

ORBIS



LEFT-WING LOVE

Vol. 8/No.6/February/2009

Your guide to campus condoms : page 5

a note from the editor

Dear Reader,

Right now, the future seems uncertain. Many students (myself included) are looking forward to graduation with trepidation, trying to settle on a path that will offer some financial security. We are cutting back, saving more, and doing a lot of worrying. Vanderbilt employees, who go into wage negotiations this fall, are wondering whether they will even have their jobs then.

To cheer up, we made the theme of this issue "left-wing love," and indeed, much of our issue is about...sex! The freedom to have safe sex (see our guide to free condoms, p. 5), the freedom to live without fear of sexual violence (see International V-Day festivities, p. 6), the freedom to be complete outside of a relationship (see "He's Just Not That Into You," p. 11)...We're very pro-sex here at Orbis. (Side note: if you have any interest in writing for Orbis as a sex columnist, drop me an email at vanderbiltorbis@gmail.com!)

But even if you're not interested in having or reading about sex, we also cover many other types of left-wing love - that is, ways liberals can reach out to our neighbors. The global gag rule, which silenced foreign aid organizations who worked in family planning, has been lifted by the new administration, which we celebrate (p.4). Meanwhile, the proposed Tennessee adoption ban would make it harder for adoptive children to find loving parents (p. 4 again). V-day reminds us to remember our sisters around the globe who face systematic rape and torture as a weapon of war.

There are some of us who just want to talk about senatorial politics all the time (p. 8), or debate the relative merits of Macs vs. PCs (did not make it into the issue, but was endlessly debated). We are very pro-nerd here at Orbis, too, if that is not already fairly obvious. If you are a slightly nerdy, pro-sex left-winger, maybe you would be interested in joining our staff too - or at least you might like to read our new blog, blorbis.wordpress.com, where you can weigh in on any number of pop culture and political issues that don't make it into our issues (Mac vs. PC, anyone? Michelle Obama fashion?). Maybe it can distract you from your economic woes, or at least your midterm-induced stress.

To all of our readers out there (all 7 of you who even bothered to read this) I want to say - we love you, and thanks for reading! Keep the liberal love burning this V-day season. We're here to serve you - so if you love Orbis, or even if you don't, please, let us know what you're thinking via email, blog, or letter.

Yours truly, Robyn

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Please recycle.

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Orbis "Issues" will return next month

Visit us online: www.vanderbiltorbis.com

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Read the blog: blorbis.wordpress.com

4245

number of American military deaths in Iraq
since March 2003

Cover design: Sam Abney.

Orbis aspires to change the atmosphere on Vanderbilt's campus and provides a voice for liberal, multi-cultural and minority viewpoints. This publication strives to inform the public about issues that these groups face as well as to promote diversity and unity within our community. It is a forum for discussion of social, political and religious commentary relevant to Vanderbilt, the nation and the world. Orbis was founded by a coalition of students seeking to raise consciousness about diverse ideas, cultures and backgrounds in our society. We hope to challenge the existing social atmosphere at Vanderbilt and promote a rebirth of acceptance.

Love letter...to a dead economist

Dear John Maynard Keynes,

You've been dead for, oh, sixty-three years, and your economic theories have been largely out of fashion for the past forty. Yet, miraculously, you're popular again - and not a moment too soon. The new administration has embraced you with open arms in the hopes that the Economic Stimulus and Recovery Package will push the economy out of a slump. This plan, of course, is based on your idea of the "Keynesian multiplier": a formula which states that every dollar of government spending produces more than a dollar in economic growth.

This is how it works, as Alan Blinder, an economist at Princeton, explained to me recently (via NPR): if our economy should be producing \$15 trillion, but is only producing \$14 trillion, the government can raise the GDP shortfall by injecting a certain amount of spending into the equation. With a Keynesian multiplier of around 1.5, we would need about 650 billion in stimulus money to make up for the trillion dollar shortfall. Et - voila! Economy fixed! Right?



Keynes: we love him, we love him not...is it love again? Watercolor from the National Portrait Gallery. Gwen Raverat, 1908.

Unfortunately, the jury is still out on whether this actually will work. You fell out of favor in the 1970s, when you followed the economy into a massive recession with overenthusiastic spending that led to a spiral of unemployment and inflation. While many economists now remain somewhere in the middle, waiting to see how this whole thing will pan out, your critics on the right call this faith in massive government spending "kindergarten Keynesianism." They have retained other macroeconomic theories you pioneered, such as the Fed lowering interest rates in response to economic slowdown, but this, too, has failed to work in the face of the current meltdown. On December 6 of last year, the Fed cut the key lending rate to zero percent - and the economy still has not responded. The only other tool many modern economists have to fight the slowdown is a strong prescription of tax cuts. Which, frankly, is not going to be enough to do anything on their own - you were so right about that, Keynes. And so we turn to you again. You could be our only hope.

Many believe that your economic stimulus theories have never really been put to the test. While FDR ostensibly took your advice when constructing the New Deal, he also did things you said would cancel out any government spending, like raising taxes and balancing the budget. It wasn't until World War II forced the government to spend a truly massive amount of money that the economy recovered. However, there is still dispute about whether the war ultimately broke the depression, or the government spending that accompanied the war. Thus, many say this will be the first true test of the Keynesian prescription - government spending, when all else has failed.

Certainly it isn't just your economic policy that made you a contentious figure, even in your heyday. While you were one of the most brilliant and innovative thinkers of your time, you were also a fascinating and somewhat shocking public figure. Called "foul mouthed," "slutty," and a "British elitist" by your critics, "arrogant," "supercilious," and "unbearably boorish" by your friends, you were a controversial figure, to say the least. You were an unbearable snob and a bigot who hated Jews, working people, the French, and looked down upon anyone who wasn't a Cambridge man. (Although, we give you major props for being openly gay at a time when homosexuality was punishable under the law - certainly this must have been a source of people's scorn as well). Even the famed Bloomsbury group of raunchy, free-loving artists thought you were a bit too out there. It is in spite of these glaring flaws in your personal life that we adore you.

But your General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money was one of the most influential works of the 20th century, and, with any luck, it will be validated with this new bout of government spending. Your friends and enemies alike recognized that you were a brilliant thinker. Now that we're placing \$787 billion dollars of trust in your theory, I really hope they were right. Please prove to everyone that our affection for you has not been misplaced. After all these years, it could be love, again, for Keynesian economics.

-Robyn Hyden



News Briefs

English-only/white supremacist connection

Shortly after the defeat of Eric Crafton's English-only ballot initiative, metro officials released campaign finance documents showing that Crafton's group, Nashville English First, got more than ninety percent of its roughly \$90,000 in funding from Arlington, VA-based ProEnglish. ProEnglish has no connection to Nashville or Tennessee; however, the group has been directly linked to John Tanton, founder and head of several hate groups identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The organization seems unconcerned with being associated with hate groups; ProEnglish Executive Director K.C. McAlpin remarked, "Being called a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center is like being called ugly by a frog."

Scientologists move in to Nashville

The church of Scientology has purchased a building right off campus - and a group called Anonymous really doesn't like it. Donning "V for Vendetta" masks and offering cake to passers-by, the group (a national anti-scientology organization) gathered in front of the scientology center to protest this Valentine's Day, donning masks to prevent retaliation from what they view as a shady, secretive cult. The center is located in the old Falls School business center, a historical building purchased by Scientologists last June for \$6 million, which will probably become an "ideal org" - that is, the place from which Nashville scientology will form a "New Civilization (sic) in Nashville," to quote their website, nashvilleideal.org. Whatever the Scientologists are up to in there, at least they aren't the ones standing on street corners, wearing creepy masks and offering cake to strangers.

Corruption in juvie court systems

Two Pennsylvania judges pleaded guilty to federal corruption charges on February 12, 2009 due to circumstances concerning the sentencing of juveniles to detention and incarceration for relatively minor offenses. The judges had worked out a deal with for-profit PA Childcare and Western PA Childcare to receive kickback money in exchange for ensuring juvenile delinquents were committed to the company's care. The companies received compensation from the state in exchange for housing the juveniles.

It is believed that between 1,000 to 2,000 Pennsylvania children were given overly harsh sentences between 2003 and 2006. Lawsuits against the judges and PA Childcare and Western PA Childcare are expected and the earlier sentences will be reviewed and possibly expunged.

Attack of the Octomom

Where should we begin with this bizarre story? Following California resident Nadya Suleman's delivery of eight babies in late January, gossip mags are having a field day, and every new detail to emerge escalates the story's scariness. First, it was revealed that the mother already had six children prior to her new additions. She reportedly supported her family with food stamps and Social Security disability payments, but still had money left over to pay for plastic surgery in order to look more like her idol Angelina Jolie. Suleman is 33, single, unemployed, and maintains limited contact with her sperm donor, whom she met at a nightclub. Sadly, she appears to have no means to support her children. Suleman has received a barrage of criticism and even death threats following the publicity of her births. A tip for the faint of heart: don't look up TMZ's picture of her pregnant belly. It may scar you for life.

Obama repeals “global gag rule”

By Erika Hyde
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In the first days of his presidency, President Obama sharply differentiated himself from his predecessor by rescinding the Mexico City Policy. Known more commonly as the global gag rule, the policy withheld US aid to foreign reproductive care agencies that offered abortion services. By ending the restriction, Obama signaled that the United States would recommit itself to worldwide comprehensive care and reproductive rights.

The global gag rule was first announced as an executive order by President Reagan in the 1980s. It was a divisive policy that President Clinton repealed in 1993 and President George W. Bush re-implemented in 2001. Under the policy, family planning organizations working in third world countries were forced to either opt out of US aid and take drastic budget cuts or eliminate abortion-related services, even in countries where abortion was legal.

Pro-life advocates contend that Obama's decision to repeal the executive order will lead to more abortions around the world. However, the numbers over the past eight years have borne out the opposite result: the global gag rule actually caused illegal abortion rates to rise, since underfunded reproductive rights groups could no longer distribute contraceptives or offer counseling.

The gag rule withheld US federal aid from non-governmental organizations and family planning agencies if they performed, discussed, or promoted legal abortion services, even if the abortions were funded by the organizations themselves instead of US funds. The

Bush administration even refused funding to NGOs that offered abortion-related counseling with money provided by other foreign governments.

Pressured by the Bush administration, the groups who accepted the gag rule stopped offering safe abortions and comprehensive family planning services. As a result, the



number of dangerous abortions performed throughout Africa multiplied in the last eight years. In addition to ceasing abortions, NGOs that participated could no longer offer abortion referrals nor advocate for pro-choice

policies in the countries they were assisting.

The gag rule's impact was even greater on the organizations who refused to sign the anti-abortion pledge. Reproductive health care groups who stood up to the US policy faced drastic cuts in funding. For example, the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia opted out of US aid in order to keep contributing to the Ethiopian government's policy debates on legalized abortion, and as a result lost over 35 percent of their resources. Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, and Ghana are among the countries most affected by the funding restrictions. With the loss of support in these countries, clinics were forced to shut down, contraceptive distribution services were eliminated, and education outreach programs were compromised. The Global Gag Rule Impact Project found that HIV/AIDS outbreaks increased in Africa as a result of these decreased services.

When the gag rule was in effect, the main criteria for funding was whether a group was anti-abortion. Now that the gag rule has been lifted, family planning groups and governments can choose the partnerships and services that are the most cost-effective, high quality, and catered to the cultural needs of a country.

Instead of making difficult decisions between cutting services or defying US dictates, groups like Planned Parenthood Federation, Pathfinder International, and Engender Health can now resume their full regimen of services to reduce disease transmission and abortion rates. Obama

has lifted a major global barrier to reproductive rights, and we will surely see positive ramifications in the years to come.

Proposed bill could prevent 1/3 of childless TN couples from adopting

By Claire Costantino
COMMENTARY EDITOR

On Feb. 9, State Senator Paul Stanley (Rep. - Memphis) introduced a new bill that would ban unmarried couples from adopting. Although the text of the bill states that it is trying to protect children from being adopted by all unmarried couples, the primary group of potential adoptive parents who would be banned are homosexual couples. Senator Stanley has a notoriously weak record on gay rights legislation, and one can only view this as another attack on gay rights.

A similar bill was introduced last year, but its estimated cost of \$7 million to the state was a major factor in its defeat. Interestingly, this year's bill does not include a fiscal summary. It can be assumed, however, that the projected costs of this measure have not been radically reduced in the past year.

Aside from the blatant and offensive discrimination against homosexual couples, this bill is

also detrimental to Tennessee's potential adoptees. According to records from the state Department of Children's Services in 2008, one-third of all adoptions were made by cohabitating couples. Adoption policies are very rigorous already, so the cohabitating couples that were considered eligible were certainly qualified and able parents. It is detrimental to everyone - children, potential adoptive parents, and the state - to allow such discriminatory policies to affect an important issue like adoption.

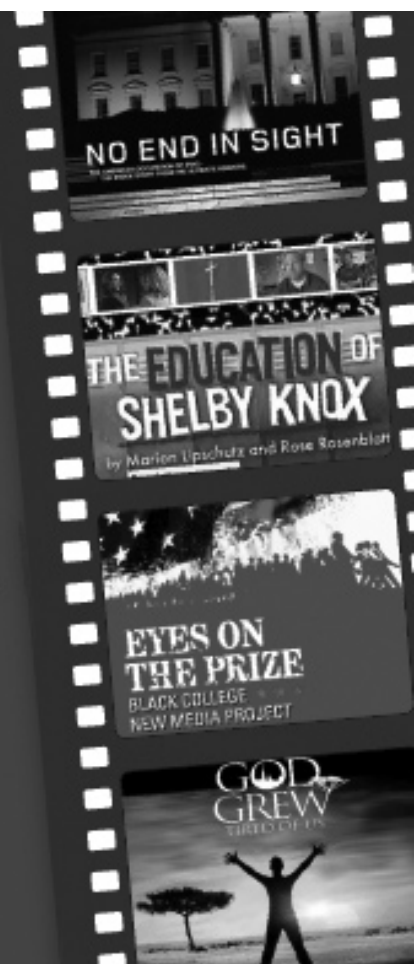
On Tuesday, February 17, the Tennessee Equality Project held their "Advancing Equality Day" at Legislative Plaza here in Nashville. Although they were advocating for many measures, one of their primary focuses was the proposed adoption ban. They encouraged activists in the Nashville area to attend and help lobby for pro-equality causes at the state legislature.

If you are interested in adding your voice to the chorus speaking out against discrimination and in protection of children, you can also get involved with the Tennessee Equality Project by visiting www.tnep.org.

Want a window into what is happening around the world and in your community?

Then screen a documentary on a subject from Iraq to Sudan, civil rights to reproductive justice.

E-mail: speakers@campusprogress.org



Your campus condom guide

By Lauren Engelbert

Before writing this piece, I had heard rumors about free condoms on campus, but never actually knew where to find them. After venturing into the depths of Vandyland in search of the seemingly elusive campus condom supply, I resurfaced with an appreciation for finger cots, dental dams and the art of condom wrapper designs. My campus condom knowledge, previously limited to the Munchie Mart display and free bowl at the annual fall Wellness Bash, is now significantly more intimate. I returned from my quest impressed by the accessibility and enthusiasm of those involved to educate students and provide sexual health resources, but I remain unsettled that I had to put in such a concerted effort to find resources that should have been made available to me during my first week on campus freshman year.

Purchasing Condoms

One would expect that compared to condom prices and availability at CVS and Rite Aid, Munchie Mart condoms, like most merchandise there, would be overpriced and understocked. However, with prices starting at an average of \$4 for a pack of three at the nearby drugstores, the Munchie Mart condoms are comparatively cheap, in the \$2.59 to \$2.99 range. They do not lack variety either, offering spermicidal, "shared pleasure," and magnum brands. Contrary to rumors, condoms are not available on the Meal Plan.

To accommodate late night condom calls for the freshman class, the organic Munchie at the Commons Center also recently added condoms to its inventory. Various versions of Trojan condoms are available at \$3 for a pack of 3.

For those who prefer to buy in bulk, the bookstore also carries boxes containing 12 condoms per box. The going rate is \$11 to \$12, although they only carry Trojans.

Free Condoms

The Zerfoss Student Health Center provides up to five free Durex condoms per student per semester, after which one can buy four for \$1. The Center makes note of how many students are given condoms during the course of doctors' appointments, but visits purely for the purpose of getting condoms are not put on the health record. In terms of privacy, I felt slightly awkward announcing my search for condoms in the waiting room, but aside from that, it is an easy way to obtain them.

The Wellness Center: Whether you are looking for a finger cot, female condom or a dental dam for your sexual explorations, or prefer fun condom packaging and glow-in-the-dark condom holders such as those made by One, the Wellness Center, located on the first floor of the Rec Center, has it all. Boxes full of condoms and lube are available at the center for anonymous pickup, including brands like Durex and Lifestyles. Director Becky Spires has the resources and enthusiasm to put you at ease. She can address all your sexual health concerns and questions, including what a finger cot is, if you weren't sure. The Wellness Center is also involved in programming throughout the year in which they distribute sexual health supplies, including the upcoming Safe Spring Break Week. Programs such as these offer everything from condom key chains and Condom Bingo to abstinence pamphlets, addressing the sexual health concerns of every student.

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, located on West Side Row behind Tolman Hall, supplies a box

full of condoms located in the main room downstairs, which is replenished throughout the year. This is a good way to obtain condoms anonymously if you feel uncomfortable at the Health Center or the bustling Branscomb Munchie Mart, whose fluorescent lights might seem to expose your bedroom activities to the world. They also hand out free condoms at the Wellness Bash in October; brands vary. Female condoms are also available upon request, but in smaller quantities. The Women's Center is also closely affiliated with Planned Parenthood, a helpful local resource outside of the Vanderbilt community for various sexual health concerns.

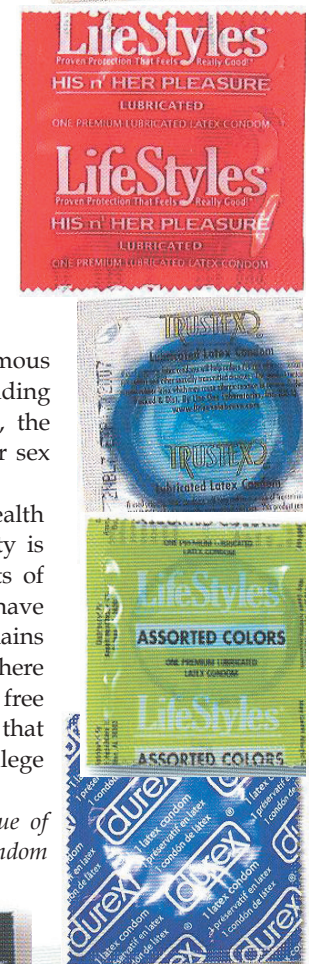
The K.C. Potter Center for LGBTQI Life, next door to the Women's Center, has an extensive supply of all types of male and female condoms, dental dams and lube. You can find them in baskets in the first floor bathroom next to some helpful literature about safe sex and proper condom use. Students in the center are eager to show you where to find the condom collection if you ask.

Obviously, Vanderbilt cares about the sexual health of students enough to offer such a variety of options, but the lack of a specific sexual health director or coordinator has hindered the unity – and thus accessibility – of condom distribution and other sexual health supplies to students.

Furthermore, the question of immediacy remains. Most campus condom distributors are not open on weekends or late at night. Having condom supplies in every residence hall would be more likely to ensure that spontaneous acts of passion occur safely. Not only would condoms be more readily available, but it would also provide a more anonymous way of attaining them. If condoms were available in all vending machines or separate condom dispensers were installed, the simple swipe of a Commodore Card would assist in safer sex practices.

With the abundance and excellent quality of sexual health resources on campus, it is unfortunate that the University is fragmented when it comes to actively informing students of the availability of such sexual health supplies. Whether I have accounted for all the condom locations on campus remains uncertain, because I have no other information about where to go. If all students had received a list of the locations of free condoms and other resources freshman year, I'm certain that countless students would not only have saved precious college spending money, but would have engaged in safer sex.

This article originally appeared in the September 2007 issue of *Orbis* and has been updated to reflect changes in campus condom availability.



Vagina Monologues celebrate V-day

A production both silly and serious discusses female sexuality and violence against women



17 women participated in the Vanderbilt production of "The Vagina Monologues." All photos by Robyn Hyden/ORBIS.

By Robyn Hyden
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"The Vagina Monologues," produced by Project Safe from February 12-15 at Sarratt Cinemas, talks frankly about sexuality and sexual violence. Written by playwright Eve Ensler, the play originally premiered in 1996, and has since spawned a global movement to raise awareness and funding to fight violence against women.

While the original script was based on over 200 interviews with friends and acquaintances, Ensler has since expanded it to include stories from women she has met while traveling to some of the most impoverished and war-torn places in the world. The V-day organization is a non-profit charity that has raised over \$62 million in the past decade to combat violence against women around the globe. All proceeds from this year's production went to aid the

women and men affected by this violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the DRC.

A new monologue was added to the play this year to highlight sexual violence in the DRC. Called "Baptized," it relates the story of Eve Ensler meeting an 8-year-old girl named Noella who had been repeatedly raped for two weeks in a soldier's camp. Her father had been slaughtered, her mother also gang raped; now, the little girl had developed a fistula as the results of repeated, brutal attacks, which means she could no longer control her bodily functions. Eve's encounter with the girl led her to commit to ending the conflict in the DRC, saying, "These are without doubt the worst atrocities I have seen on the planet - and I have seen dreadful things, terrible devastation." The current production begs the audience to take note of the fact that the fighting in the DRC is caused by limited access to valuable resources, including coltan, a valuable metallic ore that is used to power high-tech devices, such as our cell phones and Playstations. The play contends that we are all responsible for what is happening in the DRC.

In the past, the production has been used to raise awareness of the rape and murder of hundreds of women in Jaurez, Mexico; the brutal mistreatment of women in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan; genital mutilation in Kenya; and acid burnings in Islamabad. The play regularly features a monologue recounting the experiences of women who were raped as a tactic of war in Bosnia in 1993.

While many monologues feature stories about rape, sexual violence, and other devastating events, much of

the play features lighter and even rather silly fare. There is plenty of humor surrounding the topic of vaginas: women talk about getting their first period, pubic hair, trying to find their clitoris, and other embarrassing tales. Much of the play focuses on encouraging women not to be embarrassed when talking about their private parts, since all too often, shame and discomfort prevent women from coming forward to discuss sexual trauma.

This play's enduring power derives from its very deep subject material, drawing on stories that have been silenced or ignored for too long. While I'm familiar with the play, I found myself laughing, crying, and applauding another excellent production (directed by Katy Adams). If you've yet to see it - be sure to rent it, or catch a local production. It's the perfect V-day date, because even if you find yourself alone, you'll be in good company.



T-shirt and candy sales benefited Vanderbilt's Project Safe Crisis Fund, which helps support rape survivors in the Vanderbilt community.



The Vagina Monologues will be produced by the Vanderbilt Medical School on February 17 at 5 PM in Langford Auditorium. Proceeds will benefit the Nashville Sexual Assault Center.

To get details or to find more local productions, visit www.Vday.org.

Pro-life and pro-choice activists gather in D.C. to mark Roe v. Wade anniversary

Report by Kay Steiger
CAMPUS PROGRESS

January 22 was the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. Since then, pro-life activists have rallied every year in front of the Supreme Court. This year's crowd seemed small, especially since the city had seen about 2 million people gather in the city for President Barack Obama's inauguration. Here are some of the images from this year's pro-life rally. Published with permission from campusprogress.org.



All photos by Kay Steiger/Campus Progress

One man holds up a sign that says "Personhood Now" and wears an "Abortion is Mean" sweatshirt. The personhood movement is one that seeks a legal definition of life beginning at conception; such an initiative was on the ballot last November in Colorado but was defeated by a margin of 73 to 27 percent. The man is also wearing a "Democrats for Life" sticker.



One man bends his head down in prayer with a sticker on his back that reads "Babies are Wonderful."



A crowd of pro-life activists in front of the Supreme Court just after 1 p.m. Much of the protest involved broadcasting Christian music, reciting prayers, and listening to scripture readings.



Pro-choice activists set up a counter-protest with signs that say "Keep abortion legal," (the National Organization for Women's standard slogan), and more creative slogans like "If your fetus is gay will you still fight for his rights?" and "Life sucks anyway."

One speaker addressed the crowd, telling the story of the Israelite army fighting the "uncircumcised Philistines" asking who they are that would "stand against the army of the Lord." He makes a parallel to today's government leaders. "Who are these legislators that would stand against the army of the Lord? Who are these Supreme Court justices that would stand against the army of the Lord?"



Looking ahead to 2010 Senate Races

By Evan Didler
WEB EDITOR

While it's still early in 2009, Senate races for the 2010 cycle are already beginning to materialize. The single most important consideration for incumbents in this cycle is that they were elected (or reelected) in 2004, a year in which Bush's reelection bid helped get out the Republican vote. Given the many voters disenchanted with Bush's second term, it is not unreasonable to expect that those bad feelings will transfer to Republican senators, particularly those held by new members. Perhaps sensing this vulnerability, three at-risk Republicans from Florida, Missouri, and Ohio, have already opted not to seek reelection.

There are presently 37 seats up for election in 2010, 17 held by Democrats and 20 held by Republicans. This figure includes the probable retirement/resignation of Republican Kay Hutchinson, who is planning to run for governor of Texas. A total of at least four Republican senators (excluding Hutchinson) and one Democratic incumbent will not be seeking reelection.

KENTUCKY

Incumbent: Jim Bunning, Republican
Prediction: Tossup



Analysis: Bunning barely won reelection in 2004 with 51 percent of the vote, and there are numerous rumors that Bunning is suffering from dementia and has lost his grip on reality (look up Bunning and "little green doctors" on YouTube). The National Republican Senatorial Committee, along with Kentucky colleague and minority leader, Mitch McConnell, has been not-so-subtly encouraging Bunning to retire so that the Republicans can field a stronger candidate. A number of Kentucky

Democrats with strong statewide name-recognition, including Lieutenant Governor Daniel Mongiardo (who ran the tight race against Bunning in 2004), have expressed an interest in the seat. If Bunning still ends up running for reelection, Democrats would have a good chance of picking up this seat.

FLORIDA

Incumbent: Mel Martinez (retiring), Republican
Prediction: Tossup

Analysis: Martinez sensed that he was vulnerable and will be retiring after having only served one term. Jeb Bush, brother of former President George W. Bush, has stated that he will not seek the seat. A number of Democrats and Republicans have expressed an interest in running, and the race is likely to be one of the most expensive in 2010.

PREDICTIONS

Safe Democratic: 7 (Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, New York, Oregon, Vermont)

Likely Democratic: 5 (Arkansas, California, North Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin)

Leans Democratic: 6 (Colorado, Connecticut, Nevada, New York, Ohio)

Total Democrat: 17

Tossup: 7 (Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania)

Leans Republican: 2 (Kansas, Louisiana)

Likely Republican: 5 (Alaska, Arizona, Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas)

Safe Republican: 6 (Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah)

Total Republican: 13

ILLINOIS

(special and regular election)

Incumbent: Roland Burris, Democrat
Prediction: Tossup



Analysis: Burris starts in a weak position, having been appointed under controversy by corruption-plagued Rod Blagojevich to fill the remainder of President Barack Obama's Senate term. It is unclear whether Burris intends to stand in the 2010 elections; two elections will be held, one to determine who serves until January 3, 2011 and another to determine who will serve out a full six-year term. While the corruption inherent in Illinois politics affects both Democrats and Republicans, Republicans may be able to win the seat by pointing fingers at Blagojevich and Burris.

MISSOURI

Incumbent: Kit Bond (retiring), Republican
Prediction: Tossup

Analysis: Republican Jim Talent, a former senator who lost in his reelection bid in 2006, is rumored to be considering a run for the seat. Just about every other Democratic and Republican politician with statewide name recognition in Missouri is considering a run, too, meaning that the race is

shaping up to be quite competitive.

NORTH CAROLINA

Incumbent: Richard Burr, Republican

Prediction: Tossup



Analysis: North Carolina surprised many political experts by voting for Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election and voting out Republican Elizabeth Dole in favor of a relatively unknown state senator, Kay Hagan, for US Senate. Burr has had one of the weakest approval ratings of any senator after his election to the Senate in 2004 (often in the 30s, sometimes the 20s); his strong support for Bush's policies as well as his antagonism towards funding higher education in a state that is home to many universities and college students is likely to come back to haunt him. No incumbent senator has been reelected in North Carolina since Republican Jesse Helms in 1996, in a race that drew attention to Helms's racist and homophobic beliefs. Furthermore, Burr's particular seat is often thought of as North Carolina's "buyer's remorse" seat since no incumbent for the seat has been reelected since 1968. Former Governor Mike Easley, Attorney General Roy Cooper, and former State Treasurer Richard Moore have all been mentioned as Democratic contenders for the 2010 Senate race; all of them have strong statewide name-recognition and may well be able to defeat Burr.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Incumbent: Judd Gregg, Republican
Prediction: Tossup



Analysis: With New Hampshire and New England becoming increasingly Democratic in their congressional delegations, any Republican, including Gregg, would likely be facing a tough election bid. It is unclear whether Gregg's abortive run as Secretary of Commerce nominee will help or hurt him.

ALASKA

*Incumbent: Lisa Murkowski, Republican
Prediction: Likely Republican*

Murkowski may face a bruising Republican primary should Governor Sarah Palin set her sights on a Senate seat. Regardless of the primary outcome, however, a Republican will likely be elected from Alaska.

ARIZONA

*Incumbent: John McCain, Republican
Prediction: Likely Republican*

McCain is aided by the fact that his strongest potential Democratic opponent, former Governor Janet Napolitano, has been appointed to Obama's cabinet as Secretary of Homeland Security.

ARKANSAS

*Incumbent: Blanche Lincoln, Democrat
Prediction: Likely Democratic*

Lincoln is a Democratic senator in a state that has become a Republican stronghold. Nevertheless, Arkansas has only elected one Republican since Reconstruction and Lincoln is well-liked and not particularly leftist. The only Republican who could pose a credible threat to Lincoln's reelection would be former Governor Mike Huckabee.

CALIFORNIA

*Incumbent: Barbara Boxer, Democrat
Prediction: Likely Democratic*

The only thing that keeps this seat from being safe Democratic is the possible entry of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger into the race. Schwarzenegger remains the most popular Republican politician in California with his bipartisan spirit, and he will not be able to seek reelection as governor in 2010 due to term limits.

COLORADO

*Incumbent: Michael Bennet, Democrat
Prediction: Leans Democratic*

Bennet was appointed this year to the fill the remainder of Ken Salazar's term, who was appointed as Secretary of the Interior. Presently, Bennet is relatively unknown outside of Denver and will have to work to boost his name recognition before 2010. Bennet's chances of winning are bolstered by the fact that Colorado has been trending Democratic in recent elections.

CONNECTICUT

*Incumbent: Chris Dodd, Democrat
Prediction: Leans Democratic*

Dodd's 2008 presidential run and his involvement in the "Friends of Angelo" mortgage scandal have hurt his approval ratings with the state's voters. If Dodd does not retire, the Republican who poses the greatest threat is former Representative Chris Shays, an exceptionally moderate Republican who lost his House seat in the 2008 election, leaving New England with no Republicans in the House.

DELAWARE - special election

*Incumbent: Ted Kaufman, retiring, Democrat
Prediction: Safe Democratic*

Kaufman has stated that he will not stand in the 2010 special election, paving the way for Joe Biden's son, Beau Biden, to be elected to his father's seat after he returns from his tour of duty with the Delaware National Guard.

HAWAII

*Incumbent: Daniel Inouye, Democrat
Prediction: Safe Democratic*

Republican Governor Linda Lingle, should she choose to run, may be able force Inouye to spend more resources campaigning than in some previous elections. Regardless, Inouye

is widely expected to be reelected.

IOWA

*Incumbent: Chuck Grassley, Republican
Prediction: Likely Republican*

The best hope for Democrats is for Grassley to retire.

KANSAS

*Incumbent: Sam Brownback, retiring, Republican
Prediction: Leans Republican*

While Kansas could normally be counted on to elect a Republican to the Senate, having not elected a Democrat to the Senate since the 1930s, 2010 could prove to be an exception. With Brownback retiring, popular Democratic Governor Kathleen Sebelius is the Democratic Party's best shot at wresting the seat away from the Republicans, should she choose to run (if she is not nominated as Secretary of Health and Human Services). Two Republicans currently serving in the US House have already announced their intention to run, and they will not give up this seat without a fight.

LOUISIANA

*Incumbent: David Vitter, Republican
Prediction: Leans Republican*

Vitter was entangled in a prostitution scandal in 2007 which severely damaged his "family man" image and is something that his eventual opponent is sure to bring up. The biggest asset the Republicans have in this election is the loss of Democratic voters in New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina in 2006. A number of prominent Louisiana Democrats, including Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu, have reportedly been considering a run.

NEVADA

*Incumbent: Harry Reid, Democrat
Prediction: Leans Democratic*

The Senate Majority Leader will likely face a tough reelection bid as his approval ratings have continued to hover below the 50 percent mark. Reid will be able to argue that his majority leader status helps bring in projects to Nevada, while he fights back opposition from what is sure to be a formidable Republican challenger.

NEW YORK - special election

*Incumbent: Kirsten Gillibrand (Dem.)
Prediction: Leans Democratic*

A former Representative representing part of the rural Catskills region, Gillibrand was appointed to fill the vacancy created by Hillary Clinton's appointment as Secretary of State. Relatively unknown, particularly in New York City, Gillibrand may face notable opposition in the Democratic primaries. The eventual Democratic candidate will face serious Republican opposition, although Rudy Giuliani is said to have set his sights on becoming governor.

NORTH DAKOTA

*Incumbent: Byron Dorgan (Dem.)
Prediction: Likely Democratic*

Dorgan will be seeking reelection to serve his fourth term in the Senate. The only serious challenger for Dorgan would be Republican Governor John Hoeven, should he choose to run.

OHIO

*Incumbent: George Voinovich, retiring, Republican
Prediction: Leans Democratic*

Voinovich is said to have retired in part due to polling showing that he would be vulnerable in a reelection bid. With Ohio trending Democratic in recent elections, coupled with an Ohio Republican Party crippled by corruption allegations in the last few years, this race bodes well for Democrats.

OKLAHOMA

*Incumbent: Tom Coburn, Republican
Prediction: Likely Republican*

The competitiveness of Coburn's seat will come down to whether Democrats field and fund a credible candidate, such as Democratic Governor Brad Henry.

PENNSYLVANIA

*Incumbent: Arlen Specter, Republican
Prediction: Tossup*

Specter is capable of eking out a win if he is running in 2010. While he has stated his intention to seek reelection, health complications from Hodgkin's disease may force him to change his plans. Specter is very moderate Republican who is said to be more popular among Democrats than Republicans in Pennsylvania.

SOUTH CAROLINA

*Incumbent: Jim DeMint, Republican
Prediction: Safe Republican*

Analysis: Even if DeMint is a not-particularly-well-loved rookie senator, it is hard to envision a scenario where DeMint or the Republicans would lose this seat. This is a state where the Confederate flag still flies at the capitol.

TEXAS (special election)

*Incumbent: Kay Bailey Hutchinson - retiring,
Republican
Prediction: Likely Republican*

Hutchinson has plans to resign from her seat in order to wage an intense Texas gubernatorial primary battle with Republican Governor Rick Perry, who will be seeking his third term. While any Republican appointee for Hutchinson's seat would not be anywhere near as popular as Hutchinson, Texas is unlikely to elect a Democrat over any Republican.

WASHINGTON

*Incumbent: Patty Murray, Democrat
Prediction: Likely Democratic*

Washington has become more and more Democratic in recent elections and there is currently no strong potential Republican challenger who could oppose Murray. Murray's previous reelection bids, however, have not resulted in the blowouts that would be expected from a strong incumbent.

WISCONSIN

*Incumbent: Russ Feingold, Democrat
Prediction: Likely Democratic*

Feingold is one of the Senate's most leftist members, but he represents a state that is far more middle-of-the-road.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky recently remarked that he expected 2010 to be a good year for Senate Republicans, noting that Bush's departure would likely shore up Republican support. However, even barring further retirements which could push more Republican seats into tossup territory, there is only one Democratic seat that is a likely tossup, while the Republicans must defend six tossup seats and one seat where the Democrats are the favorite. Realistically, the best the Republican Party can hope for right now is to prevent Democrats from gaining a supermajority of 60 seats in the Senate. Democrats only need to hold onto all of the seats in which they are favored to win and capture one of the tossups, and there's already one tossup with a Democratic incumbent. That would get the Democrats 60 seats in the Senate, including two Independents that caucus with the Democrats and assuming Democrat Al Franken of Minnesota is eventually seated. Overall, the chance of Democrats breaking the 60-seat filibuster threshold looks very likely. In fact, the Democrats could start 2011 with 65 senators in their fold.

Pirates plague Somali coast

Fishermen armed with high-tech weapons kidnap wealthy citizens; funnel weapons into Sudan

By Nakul Shekhawat
STAFF WRITER

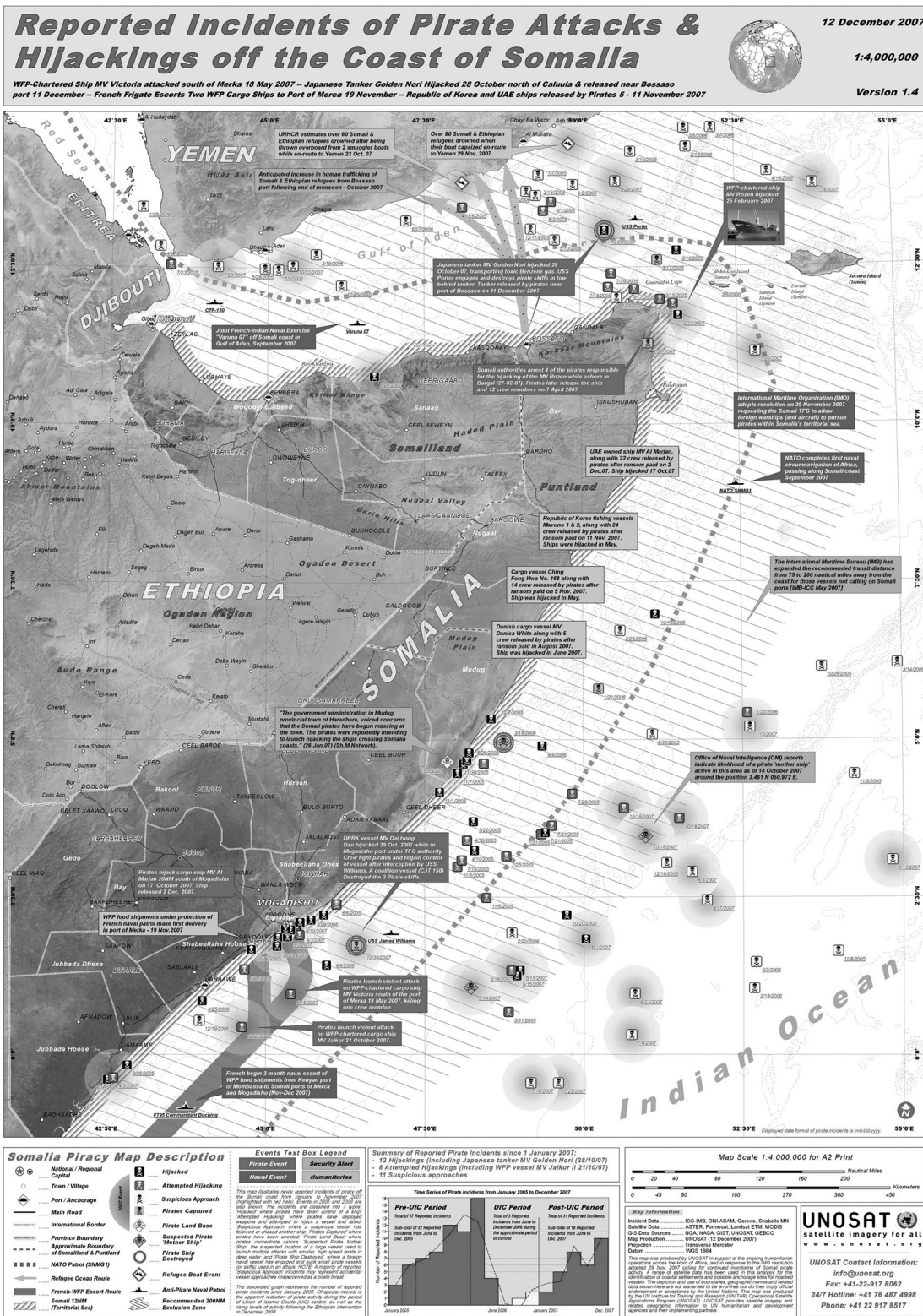
Since the collapse of Somalia's central governing authority in 1991, there has been constant conflict, often involving clans and warlords. The country's unprotected, tuna-rich waters were soon exploited by foreign fishing fleets which illegally trawled the area and threatened coastal fishermen's way of life. Ships from European countries also began illegally dumping toxic waste into Somali waters, further antagonizing the coastal population. Somali fishermen from the region of Puntland began arming themselves to defending Somali waters and asking for money in exchange for foreign use of what had officially been designated as Somali natural resources. However, these "coast guard" operations became increasingly belligerent and soon escalated into a lucrative piracy network encompassing much of Somalia's naval territory. The pirates' range began along the southern coast but shifted to the north in 2007, ultimately threatening foreign vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden. Instead of stealing ships' cargo and killing the crew, the pirates demanded ransom in exchange for returning the hostages. Ransoms were paid in cash only, with US dollars being the preferred form of currency. According to Kenyan estimates, the pirates received \$150 million in ransom money in the past year alone.

Pirating teams consist of local fishermen who are familiar with their region, former militia who have extensive fighting experience due to the country's endless civil wars, and - most interesting of all - "pirate geeks" who know how to operate sophisticated technology such as GPS, sonar, satellite phones, and high-end weapons devices. The Somali pirates' weapons are reportedly supplied by the southern capital of Mogadishu, their northern neighbor Yemen, and wealthy business connections from Dubai. Last September, Somali pirates hijacked a Ukrainian freighter carrying \$30 million worth of heavy weaponry, including 33 Russian tanks. Kenya claimed ownership of the cargo, stating that it had legally ordered the weapons for its own military. But according to the New York Times, Somalis claimed that

the weapons were "part of a secret deal to funnel weapons into southern Sudan."

The pirates claim they are not interested in killing and only want money in order to protect themselves from hunger. They refer to themselves as "coast guards" and blame illegal fishing as the root cause of their behavior. A Dutch hostage, freed last year, was repeatedly told by the pirates that Somalia's poverty and instability left them no choice but to rob for a living.

Conditions are even stranger in the port of Eyl, which has essentially become a pirate town. Locals report that the pirates live a luxurious life, building large houses and driving expensive cars. The promise of money lures young men from nearby regions to become pirates as well. The capture of a single ship and its crew initially involves only a handful of armed hijackers, but the operation can grow to involve tens or hundreds of Somalis. Locals are hired to guard the hostages, prepare food, negotiate with foreigners,



Map via UNOSAT/UN Institute for Training and Research

keep accounts of financial transactions, maintain technology, and provide numerous other services. Piracy is now being seen by some as socially acceptable. However, locals also complain about a lack of security due to the constant arrival of armed men. An influx of US dollars into the local economy has raised the cost of living, making it difficult for locals to survive if their salaries remain stagnant. Rampant prostitution and drug and alcohol use have also affected the area.

In December 2008, the UN Security Council finally approved a resolution allowing countries to chase down Somali pirates on land and at sea. This extends their pre-existing powers to enter Somali waters and chase pirates. Currently nine countries, including the United States, have armed ships stationed in the region. However, authorities complain that instead of ending piracy, such measures may simply shift the problem away to nearby regions.

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“He’s Just Not That Into You”



Talented actresses Ginnifer Goodwin, Jennifer Anniston, and Jennifer Connelly are wasted in a weak, contrived romantic comedy.

By Claire Costantino
COMMENTARY EDITOR

Warning: I am about to sound like an angry, fun-sucking woman. I don't like to play the role, but this movie leaves me no choice. “He’s Just Not That Into You” is both completely forgettable and disturbingly resonant. On the one hand, it is simply another in a long line of testaments to the inherent lameness of women from Hollywood. On the other, it is unforgettably bad. It is so bad that I can still vividly conjure up the feelings of anger and awkwardness it awakened when I saw the movie. For those who aren't familiar with the film (are there any of you out there who somehow missed the bombardment of previews?), the story follows the disappointing, dysfunctional and weirdly interconnected relationships of lovesick yuppies in Baltimore.

Frankly, it is hard to know where to begin. Dissecting this movie to find the core problem is easy as finding the first bullet on a crime scene that inspired a mass murderer-arson-suicide-theft rampage. There are so many characters and relationships to keep track of that you hardly know any of them well enough to understand their motives. And this is not some sort of artistically significant omission of back-story. This is shoddy screenwriting, plain and simple. Why is Scarlett Johansson so inexplicably slutty? What happened to make Jennifer Connelly a bore? And for the love of God, what turned Ginnifer Goodwin into such a sorry sack of lame? Honestly, I was shocked that none of her friends explained the real reason she was alone: she sucks! Aside from creepily stalking men, Gigi has no apparent hobbies, interests, or goals. The only possible explanation for her odd behavior comes in the movie's opening scene. The brief, cliché-ridden introduction would have you believe that women, especially Gigi, are conditioned from birth to misinterpret men's actions and rely upon their presence for fulfillment.

Do not misunderstand me; I think it's great to be in a relationship. In fact, it seems natural to pair off since we're such social creatures. And I would be a liar if I said that I had not been guilty of dissecting every pause and word choice in a phone call with a boy I liked to see if “I love you” was hidden under layers of complex meaning. But I also have other pursuits. This ability to maintain a happy sense of self in the absence of a mate is one of the key things that distinguishes my life from young woman living in say, the 1950s. Jane Austen was noticing this phenomenon's importance way back in the nineteenth century, but evidently filmmakers have not yet heard the good news. Outside of the movies, we here in the twenty-first century prefer to encourage people to focus on finding the right partner, not just any partner.

This ability to maintain a happy sense of self in the absence of a mate is one of the key things that distinguishes my life from young woman living in say, the 1950s. Jane Austen was noticing this phenomenon's importance way back in the nineteenth century, but evidently filmmakers have not yet heard the good news.

The movie seemed promising because it was based on a reasonable book of the same name that asked women to start being realistic about their love lives, treat themselves with the respect that they deserve, and quit letting men completely drive the agenda. All in all, authors Greg Behrendt and Liz Cuccillo express a most admirable message. Yet, if anything, the movie encourages women to act in entirely the opposite way. (Spoiler alert: the next few sentences may ruin some of the movie's surprises - if, indeed, a movie that is so unimaginative and predictable can have any surprises.) While it is clear that the marriage between Ms. Connelly's and Mr. Cooper's characters is struggling (due to faults from both), she does not act for her own self-preservation until it has been made excruciatingly, cruelly clear that her husband “just isn't that into her” anymore. Similarly, Jennifer Aniston's Beth ultimately makes her wishes and goals completely subservient to Neil's (Ben Affleck), just in time for Neil to do an emotional 180 and grant her wish for marriage. If that doesn't completely disempower Jennifer Aniston and then turn Ben Affleck into more of a savior than an equal mate, I don't know what does. Yet the pinnacle of the movie's hypocrisy comes when Justin Long finally tells Ginnifer Goodwin that she was his “exception” to all of his hardhearted dating rules and that he just wants to love her. Greg and Liz probably cried at the premiere during that scene because the irony of the epic misunderstanding of their book quit being funny and just became disillusioning. Or maybe they weren't even invited to the premiere because the movie actually takes little more than a title from their work.

So after enduring “He’s Just Not That Into You,” I am waiting a while before I will see another romantic comedy. I am waiting for one that will try to reflect the world we really live in. For example, instead of always depicting women as the ones pushing for commitment, desperate not to be alone, scripts should show that men act this way sometimes, too. The current stereotypical portrayal makes men look emotionally stunted and women look pathetic. Call me a romantic, but I refuse to believe that, as movies like “He’s Just Not That Into You” show, all men are unfeeling morons and all women are just sad, lonely losers.

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HIV SUCKS

check yourself
before you wreck
yourself

**IF it's wet
wear your
RAINCOAT**



LAYTEX
feel me?

Lets get it
ON

**Fun with
Rubbers**



SHUT UP
AND
READ
THIS

Teach RELAX man

- How does HIV spread through sex? **IGNORANCE**
- ✓ HIV is spread by HIV infection in blood and sexual fluids found in the man's penis and woman's vagina.
- ✓ Sexual fluids ^{CUM} come before, during, and after orgasm.
- ✓ You can't spread HIV if there is no HIV infection. **YOU CAN STILL SPREAD OTHER STUFF!**

Who are havin'
SEX

**TAKE CHARGE
OF YOUR
DISCHARGE**

- What is safe sex? **Showing some LOVE**
- ✓ Some sexual activity carries some risk of spreading HIV.
- ✓ To reduce risk make it difficult for HIV to get into your body.

What is unsafe sex? **SCARY!** stupid



- Unsafe sex has a high risk of spreading HIV when blood or sexual fluid touches soft, moist mucous membranes.
- ✓ Mucous membranes are found inside the rectum, vagina, mouth, nose, and the tip of the penis.

AKA ASS

- ✓ Vaginal or rectal intercourse without protection is very unsafe. **TRUE**, 1 in 4 peeps with HIV don't **KNOW**
- ✓ Sexual fluids enter the body and wherever the man's penis is inserted. It can cause small tears that can make HIV infection more likely.

**MAN UP
AND
WRAP UP**

- ✓ HIV can enter the man's penis if it comes into contact with blood or vaginal fluids or has open sores.

What is safer sex? **SMART**

KNOW

every sore, every score

- ✓ Beware of your body and your partner's. Cuts, sores, and bleeding gums increase risk.
- ✓ Use a barrier to prevent contact with blood or sexual fluids.
- ✓ The most common artificial barrier for men is a condom.

- ✓ Lubricants can reduce the chance of a condom breaking.
- ✓ Be sure to use water based lubricants. Oil based lubricants like vaseline can damage condoms.

- ✓ Oral sex is a lower risk activity for HIV transmission. To be safer, try using a flavored condom. **cherry?**

**NO BABY
OIL!
BABY**

- What are safe activities?
- ✓ Abstinence is totally safe... **AND LONELY, get yeal!**
- ✓ Sex between two individuals who are not infected with HIV and are not having sex or sharing needles with anyone else.
- ✓ Fantasy, masturbation, sexy talk, hugging, kissing, and massage.

EXPRESS YOURSELF PROTECT YOURSELF

NO DOES