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201024 OBITER DICTA: LATE SUMMER 2010

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Steven Alan Samson

Tuesday, September 7

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/doing-the-dojs-job-for-them-demanding-valid-voter-rolls-before-november/?singlepage=true>

J. Christian Adams, an election law attorney who served in the Voting Rights Section of the Department of Justice before resigning last Spring, has filed notice letters with sixteen states, including Virginia and Oregon, for failure to enforce section eight of the 1993 Motor Voter law.

"During the Bush administration, the Justice Department enforced both Section 7 (the welfare office registration provisions) as well as Section 8 (the list integrity provisions). Section 7 cases were investigated and brought against multiple states, including Illinois and Arizona. Section 8 cases were investigated and brought against multiple states, like Missouri and Maine."

"The decision of the Holder DOJ to ignore the integrity provisions of Section 8 is deliberate and corrupt. In November 2009, political appointee Julie Fernandes told the entire assembled DOJ Voting Section that the Obama administration would not enforce the list maintenance provisions of Section 8. Section 8 'doesn't have anything to do with increasing minority turnout,' Fernandes said. 'We don't have any interest in enforcing that part of the law.' End of story."

"At the same time, Fernandes stressed that the DOJ would vigorously enforce the welfare agency registration provisions of Section 7."

The selective enforcement of this law is not surprising. The law's very purpose and design lends itself to such abuse. Welfare offices are major conduits of federal funds as well as the public policy ideologies and agendas set at the national level. The fact that the provision for voter registration fosters a clientele-mentality among welfare-recipients and welfare-workers, and which encourages a sense of entitlement and dependency, is something that should be too obvious to deny.

<http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/spengler/2010/09/02/flash-economists-make-cynical-pundits-redundant/>

Re: the resignation of the chair of President Obama's Council of Economic Advisors in face of an unfathomable economic crisis. 'Tis the familiar refrain of an old, old song. How many spells must the CEA cast/Before the market settles down? Who knows?/The tea leaves are blowin' in the wind.

<http://pajamasmedia.com/rogerlsimon/2010/09/06/holocaust-denial-george-soros-vs-the-tea-parties/?singlepage=true>

George Soros sounds like a real sweetheart. What complex might Freud have associated with such a treacherous career?

<http://www.danielpipes.org/8850/americans-wake-up-to-islamism>

Daniel Pipes argues that Americans must learn to distinguish between Islamism (a radical ideology) and Islam. At the same time he admits his earlier concerns about Islamist strategic successes and cites the prediction by Richard Curtiss at a 1999 conference - following recent incidents involving Burger King and the Epcot Center - that Muslim attitudes toward Israel would militate against American support for Israel.

Wednesday 8

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100052779/even-americas-liberal-elites-concede-that-obamas-presidency-is-crumbling/>

Nile Gardiner in London notes the growing acknowledgment that last year's unstoppable liberal steamroller is turning out to be much more short-lived than Oliver Wendell Holmes's Wonderful One-Hoss Shay.

Friday 10

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/285123/christians_in_gaza_fear_for_their_lives.html?singlepage=true&cat=9

We should never forget that the cycle of scapegoating has a long history. Entire libraries have been destroyed down through the centuries. Savonarola became famous for his "bonfire of the vanities." Hitler's public bookburning took place only four months after he was made chancellor. Nathaniel Hawthorne used a public bookburning as the theme for "Earth's Holocaust." As a standard of justice, "an eye for an eye" was meant to bring some manner of proportionality into punishment. The antidote for vendettas and other such offenses may be found in Scripture: Deut. 32:35, Matt. 18:7, Rom. 12:19-21.

Saturday 11

http://townhall.com/columnists/MaryGrabar/2010/09/11/sociopathic_intellectuals_on_911/page/full/

Mary Grabar, who for several hours was buried deep in the graves of academe before learning of the 9/11 attacks, discusses the reaction of sociopathic intellectuals and, in doing so, illustrates the thesis of Kenneth Minogue's latest book, *The Servile Mind: How Democracy Erodes the Moral Life*.

Sunday 12

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/only-in-chicago-would-street-gangs-be-so-bold/?singlepage=true>

Some Chicago gang leaders called a press conference and then proceeded to sound and act like politicians on the take. "That's what the gang press conference was really all about: the time-honored Chicago tradition of shaking down the taxpayers for a slice of the pie. 'A lot of this violence was started, was

birthed by patronage, corruption, and cronyism,' [self-described "minister" James] Allen told WLS reporter John Garcia, 'and us being locked out of contracts and jobs and resources in our communities.'"

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/has-israel-just-figured-out-how-to-make-the-electric-car-worthwhile/?singlepage=true>

One day we may update G. K. Chesterton's classic essay, "The Free Man and the Ford Car," with a sleeker, more streamlined version: "The Free Man and the Electric Car." You can test drive a gear-less electric car with rapid acceleration in Israel and experience a new ritual called "battery swapping."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/7996747/Brussels-has-broken-our-power-to-rule.html>

In the *London Telegraph*, Christopher Booker reveals that the EU has broken the power of Rule Britannia and concludes that the whole mess of banking, agriculture, and health policies may someday implode.

Monday 13

<http://pajamasmedia.com/victordavishanson/the-origins-of-barack-obamas-petulance/?singlepage=true>

Victor Davis Hanson sizes up the pique of Obama, whose presidency peaked early and which now suffers from the sort of slings and arrows that strike "when prophecy fails." The president's storied rise to power appears to have been paved with a big assist from a Chicago-style machine politics in a manner that is reminiscent of the rise of "Landslide Lyndon."

"Most candidates for state office do not sue to remove their opponents from the ballot. Obama petitioned (successfully) that most of them be disqualified in 1995. It is likewise rare for the sealed divorce records of a front-running primary rival to be mysteriously leaked, prompting a veritable uncontested nomination. But after Democratic rival Blair Hull imploded from such revelations, so did Obama's general election Republican opponent Jack Ryan, who dropped out of the race after his divorce proceedings were eerily likewise exposed. Lightning does strike twice in the same place for the blessed Obama." Such lightning strikes might recall the leaking of income tax records that helped unseat a senator from New Mexico who had pressed for a congressional investigation.

"Obama had served in the Senate for about two years, when he announced his candidacy for the presidency. That too is rare, but not unprecedented; what was singular was his claim that he was a bipartisan uniter, when, in fact, he compiled the most partisan voting record among 100 senators of either party. He sponsored no major legislation; his memoirs reflected others' interest in him, not his own record of lawmaking. His themes were winning over adherents rather than signature accomplishments." Peter Sellers as Chance the Gardener in Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There* had already anticipated this scenario, as did Robert Redfield in *The Candidate*.

"The exotic name, the mixed racial heritage, and the street cred cool, juxtaposed to the nerdy professorial sermonizing, trumped the need to author or repeal significant laws or create lasting community institutions – or to leave any footprint of achievement at either the University of Chicago, the Illinois legislature, or the U.S. Senate. Running for office or courting appointments or angling for promotions seemed divorced from worry about doing anything when such wishes were granted. Obama's tragedy is that there is nothing left he can run for, no further adulatory confirmation for just being Obama. Performance for the first time in his life is now all that counts." To fully appreciate what this means, we should consider how *The Peter Principle* applies to those who are put on "the fast track" of unmerited promotions.

"Names and images matter in America. Just as a hypothetical moderately attractive blond but empty 'Pam Hill' would not earn the high profile accorded to her double-ganger Paris Hilton of similar non-achievement, so too a Barry Dunham does not catch on in the progressive political world in the manner of a Barack Obama."

"Nobel Peace Prizes traditionally are awarded to recipients after a lifetime of activism, often after some exposure to danger, or at least a sizable body of inspirational literature. Obama simply had no such record. He is our collective Peter Sellers of *Being There*. To paraphrase the embarrassed awards committee, Obama was granted the prize more on his symbolic potential, rather than on the basis of anything he did. Like hundreds of other liberal elites, the Nobel committee seemed to draw more personal fulfillment and satisfaction for bequeathing the award than did Obama in receiving it."

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/dreams-from-his-father-obama-as-petulant-anticolonialist/?singlepage=true>

Between them, Dinesh D'Souza and Victor Davis Hanson appear to have unearthed a Rosetta Stone for understanding this president, both as to his demeanor and his meaning. Bryan Preston, drawing on both analyses, calls him a "petulant anticolonialist." The president's return of the bust of Winston Churchill around the time he took office seemed at the time to signal the beginning of a new Anglophobe period in our foreign relations.

<http://www.imaginativeconservative.org/2010/09/review-of-arthur-c-brooks-who-really.html>

Barbara Elliott reviews a book on charitable giving by Americans and shows some of the interesting patterns uncovered by the author, Arthur Brooks. Conservatives are more generous than liberals. The poor are often more generous than the well-to-do. A major variable has to do with the role of public finance.

"Whether or not people give charitably has everything to do with entitlement mentality. In a fascinating comparison, Brooks looks at the giving patterns of the poorest Americans, who are at one extreme or the other, America the Charitable and 'America the Selfish' writ large. People with the least income to spare either give the highest proportion of their income away – four to five percent – or they give almost nothing. What's the difference in these two groups? The X factor is whether they receive entitlement payments from the government. The working poor give away three times as much of their money as

people on welfare, even though they have exactly the same income. Apparently receiving entitlement payments cripples the impulse to aid others. Brooks concludes 'poverty doesn't make people uncharitable – it's the government policies for ending it.'" The entitlement mentality is one aspect of the state of dependency that weakens initiative and undercuts resolve.

Tuesday 14

http://townhall.com/columnists/VirgilGoode/2010/09/13/more_hate_crime_hypocrisy/page/full/

My former congressman, Virgil Goode, blows the whistle on hate crime statistics and how they are skewed to implicate "whites" generally and point the finger of blame against conservative "racists."

"When most people think of hate crimes, they think of a Klansman or a skinhead beating up a minority. Yet in Los Angeles County, 78% of Hispanic on black and 52% of black on Hispanic hate crimes are considered 'gang related.'"

"I doubt that the Crips are tuned in to Rush Limbaugh on their car radio while they commit a drive-by shooting against MS-13. What about the Hispanic on white and Hispanic on black hate crimes? The federal government does not report them! While the FBI's hate crime reporting sheet includes Hispanics as a victim group, they do not include Hispanics as offenders, and categorize virtually all of them as white. In Los Angeles, where local police count Latinos as perpetrators, they make up 69% of all anti-black hate crimes. These are counted as white on black hate crimes by the FBI."

"Thus, if the MS-13 retaliated against the Crips and yelled a racial slur in the process, this would be reported as a white on black hate crime. Sure enough, the same people who blame attacks by blacks against Hispanics on opposition to illegal immigration are blaming the supposed rash of 'hate crimes' against blacks on criticism of Obama."

The Right is always the fall guy for *bien pensant* liberals. As James Piereson observed in *Camelot and the Cultural Revolution*, Hillary's "vast rightwing conspiracy" was immediately blamed for the Kennedy assassination. The Left never really acknowledged, even grudgingly, that Lee Harvey Oswald was motivated by Communist ideas.

Wednesday 15

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/09/the_gospel_of_obama.html

Robin of Berkeley recounts her guilt-ridden childhood that led her into political liberalism and her profession as a psychotherapist. And she alludes to her more recent conversion from the politics of guilt and pity into a life of faith and faithfulness.

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/09/jonah_goldberg_on_last_nights.html

Clarice Feldman singles out a telling passage from Jonah Goldberg's analysis of yesterday's primaries and the positive role played by the Tea Party movement.

Thursday 16

<http://pajamasmedia.com/rogerkimball/2010/09/15/some-thoughts-on-the-conventional-wisdom-department-of-psephological-prognostication/?singlepage=true>

Karl Rove was correct about candidate Obama being harder to defeat and more dangerous. But Hillary Clinton is the most popular Democrat right now. Given what Carla Bruni says about Michelle Obama's unhappiness in the White House, are Republicans prepared for the possibility of a switch at the top of the Democratic ticket in 2012? Hillary Clinton could energize the Democratic base like no one else right now.

Friday 17

<http://www.seattleweekly.com/2010-09-15/news/on-the-advice-of-the-fbi-cartoonist-molly-norris-disappears-from-view/>

Something akin to the witness protection program is being put to a novel use. Now that we have our own cartoon controversy the American people are being outfitted for dhimmitude. Along with a new identity, are the authorities prepared to slap a burqa on this Seattle cartoonist?

The RICO law was used in the 1980s against Christian anti-abortion protests and many protestors unjustly lost their property and their livelihood as a result of arrests and lawsuits. And yet we tolerate corrosive and violent Islamist rites and practices. Why not outlaw radical mosques and cut off their sources of funding? The American people need to be reminded that America is at war. It is increasingly a civil war and is becoming less civil daily.

More than half a century ago, Justice William O. Douglas wrote the following in *An Almanac of Liberty*: "a 'religious' rite which violates standards of Christian ethics and morality is not in the true sense, in the constitutional sense, included within 'religion,' the 'free exercise' of which is guaranteed by the Bill of Right." When will we start to restore the integrity of our Constitution? It is time to renew the historian George Bancroft's *Plea for the Constitution* which, as he noted in 1886, had been *Wounded in the House of Its Guardians*.

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/my-pet-marxist-and-the-democrats-perfect-new-logo/?print=1>

Silly season is off to a barking (as in barking mad) start. The bit about Harry Reid's new pet is LOL.

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/09/do_the_30_year_math_the_consul.html

C. Edmund Wright does the math for the last 30 years of elections. His thesis: Voters embrace conservatism when it is fully embraced and honestly offered by Republicans.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,311946,00.html>

The transcript of Senate nominee Christine O'Donnell on Bill O'Reilly's show in 2007 contains this juicy revelation: "O'DONNELL: They are – they are doing that here in the United States. American scientific companies are cross-breeding humans and animals and coming up with mice with fully functioning human brains. So they're already into this experiment."

This bit of inanity may be juxtaposed with the following excerpt from William Buckley's account of a discussion that led *National Review* to read Robert Welch and the John Birch Society out of the conservative movement:

"'How would you define the Birch fallacy?' Jay Hall asked.

"'The fallacy,' I said, 'is the assumption that you can infer subjective intention from objective consequence: we lost China to the Communists, therefore the President of the United States and the Secretary of State wished China to go to the Communists.'

"'I like that,' Goldwater said.

"What would Russell Kirk do? He was straightforward. 'Me? I'll just say, if anybody gets around to asking me, that the guy is loony and should be put away.'

"'Put away in Alaska?' I asked, mock-seriously. The wisecrack traced to Robert Welch's expressed conviction, a year or so earlier, that the state of Alaska was being prepared to house anyone who doubted his doctrine that fluoridated water was a Communist-backed plot to weaken the minds of the American public."

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/goldwater%E2%80%94the-john-birch-society%E2%80%94and-me-11248>

It must be the water. . . .

http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100916_tea_party_and_insurgency_politics

Robert W. Perry provides an in-depth analysis of the Perot phenomenon, the populist backlash that roiled two electoral cycles during the 1990s, and compares it with the Tea Party movement today.

Saturday 18

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/do-liberal-novelists-always-write-liberal-novels/?singlepage=true>

Brendan Bernhard reviews Zoe Heller's novel, *The Believers*, as a satirical treatment of a family of liberal true believers. Heller, who previously wrote *Notes on a Scandal*, belongs to a family of writers who come from that same milieu. Bernhard regrets that *The Believers* escaped the notice of conservative reviewers when it was first published but he concludes with the following consolation:

"One could argue there's an upside to conservative publications ignoring novels like *The Believers*. So long as conservatives don't start trumpeting the fact that left-wing novelists sometimes produce work that is a lot less left-wing than they think it is, said novelists will feel safe to produce more of them. Unlike film, TV, painting, drama, dance, music, opera, etc., the novel is the most private and secretive of art forms. Most readers of the literary fiction produced by liberals are themselves liberals or tending that way, as are the professors who assign and teach the books to students, along with the preponderance of agents, publishers, and reviewers who oversee and control the entire process. In effect, what you have is an almost closed circle.

"Think of it as a kind of "Journolist" in which liberals let their hair down, but instead of plotting how to get their nemeses out of office, frequently critique and question themselves and the culture they have helped create. It's more dangerous to do that in a movie or on TV – too many people see that stuff. But literary fiction? Low readership, majority female, and mostly left-wing or left-of-center. The risk of exposure is slight. In an age of increasingly totalitarian technology, the novel is one of the last redoubts of privacy, introspection, and the three-dimensional view. Conservatives shouldn't give up on it without a fight, but perhaps they should be sly about how they approach it as well."

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/09/rules_for_republicans.html

Paul Jacobson advocates turning the tables on the radical Leftists who have replaced the liberals in the ruling establishment. His "Rules for Republicans" turn Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* against them, but this time in the service of truth and our constitutional liberties.

http://www.mcnaughtonart.com/artwork/view_zoom/?artpiece_id=379#

For Constitution Day (yesterday), this painting of the Forgotten Man and our 44 presidents raises the issue of our drift from the Constitution of Limitations to a Constitution of Powers. The painter has captions on each of the presidents. I wish he had said something more and something positive about Grover Cleveland, but I find the painter's assessments to be shrewd for the most part.

<http://frontpagemag.com/2010/09/17/leftist-professors-and-double-standards/print/>

Dr. Fred Gottheil, a University of Illinois economist, recently conducted a survey of academics who had signed a petition attacking Israel.

Jamie Glazov: "I would like to discuss with you today a recent experiment you did – The Statement of Concern – which exposed the hypocrisy of leftist academics who pretend they care about women's rights and the rights of gays and lesbians.

"Tell us about the Statement of Concern, what motivated you to do it and what its results have been.

Gottheil: My "Statement of Concern" came about more by accident than by design. I was searching for someone or some subject on Google.com – can't remember

exactly – when I chanced upon multiple listings of Professor David Lloyd’s anti-Israel petition. That was in early January, 2009, just after the Gaza war. Lloyd’s petition, addressed to incoming President Obama, asked for a US abandonment of Israel. His four-page argument read as if it were written by Ahmadinejad himself. Of course, that wasn’t really interesting, considering the source. But it was the lead-in heading on so many of these petition-carrying sites that drew my attention. It read something like “900 Academics Sign Petition Against Israel ...” I became more curious about who these 900 academics were than about the substance of the petition and found myself going carefully through the list of those 900. Did I recognize any? Indeed I did. Six were on faculty at the University of Illinois and one actually affiliated with its Jewish Studies Program! A few more were 'the usual suspects' types but I couldn’t help but wonder who the others were and why they would sign onto such a distorted account of Israel.

"I began searching through their web sites, making note of the signers’ research interests and department affiliations. That’s when I discovered that many were faculty in women and gender studies departments. The thought occurred to me: Would these same 900 sign onto a statement expressing concern about human rights violations in the Muslim Middle East, such as honor killing, wife-beating, female genital mutilation, and violence against gays and lesbians? I felt it was worth a try. My ‘Statement of Concern’ became a four-page document providing evidence of these human rights violations and identifying leading authorities – mainly Muslim clerics and professors – who condoned these anti-women and anti-gay practices. By late spring, I had the email addresses of 675 who signed Lloyd’s petition and sent them my ‘Statement of Concern,’ requesting their support. The results were surprising even though I thought the responses would be few. They were almost non-existent."

Sunday 19

http://townhall.com/columnists/KenConnor/2010/09/19/muslims_behaving_badly/page/full/

Ken Connor comments on our most recent religious double standard. Mark Mitchell provides some essential historical context in this regard:

"The American Constitutional order is one historically rooted in the Christian faith but separated from any established national church. In that sense, the American Constitutional order is secular in form but an outgrowth of a culture permeated by assumptions about human nature and moral truths born of Christianity. As a result, we enjoy a political sphere that can be influenced by the religious sphere while at the same time citizens are free to worship as they please and the state has no say over the content of religious beliefs."

But religious freedom does not extend to everything a person might do in the name of religion. This is the context of William O. Douglas's saying that "a 'religious' rite which violates standards of Christian ethics and morality is not in the true sense, in the constitutional sense, included within 'religion,' the 'free exercise' of which is guaranteed by the Bill of Right." The Supreme Court itself drew upon Francis Lieber's *Manual of Political Ethics* in the Reynolds case

to illustrate some of these limits, among which Lieber included polygamy and suttee.

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2010/09/molly-norris-shows-us-how-not-to-hide.html>

Here is a very interesting discussion and dissection of the case of the cartoonist "going ghost." Another sign of our times in so many different ways.

<http://www.debka.com/article/9032/>

DEBKA provides a bleak assessment of the situation in Lebanon. Who will make the first move?