, or a diplomat. But the youth who does best what all the ablest and most ambitious youth about him are trying to do well will generally prove a superior man; nor can we doubt that an accomplishment which Fox and Channing, Grenville and Wellesley, Mansfield and Tenterden, first distinguished themselves above their fellows, indicates powers of mind, which, properly trained and directed, may do a great service to the State (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, p. 123).

What is not clear from the Report is whether the members of the Macaulay Committee believed that a classics education better honed thinking skills than most other subject matter--save perhaps mathematics. Or whether they thought that the substance of the classics--the hierarchical, organic, aristocratic ideals of Homer, Plato, Plutarch, and Seneca provided men with the ideas and lessons for governance, i.e., heroic, virtuous administrative know-how. Or whether they thought that the most able students, or those from the best social backgrounds (they often understood the two attributes to be one) pursued classical studies and, therefore, that if the Indian Civil Service wished to recruit the top candidates, it should cull from those who had read Latin and Greek. It seems likely, however, given the prevailing views of the era, of both the dominant ruling classes and the Oxbridge classicists, that all three reasons were involved just as they had been since the flowering of neo-classical humanism among the ruling classes in the universities during the Renaissance.

After the breakdown of feudalism, the Tudors had greater and greater need for help in governance of the top classes in society. "Something more was called for in administration than a gentleman who could manage a horse and go to law with his neighbors; it was a problem, in short, of advancing the scholars and educating the gentry." (Ford, 1985, pp. 15-16). Sir Thomas Elyot in his book *The Governor*, along with other thinkers of the era, maintained that the best education would be the kind of classical scholarship which Moore and Erasmus had brought from Italy. Elyot commended this study for its contribution to developing intellectual discipline and rigor through language acquisition as well as for its substantive

truths. Such study would instruct students from the leading classes into the importance of their superior role at the top of the hierarchy in the harmonious governance of England. As he explains in this passage concerning the governor's tutor who:

shall commend the perfect understanding of music, declaring how necessary it is for the better attaining the knowledge of a public weal: which is made of an order of estates and degrees, and, by reason thereof, containeth in it a perfect harmony: which the governor shall afterward more perfectly understand when he shall happen to read books of Plato and Aristotle of public weals, wherein be written divers examples of music and geometry (Tillyard, 1960, p. 102).

Hence, certainly by the time that Macaulay and his committeemen were working on the links between university preparation and suitability for rule in India, the role of neo-classical humanism in preparing the upper classes for leadership positions in British society was now of very longstanding (Wilkinson, 1964 and Woodruff, 1954).

Though the Macaulay Report weighted them less heavily than English, classics, and mathematics, the report, nonetheless, suggested that candidates might also demonstrate their proficiency in Sanskrit and Arabic, but not in any Indian vernacular languages since these were "of no value except for the purpose of communicating with natives of India." (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, p. 121). Sanskrit and Arabic, the committee decided "though with much distrust of our own judgment," were appropriate because: "These classical languages are by no means without intrinsic value in the eyes both of philologists and men of taste." (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, p. 121). In addition, candidates could also offer modern European languages, viz., Italian, French, and German, as well as natural sciences, and moral philosophy though these were also accorded less weight.

As this account makes clear, although the Macaulay Committee was opposed to professional or specialized or technical education or training as a pre-condition for admission, the committee was not of a similar disposition with respect to what courses of study students should follow upon entering Haileybury which after all was a

college devoted to preparing men for the profession of administration in India. They lumped these practical studies under four headings: (1) the history of India which included geography, the constitution of the British and its relation to the Indian states, natural resources, religions, and the "physical and moral qualities" of different Indian races; (2) general principles of jurisprudence; (3) financial and commercial science; and (4) the basic foundations of one or more Indian vernacular languages (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, pp. 124-125).

Because the Macaulay Report was addressing itself to the proper educational background for entering Haileybury and the proper post-bachelor's training which Haileybury should offer, the Report differed substantially from the Northcote-Trevelyan recommendations which followed it, for the Home Civil Service had no college. The Northcote-Trevelyan Report was made to the House of Commons in the face of the Crimean War where Florence Nightingale had publicized the fact that government inefficiency had resulted in supplies--particularly medical supplies--not making it to the front for the care of the wounded and the dying. Northcote and Trevelyan had consulted with both Macaulay (who was the brother-in-law of Trevelyan, whom Trevelyan had met as a student at Haileybury), and Jowett (who had been a contemporary of Northcote's at Balliol). Northcote and Trevelyan recommended that the Civil Service recruit personnel on the basis of a written literary examination to be designed and administered by a Board of Examiners who would draw on the expertise of people "experienced in the education of the youth of the upper and middle classes" (Great Britain, Fulton Report, vol. 1, p. 12). In this way, the authors ensured that the Oxford and Cambridge graduates would make up the bulk of the recruits since these two universities were made up of youths of these classes. And the first Board of Examiners made this clear when they based the examinations on the curriculum of Oxford and Cambridge.

The reforms were occurring unsurprisingly in the context of increasing democratization very much the way Weberian theory has suggested they would. Weber has argued that as democratization makes itself felt, governments often move to reform the bureaucracy by putting objective testing and educational requirements in place of the traditional entry of worthies or nobility by patronage and privilege. Of course, as Weber has also pointed out this leads not to the elimination of an elite but to the creation of a new meritocratic

one, but more of this later. What is interesting about these reforms then is neither that they arose in the context of increasing democratization nor that they eventuated in a meritocratic elite but that their authors were so entirely conscious of creating a meritocratic elite. The increasingly powerful upper middle classes, of whom the above architects of Civil Service reform were a part, were aware of the steadily declining role of the aristocracy in the political affairs of Great Britain as the country increasingly democratized, but as this quote of one of their number, Matthew Arnold, indicates, they were keenly aware of the extent to which the aristocracy was still wielding a great deal of governmental power through their administrative roles:

The time has arrived, however, when it is becoming impossible for the aristocracy of England to conduct and wield the English nation any longer. It still, indeed, administers public affairs; and it is a great error to suppose, as many persons in England suppose, that it administers but does not govern. He who administers, governs, because he infixes his own mark and stamps his own character on all public affairs as they pass through his hands; and, therefore, so long as the English aristocracy administers the commonwealth, it still governs it. But signs not to be mistaken show that its headship and leadership of the nation, by virtue of the substantial acquiescence of the body of the nation in its predominance and right to lead, is nearly over. That acquiescence was the tenure by which it held its power; and it is fast giving way (Arnold, 1970, p. 101-102).

And, thus, as members of this educated upper middle class participated in designing administrative recruitment reforms, they did so in their own interest which involved blocking the steadily encroaching lower orders from access to administration. The reformers consequently laid down criteria for admission available only to the educated upper classes, both upper middle and aristocracy. By creating recruitment criteria which restricted administration to the educated gentleman, these upper middle class reformers secured two professional vocations for themselves--that of civil servant in government at home and abroad and that of university humanist--the classicist, the literary don, the historian

(Hetzner, p. 123 and Rothblatt). Of course, this is in no way meant to suggest that these humanistically educated upper middle classes, in keeping with their Elizabethan intellectual inheritance, did not sincerely believe that humanistic study was the best preparation for life and vocation. Rather this is simply meant to suggest that the particular kind of meritocracy which the English have come to experience in public administration was not an unintended artifact of the move away from patronage toward objective recruitment criteria but a planned outcome.

The effects of this nineteenth century conception have been felt across the entire past century even though there have been numerous changes in the examination system over the years. Over time the Civil Service has moved away from the written examinations involving knowledge of specific subject matters from university curricula and has adopted more general intellectual examinations exploring a candidate's basic literacy and numeracy, conceptual capacities, and soundness of judgment. In addition, beginning with the adoption of the 1917 Leathes Committee recommendation, an oral component has been a central part of the examination. And in fact, since 1971 the Civil Service has relied predominantly on oral examination for selecting its high flyers or recruits to the top administrative ranks. But in spite of these changes in the examinations for the Civil Service over the course of the past century, the Civil Service has continued to recruit a majority of Oxford and Cambridge arts graduates although recent recruitment data suggests that this may be weakening somewhat.

From 1905-14, Oxford and Cambridge supplied 82% of Civil Service recruits; 1925-37, 78%; 1948-56, 78%; and 1957-63, 85% (Fry, pp. 90-91). Seemingly correlated with the rise of the new redbrick universities, in the 1970s the percentage of Oxbridge recruits had dropped to about half, but by the early 1980s the percentages had bounced back to about 75% (Ponting, p. 75). More recently during most of the Thatcher years, the trend appeared to be away from Oxford and Cambridge, with a drop from 72% in 1984 (New Society, p. 20) to about 59% coming from those universities in 1985 (The Times, April 18, 1986, p. 18) and less than 50% in 1986 (The Times, December 9, 1986, p. 19). By 1990, the proportion of candidates coming from Oxford and Cambridge had declined for the fifth year in a row with only 30.2% coming from those two universities (The Times, July 19, 1991). It is difficult to know precisely what these figures signify. The Civil Service

throughout the eighties and nineties has actively recruited from universities and polytechnics. Perhaps some of this promotion of the Civil Service on non-Oxbridge campuses has reflected the concern of the Civil Service to fill all of its places which it was unable to do throughout most of the Thatcher years. During most of Mrs. Thatcher's tenure, many Oxford and Cambridge students rejected careers in the Civil Service in favor of business careers, primarily in finance in the wake of banking deregulation and London's increasing role in world financial markets. Or perhaps the trend away from Oxbridge has been merely a temporary phenomenon as suggested by the fact that in 1991 the trend began to reverse itself and once again appeared to favor Oxbridge recruits, who comprised 41.3% of that year's in-take.

In any case, we know, given the heavy arts orientation of Oxford and Cambridge, that over time the recruits have come overwhelmingly from the humanities. For example, in 1917 the Leathes Committee could be found saying that "such subjects as language, literature and history are, on the whole and for the most part of young men, the best preparation for the Higher Civil Service" (Ponting, p. 69). Of recruits from 1956 still in the Civil Service in the 1960s, 17 of 35 had studied history (New Society, p. 20). And in the early 1980s, we know that 70% of successful recruits had arts degrees as opposed to 15% with social science degrees and 14% with science or technology degrees (Rose, p. 201). In 1984, arts graduates comprised 69% of the in-take; social sciences, 20%; and science and technology, 14% (New Society, p. 20). It would be interesting to know what the percentages of arts graduates was between 1985 and 1990 in the face of fewer Oxbridge entrants. Given the presence of at least some products of the polytechnics and other universities specializing in technology, science, and social science in the late eighties, it is reasonable to assume at least a small diminution in the numbers of arts graduates. Nonetheless, in 1990 the First Division Association of Civil Servants was still complaining about recruitment:

Will this bias continue to favor those with a preponderance of male hormones, white skin, Oxbridge arts degrees and carrying umbrellas?

We hope not. We feel that the process is increasingly geared towards those who are good at passing selection systems, the reasonable and

intelligent people, with the emphasis on the outgoing yet conformist team leader...A sizeable number of able, intelligent people are falling unnecessarily by the wayside (The Times, October 19, 1990).

In fact, what the Thatcherites, like so many governments before them, had left intact was the cult of the gentleman amateur--a lack of interest and expertise in management and a consensual style leading to policy-making of the middle way (The Times, October 19, 1990). However, even if the Civil Service were to engage in a major alteration of the composition of its recruits to reflect a much broader range of universities and degrees, the service for the foreseeable future will still most likely continue to be the creature of the Macaulay and Northcote-Trevelyan reforms, i.e., of Oxford and Cambridge and the humanities, both in terms of its actual composition and in terms of its norms. For it would be at least several generations before those in the topmost positions in the service would be in a position to seek change and to foster new values or modes of operation. Furthermore, it is probable that the Selection Board will select non-Oxbridge graduates who either fit the Oxbridge mold or are likely to adapt to it.

Impacts

The dominion of Oxbridge humanism in the Civil Service has made roughly two different kinds of contributions to the character of public administration in Great Britain: a high degree of cognitive skill development and the creation of an elite professional corps with a common *Weltanschauung* and vocabulary. With respect to skill development, the entire Oxbridge curriculum centers on developing students' analytic and writing abilities, whether through the tutorial system or the annual examination papers, which require similar skills. Oxford gives this account of its aims in undergraduate education:

At the weekly meeting with the tutor the student presents the result of the week's work, the reading assembled from the various sources suggested by the tutor. What the student is expected to present is something more than information. Whether it be set out as the solution to a problem, or as an essay, the essential is to develop a critical attitude to facts, to

learn to sift evidence, and to establish priorities, in a word, to distinguish essentials from incidentals (Oxford, p. 8).

And in this way, the student hones not only his analytic capacity and his mastery of composition but also his verbal skills, for the Oxford tutorial method involves hundreds of hours of oral exchange between tutor and tutee; thus, the system encourages not simply thinking but thinking on one's feet, not just cogently composing but articulately presenting and defending.

With the exception of a very few fields, the entire Oxbridge curriculum is designed to encourage this kind of generalized intellectual capacity rather than training for any specific profession. For example, even the study of the law bestows no professional qualification on the graduate although it does enable a student to skip some of the examinations for being a barrister or solicitor. As the Oxford prospectus explains:

Some degree subjects, such as medicine and engineering, prepare you for specific careers. Most Oxford degree subjects do not provide such vocational training and this particularly applies to all Arts subjects including languages. Oxford graduates must therefore be prepared to acquire vocational skills after leaving university. This can be done formally, through a recognized professional training, such as accountancy, or informally, on the job, as in marketing, selling or retailing (Oxford, p. 26).

In recent years, of course, even Oxford and Cambridge have become more involved in offering professional course work and degrees in management and other professional areas, but such degree programs remain the exception rather than the rule as the above quotation implies. At the core of the the Oxbridge educational ethos is that the study of arts subjects is the necessary and often sufficient condition for future professional careers. From an American or from most Western European perspectives, this view has often led to some curious contentions about the connectedness between some undergraduate humanities subjects and the practice of certain professions, such as those linking the study of ancient Greek or Greats--ancient and medieval history--to upper level administrative posts in the Civil Service. And lest one think that

these connections are simply part of a bygone era, witness this recent statement in the Cambridge University Handbook as to what occupations the study of Socrates and Cicero might serve as preparation: "After reading classics some students go on to further academic work and to teaching in schools and universities, but these do not represent a majority. Classics graduates follow a wide variety of careers and find that the classical Tripos offers a valuable educational preparation for life in business, industry or administration." (Cambridge, p. 89).

Thus, the contribution that Oxford and Cambridge have made to the creation of a professional cadre derives not from providing professional education but from providing humanities education for the profession of public administration. And what kind of education is this? What is the substance of what these people read? One of the striking commonalities of the curricula among the traditional humanities fields as well as of the more contemporary social sciences is the extent to which they all familiarize students with ancient political and moral philosophy. Thus, most of those individuals recruited into the Civil Service, both the preponderant numbers of arts graduates as well as the less numerous social science graduates, have studied such works as Socrates' *Meno*, Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

And what is it that students might take away from a study of the ancients? Without question the study of classical philosophical texts has over time reinforced the importance of the traditional British aristocratic social values bound up in the concept of the English gentleman and has helped with the reinterpretation and adoption of this ethos by newly emerging elites. This is to say that the ancient texts present a picture of a highly integrated organic society, perhaps in no better place illustrated than in Plato's *Republic*, where those naturally fit to rule, the *agathoi*, ruled for the *koinon*, or the common good. And these guardians who were fit to rule were men of superior intellectual capacity who had been properly educated for governance.

As noted in the earlier discussion of Elyot, these lessons have been valuable to Great Britain as it has experienced increasing needs for able administrators as government has grown and as society has gradually democratized and embraced capitalism, successively unseating and unsettling members of the ruling social classes of society. Of course, Oxford and Cambridge have educated and

socialized men into the role of governor not simply on the basis of familiarizing them with classical thinkers, for certainly bringing these young men together in common living arrangements where they might feel the camaraderie of an exclusive caste or club has also undoubtedly played a role in the creation of an elite corps as have the earlier public school experiences of many of these same youths. Nonetheless, the lessons of the ancients have been an invaluable contribution of Oxbridge humanism to the creation of a profession of governance.

The ancients have provided a model of a society where people are selected to rule on the basis of merit and where they are accorded society's highest prestige. This status derives not from the emoluments of wealth but from the meritorious selection to the ruling role. Rulers in this system are gentlemen of leisure who have the time to while away an afternoon under a tree with Socrates, pondering the nature of justice. This system, thus, emphasizes traditional aristocratic virtues--top people should run things and not distract themselves with the hustle and bustle of commerce. The English upper classes have made good use of these lessons in their efforts to socialize new classes--often deriving from the hustle and bustle of commerce--into the quietism of gentlemanly rule. Governance in English society has long been the province of the thoughtful, educated gentleman who not only can handle affairs of state but also can find time for learned or creative pursuits. This is a nation whose politicians have found time to write novels and histories, as in the cases of Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill respectively, or whose bureaucracy has given us the novels of Anthony Trollope, George Orwell, C.P. Snow and J.R. Tolkien. There are few comparable intellectual outpourings from politicians and bureaucrats in positions of high responsibility in most other western industrialized nations.

Of course, the classical scholars were not interested in promoting a ruling elite simply for its own sake but, in fact, for the good of the whole, i.e., for the promotion of the virtues embodied in various social arrangements--laws, institutions, and informal norms--which would promote the harmonious functioning of society and the nurture of individuals and classes in accordance with their respective abilities. Ancient moral and political philosophers, thus, focused on basic issues of justice, fairness, equality, duty, and the common good. Thus, the education of Oxbridge humanities and social science entrants into the Civil Service has made them pay explicit

attention to basic concepts of government and democratic theory and principles and theories of ethics, and to understand their own roles to be intimately bound up with such considerations.

This kind of perspective results in a number of important benefits alongside a number of liabilities for the British system. With respect to the benefits, the British system, first of all, appears to promote a high degree of probity among its administrators; in particular, the British seem to have few problems with graft and corruption. Secondly, the British bureaucracy has maintained a reasonably good record for fair and equitable implementation of public policies. The just distribution of public goods and services has seldom been called into serious question.

Thirdly, British civil servants make some very useful distinctions between accountability and responsibility in their democracy. Given the educational backgrounds of civil servants as well as the absence of patronage throughout the bureaucracy, except at the topmost reaches, they tend to see themselves as the true governors of England rather than the "here-today-gone-tomorrow" politicians. Less subject to the whims and fads and skullduggery of politics then, they consciously understand themselves to have a constitutional role as ballast in the ship of state, always attempting to right the balance between doctrinal extremes and excesses of interest. They by and large accept their obligation to professional neutrality, i.e., to serve the policy and managerial needs of ministers of different political parties representing differing political beliefs, and to be accountable to these various political masters. At the same time, however, the British civil servant does take a somewhat broader perspective and understands bureaucratic accountability as something distinct from democratic responsibility. He understands the difference between the formal functional dicta of the organizational chart and traditional constitutional duty to the good of the nation. And he hence conceives his role not just as the servant of the minister but also as the trusted adviser and, thus, servant of the state. He understands his role to be that of giving sage policy advice for the good of the nation.

With respect to the problems with the system, which it can be reasonably assumed are also at least in part owing to the Oxbridge humanities backgrounds of civil servants, there have been deleterious amounts of secrecy, elitism, and moderation. First of all, the British governing elite, both inside the Civil Service and in

Parliament, seems to have absorbed all too well Plato's notion of the noble lie and been perfectly content to have the British public kept in the dark with respect to much of the business of government. The wisdom of so much secrecy is increasingly being questioned both from within the Civil Service and without. People are asking fundamental questions about the obligations of civil servants to remain silent about the actions of the government of the day when the actions of that government run counter to what the civil servant understands to be for the common good. Such questions may become increasingly critical if the Thatcherite tendency toward more ideological public policy becomes the rule for political parties generally. For a great deal of secrecy to be maintained by the governing elite--both its political and administrative arms--is possible only where the elite shares common values as to the public's right and need to know and where there is a fair degree of consensus as to the common ground-- or at the very least where there is a fair degree of consensus about the Civil Service's constitutional role in steering things in that direction. Furthermore, such questions about secrecy may become increasingly critical in the face of decreasing deference to a governing elite among the British public, for government's right to secrecy is only possible where the polity is deferent enough to accord such secrecy legitimacy.

This decrease in deference is not only presenting problems for traditions of secrecy but also for respect for the bureaucracy generally. Without question, the elite values and perspectives of Whitehall, and to a lesser extent also of Westminster, are increasingly subject to criticism by people of highly different political views. On the left, the criticism has been that the Civil Service is overly dominated by white men from elite educational institutions, from upper middle class families, who have great difficulty in understanding the average Briton and, therefore, in rendering policy advice efficacious to an equalitarian Labour government. On the right, the charge is that the civil servants are from elite educational institutions where they have absorbed anti-business biases from non-business upper middle class families and that these bureaucrats, as a consequence, have neither understanding nor sympathy with the need or means to capitalist economic expansion and, thus, cannot give adequate policy advice to a Conservative government promoting free enterprise like that of Thatcher.

Related to this second criticism is the third major one, the perception that the Civil Service has recruited individuals who are too moderate in their worldviews, too imbued with gentlemanly ease to do the hard work and to engage in the acts of innovation and governmental entrepreneurship which are necessary to dramatic improvements in the public policy arena. The Oxford University prospectus is instructive in this regard when it states a pedagogical goal of the tutorial process as being "creation under guidance" (Oxford, p. 10). There is a great deal of public sentiment these days suggesting that the Civil Service emphasis on recruiting bloodless men of moderation who have so successfully absorbed the golden mean that they eschew enthusiasm presents a real stumbling block to effecting major changes in public policy. And because Great Britain's economic decline has been so pronounced in recent years, all political parties and public opinion generally have been sympathetic to making some dramatic public policy changes--the disagreement has simply been over the direction of the changes--the Civil Service is likely to come under increasing fire for its lack of policy inspiration and strength of commitment.

The liabilities of humanities backgrounds for civil servants to the contrary notwithstanding, generations of Britons have experienced the advantages. The emphasis on reading, writing, and analytic thinking in courses of study in the humanities over the simple acquisition of technique found in many professional programs produces individuals who are extremely adept at analyzing cogently and communicating effectively. Furthermore, the substantive lessons of moral and political theory have contributed to the British civil servant's heightened sense of his professional role in the governance of society. In addition, it has given him a consciousness of ethical principles embodied in public policies and their implementation that has played an important part in promoting honest and just government. And finally, it has provided him with an appreciation of his role in relation to the other democratic actors in promoting the common good, over and above party political fortunes and other societal interests, that has contributed to the stability and well-being of the entire social order.

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Fiction

Her Ladyship and the Postal Princes

Dolph Santello

Background:

This portrayal is factual and true. Her Ladyship's name has been slightly changed; the name that she used did have a royal connotation. The information was obtained from observing her as a street person, a newspaper article, her social workers, and a relative of a postal worker.

This tale has been repeatedly used in a graduate public administration course on administrative behavior to provide a basis for discussion about the roles and responsibilities of public administrators. A resulting major question that it raises is the balance between providing for the needs of an individual and those of society as a whole. That is, do we want those in the public service to be compassionate and respond to the special needs of individuals, or do we want them to be value-neutral and follow the usually impersonal rules and regulations?

In addressing this dilemma, the discussions often include many of public administration's enduring dilemmas. Examples include the role of public servants in influencing, as well as carrying out, public policy; the need for public administrators to efficiently implement public policy, while also providing effective services to the public; and the dual responsibility of public administrators to their agencies and to the public.

American city-kingdom, an aged royal lady. By her own anointment in year past, she had taken the title of "Her Ladyship." She only lived in her city-kingdom for a few of her later years, having spent most of her adult life confined to the dungeons of a state owned institution for the mentally ill. As fate would have it, she had been freed from her internment, given a monthly dole, and promised a new life by the government's deinstitutionalizing knight.

Unfortunately, Her Ladyship was not joined in her new life by His Lordship. You see, he had left her many years ago to seek his fortune in far off city-kingdoms. She was saddened by it, thought of him often, and hoped he would return to care for her.

Like most ladies of her time and lot, her mannerisms and wardrobe were so outstanding that she quickly became known by all the local citizenry. On most days, she could be found walking the streets of the city-kingdom and talking to her subjects, with her new faithful companion, a dog. Because Her Ladyship cherished her possessions and garments, she carted them with her wherever she traveled. And although she was small of stature, she feared more for the loss of what were heirlooms to her, and for the health of her dog, than she did for her own personal safety. You see, she remembered being set upon by robbers and muggers who took her meager fortune and left her dog to die. The local gazette had reported her plight and misfortune, which sorrowed the citizenry and led them to treat her with greater notice than they usually afforded those of a similar station.

Fearing further loss, Her Ladyship turned to her wits for solace. Being a wise and resourceful lady, she came upon a scheme for protecting her coffers. She obtained a postal box, at the United Kingdom of States Post Office in the center of the city-kingdom, in which to keep her dole. In order to discourage others from pilfering its contents, she selected a postal box on the top. And so as not to have her key stolen from her personage, once her dole was in the box it was locked. She then had a postal worker place the key in her postal box.

Now, one might wonder how Her Ladyship would have been able to access her dole. Well, the postal workers came to her rescue. They became here heroes and faithful servants. To others, they were just clerks, but to Her Ladyship they were her new family. It

follows, then, that since she had long ago titled herself as Her Ladyship, her adopted family should be dubbed Postal Princes.

Her Ladyship's Postal Princes served her well. They greeted her with respect and kindness, and offered proper recognition to her status and nobility, while watching over the contents of her postal box. When she received her government allotment, she would convert her stipend into cash and have her Postal Princes store the currency in her postal box. So as to protect her wealth from being stolen, she only carried on her personage enough funds for a few days subsistence. If Her Ladyship needed to replenish her purse, her Postal Princes would bring forth to her legal tender from her postal box.

Being good and faithful servants, Her Ladyship's Postal Princes had offered to help her obtain a safe deposit box or an account at a local bank. She had politely, but emphatically, refused. She saw banks as enemies to her and her family. Further, she saw bankers as the invaders of her kingdom and the robbers of her dowry. She remembered the "Crash of 1929" and the years of famine and suffering that followed. The historical events of that period were disastrous to Her Ladyship and her Royal Family. The ensuing troubles contributed to her mental illness and the resulting many years of institutionalization, during which her Royal Family were all scattered and lost, and thus gone from her life forever.

As she settled into the later years of her life, Her Ladyship's needs became more simple. She had even seemed content with her lot, and was quite fond of her Postal Princes. She spoke so highly of them to all who would listen that it was noted by their master, or the Post Master, as he was called by the government and addressed by his subjects.

As would be expected, the Post Master summoned the Postal Princes, or mere clerks as he thought of, referred to, and treated them, to appear before him. In their roles as clerks, they obediently did so, marching themselves to his office.

As the Post Master stood before them, he purposely looked down on them. With great power and authority he held the thick black book of Postal Rules and Regulations for the United Kingdom of States over their heads. The Post Master proceeded to cite the rules and regulations that prohibited the keeping of currency in postal

boxes, and that prohibited postal workers from providing the contents of a postal box to someone who did not have a key in their possession. He chastised them for their actions, threatened disciplinary action, ordered them to cease and to desist from breaking Postal Rules and Regulations, and forbade them from providing special services to Her Ladyship.

Faced with these pronouncements and admonishments from their Post Master, Her Ladyship's Postal Princes did not falter. Instead, they came to her defense and stated that her needs as one of the citizenry, which they were satisfying as public servants, should be of no concern to him as the Post Master. They expressed to him their conviction that their services to Her Ladyship were rightful and proper acts done in the proper performance of their chosen and expected duty to the populace.

The Post Master repeated his pronouncements to, and admonishments of, the postal clerks. The clerks bowed and acknowledged to him that they understood their responsibilities, while intentionally not clarifying to what or whom. With frustration and rage, the Post Master dismissed the postal clerks, but he was not able to so easily dismiss their role and responsibilities as Postal Princes to Her Ladyship.

So, as is often the fate of masters in the United Kingdom of States, this Post Master found himself in a predicament. And, like other masters in the United Kingdom of States, he can be seen roaming the hallowed halls of the Post Office, mumbling to himself, " 'tis a quandary, what should I do, what should I do?"

And so, dear reader, while Her Ladyship's tale has come to an end, its underlying dilemma endures. There are many others in the United Kingdom of States like Her Ladyship, with special needs from their government and their public servants. It can be envisioned that there are other, numerous Postal Princes to serve them.

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My Grandfather's Spoon

Russell Ayres

I can smell the sea and the ship's oil and feel the coarse material of the tunic holding the stolen spoon, now warming against my breast. I watch the Yank ship's officer watch me, but I know that he suspects nothing. The physical sensations of a day that happened nearly fifty years ago--long before I was born--are so strong in my head that I brush my hand against my clean-shaven face in a self-conscious gesture, worried that all these lunchtime shoppers in Garema Place will be affronted by the five days' growth on my chin.

Sometimes my imagination gets away with me. I smile at my "fancifuls," as my mother used to call my daytime reveries and my night-time terrors alike.

The solid metal of the spoon in my inside breast pocket feels heavy. I haven't shoved the utensil down my shirt front, as my grandfather did all those years ago when he pilfered it from a U.S. Navy ship that rescued him from the Coral Sea in 1944. It has not been warmed by my flesh the way it was by his; but I can imagine how it felt as it tugged heavy in his shirt.

It is payday Thursday; the Sabbath for all public servants and, for my father and me, the day of our fortnightly game in Garema Place. We've played almost every fine payday Thursday now for ten years or so; ever since I followed in Dad's footsteps and joined the public service.

Dad and I used to play lots of board games when I was a kid: draughts, Chinese checkers, backgammon, but most of all, chess. And the prize for the victor, at least after my grandfather died, was the worn old spoon. Dad often "chucked" a game just to let me feel

the smooth metal of the trophy, to let me understand what it was to win as well as to lose. These last ten years, though, neither of us has chucked a game, and in that time it has always been chess. And always on payday Thursday, in Garema Place.

I can't say I have ever noticed anyone else playing at the little concrete tables in the square. Most people, I think, don't even realize they are there. To Dad and me they are our meeting place where we can play the old game again. I'm at the table now, sitting in one of the two chairs the local café owner lets me borrow for the game, feeling the warm October sun warm my shoulders and redden my face. Dad hasn't arrived yet, but he won't be long; his office is closer than mine.

"Hello." He sits heavily, breaking my daydream.

My eyes are closed against the glare and I have slipped into another often-followed set of thoughts about my grandfather's spoon, remembering the taste of hot sweet tea sucked from the spoon's deep bowl. Tea made in a billy near a small natural lake where the three of us, Pop, Dad and I, have fished all day. Even as young as I was I remember that our fishing trips always had a sharp competitive edge to them. It was a game for the three of us, looking for the best positions, moving stealthily around the lake, searching for the most advantageous spots. Pop, the wily old bushy, would always catch the most. And he revelled in beating us every time.

The sensations of cold evening and hot tea are my own memories, but they are strangely muted in comparison to my imagined embellishments on the story of my grandfather's daring defiance of the U.S. military police at the Sydney wharf where he sauntered past them in the ill-fitting and lousy clothes given to him when they fished him out of the sea after his merchant ship was sunk by the Japanese. Pop only ever spoke about the war when he was drunk. He would proudly relate his less savory exploits of theft and philandering, delighting me, his youngest grandchild.

"Hi!" I say after a moment's hesitation. Dad surprises me again with how old he looks, wearing the conservative public servant's garb of twenty years ago: heavy woollen trousers, dark grey; blue-grey vest and white shirt, with a tie from a school Dad has never even seen, let alone attended.

I am always conscious of the social and professional gulf between us. I'm glad we are not in the same department, otherwise I could find myself in the ridiculous position of supervising my own father. "Deadwood" is the word we use for his compatriots in my department, people who simply get in the way of the work to be done, cost burdens the organization can no longer afford to carry. And I have worked hard to excise them from my branch. But Dad is taking a "package" soon, retiring after thirty years. His department offered the general round of redundancies and, after a little persuasion, he is taking it. He is not in the least bitter; but I am--bitter, relieved and ashamed.

As he sets out the chess pieces I feel I have to speak of the occasion: it is our last game. "You get your pay-out today, don't you?" I know he does, but ask anyway.

"Yes, hundreds of thousands of dollars, but the investment bloke reckons it won't see me through to seventy-five."

I balk at how to respond to this: if I agree, it will seem as though I am accepting poverty in old age for my parents; if I laugh it off, I'll be implying that I do not think that living to seventy-five is going to be a problem for Dad. Which I don't.

Such are the minefields of our conversations. That is why we play so many games and have so few conversations; our games have winners and losers, our conversations are never so straightforward. I adopt my old tactic and promptly change the subject. "I don't feel too lucky today; I reckon you're going to get the old spoon off me this time."

As Dad grunts in reply (quiet at the best of times, he's positively taciturn at chess), I wince at my hypocrisy. I have won every game for the last six years and a tone of condescension seems to be permanently in my voice whenever Dad is around. And, to make matters worse, today I feel on top of the world, having carried off a coup in the office, the details of which would scandalise Dad. I feel good, too, because I am sure I have overcome my innate desire to beat Dad so this, our last game at these tables, can see the spoon returned to him.

As always I am white. As a kid I fantasized about being a white knight carrying on a great battle against the forces of evil. In those wars I always won, as I have done for the last six years.

The game starts slowly, tentatively, in the way Dad has come to always play during this long losing streak. My usual aggressive sweeps across the board are kept in check by my determination to let him win. But I don't quite let go. I am not striking into the heart of his territory, but neither can I make myself not see and then counter the subtle but by now predictable ploys my father has developed over twenty-five years of chess games with me.

In this languid stage of the game, when my normal aggression is suppressed and I am mostly responding to Dad's tactics and diversions, my mind wanders again to my grandfather's pilfered spoon with "U.S.N." stamped on its handle and the oddly modern arrow design along its shank. It has become an emblem for me, a symbol of my grandfather's grand exploits in the Australian Merchant Navy during World War II, and his Lawsonsque struggles in temperate rainforests as a timber-getter and railway sleeper cutter. Even when I knew him, old as he was, he was a powerful, frightening man of great passions and broad prejudices.

It occurs to me that he would have perished amongst the subtleties of Canberra's labyrinthine bureaucratic politics. Men of action starve here for want of anything tangible to act upon. My self esteem rises as I realise that there is a world in which my grandfather could not have coped, in which his bravado and anti-authoritarian jauntiness would have left him floundering; and it is a world in which I am thriving.

"Check."

My father's low key delivery does not hide his bemusement at my inattentiveness. I can see his knight there, in the bright Canberra sunlight, threatening my king, but I cannot bring to mind the sequence of moves which led to this point. I feel uneasy. I mean to lose today; it is Dad's day. But I don't want to make a complete fool of myself.

"Afternoon Mike." The voice of a colleague draws my attention away from the offending black knight. I cannot remember her name, only that we flirted in a desultory sort of way some time last

year. The exchange is brief, but it pulls me up, sharp. Damn my daydreaming! It will really get in the way one day.

I sit up straight. I'm taller than Dad, and I know the value of good posture in a competitive situation. But I don't look him in the eye as I pull the spoon from my jacket and place it on the table next to the board.

In three moves I take the challenging knight; in seven more I have the black queen and both rooks; checkmate comes as a surprise to me in three angular sweeps of my own white knight.

Looking up to his face, I see his wintry smile. He has really forgotten how to win. He just hasn't the backbone any more.

"Spoon's yours," he says, picking up the shiny silver-white implement and passing it to me. "We'll have to organize the odd game again, if you can afford the time."

I smile too, glowing with the win as I always do, glad that I played an honest game after all, and didn't patronize my father by chucking it.

Pop wouldn't have.

Russell Ayres is a Director in the Corporate Policy Branch of the Australian Department of the Arts and Administrative Services. He is thirty-one years old and has worked in the Australian Public Service for eight years. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree (Honours) in History and English literature. He is married with three children.

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

Down and Out at the EPA

Larry Hubbell and Fred Homer

Three years ago I left the Environmental Protection Agency. At the EPA I attended numerous, boring meetings; wrote cover-your-ass memorandums for the higher-ups; and maintained squatter's rights to a desk. Perhaps other people at the EPA led interesting work lives, but mine was preoccupied with administrative minutiae and political intrigue of a low order. For now, my wife and I own a country inn in rural New Hampshire. I tend bar, ensuring that the locals are sober enough to remain standing at the end of the night. We serve the needs of inn guests, half of whom claim they want to be innkeepers themselves and manage a staff of transients who would prefer playing softball to waiting tables. Despite its reputation for romance, some days I tire of being an innkeeper. However, I never regret leaving the Washington bureaucracy.

Ironically, I would have never left unless I'd been given a push. A \$70,000 annual salary and a comfortable, if not ostentatious, life style are difficult to forego. After all, it's no longer in my nature to take risks.

On a bright Monday morning in May, like most mornings in my former life, I was perched behind my desk reading the *Washington Post*, drinking coffee and eating a Danish. Suddenly, Jason Baldwin, a young man of 27, burst into my office.

"JACK, they bought it! The old man, Larry Springer, Carl Davis, even that sniveling Jill Coker liked my idea. I'm headed for a big merit award in October and probably a promotion."

"After I'm finished, the deadwood in this division will have retired or moved on. The politicians in the Clinton administration will love it! Cleaning house fits in perfectly with this reinventing government

crap. I can see the headline in *The Federal Times*: 'Young Harvard Grad Devises Plan to Clean Up Mess in EPA.'" Jason had only worked in Washington briefly but already he had adopted the standard operating cynicism of many federal government employees.

"Now wait a minute, Jason. Aren't you getting a little ahead of yourself? This plan could be misused by the agency's political appointees. Your 'deadwood' colleagues will be out to get you if you honcho this. Bury this proposal."

"Jack, you're too conservative. I'm not going to make it in this town by sitting on my ass. Carl and Larry... they got to the top by championing winning ideas."

"You're getting sucked in, Jason. I've known several people in this agency who wish they hadn't. Frank is divorced. Jim doesn't know his kids. Carolyn is unhappy. Once you get caught up in the career game, you're stuck. Nothing's good enough."

"Yeah, I learned about that during my organization theory course," he said dismissively. "When I become a super grade, I'll think about it. See you later. I've got papers to shuffle" and he walked away barely concealing an arrogant strut.

Jason Baldwin is a person known throughout the office for his hyperbole and his hubris. A little too bright, a little too innovative for the Management Division of the EPA. He's a Harvard MPA with a mission. However, that mission may never be defined, beyond the standard career advancement fantasy.

He confides in me. He thinks I'm safe. I'm no threat to him. As a GS-14 in his mid 40s, I'm comfortably ensconced in a corner office, albeit on the first floor. No longer motivated by a passion to rise up the career ladder, it's unlikely I will be promoted again. I'm dead-ended. Damn, do I fit the bureaucratic stereotype? To Jason, I must be like the father he never had. Instead of the dynamic career-conscious father who raised him, and pushed him to attend Harvard, I'm the doting, slightly lazy father, nesting, and always willing to listen.

Jason stands tall, lithe and nattily dressed. Today he is wearing a Wilderness Society tie that features African elephants grazing

peacefully against an African motif. It's the sort of tie favored by the current agency administrator. His suits are dark, conservative and always Brooks Brothers. His shoes are handmade in England. He undoubtedly wears silk underwear, but I can't vouch for that. His clothing is excessive for a GS-13, but Jason sees dress as "an investment in my future." Who in senior management is going to take seriously someone who wears a factory second suit from Syms and shoes with ridiculous tassels?

Besides maintaining the standard corporate uniform, Jason conforms to the EPA mold in other ways. His hair is carefully coifed and he makes no effort to conceal the premature greying at his temples. Some people at the agency suggest that he dyes his hair grey to affect a look of sagacity. He often jogs at lunch, avoiding the nearby fast food restaurants of Waterside Mall -- the high cholesterol grease pits frequented by the middle-aged, increasingly corpulent agency dead-enders.

When he isn't jogging, he is "power lunching" with people who can advance his budding career. He carefully chooses the venue. Escaping the depressing dullness of Waterside Mall luncheon fare, he courts potential mentors at expensive sleek restaurants in downtown Washington. They feature entrees with unpronounceable names and inexplicable prices. There he rubs elbows with another breed of climbers, Washington's Gucci clad lobbyists. At these lunches, he is a master at appearing deferential but not obsequious. He knows when to listen and is always sizing up the person seated opposite him. Following each meal, like a dutiful scribe, he carefully records his notes of the lunch encounter in a black, leather covered book with his gold-embossed initials.

Some of his previous ideas to improve management processes at EPA were miserable flops, prompting mumbled derision from his peers. His idea to allocate office space on the basis of a person's performance rating score was both impractical and infeasible. Furthermore, his plan to establish a creativity fund to finance innovative ideas was rejected and seen by some people as a blatant attempt by him to win favors--establishing himself as the arbiter of pork. Larry Springer said he was merely parroting what he had learned at Harvard. Maybe, he sneered, the Harvard whiz kid isn't so smart after all. And in deriding him, Larry enjoyed bringing him down a peg or two. Jason is playing a high risk game. Given Jason's penchant for proposing high risk management innovations,

he is bound to be written off by the higher-ups as a crank or eventually accepted as one of them.

Ned Stokes will be the first one Jason snares. Ned is a half-and-halfer. Half-and-halfers find their jobs unfulfilling, boring and unchallenging. They're typically able to complete their assigned duties at work in less than 20 hours a week. Then, they devote themselves to outside interests, sometimes business, sometimes pleasure, but always at the taxpayers' expense.

Ned may be a half-and-halfer, but he's an enterprising half and halfer—a damned good businessman. Ned likes to keep busy. He does whatever official work comes his way and remains available. He's no Rich, the half-and-halfer immortalized on Saturday Night Live, who probably gets hemorrhoids sitting interminably next to the office copying machine while he engages in aimless chatter. Ned is another breed of half-and-halfer. Ned would probably regard Rich with disdain. "Ned, Ned O' Rama, Ned the Tee Shirt Man, Ned the Haberdasherino." Ned would have no time to respond to that kind of banter.

When things are interminably slow and others are completing the daily crossword puzzle, schmoozing with the secretaries or taking long lunch hours, Ned is actively pursuing his tee shirt business. This guy knows tee shirts. He gave me a great deal last year when my son's little league team needed them. Not only were they cheap, but they were designed and manufactured with care. Certainly a lot more care than he shows in the other half of his job.

When Ned is managing his tee shirt business, there is a definite bounce to his step. His desk becomes the center of activity. He answers his telephone with gusto, seriously intent upon closing the next sale. Ned brazenly takes deliveries of tee shirts at his desk. When he's doing tee shirts, he's as animated as a stockbroker on the New York Stock Exchange.

Nobody has wanted to turn Ned in. He should have been reprimanded for tying up the office phones and turning the office into a bazaar. He violates many government rules, but he's a likable fellow. In other offices, they're probably living out 60s fantasies and experimenting with yet fully undiscovered hallucinogens or arranging after-hours sex orgies. Not our office! Our main

transgressor is more mainstream. He lives the American Dream by spending his time buying and selling tee shirts.

I don't know Ned well enough to ask him why he pursues his tee shirt avocation, or is it a vocation? Does he really love his job at EPA? Does he only pursue the tee shirt business to keep himself from becoming bored during the down times? Is he really doing the government a favor? It certainly is cheaper to allow Ned to pursue his business at work than build him and other half-and-halvers a full gymnasium; sponsoring expensive conferences; or wracking one's brains to create the impossible--interesting work during the slow periods.

Or is Ned truly alienated? Alienated from himself? Alienated from his co-workers? Why doesn't he quit EPA altogether? Perhaps he is not a brave entrepreneur, but only a skittish soul fearful of full time combat in the private sector. Anyway, I secretly admire him. Unlike some of us, who know to the day their planned retirement date, he at least partially thumbs his nose at the big brass, oblivious to the latest call for greater productivity.

"Jack, you're going to be late for the staff meeting," warns my supervisor Carl Davis as he hustles past my office door. While I occasionally lapse into passive reflection, some might call it checking out, Carl seems intent upon setting interoffice speed records. That's his life--a race between meetings that only beget more meetings. By the time he reaches retirement, if he ever retires, he will come close to reaching meeting infinity.

Carl is always in a hurry. He has the energy of a teenager, even though he's pushing sixty. Given the choice of waiting twenty seconds for the elevator or hurdling six floors of steps, he usually prefers the latter, unless of course, he is in the company of a paunchy supervisor. Me, I'd rather let the elevator do the work. Was it Carl's energy that propelled him to GS-15hood when he was only 36? Perhaps I need to take up jogging again or maybe my tennis elbow will heal and I can work off some pounds.

Damn it! The staff meeting already started. Carl is relating staccato-like the details of his meeting with Franklin Kingsley, the assistant administrator. This is the part of the weekly meeting that is worth paying attention to. Carl is usually forthcoming about information and gossip seeping down from the higher levels. Today he seems

more circumspect. Maybe they screwed him on merit pay or maybe he just had a bad night's sleep.

The rest of the meeting resembles an adult version of "show and tell." "Marilyn," Carl chortles, "could you tell the group about the latest cash management initiative you launched last week. I know it will gain the attention of senior management." Marilyn Coles is Carl's favorite. She seldom needs much encouragement to tout her accomplishments. Office meetings increasingly resemble the NBA high-five. Endless self-congratulation, boasting and braggadocio. It's sickening. Why don't we ever hear about interesting failures? Others typically follow Marilyn with their interminable recounting of what passes for adventures and accomplishments in the federal bureaucracy, the bureaucrat's version of Conan the Rotarian. The meeting ends with Carl's admonition, "Let's get back to work, people."

This meeting ends differently. Carl takes me aside. He looks worried. "Kingsley wants to see you privately, right away, Jack."

"Why?"

"It's a private matter."

Whoa... this is unusual. If this matter is a work-related assignment, Carl would insist upon attending. He's not one to be excluded. A private matter? What does that mean? Maybe I'm getting a merit award or better yet a promotion.

I walk over to the assistant administrator's office faster than usual. Like most political appointees, Kingsley has a beautifully appointed office replete with oriental rugs, leather couches, Monet prints from his personal collection and a photograph showing him embracing Bill Clinton. His monster-secretary, Judith Cunningham, has a deserved reputation for nastiness. She enjoys making other people squirm. If Judith had chosen manufacturing rather than government work, she would have been a "work until they drop" overseer. She is the gate keeper. Through her pass all appointments, telephone calls and various missives. Judith determines whether you wait five minutes or five hours. And that's the way her boss Franklin Kingsley likes it. The class system is alive and well at EPA and I am merely one of the latter day peasants, a supplicant to the lord of the manor.

"Franklin wants to see me right away."

"That's curious. He didn't tell me! Did you make an appointment with the assistant administrator?"

Oh, the assistant administrator is it? Pretty soon he'll want us to call him Dr. Kingsley. A \$200,000 charitable contribution can buy honorary doctorates nowadays. His alma mater, De Paul, bestowed one on him. He probably needed a tax deduction that year to offset profits from his very lucrative garbage collection business.

"No, I didn't make an appointment with the assistant administrator. Carl told me that he wanted to see me."

"Well... Carl and you should know that the assistant administrator is a VERY... BUSY... MAN. You can't just walk in here and expect to see him immediately."

"Can I wait until he's free?"

"Well," she declares with a non-committal pout, "why don't you sit over there by the Monet."

She's even telling me where to sit, like I'm some kid waiting to see the principal. I wait forty minutes, trying to pass the time while reading a dated copy of "Travel and Leisure." I'll never visit these exotic places. Not on a government salary.

Judith looks up nonchalantly. "Jack, the assistant administrator will see you now."

There wasn't a telephone call, not a shout from the inner sanctum. How do these people communicate? Telepathically? In the office Kingsley is sitting behind his mahogany desk. He doesn't get up to greet me. Bad sign. He directs me to sit in the chair opposite him. I am tired of being told where to sit. I set the chair at a slight angle to Kingsley.

Kingsley is a large man in his mid fifties. A former garbage collector, blessed with big hands and an insensitive nose. He started as a laborer and worked his way up as an entrepreneur "de garbage." The Kingsley Garbage Collection Service collects garbage in many of Chicago's posh northern suburbs. This guy is

nouveau riche. He must have changed his name from Kinski or Kisniewski. Kingsley doesn't fit him. His adopted name augments his newly acquired status. He wears expensive suits and gold cufflinks, drives a late model convertible Mercedes and owns an eight bedroom house in McLean with wealthy Saudis as next door neighbors.

He doesn't fit the EPA mold. He lacks the upper middle class smoothness that is endemic among the agency's professional class. However, he must know solid waste, having hauled millions of tons of it. Why is he working here? Does he even know what the agency's mission does? As head of the EPA's management division, he can't screw up too many things.

"Jack, today I heard something I didn't like about you."

God, what have I done.

"Don Burrows, the Deputy Inspector General, tells me that you may have submitted phony travel voucher claims. Is that true, Jack? I can't tolerate that kind of shit in this organization. Squeaky clean, that's what I expect."

Yeah, right. At some point in his Chicago garbage collection business, he must have paid off the mob.

"Sir," I assume the role of a penitent, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Let me refresh your memory. Don tells me that you submitted false taxi voucher claims during the past month. He says that he has the proof that you didn't take any of those trips."

"Remember when I paid for that reception last month? We do this sort of thing all the time. You can't legally be reimbursed for receptions. When we do these things, we always phony up travel vouchers."

"That kind of attitude doesn't play around here, Jack. I suggest that you talk to an attorney. The IG will be talking to you soon. Their Fraud Investigation Unit will conduct the investigation."

I slowly rise from my seat... stunned. Uneasily I plod out of hizzoner's office. The Fraud Investigations Unit... the Fraud Investigations Unit? They're the ones who conduct the criminal investigations of illegal hazardous waste disposals. They normally investigate organized crime, not nickel and dime travel voucher cases. Why is this happening to me? I retreat to the hall bathroom and see that all the stalls are free. I sit atop a throne and contemplate my fall from grace.

Who has it in for me? Carl Davis likes me... well sort of. Hell, just last year he invited me to his son's wedding. I didn't buy his son a lavish present, but it wasn't cheap either. What was it anyway? I don't think I offended anyone at the reception. I even danced with his cranky sister. I'm not one of Carl's favorites, but at least I get my work in on time and don't screw it up.

My colleagues like me. Shit! I don't have any enemies in the office that I know of. Or do I? Could Larry Springer still be angry with me because I beat him out for a promotion five years ago? He does have Kingsley's ear. Nah... he must have gotten over it. He's a GS-15 now, someone destined for the Senior Executive Service. There must be other people well ahead of me on his hit list.

Lois Johnson... I should never have slept with her seven years ago. My marriage was rocky then. Martha and I were separated at the time, but sleeping with someone 15 years your junior is always a mistake. She was barely out of graduate school. I must have reminded her of one of her professors. It must have been a simple case of transference as my former therapist noted. I shouldn't have broken off our affair abruptly. Yet, she didn't seem deeply wounded by it. Maybe she was. Maybe this is her long-planned-out revenge. Nah... she's happily married now with two kids. Lois doesn't seem like the type to nurse a long standing grudge. What does she care that an aging and greying bureaucrat brushed her off seven years ago?

It must be Kingsley. It's got to be Kingsley. What did I do? I must have pissed him off in some way. This sort of thing doesn't happen by accident. He must have tipped off the Inspector General. This wouldn't happen unless he wants to get me for something else. What something else?

Kingsley loves the perks that come with his position. He revels in the status these privileges provide him. Many political appointees when they discover the power of their position become enthralled by the executive bathroom; the chauffeur; the outwardly compliant secretary; the outer office that resembles a palatial reception area; and the career employees who perfect the art of groveling.

Maybe I irritated him last week. During a meeting in his office, I used his private bathroom. Hell, I didn't want to go down the hall and annoy him by missing out on his weekly slide show. I was careful. I left everything the way I found it. I didn't even use his lace-fringed towels.

Last week I also used his private parking space for about 15 minutes. Could that be it? His spot is conveniently located near the West Tower elevator. I had to rush up a memorandum to the front office. Kingsley must have not been very pleased by that infraction because when I returned to move my car it was being towed away. He never mentioned this incident to me, but he probably hasn't forgotten it either.

Maybe he was offended yesterday when I enlisted Willie, his chauffeur, to run an errand for me. I asked Willie to transport a document to OMB for a budget hearing we had the next day. Wouldn't you know it, five minutes after Willie left, Kingsley got the urge to have coffee with one of his business buddies at Transportation and became irritated because Willie was gone. Poor Kingsley had to hail a cab. What indignities political appointees have to sustain!

Who knows what digs Dame Judith has directed at me? She never liked me. She can be so differential towards the agency up-and-comers and so contemptuous of everybody else. Kingsley spends a lot of time with her behind closed doors. Surely he isn't occupying all those hours with dictation. I don't mean to imply that anything sexual is going on between them--God am I a sexist? However, she undoubtedly gains favor by nodding in agreement when he trashes individual staff members.

Do I sound embittered? My former therapist would say that I am projecting. At least I'm introspective. Isn't that the first step towards healing? I need to leave this bathroom stall, a place for free association, and formulate a plan of action.

I plod back to my office, carefully contemplating my future. Waiting for me are two female agents from the Inspector General's Office. "Jack Cranston, we're here from the Fraud Investigation Unit," they announce with a crisp and authoritative air. "We need to talk." They simultaneously rise from their seats and follow me into my office. Without asking, they sit in chairs opposite my desk and carefully open their precisely organized briefcases.

I don't know either of them. However, they look and act like fraud investigators. They have the intensity of auditors and the brusqueness of Marine Corps sergeants. They are humorless; their clothing demonstrates a slightly conservative dowdiness; and their eyes are riveting. Who trained these women? The Federal Bureau of Investigation? They differ only in their body shapes. One's a cabbage, the other a carrot.

"Mr. Cranston," the cabbage begins, "I am Agent Morgan and this is Agent Donnelly. You are suspected of having committed a criminal infraction. You are suspected of misusing federal funds."

"What's the problem?"

"We have evidence that you deliberately falsified \$150 worth of travel vouchers for your personal gain."

"Isn't this rather unusual for your unit to be investigating travel vouchers? That's penny ante stuff, isn't it?"

"Sir," the carrot interjects, "we are investigating your alleged commission of a fraudulent act. That is never penny ante" she said with a tone that would have made an army drill instructor proud. "One of our options may be to refer this case to the U.S. Attorney for prosecution. I assure you, sir, we take this charge very seriously."

As I suspected--these two appear to be as morally absolute as my five year old. It makes no difference to them whether I assassinated the assistant administrator or merely used some creative license in formulating a travel voucher. Both are crimes--pure and simple.

"I want to end this interview. I want to speak with my attorney."

"Certainly," the cabbage retorts, "that is your right. We'll be speaking with you later." In unison, they rise from their chairs, form a single file and promptly head for the door.

Damn them! Damn this agency! This is arbitrary justice. People in this agency are always phonying up travel vouchers. Yesterday I heard Larry Springer say that he had submitted a fake voucher. I need to take the next few days off and talk to an attorney.

I leave for home early, missing Washington's rush hour. My two kids are home, engaging in verbal combat over whether they'll watch "Donahue" or "Full House" on the big screen television. My wife, Martha, has just come from her part-time job at the library and is starting dinner preparation. "Jack, why are you home so early? Something wrong?"

"I think I'm screwed. The IG is investigating me. They know I faked some travel vouchers. I was trying to reimburse myself for that reception I held last month. Hell, I'm in some trouble."

"Why did this happen? Are their charges true?"

"I don't know and yes. Do you mind if I take a nap?"

"Dismissed!"

I stare blankly at the wall for god knows how long. Wounded, saying nothing, barely moving, I review my options. The next day is like that too. Finally, by mid-afternoon of the following day, I roust myself from my Lazy Boy and call Schmidt, Black and Kohler, a law firm specializing in white collar crime, and set up an appointment for Thursday. My appointment is with Ann Davenport, one of the firm's junior associates. After the phone call, I continue staring at the wall, feeling sorry for myself well into the night.

Still in a glum mood, the next morning I follow my traditional pre-work routine. Paper, coffee, English muffin (lightly toasted), shave and shower in that order. Following this oft-repeated ritual, I put on a neatly-pressed white shirt, my best suit, a conservative tie and well polished shoes and slump into my late model Nissan Sentra. Today the destination changes --- instead of my traditional right off the 14th Street Bridge, onto the Southwest Expressway and into the dreary, crumbling environs of Southwest Washington, this morning I

continue straight up 14th Street towards Farragut Square into the world of well dressed lobbyists and pricey lawyers.

Schmidt, Black and Kohler is located in the K Street Canyon--a broad street bordered by service roads and non-descript buildings of steel and glass. Like other prosperous Washington law firms on the K Street corridor, this one is furnished with a plush, premium grade carpet and a vigilant receptionist. I am promptly escorted into Ann Davenport's office. She is disheveled, having just returned from her morning jog through the smog-filled Washington streets.

"Jack Cranston? Come in and have a seat."

At least someone is giving me a seating option. Paying a hefty fee does have its minor rewards. Nevertheless, I come into our meeting with a prejudice. I don't like lawyers. However, like most Americans, I am more than willing to consult them when my ass is on the line. But what are they? Sages? Hired assassins? Post-biblical interpreters? There are too many of them. The \$300 an hour I am charged to spill my guts out is more expensive than my psychotherapist.

Ann is in her late 20s and holds a degree from the University of Chicago Law School. Somewhat reluctantly at first, but later with great fervor and elaborate details I recount my story. She sits across her desk from me with a studied expression, asking the occasional clarifying question. I think I like her. Ann appears to be a good listener. Furthermore, she's sympathetic and I think she has the toughness that will match up well with the robots from the Inspector General. As I finish my story, her secretary brings each of us a cup of coffee.

"It's hard for me to believe that they would consider prosecuting you because you submitted \$150 worth of fake travel vouchers. They're probably bluffing. The U.S. Attorney wouldn't have the time or interest to pursue such a petty charge. Now if you falsified several thousand dollars worth of travel vouchers--that would be a different story. Is there something you haven't told me? Remember attorney-client privilege applies."

"No, that's it. I really think the assistant administrator found a convenient way to nail me."

"We'll provide you vigorous representation. I'll see to it. I'll give a call to the agents in charge of this case and see what I can find out. Give me a call, if anything else comes up."

I leave her office feeling more confident, but poorer. Those three hours cost me \$900. If this damn process drags on too long, I may need to take out a second mortgage.

Instead of returning home or reporting to work, I stroll over to Farragut Square and spend the rest of the afternoon feeding sunflower seeds to an ever increasing horde of ravenous and ungrateful pigeons. I don't even like pigeons. I must rescue myself from this funk. I need to go to work tomorrow.

The next day, assuming the mien of the ancient gladiator, I complete my morning ritual. However, this morning I barely communicate let alone acknowledge the presence of Martha or the kids. I wonder what I will tell people if they ask me what's going on? I'll mumble something about a root canal. No one needs to know about my predicament.

When I walk into the office, no one looks up from their desks or interrupts their early morning conversation to say "good morning." Frank, who I had lunch with last week, is engrossed in a conversation with one of our secretaries. Ned is busy on the telephone dealing tee shirts. Justin, my youngest child's god father, is intently composing a memorandum on his IBM, his head too close to the screen. Not even Marta, the office personality, feels the need to interrupt her work to greet me. Doesn't she always say "hello?"

Everyone must know what's going on. This kind of thing always surfaces. All it takes is for one person to find out. Hell... my story has become office entertainment. Nothing gets the adrenalin pumping like an office scandal.

All of them are going to avoid me. They need to maintain their distance. You'd think that my felonious aura might envelop them too. I've worked in this office for seven years. I'm not just a newcomer who can be simply discarded. I thought these people cared about me. I thought I cared about some of them. So much for office friendships!

Maybe I'm too harsh. They might simply be embarrassed. They may not know how to express their condolences. I am well liked. Every year I am the unanimous selection to be Santa Claus at the annual office Christmas party--a party at which I always lead the atonal masses in several choruses of "Jingle Bells." I'm probably reading too much into this.

The next few days are uneventful. Jason Baldwin, my young confidante, stops by to shoot the bull. He must be unaware of my legal difficulties.

"Jack, I've been promoted. Kingsley made me one of his special assistants. My office will be next door to his."

He can't know about me. He's savvy enough to know not to consort with the enemy.

"That's great, Jason. I knew you'd make it. What's your assignment?"

"Kingsley was rather vague about that, but he told me that I would be his advisor on personnel management. I guess he's serious about wanting to drum out the deadwood."

"Yeah, me included," I mumbled.

"Well, I've got to go. By the way, do you think that peach or mauve would be a better color for my office walls?"

"Go with the mauve."

"Thanks, Jack."

Although I remain fairly distracted, I conduct my work in an overtly routine manner. Ann Davenport calls and tells me little except that the IG wants to arrange a meeting with us next week.

My co-workers are becoming more distant from me. I am shunned; nobody looks me in the eye; I'm left out of gossip; not invited to lunch, sometimes not invited to meetings. I've become a non-entity --the leper who occupies the corner office.

This can't go on much longer. I'm distant from my family. I'm grumpy at work. My worries are both real and imagined. My sleep, what there is of it, is fitful. I don't eat. I play with my food. I'm drowning in my narcissism. I desperately want closure.

I arrange a meeting with Carl Davis. Carl is sitting behind his desk, thumbing through his date book, anxiously avoiding eye contact.

"Carl, I know you know what's happening to me. What can I do?"

"You've consulted an attorney?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, they are much more competent advising you than I am. Would you like to take a few additional days off?"

"No Carl, I don't want any more time off. I want your backing. You know that everybody fakes vouchers."

"No, I don't, Jack. You've been a bureaucrat for more than 20 years. You know the rules."

The damn liar! Even Carl is turning his back on me. I can't trust him either. "I thought that you would stand up for me, Carl."

Suddenly Carl erupts. "Don't feel so damn sorry for yourself. I've been carrying you in this division for a long time. You need to change jobs. I've been trying to give you that hint in your last two evaluations. Damn it, Jack. I've got an important meeting to prepare for with the administrator. We'll have to put this discussion on hold for the time being." I knew we would never talk about this again.

The next day we met with the IG. The participants are the two IG investigators, the branch chief of the Fraud Investigations Unit, Ann Davenport and myself. The venue is a sterile, interior office, located at the end of a winding hallway in the basement of Waterside Mall. Fortunately, there are no bright lights beaming in my face. I probably will also be able to exit to the bathroom without raising my hand. And, of course, my attorney is there to argue my position and offer me solace.

The branch chief, Dennis Weathers, an intense short man in his mid 30s, begins the inquisition, dispensing with the normal pleasantries. "Ms. Davenport, your client submitted a travel voucher of \$154.50 on May 20th, which we believe is fraudulent. We have evidence that Mr. Cranston did not take any of the trips that he claimed on the voucher and we can back up that claim with sworn statements from his supervisor and some of his co-workers. Furthermore, here are corroborating statements from the security officials of the agency offices he claimed to have visited who state that his name does not appear on their visitor logs." He hands Davenport the incriminating evidence.

"We believe this is a very serious offense--a view, which according to agents Donnelly and Morgan, does not seem to be shared by your client. Accordingly, we have contacted the U.S. Attorney's Office and they have agreed to prosecute this case. Here's their statement in writing of their willingness to prosecute."

Ann takes the offensive. "As a citizen, I wish that the IG took such vigorous approach in the prosecution of those people accused of dumping hazardous waste. Perhaps we wouldn't have so many Superfund sites."

"Ms. Davenport, let's stick with the case at hand. How we handle hazardous waste dumpers has no relevance to this matter."

"Well, I believe it speaks to equal justice. I read a story in the Post just yesterday. It quoted a Congressman from one of your oversight committees complaining about EPA's lack of rigorous enforcement. How can you be so apparently lax in that area and yet so overly aggressive in your treatment of my client?"

"Mr. Cranston is an employee with more than 20 years of service in the federal government. During that time he has never received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation. Indeed, on four occasions he has received outstanding performance evaluations. Furthermore, he has no criminal record and is an upstanding member of his community. I find it reprehensible to prosecute a person on this trivial charge. This seems to be some sort of vendetta against my client. I think that the *Post* might find it interesting that EPA's IG chooses to spend so much of its time entrapping their own employees on petty cash matters and not prosecuting serious law violators."

"A fine speech, Ms. Davenport, but I am not a member of a jury. Our orders to root out fraud, waste and abuse come from the highest level of this administration. We are trying to ensure that government employees are held to high moral and legal standards. We believe that your client violated the law and for that he must be prosecuted. You may leak information to the *Washington Post*, but I am sure it will only serve to further discredit your client's reputation. We have nothing more to say, Ms. Davenport. If you have nothing more to add, this meeting is over." As they leave, Ann shakes her head.

"Ann," I say in a wavering voice, "can we get a cup of coffee at Roy Rogers?"

"Sure," says Ann, "let's get out of here."

We walk silently until we reach the confines of Roy Rogers. Gone are the lunch time crowds. It's late in the afternoon. "I can't believe those digitheads," says Ann "they don't seem willing to give an inch. No room for compromise. Why did the U.S. Attorney agree to take the case? This is absurd. I'll talk with one of my colleagues at the U.S. Attorney's Office and try to find out some information."

"Forget it Ann. I want this over with. I need to talk with Kingsley and find out what he wants."

"Let me check my schedule. I'm free next Thursday afternoon."

"No, Ann, if I brought you to the meeting it would only further irritate him. If you're there, Kingsley won't open up. I've got to see him alone."

"Jack, I don't know if you should confront Kingsley alone. I think you need me to represent you."

"Thanks, but if I'm alone, he'll probably be more willing to cut a deal."

"Okay, Jack."

The next day I make an appointment with Kingsley and I'm swinging between penitence and anger. Judith greets me with a scowl and I wait the obligatory 30 minutes before my meeting with him. As I thumb through *Field and Stream*, I notice Jason Baldwin

has moved into his new office. He busily passes in and out of Kingsley's office, apparently unaware of my presence. Does his rise to the top bode well or ill for me?

"The assistant administrator will see you now, but he only has five minutes."

I rise from my seat somewhat tentatively and search for courage. Before I open my mouth, Kingsley takes the initiative. "Jack, the IG has been keeping me informed of their investigation. It doesn't look good. I think they're being a little hard on you, but you know since the Congress passed that IG Act in the 80s, they are pretty independent. They don't take direction from anyone."

Sure! You waste disposal king! And I'm sure that you had nothing to do with my predicament. Didn't make any phone calls. Didn't arrange anything. Everyone knows that you and the Inspector General are golf buddies. I remain silent, quietly cowed.

"I think they have you by the short hairs.

"It's too bad. I've checked your personnel file. You've had an excellent career. It would really be trashed by a criminal prosecution. How would you explain it to a future employer? You know how hard it is for an ex-bureaucrat to get a job in the private sector anyway."

He seems to be leading me somewhere. I sit speechless, waiting for the punch line.

"Look, maybe I can help you. As I said, the IG is completely independent, but if I put in a good word for you, they might back off. However, they'd probably need to know that you're leaving the agency. I'm not real familiar with the process, but we could probably arrange it so that your position was rified. I've never been real sure what you fellows in Carl's office do.

"If the IG agrees with it, it would leave you with a clean record and more than 50 per cent of your salary. I think this is a deal they can live with. You want me to discuss it with them?"

I hesitate for a moment then relent. "I'll take it."

"I'm going to have Jason Baldwin meet with you in his office to discuss the arrangements. That is, if the IG buys into this idea."

Kingsley buzzes Jason. I stand up and slowly plod into Jason's office. By sending me to Jason, Kingsley must be testing Jason's loyalty.

"Jack, I am very uncomfortable with this whole situation. I didn't think that you would be targeted for removal."

"So you admit that this investigation was not on the up-and-up."

"I don't know that for a fact, but I have strong suspicions. Jack, I'm telling this to you as a friend, not as Kingsley's hatchet man. I find what they've done to you to be very disillusioning."

"Yeah, they really stuck it to me."

"I've put in for a transfer to Transportation. I have a friend over there who has been trying to get me over there for some time. Maybe at Transportation they play fewer of these damn games."

"Good luck Jason, but I'm not sure it will be all that different over there. I'm fairly cynical right now, but the Washington bureaucracy is a pretty tough place. The people who rise to the top do so primarily because they are effective game players."

"You may be right. I'll keep that in mind."

"This may not be so bad, Jack. You always told me you and Martha wanted to open a small inn in New England. This might be your chance."

"I've been thinking about that. I'll have to get off my duff and do something."

"You and Martha could be sitting on the front porch of your inn in some quaint New England town. Setting your own hours, serving tea in the afternoon, talking with the guests. It's got to beat the Washington grind."

"The Management Division will be in touch with you soon to arrange a perfunctory audit of your position. With Kingsley

whispering in their ear, I'm sure they'll find your position is expendable. I don't think that you will be hearing anymore from the IG."

"Let's stay in touch."

"That's a given."

For the first time in more than a week I feel relieved. I can stop worrying about what is going to happen. It's already happened. I can stop worrying about what other people think of me. I already know.

I sleepwalked through my job for years. My salary and my golden handcuffs made it too comfortable for me to leave. Soon I will be free--but receiving only slightly more than half my current salary. Martha and I will have to do something. I can't live on only my reduced salary. Maybe we will buy a country inn.

That's how my career as a bureaucrat ended. Three months after leaving EPA, Martha and I took out a mortgage on a country inn in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. It exhausted most of our savings. We still worry about finances. Operating on a slim margin, we pray for snow in the winter and warm, clear weather in the summer.

Back in distant Washington, the bureaucracy remains immobile, but the cogs move on. Ned Stokes voluntarily left the bureaucracy and is now operating a thriving tee shirt business in Northeast Washington. Kingsley returned to his garbage collection business with a raft of agency and presidential medals. Carl Davis was promoted to a super grade position and is a division director with Marilyn Coles as his deputy. Judith Cunningham is secretary to the new assistant administrator and has opened her heart to Jesus, but not to the supplicants waiting in her office. Ann Davenport was promoted to partner and now charges \$500 an hour. Jason left Transportation after two years and began working full time on his PhD in public administration. He visits the inn annually.

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Life in Public Bureaucracy: The Case of the Blue Carpet

Willa Marie Bruce

Background:

This paper illustrates how a professor of public administration can use everyday events to demonstrate the complexities of life in public bureaucracy, and in so doing, stimulate student thinking and develop their problem solving abilities. It presents an account of an encounter which I, as a faculty member, had with a member of the university service staff, then discusses the insights into bureaucracy that the encounter provided to graduate students in public administration. A description of the encounter is given to the students in the form of a scenario followed by a discussion on bureaucratic decision making and responsiveness: the two issues on which I want students to focus their problem solving. The scenario, which is entitled "The Blue Carpet," has previously appeared in abbreviated version in the *Journal of Teaching Organizational Behavior*.

The Blue Carpet

This is the story of a bureaucratic encounter of the worst kind - one between bureaucrat and bureaucrat. It is not about a "clash of the titans," nor is it David vs. Goliath. Rather, it is the story of how two relatively insignificant employees in a large government bureaucracy met head on in an intra-organizational conflict. It is a story familiar to many who work in bureaucracy, although an extreme case. The story is told below in a conversational style. Words within the quotation marks represent approximately what was said by each participant in the reported interactions.

The story begins with a decision to re-carpet some offices, an innocuous decision, one of no major significance in the operation of government--a decision not destined to impact the world. Yet, it is a decision, nonetheless, of great importance to those involved. For you see, one of those offices belonged to a person who had definite opinions about how her office should look. At her own expense, she had already re-painted and purchased new curtains. She envisioned color-coordinated surroundings and the department head had assured her that the carpet color of her choice would be installed.

About two weeks later when the Carpet Purchaser arrived, tape measure in hand, he showed his color chart to a secretary and advised her that BROWN was a nice neutral shade. She agreed. He proceeded from office to office, measuring. When he arrived at THE OFFICE, he was asked to display the color chart.

"I'll take Blue."

"You can't have Blue. This office gets BROWN."

"I want Blue, and the department head said I could have Blue."

"All offices in this building get the same color carpet--BROWN."

"Why"

"We're changing them all to BROWN."

"Who is we?"

"Well, your department head, for one."

"I don't believe that. He said I could have Blue."

"Even if he did, there are people over him."

"Who?"

At this point the Carpet Purchaser named the supervisor of the cleaning crew.

"I know him. I'll give him a call."

"He'll tell you that it's too hard to clean offices when they have different colored carpet. You're just trying to make more work for him."

"Cleaning different colored carpet at home doesn't take any more work. I'll just call and ask him why office carpets have cleaning problems that home carpets don't have."

"Wait a minute. He's got bosses too."

"Who?"

The name was given. The phone call was made.

A very surprised voice responded to the question of why all office carpets must be BROWN with the statement, "They don't, not if you have a private office. Do you have a private office?"

"Yes."

"And is it scheduled for re-carpeting?"

"Yes."

"Then I can't see the problem. Pick any color you want."

"I'm trying to, but your man won't let me."

"I'll speak to him. Put him on the phone."

After a brief conversation, the Carpet Purchaser hung up the phone.

"He says you can have any color you want," he muttered.

As he left the area, he apologized to the secretary for having to put Blue carpet in one of the offices. Everyone around laughed. The matter appeared ended.

A week later, the Cleaning Supervisor appeared in THE OFFICE.

"I hear you're having problems about your new carpet. The Carpet Purchaser came by my office and asked me to call you and tell you that my crew can't clean Blue carpet."

"Can they?"

"Of course."

"Do you see any problem with my having Blue carpet?"

"No. In fact, I asked the Purchaser, 'What's the problem?' You'll never guess what he told me. He said that he has as a personal goal to rid this entire installation of Blue carpet. It makes no sense. I told him that if it was that important, he should quit carrying a Blue sample around with him. I also told him that I didn't care what color your carpet was and that I would not tell you that you can't have Blue."

They both laughed. The matter appeared ended.

The following week, the Director of Purchasing for the entire installation arrived on the scene. He asked, "What's this I hear about you and Blue carpet?"

"Oh, no. Don't tell me this has gotten all the way to your office."

"The Carpet Purchaser called me yesterday. He told me that he was sending through a purchase order for new carpet in your area--BROWN for the reception area, Blue for your office. He asked me to refuse to approve the Blue. I told him that it doesn't matter to the purchasing office what color you get.

"That's what I came to tell you. Get whatever color you want."

"I want Blue."

Life Inside the Bureaucracy

The case continues with a discussion of life inside the bureaucracy, as follows:

Despite the proliferation of theories about bureaucracy and their attempts to explain how bureaucrats should and do act, there is little to explain the effects on one employee of decisions made by another in a different department. It is as though the theorists look only at "The Bureaucracy," and not at what goes on within it. Yet those of us who spend our working lives in the bowels of bureaucracy

know that *ad hoc* decisions occur frequently, often with frustrating results.

Decisions such as those described in the Blue Carpet incident, which are made by a representative of one department, yet impact someone in another department, can be called "intraorganizational decisions." They are decisions made within the organization, about the organization. It is these decisions for which we have no guidelines and no theories of explanation. Because of the lack of guidelines, the results of these decisions are frequently frustration and exasperation. Inevitably, dealing with both the decision results and the feelings they generate consumes large amounts of time and energy.

The Blue Carpet incident describes an intraorganizational discretionary encounter. It is told as it happened, to illustrate the pathology that can occur when two departmental representatives, unguided by standard operating procedures, make discretionary decisions. It is told to demonstrate the amount of time and resources that can be consumed when neither decision maker uses discretion responsively. It is told to educate you on how to defend yourselves against the misuse of discretionary decision making.

The legend is told about a man who walked across the country from Maine to Oregon. "How," he was asked, "did you manage to survive the crossing of rivers and the climbing of so many mountains?"

"The mountains and rivers were easy," he replied. "They were a challenge and I felt a great sense of accomplishment when I had overcome each challenge.

"The problems," he added, "the things that almost made me give up were neither the mountains nor the rivers. What wore me down was the sand in my shoes."

Blue Carpet is a "sand in my shoes" kind of issue--an innocuous concern, irrelevant in the scheme of things. It is an issue, however, that exemplifies the kind of event that literally wears us out, impairs performance and drains energy necessary to complete the task at hand.

The key, it seems, is not so much to bemoan a "Blue Carpet" event, or even to accept that we all encounter "Blue Carpets." Rather, the "Blue Carpet" can alert us to the reality of intraorganizational decision making and lead us to the recognition that such decision making can detract from productivity—detract enough to motivate us to develop means of managing it.

Decision Making

Although decision making is a daily part of organizational life, to consider it as an instrument of discretionary responsiveness within the organization is to consider it in a new and unfamiliar context. Many discretionary decisions reflect the dynamics present in a determination which affects agency clientele. Reports of bureaucratic encounters tend to analyze the encounter and praise or lament its results in regard to impact on clientele.

Still, those of us who work in a bureaucracy know that discretionary decision making also occurs in actions that affect our cohorts in both our own and other departments. Often these decisions are *ad hoc*. Rarely are they premeditated. Even more rarely are they guided by a standard operating procedure. Frequently, they result in frustration and anger.

In his 1979 study of decision making, Paul Nutt (1976) identified different styles of decision making and related these styles to the level of the organization at which they are most likely to occur. At the technological core, that level of the organization where the job of the organization gets accomplished, decisions about service delivery are typically guided by a standard operating procedure (SOP). When an incident such as the Blue Carpet occurs, for which no SOP exists, the person in charge is expected to make the decision.

Yet, generally no one at this level is in charge of intraorganizational decisions. No SOPs exist to provide direction. So, when "Blue Carpet" issues arise, people flounder. Productivity slips. With no guidance for intraorganizational decision making, people retreat to the familiar.

In the case of the "Blue Carpet," each employee involved appeared to use personal goals as decision criteria. The Office Occupant wanted color-coordinated surroundings, the Carpet Purchaser may

have wanted to exercise power. They both attempted to rely on the person in charge of their department as the source of legitimacy. The situation became a power struggle irrelevant to the organization mission. It was resolved as much from benign neglect as from a rational reasoned process. A great deal of time and psychic energy was wasted, making the decision costly indeed.

"Power struggle" may not be the only explanation for the behavior of the Carpet Purchaser and the Office Occupant. One who did not know what the office building looked like might think that the carpet purchaser was concerned with standardization of carpet color. This did not appear to be the case, however, for none of the other office or hallway carpets matched. The downstairs hall, the stairway, and the upstairs hall all had different shades of carpet on them and none were scheduled for re-covering. Such a hodge-podge of colors might have been so offensive to the Carpet Purchaser that he wanted to make an effort for symmetry. In any event, this particular office building had not fallen prey to the frequent complaint that bureaucracy may not allow for enough diversity.

Other explanations for the behavior of the Office Occupant and the Carpet Purchaser might emerge in the reader's mind. The most evident one seems to be, however, that when SOPs fail to address intraorganizational decision making, issues may be resolved by power plays which pit one employee against another.

Responsiveness

In any dealing between people within the bureaucracy, or between client and bureaucrat, there is a possible tension between acting responsibly and being responsive. Employees who act responsibly attempt to maintain neutrality as they follow the rules to do their duty to perform their jobs. Persons who are responsive may not be as concerned with following rules as they are with meeting needs or building relationships. In the absence of rules (as in the case of the "Blue Carpet") responsible persons may try to find or develop standard policies based on objective criteria, and applicable to future similar decisions. Responsive persons, on the other hand, may try to accommodate one another, with no desire to standardize their actions.

Terry Cooper (1990) identifies two kinds of responsibility--objective and subjective. Objective responsibility means doing what one is told or following the rules to meet expectations imposed from

outside one's self. Subjective responsibility adds the dimensions of loyalty, conscience, and identification. To be subjectively responsible means that one has a personal commitment to doing what one thinks is right to the best of one's ability.

In the Blue Carpet scenario neither objective nor subjective responsibility was apparent. There were no appropriate rules to follow. Neither the Carpet Purchaser nor the Office Occupant appeared to think beyond their own wants. It was never apparent that either might be demonstrating adherence to an official rule. Neither showed some loyalty or identification with one another nor with some abstract concept such as symmetry of color. They each appeared self-absorbed.

Responsiveness is a complex action which results from how one constructs the problem about which a decision is being made. Carol Gilligan (1982) suggests a gendered understanding of the difference between responsibility and responsiveness. In her studies of moral decision making, she found that men are more likely to see responsibility couched in a logic of equity and reciprocity, that is, they follow the rules. Responsiveness, on the other hand, is often a female concern. It is grounded in an underlying ethic of care, and a desire to build relationships.

Responsibility and responsiveness meet when persons take the time to make reasoned ethical decisions. Whether one attempts to "Do the loving thing" as Situation Ethics suggests, or acts on the utilitarian concept of "the greatest good for the greatest number," one can be both responsive and responsible. Decisions can go awry, however, in the absence of decision rules or personal commitment to right action. This appears to be what happened in the case of the Blue Carpet.

"Lessons" to Be Learned

After they read the Blue Carpet scenario and the discussion of decision making and responsiveness, students are asked to develop a "moral to the story" by answering the following questions:

1. How can a Blue Carpet incident happen?
2. How can a Blue Carpet incident be prevented?

It is worth noting that many of the students are also practicing administrators. They reported experiencing similar incidents in

their organizations. These events arose over issues such as office size, office equipment, office painting and papering, lighting, temperature control, smoking, and even employee benefits and Christmas trees. All incidents followed the Blue Carpet pattern. Issues were both intraorganizational and required a discretionary decision. As in the Blue Carpet incident, responsiveness did not appear to be a consideration. As in the Blue Carpet incident, decision results were frustrating, angering, and resented by at least one person involved in the process.

What follows is a summary of the students' comments regarding how a Blue Carpet incident can happen in a public organization, and how it can be prevented.

How a Blue Carpet Incident Can Happen

The bureaucratic organization, as conceptualized by Max Weber and described by Charles Goodsell (1985), contains at least five elements, all of which were viewed by students as contributing to the Blue Carpet episode. They are:

1. division of labor and functional specialization,
2. a hierarchical chain of command,
3. a formal framework of rules and procedures,
4. maintenance of an organizational history in the form of files and records,
5. professionalism and longevity for persons within the system.

The characteristics of bureaucracy presume rational behavior at all levels, an adherence to the reporting relationships depicted in the chain of command, and no intraorganizational interaction. As one student stated, "Max Weber never knew anyone who wanted Blue Carpet."

Specialization. Because of the concept of specialization, workers may believe themselves to be the only one technically capable or qualified to make a decision. In the case of the Blue Carpet, the Carpet Purchaser perceived himself to be a technical expert. In the more far-reaching Iran Contra Affair, Oliver North perceived himself a technical expert, too. North's use of discretion violated the law and rocked the administration. In both the Blue Carpet and the Iran Contra Affair, the bureaucratic phenomenon of

specialization provided an inflated perception on the part of the technician of his breadth of discretion.

Chain of Command. The hierarchical chain of command hinders communication. Those at the bottom tend to shield their superiors from knowing about mistakes. Direction from superiors is often distorted by the time it reaches the lower levels of the organization. One has only to play the childhood game of "Gossip" to recognize this. Thus, it is not until a crisis occurs that the result of discretionary decisions reaches the top. Administrative control may be able to occur only after a situation has happened, escalated, and disrupted the organization. Until a crisis occurs, individuals are generally free to use discretion and will tend to develop their own decisionmaking criteria and policies.

In the case of the Blue Carpet, the Carpet Purchaser's discretionary selection of brown carpet had gone unquestioned. Only when an employee who also expected responsiveness was affected, did the results of his decisions reach his superiors.

Standard Operating Procedures. The bureaucratic framework of SOPs provides an aura of rationality through formally defined guidelines. Individual bureaucrats are free to use their own discretion within this framework until challenged. The SOPs are developed to direct decisions made in agency operation and client service. These SOPs rarely, if ever, guide intraorganizational actions.

Indeed, it's very difficult for even a bureaucratized organization to make policy about every possible action in either its operations or its intraorganizational activities. Rules governing internal procedures are generally not made until incidents such as the Blue Carpet scenario occur and demands for standardization are made. One of the ills of modern bureaucracy may be that persons in it do not often think about how they will relate to one another.

In the Blue Carpet incident, what SOPs did exist seemed to provide only criteria regarding which offices would be carpeted. Beyond that, the Carpet Purchaser was delegated discretion. Such delegation assumes "good" decisions. While the term "good" probably includes a concept of responsiveness in its definition, responsiveness may not occur. All too frequently, persons

accustomed to SOPs provision of direction may make inappropriate decisions when no guidelines exist.

Files and Records. Files and records designed to ensure consistent administrative actions generally do not contain a history of intraorganizational decisions. The existence of records implies that a history exists. The assumption of historical precedent for the decision allows for frequently unquestioned arbitrary decisions such as the selection of brown carpet or the sale of arms to the Contras. Files and records provide an aura of security. In the case of discretionary decisions, security simply is not there. As a result, if a specialist makes a decision and sounds logical in defending the decision, he is rarely questioned; nor do those affected often appeal to a higher authority.

Position Security. The general security of bureaucratic positions enables bureaucrats to utilize discretion in non-responsive ways. Job security can foster complacency. People who make poor decisions rarely lose their positions. People affected by those decisions rarely complain. This phenomenon literally paves the way for decision makers to use personal goals and interests as decisionmaking criteria. In so doing they can divert effort away from the accomplishment of organizational goals. This is especially true in Blue Carpet type incidents when the results of their decisions negatively affect other organizational members.

How Blue Carpet Incidents Can Be Prevented

The students agreed that the impersonal nature of bureaucratic theory contributes to the ability of bureaucratic characteristics to foster Blue Carpet events. They also saw those same characteristics as the instruments of preventing them. Their suggestions for prevention are reported below.

Specialization. The organization's specialists should learn that one of their functions is service to other employees. Those who are responsible for intraorganizational activities should be taught to see fellow employees as clients or customers. Whenever possible the guiding decision criteria should be "the customer is always right." As a result of this philosophy, discretionary decisions are more likely to be responsive. Service to other employees should be viewed as a mechanism for enhancing organizational productivity.

Responsiveness requirements should be placed in every job description. Specialists are hired because they are able to demonstrate an acceptable level of required knowledge, skills, and abilities. The ability to utilize discretion responsively should also be required. Both orientation and in-service training should emphasize this requirement.

If decision makers are aware of an agency's expectation that they are to be responsive to fellow employees, students thought that they are more likely to be. To assure such responsiveness, it was also recommended that "responsive use of discretion" be included as a performance evaluation criterion. While it may not be possible to become a specialist in responsiveness, students agreed that it was reasonable to expect that specialists demonstrate responsiveness.

Chain of Command. Formal organizational policies are routinely developed at high levels in the chain of command. Policies regarding intraorganizational activities should also be developed here. Persons at administrative levels are in a better position to consider costs in both time and dollars, and to evaluate political ramifications, before setting both discretionary and responsiveness guidelines. Once the guidelines are developed, they must be communicated.

Even though students recognized the difficulties with communication down through the chain of command, they thought that the usual channels of communication could be used for explaining guidelines for intraorganizational decisions.

Suggestions for using the chain of command to prevent Blue Carpet incidents included training, memoranda, and supervisory direction. In fact, students put a great deal of responsibility on the supervisor for influencing discretionary responsiveness. They suggested that when a supervisor becomes aware of a violation of agency expectations, the abuser must be called to task immediately.

In the Blue Carpet incident, students more frequently blamed the Carpet Purchaser's supervisor than they did the Carpet Purchaser. As one person said, "The supervisor needs to supervise, and he didn't."

Standard Operating Procedures. Rules and regulations which guide intraorganizational decisions should be as formalized as are other

operating procedures. These rules should consider possible long term effects of the procedures they require. They should promote quality of work life for as many employees as possible, while also assuring that agency goals are kept paramount. SOPs which guide discretionary responsiveness should focus on the long term, rather than the short. They should result in bringing about the best possible situation for the greatest number of employees.

In the Blue Carpet scenario, both the Carpet Purchaser and the Office Occupant saw only personal goals and only the short term. The Office Occupant had to live with the decision for the life of the carpet, or for her life in that office. The converse is also true. The Office Occupant could be gone next week, and the organization would be stuck with Blue Carpet. In either event, rules and procedures for such a decision should be developed at a level of the organization which can look to the long term.

Bureaucracy was prized by Max Weber as being "value neutral," so that it can more easily ensure equitable treatment for all. Before such equitable treatment can occur, however, authorities within the organization must decide the political issue of "who gets what, when and where and how." In the case of the Blue Carpet, the Carpet Purchaser should be responsible for purchasing and maintaining inventory. Deciding which offices get which carpeting, when, and how should be guided by SOPs.

Benefits of Bureaucracy

Students thought that, as a guide for decision making, the bureaucratic framework is unsurpassed. "When in doubt," said one, "play the organization game. Its rules are acceptable. Its outcomes are rational."

Students also agreed that not all preventative actions can be taken at the same time. To develop too many rules and too much control can make the organization inflexible. An example of such rule-bound inflexibility was described by a former federal employee. He told the story of a co-worker whose office was a windowless cubicle in a large building. In order to give himself an illusion of spaciousness, the co-worker purchased wallpaper which looked like a summer sky and papered the ceiling. He believed this relaxed him and made him more productive. Shortly thereafter, a representative of GAO arrived on the scene. The employee was

informed that his wallpaper did not meet federal standards for offices and he was instructed to remove the wallpaper. To totally eliminate discretion was thought by students to be as counter productive as were excessive rules.

To have a whole area of activity ungoverned by rules, however, is to court disaster. Students noted that in the bureaucracy we are very concerned to have strict, comprehensive SOPs to guide our interactions with clients. Yet they thought that we go to the opposite extreme in dealing with intraorganizational discretion.

Summary and Conclusions

A Blue Carpet incident will have little bearing on the world or on the reputation of the organization. An Iran Contra Affair can be a disaster. Yet both were the result of discretionary decision making on the part of technical specialists. Students decided that guidelines for such discretion are indicated.

By discussing this scenario depicting an intraorganizational conflict resulting from discretionary decisionmaking, students were able to see that neither theory nor practice can always provide decision guidelines. They also were able to understand the importance of looking at both theory and practice as opposite sides of the same coin, opposite sides which inform and clarify one another and, in this case, which shed light on ways to prevent and deal with organizational issues.

While the causes of the "Blue Carpet" conflict could be found in the characteristics of bureaucracy, the prevention mechanisms were also found there. Students could see that the characteristics of bureaucracy are both strengths and weaknesses, and that they can be a means of guiding intraorganizational decision making, as well as a means of delivering public service.

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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 Suite* (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 backlog 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:
Jay M. Shafritz, Movie Reviews Editor, *Public Voices*
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh
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Fax: 412-648-2605

A Fish Story

Neal Gilbertsen

Lars sipped his coffee and looked at his watch. 5:14 am. He studied the sharp westerly swell and edged the bow several degrees into the wind. Another 46 minutes until the season opened. A combler gnawed at the foredeck and for a moment the spray obscured his view of the beach. It was coming up, and when the tide turned it was going to be hell.

It was already too rough to fish, but what could he do? "6:00 am Sunday through 6:00 pm Tuesday," the announcement had read, "... and 6:00 am Wednesday through 6:00 pm Thursday." This was the official wisdom of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and weather had nothing to do with it. Like all ADF&G policy, this was based on sound scientific reasoning.

Wasn't it strange how this biological management always seemed to fit the needs of influential people?

The canneries preferred to have fishing begin on Sunday. That way processing could begin on Monday. With the season over Thursday afternoon, they could finish up late Friday and avoid paying the crews overtime. The same logic applied to the bureaucracy; fishing seasons should fit the schedule and not conflict with weekend plans. The time frame had the added advantage of keeping the complaining SOBs out of town, and out of the offices and hair of the managers. Whenever the fishermen were in, they were out. Just like Major Major in *Catch 22*.

Respectable citizens liked the fact that Sunday openings kept most seine crews out of town Saturday night. Their wives and daughters were safer, and the taxes which would have been required to support police patrols, jails and courts were held at a lower level. That the cost might involve a slightly higher risk to semi-human life

did not occur to them, or maybe it did. It wouldn't have mattered. Fishing was a dangerous occupation. It took place far from town. No one had to watch as lines parted or when men were drowned. They would all be in church, smugly congratulating themselves on their rectitude and prosperity.

Lars lit a cigarette. He knew he shouldn't. He'd been "trying to stop" and had almost succeeded... but... as always, he was tense as he moved in closer to the breakers. Excuses! Sally knew them all as well as he did, even better. She would be glad when he finally quit. He hoped he would.

5:47. He could probably get away with it if he set now, but it just wasn't worth it. Minimum \$5,000 if he were caught. Second offense and they took the permit worth at least \$80,000! Probably some jail time too. Life held enough hazard without raising the stakes to include patrol planes and the penal code. Unlikely that they would be flying today but fishermen rarely fared well in court.

The boat plunged down the backside of a swell and could not rise quickly enough to meet the next oncoming sea. Green water covered the pilot house. Must be at least 17 feet, and still coming up! The boat was just too damned small for this.

At 58' overall, the Cape Bazan was a limit seiner. The use of vessels larger than this was strictly prohibited by Alaskan law. It was a carryover from Territorial days, when the processors set the rules. Come to think of it, they still did, at least with respect to the fisheries. Oil now controlled the other politics which had once been dominated by fish barons. But then BP (British Petroleum) was the largest producer of farmed salmon in the world. Such was life in the colonies. The more things changed the more they....he drifted back to his earlier question. Why was he forced to face such weather in an undersized boat?

As the California sardine and anchovy harvests had expanded in the 1920's and 1930's, the Alaska salmon industry saw the big vessels engaged in those fisheries as a threat to its control of the resource. At that time, the processors relied upon company traps to harvest most of the salmon, at least enough to dictate the price. If boats big enough to face the open sea had come north they could have intercepted the salmon before they reached the "inside waters," the only place that weather allowed the traps to hold. So the 49' keel

law had been passed, and later changed to 58' overall. While maritime architecture had improved, and the Bazan was a "big limit", it was steadily shrinking as the Southwesterly approached gale force.

6:00. He dropped the skiff, an eighteen foot "unsinkable" workhorse with its 275 horsepower diesel, as close to the surf as he dared. John would take the decked-over aluminum tractor even closer, perhaps even scrape some barnacles if the surge caught him. The net should keep him off if he knew when to cut back on the throttle, but this was "skiff sinking weather." Keep the faith. John knew what he was doing.

Lars turned the helm sharply and tried to watch the 250 fathom purse seine as it paid out over the stern of the Bazan. He was not concerned with what lay ahead of him, but must respond instantly if the net fouled on deck or if a crewman were tangled. He could feel the swell and anticipate the next roll...how far she would heel...how long to come back...how much power he could safely use...and he also knew instinctively exactly how many fathoms of net remained...when he should turn slightly to attain the required "hook" that would hold the fish instead of letting them slip by. The Bazan and the net were simply extensions of himself, and he was as familiar with them as he was with his own body. "A two hundred and fifty fathom extension. No wonder seiners feel macho!" he thought.

Why two hundred and fifty fathoms? Same reason as the boat limit. The "legislated inefficiency" that the processors had substituted for real conservation laws when the traps still dominated production.

The traps had accounted for over fifty percent of the salmon harvested in Southeast Alaska until the early 1950s. They were operated under leases granted by the Army Corps of Engineers. The same sites were issued to the same canners year after year, and they were situated in such a way that the independent fishermen were relegated to the bays. Every deep water "hook off" on the inside was occupied by a trap, over 540 of them. Since the boats could not operate on the open sea, and since the straits were plugged with wire mesh webbing suspended from logs, the fishermen were forced to take whatever was left. That meant the sheltered waters near the streams.

While the companies thought this arrangement only fair, the fishermen disagreed. This difference of opinion led to the employment of Pinkertons to guard company property, and masked fishermen armed with rifles "liberating" the incarcerated fish long enough to sell them back to their former captors. The "problem" had gotten bad enough that the U.S. Navy dispatched a vessel to protect the processor monopoly. There was some irony here, for earlier investigations had shown that not a single trap in Southeast Alaska operated in conformity with the law. Governments and laws always seemed to serve the people who owned them.

Many prominent citizens had begun their meteoric careers operating black boats on even darker nights. Most denied these earlier breaches of morality. In this respect they resembled their wives who claimed no knowledge of Creek Street, let alone the experience of having labored there in more youthful, less prosperous times.

He coaxed the Bazan a little to starboard and slowed the engine. The huge sea that he had sensed fell away from under the keel. As she struggled back to trim, he gave her more power.

When the canners saw that Statehood was inevitable, and that the traps were to be banned, they had bought up seiners. They also had embraced the technology that would allow the operation of these vessels in rougher water. Nylon nets, steel and fiberglass hulls, refrigeration, tanks, and especially the power block.

Before Mario Puretic had developed this hydraulic net puller, men had hauled the heavy cotton nets largely by hand. Puretic was a San Pedro Yugoslav. The tuna fleet was run by Portuguese. Unable to convince "ignorant foreigners" of the possibilities of his invention, he'd thrown the prototype into the trunk of his used car and driven to Seattle.

Croatians were one of the dominant ethnic groups in the Alaska salmon industry. A few phone calls to cousins, an arranged introduction to the management of a small company called MARCO, and the rest was history. It was 1957, the year before statehood and the Constitutional ban on traps that had seen its introduction to the Alaska fisheries. Now every fleet in the world carried MARCO power blocks in the rigging, and Seattle was one of the centers of fisheries technology.

Equipped with lighter, stronger, less labor intensive equipment, the seiners reclaimed the straits and then began to move to open ocean. At first the department had resisted the change, but the cannery pushed for it and now the West Coast, as the outside shoreline of Prince of Wales Island was called, accounted for most of the region's production.

The Canadian release which marked the end of the net slid overboard as Lars backed the Bazan down. A following sea momentarily swallowed the stern. As the towline came tight the vessel steadied herself and Lars eased the controls forward. He noted the yellowish scud off to the Southwest. The wind would continue to rise as the flood approached.

He called down to the galley. "More coffee!" as he lit another Winston. "Really have to stop this soon," he thought. The kid from Idaho brought the coffee up the companionway. Nice enough kid, but not really a fisherman. None of them was nowadays. The Bazan rolled heavily to the starboard, lingered a long moment, then righted herself.

In the old days, crewmen were paid 12% of the gross. Now it was down to 5% and dropping. Boats and nets were less expensive then, and permits hadn't been invented. You went to sea with your family, learned, and when you were ready the cannery set you up in a boat. Not like that anymore. Hell, he had nearly half a million in this operation, and what did they have invested? A \$90 license and some raingear.

He would have liked to have taken experienced men. It helped when you were working conditions like these. Still, the canneries set the prices, and he could not afford to pay more. Because the good men couldn't make a reasonable living working for the lower percentages, they had found boats and permits of their own, gone gillnetting or simply gotten out of the game.

It always came down to the canneries. They had dropped the price of pink salmon from over fifty cents a pound to fifteen, sockeye had fallen from nearly \$3.00 a pound to seventy cents. Odd how the prices the consumer paid never reflected this "market economy."

They had of course increased his "boat owner's allowance," and paid him 3 cents a pound extra for the refrigeration he had installed.

He knew the two tier price structure was a company trick that allowed them to lower costs while keeping their skippers happy. In a way he was complicitous in ripping off the crew.

His income had remained the same. Had he shared the bonuses and other incentives with the crew he would have been in financial trouble. Like everyone else he'd done what he had to. Now most of the crew were college kids. They'd do it for a summer or two, then be off to something else. Helped them get through school, maybe even put some adventure in their lives.

He remembered his parents both pushing him, "Get out of this fishing, there's no future in it. Get a good education, then you can decide." He had. A Ph.D. in political science from a respectable state university. A few years teaching. A realization that universities were staffed by frightened men and women who required the psychological and social validation their positions offered. The politics were nasty, the pay was lousy, and any illusion of academic freedom had faded with experience.

He wasn't unique in this background. Unlike the cultural stereotype, most skippers had at least one degree and many of them had completed post graduate work. Maybe the system worked. Heretics were relegated to the fringes of society where the infection could be controlled. Lead dangerous men into harm's way. Hadn't David done something like that?

"Would you trust your life to it?" was a question Jack London had raised in the *Iron Heel*. Academics dealt with philosophical constructs, and were willing to kill to protect their own, or to destroy others. Hell, they fed upon the young! But did their lives or those of their students depend upon any particular morning lecture? Did it depend upon any particular error in reasoning or flaw in methods? Only if you deviated from orthodoxy or pissed off the chair was your salary in jeopardy. Posture for applause and reinforce the "status quo"....Latin for "cover your ass."

So he had taken a reduction in his class status in exchange for increased income, and, he liked to pretend, "freedom".... whatever the hell that was. The Bazan buried her nose, shuddered, and pitched wildly forward. The coffee spilled, and he cursed quietly. "Freedom to get yourself drowned," he mused. "What the hell, it beat the drabness of 'credentialed civility.'"

He had timed it perfectly. He could see the teeth showing as the tide swept through the bight. Slack water, first of the flood. The sockeye would be up now and if he could manage to tow some shape into the net it should be a good set. The wind was down a bit, but probably would come up again. He called John on the VHF and told him to kick it up a little. "Right!" crackled from one of the speakers.

Sockeye. That was where it was. Strange, this had started out as a sockeye fishery. In the old days they had thrown the pinks away as "trash." Now they harvested sixty million annually as a thin excuse for targeting the money fish.

The Canadians were upset with this. Every year they brought it up at the treaty talks. "Those are our reds!"

"But you catch millions of our pinks, and besides we can't help catching a few sockeye when we're dealing with such huge humpy runs. It's just good management."

While their Department of Oceans and Fisheries argued with the U.S. State Department and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Canadian canners took advantage of the free trade agreement and moved north. Lars worked for a Canadian cannery now, as did most of the fleet. The tender would take his catch to a sparkling new plant in Ketchikan wholly owned by cheeseheads. "Same people get the fish, does it matter who catches them?"

It did to the Canadians. They actually preferred that Americans caught the fish. Cheap labor.

In British Columbia, the fishermen and shore workers had formed a union. This had resulted in the best quality control in the world and Canadian salmon commanded premium prices on the international market. It also raised the price paid to fishermen and the salaries paid to shore workers. This was something the canners despised, so they simply moved their operations to a more reasonable political environment and transhipped the product back home. Lars's fish would still bear the proud label, "Processed in Canada."

When American fishermen had attempted to form a union back in the 1940s, a Federal District Court had found them guilty of a conspiracy to restrain trade. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act required

them to bargain as free agents with the salmon oligopoly. The fact that every processor offered exactly the same price was "not evidence of price fixing," but the attempt to change the structure was.

This wasn't Canada and the traditional shoreworkers were mostly Filipinos. They had replaced the Japanese, who had replaced the Chinese. "Iron chinks," machines that headed and gutted salmon on an assembly line perpetuated this ethnic link. The processors hired labor gangs by paying a boss, who then decided how the contract would be allocated. Bribes were expected, and "political correctness" took on a new meaning. A lot of the money had found its way into Ferdinand Marcos's pockets. Probably enough to keep his wife in shoes.

Wards Cove vs. the U.S. was reviewed by the Supreme Court during the Reagan years. The Justices had upheld the company's right to segregate workers by race. Brown people worked at more reasonable rates. They knew their worth so long as they were kept in their place. If the free trade agreement had brought us this far, imagine what NAFTA would do.

He had towed a deep hook in the net, easing the boat ever closer to the shore where the skiff held its position. Another ten minutes and it would be time to wrap it up. It had started to rain, which would help some in hauling gear...if the wind stayed down. He lit another one and reached for the empty cup.

He remembered one summer when he had worked in the canneries. Since he was the only employee who could identify the species of unbutchered fish, he had a soft job sorting the fish and riding herd over the Filipinos. It had been hot, and to keep the bugs down the foreman had ordered pesticides to be sprayed just outside the screens that covered the open plant doors. As the fumes had wafted through causing everyone to gag, Air Force officers had been shown the operation.

Salmon canneries were still not inspected by the FDA, but the Air Force worried enough about the welfare of their men to check out the food supply. This was back in the 60s when Viet Nam required top nutrition for top guns. It was hardly a defense industry as it had been in World War II; still, the military found it wise to support

corporations that kept Henry Jackson and other prominent Senators bankrolled.

As the pesticides, defoliants, CS gas and whatever else drifted through the sliming area, the officers had been impressed. In fact, the only critical "citation" involved the length of that "hippie's" hair. "Don't need no freak clippings in the can!" and he'd been forced to don a hairnet like the "other women" on the line.

His father had detested hippies too. One night on the grounds he had asked the old man what a hippie was. "They're dirty, unshaven, and don't like to work at a steady job." Lars had looked around the galley table. Three weeks out, wearing the same gurry laden clothes, stubble and beards everywhere, and men hoping to earn enough to take the winter off. Maybe even Mexico.

He saw the ugly bruise spreading rapidly across the horizon. Ivory fangs snarled from the darkening waters as the flood surged towards the point. "Here it comes!" Another ten minutes at most. Better close it up and start hauling. Wait! A jumper coming in. Easy now, don't rush it, here comes the pay off.

"Bring it home John," into the mike. "Got ya!" hissed back. The skiff turned sharply toward the Bazan, dipping her rails dangerously into the building sea. Have to be careful when he comes alongside...time the hand-off just right and get him clear.

The exchange went smoothly. The ends were together and the purse line coming aboard. John had circled free of the net and swung close amidships to hook up to the bridle. He was now towing the Bazan's stern into the swell as the rest of the gang began to haul gear through the block.

He saw the fish boil in the net. Big haul! If it wasn't for their sex drive they never would've been caught. Much like people. How many lives were ruined by this blind instinct?

Fishermen had very high divorce rates. Probably related. Men who went to sea weren't good at keeping beds warm for extended periods. He thought about his mother, and the surreptitious guests she sometimes entertained when his father was north. The fear and anger of a ten year old boy. The shame.

When he was older he had shared this with some others who had grown up at the same time. They were all surprised to learn their experiences had been similar. Upright Scandinavians concerned with outward appearances. Never speaking a word that might bring discredit on the clan. Church on Sunday. White painted houses and neatly kept yards. Well scrubbed children all "above average," all doing well... and lonely women and long nights. Everyone had known, and no one had acknowledged that they did. Preserve the myth.

Maybe that was why salmon held an almost mystical power over human imagination. "Spawn til you die!" as Ray Troll's shirts screamed at the world. The species had something in common and Troll had figured out a way of capturing that essence. Better than the real thing, and more in keeping with the environmental ethic. They were big with the tourists.

The sales were based on another myth. Alaska salmon runs were at historical highs. As a matter of fact, worldwide salmon production was astronomical. More fish than ever before, and it was a dying industry. The processors and economists said "too many fish." The tourists thought they were going extinct. It was the publicity from south. "Kill a king for Greenpeace! I'm just part of that 'wall of death.' Must be instinct or maybe a Norse genetic defect."

In Oregon and Washington the problems were real enough. They had destroyed the habitat. On the Columbia they had built dams. Created a series of lakes and backwaters. Filled them with pesticides, fertilizers and God knows what. They had logged off the timber and allowed silt to cover the spawning beds. What remained was sewage, industrial waste and radioactive seepage from Hanford. In Idaho, they even dried up the Snake in places, holding the water for irrigation.

So what was the problem? "Overfishing!" This year the trollers had been cut back another week in order to get possibly two fish back to the upper river. Everyone knew it was the dams, but nobody wanted to pay the cost. So they passed the buck down the line until they found a powerless group to turn into scapegoats.

Fixing the problem would have meant blowing up the dams. No more cheap kilowatts, no more electric furnaces. Boeing needed aluminum, just as Portland needed the wheat grown on irrigated

farms. The people who worked for Bill Gates wanted the illusion of living close to nature. They sat on their redwood decks sipping micro-brewery concoctions. Washington led the nation in growing hops. Everyone was thirsty.

If the dams went, the industrial base of the Northwest disappeared along with the inexpensive hydropower. Even Alaska's new economy of "tourism" would be hurt. Tourism... the wave of the future.

Where Ketchikan had been a working waterfront only ten years ago, it was now a collection of "galleries" and shops catering to the summer people. On days when three ships were in, the visitors actually outnumbered the residents by two to one. They were gathered onto busses and shown totem houses, quaint relics of the fisheries, and especially the old red light district.

The sons and daughters of Tlingit chieftains dressed in synthetics performed ancient rituals choreographed by tour directors. The places where chandleries, machine shops and cold storages had been were occupied by upscale shops selling Taiwanese souvenirs. No one did real work anymore, or produced real things. Those jobs had been exported. The future, like the past, lay in selling pleasure to those who could afford to pay.

It had never been the whores who kept the money. It was the Johns who brought it in, the girls who earned it, and the pimps who prospered. Maybe tradition was served after all. He just hated being trivialized. An odd anachronism, like some kind of zoo animal. "Come see the fisherman! Uncouth! Unkempt! The barbarian savages who raped nature and built our proud city! Just \$10 to see where they tied their boats. Creek Street, where fish and men came to spawn."

The decks were well awash now. The storm had finally hit in its full fury. Getting the bag aboard was a bit tricky, but they managed it. Probably four thousand, mostly reds. A good set, but it didn't much matter. Had to be the last one until the weather came down. Can't make a season at anchor.

He cut the skiff loose. John could run it into the bay. Too dangerous to try to hook it up out here. The tender would be waiting, and they'd pitch off as soon as they got in. Get some sleep

and maybe tomorrow would be better. Couldn't afford many more of these though, another fifteen or twenty days and they'd close it up. All good things have to end, and this was a "good thing," wasn't it?

Maybe he'd call Sally tonight.

Neal Gilbertsen (Ph.D. University of Oregon 1975), taught political science and public administration at Idaho State University through the spring of 1994. Having earned a promotion to associate professor, Gilbertsen resigned his position to return to his three great passions: his lovely wife Deidra (who is employed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game), Alaska, and commercial fishing. As master of the F/V Lehua Rose, he remains intent upon ichthyocide.

Books

***Disclosure*, Michael Crichton Alfred A. Knopf,
New York, 1994. Hardcover \$24.00.**

Given the subject of this book--sexual harassment--for purposes of balance two reviews follow so that readers might examine the work from a woman's point of view and a man's. Their opinions were arrived at separately; they did not discuss the issues prior to completing their reviews. The book is a novel on sexual harassment and strong opinions prevail on both sides.

Disclosure Review #1 is by
Sofia B. Klopp
Palm Beach Community College

Crichton captures the Silicon Valley mentality, giving readers a realistic feel for the environment in a high-tech corporation. The jargon may lose the reader at times but those narratives are not lengthy or rambling. Computer professionals are an unusual group within the corporation--they seem to think on another plane, making their ideas work within the structured constraints of the computer. Crichton did a believable characterization of their eccentricities.

The story runs through a fascinating maze of corporate secrets, following the experiences of a man (Sanders) who is sexually harassed by a female. Sanders's new boss is his ex-lover and she aggressively approaches him for a sexual encounter. The tale of this encounter seemed skewed and out of touch with reality. The woman is so overcome with desire that her approach is almost brutal. Why would a woman resort to such a physical attack when so little is necessary to arouse a man? Even Crichton acknowledges this by

noting subtle movements on her part such as crossing her legs and blowing hair from her face. Although somewhere there may be a woman capable of the scene described, this female is far from typical and may safely be labeled bizarre. Women seek romance and security--not just a brief sexual encounter. Perhaps a more realistic version of female harassing male would have been an older, lonely female executive trying to confirm her attractiveness or hoping for a relationship by pressuring a coworker for a date.

Although sex may be associated with power by a man, women associate power with emotional rather than physical dominance. Women are still socialized to believe aggressiveness is not feminine, and that men do not respond to female domination. Women are taught a more passive role; enticing and encouraging a possible mate. Society has changed but men and women are not expected to behave the same. Consider the criticism of our last three First Ladies when they chose an active role in the politics of the Presidency.

Crichton does portray other females in the story as competent and strong women with ethics and intelligence. With the exception of the female antagonist, the women characters in this story were believable.

The book's depiction of a man harassed does not conform to the stereotype as he nobly resists sexual temptation. His reasons, however, were a bit disappointing. Sanders resists because he feels sure his affair will be discovered and end his marriage in divorce. Not once did he consider his love for his wife or the hurt he would inflict on her as reasons for his fidelity.

The corporate bureaucracy faces this unusual accusation of sexual harassment within the corporate stereotype; denial and avoidance. They did not want adverse publicity during a merger, so they pushed aside his claims without hearing Sanders's side of the story. The company attorney feels no one will believe Sanders's story--what man would resist a proposition from a beautiful woman? Sanders finds himself in a no-win situation in which he is offered a transfer, effectively ending his career with the company.

Perhaps *Disclosure* will change the prevailing attitude that a "real" man would pursue any sexual opportunity regardless of the consequences. Men should feel free to report sexual harassment without fear of ridicule by their coworkers or the corporation.

Society will eventually accept blurred sexual roles that include sensitive men and aggressive females. Crichton may be right--as young women break out of the stereotypical submissive roles and through the glass ceiling, corporations may see a significant increase in harassment claims against females.

Disclosure Review #2 is by
Michael W. Popejoy
Palm Beach Atlantic College

Michael Crichton, educated at Harvard College and Harvard Medical School, has added another novel to his often socially and scientifically controversial body of work. Indeed, his value, his contribution, is his ability to weave social and science issues unobtrusively into an exciting plot producing thrillers that both entertain and educate.

His critics are numerous, but his readership is too large to silence him with mere criticism; and his movies (*The Andromeda Strain*, *The Terminal Man*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Rising Sun*) have all been box office hits. What makes him so popular with his readers is that his books are good; not great literature, but good nevertheless. He has a broad readership; those who read his books because they are well plotted and well written thrillers, and those more sophisticated readers who read him because there is always an underlying theory developed for those who comprehend. He takes social issues, scientific theories and technology to an audience who might never read a scholarly work in any of these areas, and he exposes them to ideas while entertaining them.

In *Disclosure*, Crichton explores today's controversial issue of sexual harassment. Yet he presents it in a curiously different way; a woman executive who harasses a male subordinate. That is not what we would expect. His critics, particularly from the feminist camp, claim that women just don't do that sort of thing. Crichton fires back that it indeed happens, and it is on the rise. Maybe women are not that much different than men after all; that "absolute power corrupts absolutely," regardless of gender; and that organizations have their own pathos victimizing the individual's rights. Further, he argues his book is based on a true story, and by presenting the issue in reverse of our stereotypes, we can all better understand, and identify with, the magnitude and the indignity of sexual harassment crimes.

The harassed male in this story is Tom Sanders, a fast track executive at DigiCom, a high tech computer firm. A woman, Meredith Johnson, is promoted to a job he expected to get--a woman he had known intimately a decade before when both were employed elsewhere, and Tom was then single. After a closed door conference with his new boss, Sanders's career is shattered. Johnson demanded they renew their old affair, Sanders refused, and the coverup and the race for the truth is on at DigiCom. Johnson is portrayed as the classic "woman scorned," only now the woman scorned has the power to get revenge.

Given the stereotypes of sexual harassment, Sanders has difficulty getting anyone to believe his story; his wife doesn't, his lawyer is skeptical, and DigiCom's CEO wants the issue buried as he negotiates a highly profitable merger. Since all the key employees stand to make a great deal of money if the merger is successful, and a legal case like Sanders's could derail the merger, most of Sanders's friends are angry at him for not just "giving her what she wanted."

Emotive responses from the reader include empathy for Sanders's plight, anger at Johnson--not with her for wanting a sexual liaison nor at her being aggressive about it--but at her systematic destruction of Sanders because he refused (men can say no, too), and disgust with corporate top management for their disregard of the issue as they focused on the merger negotiations.

There were no winners in this case, and Sanders was no saint, either--he went too far with her before deciding to back out. Of course, women have reserved the right to say no at any point in the act and the man is obliged to stop. Crichton wanted his readers to know that people, even just characters in a story, are not perfect, and that this type of crime is so destructive as to leave nothing but ruined lives and careers in its wake, regardless of the cash amount of legal settlements or restored employment. However, the closest thing to a hero (heroine actually) is Sanders's lawyer, Louise Fernandez. As an Hispanic attorney specializing in labor law, she is an outstanding character. Fernandez's career was made on suing men, and their corporations, for sexually harassing women; now she found herself in the middle of a case that challenged her own stereotypes. Crichton brilliantly develops her character as she is at first skeptical about Sanders's story, then as she slowly grows to

believe what really happened and how she could defend Sanders's rights against a corporate coverup.

As is Crichton's trademark, technology plays a major role both in the coverup and in the discovery of the truth. It is no wonder the story takes place in a high tech computer firm since the most advanced computer technology, virtual reality, cellular phones, e-mail and voice mail systems are an integral part of the chase. A sort of *Perry Mason* wedded to *Star Trek* then grafted onto a socio-legal issue. It is a contemporary story about life in organizations and the dangers of interpersonal relationships at work, and demonstrates the invasive and destructive power of technology when controlled by people with an agenda. Yet Sanders is able to use that same technology to prove his case. Crichton's point: Technology is benign until used by humans, be it for good or evil. And, that individuals can prevail over organizational pathos, but only at great risk to themselves.

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Frank Marini, University of Akron

Frank McKenna, Bowling Green State Univ.

Jay Mendell, Florida Atlantic University

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Nancy Murray, Pace University

Dalmas H. Nelson, University of Utah

Dorothy Olshfski, Rutgers University-

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Dolph Santello, University of New Haven

Philip Schorr, Long Island University

Stephen H. Sprague, U.S. Department of

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Richard Swaim, University of Baltimore

Dwight Waldo, Syracuse University