LifeMember
OWL NEWSLETTER

Fall Edition 2024 e-Newsletter

Welcome to the Fall Edition of the Owl News!

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
www.aacap.org

Quotes On Fall/Autumn

"I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house."

— **Nathaniel Hawthorne**

"Days decrease, / And autumn grows, autumn in everything."

— **Robert Browning**

"Fallen leaves on the ground are the golden song of immortal creativity."

— **Amit Ray**

"There was a hint of spring in her sole green eyes, something summery in her complexion, and a rich autumn ripeness in her walk."

— **Toni Morrison**

"Everyone must take time to sit and watch the leaves change."

— **Elizabeth Lawrence**

"It's the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!"

— **Winnie the Pooh**

"As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see."

— **Vincent Van Gogh**

"And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves ..."

— **Virginia Woolf**

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COVER ART:

As the snow owl gracefully finds a place to perch, it feels like the "unofficial" start of fall is here. With its soft white feathers blending into the changing landscape, the owl ushers in a season of quiet beauty, signaling nature's subtle shift toward cooler days and cozier nights.

AACAP 2024

OCT 14–19

SEATTLE, WA

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For the latest information visit
www.aacap.org/AnnualMeeting-2024

Save the Dates

Member Registration Open: **August 1, 2024**

General Registration Open: **August 8, 2024**

Early Bird Registration Deadline: **September 12, 2024**

On-Demand Content Available: **September 30–November 30, 2024**

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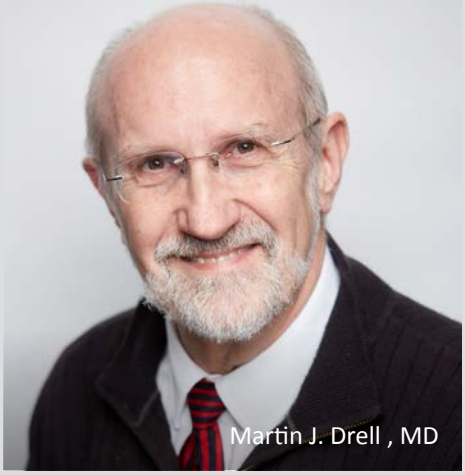
Bayard Rustin: An Unsung Civil Rights Leader

By Marty Drell, MD


Martin J. Drell , MD

Bayard Rustin is another Black Civil Rights leader that is not as well-known as he deserves to be. He was often referred to in my precious reading on the life of A. Philip Randolph who was the organizer of the March on Washington in 1963. Other articles I read said Rustin was the organizer of the same march. This uncertainty over who organized the March on Washington led me to read about his life. What unfolded was an interesting story I will now share with you.

Rustin was born on March 17, 1912, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. He was raised by his Quaker maternal grandparents, who ran a successful catering service and were active in the NAACP. W.E.B. Du Bois and other prominent leaders were guests of his grandparents as Bayard grew up. Bayard was raised to be active in the civil rights movement.

Rustin was intelligent, tall, athletic, and had an impressive tenor voice. He was also gay. He attended Wilberforce University, a historic Black University in Ohio on a music scholarship. He was very popular. Presaging his future career, he was kicked out of school after organizing a campus strike to protest the poor food on campus. He continued his education at Cheyney State Teacher's College, where he earned a degree. In 1937, he moved to Harlem where he made his way through City College of New York by singing in Black musicals and in a quartet led by a popular singer of the time, Josh White.

Rustin's Quaker beliefs endured throughout his life and influenced all the civil rights causes he was involved in from the late 30's till his death in the 70's. Like many activists at that time, he was interested in Socialism. In 1936, he joined the Young Communist League, which he left during the run-up to WWII when he felt that the Soviets abandoned Black civil rights issues. Despite having clearly rejected communism, his youthful enthusiasm drew the notice of the Federal Government and the FBI.

Overtime, Rustin turned his focus to the non-violence movement of Gandhi and A.J. Muste, a Reverend who had organized the Fellowship of Reconciliation. From the start, Muste saw Rustin's talents for organizing and speaking and sent him on the road "to teach the tenets of Muste." This allowed Rustin to see the country and to expand his skills at organizing. His tours convinced him that racial discrimination was violence, but that violence could not be used to undo violence.

These organizational skills were constantly put to use. A. Philip Randolph involved him in an earlier planned 1941 march on Washington that was aimed at pressing the Federal Government to undo discrimination in the defense industries and federal agencies. The threat of such a march factored into FDR's decision in 1941 to sign Executive Order 8802 which addressed such discriminatory activities enough that Randolph cancelled the march.

In 1942, Bayard helped form the "Congress on Racial Equality," a pacifist organization based on Gandhian principles.

Bayard Rustin: An Unsung Civil Rights Leader

In 1948, shortly after Gandhi's assassination, Bayard attended the First World Pacifist Conference and met with many of Gandhi's followers and other International Pacifist leaders.

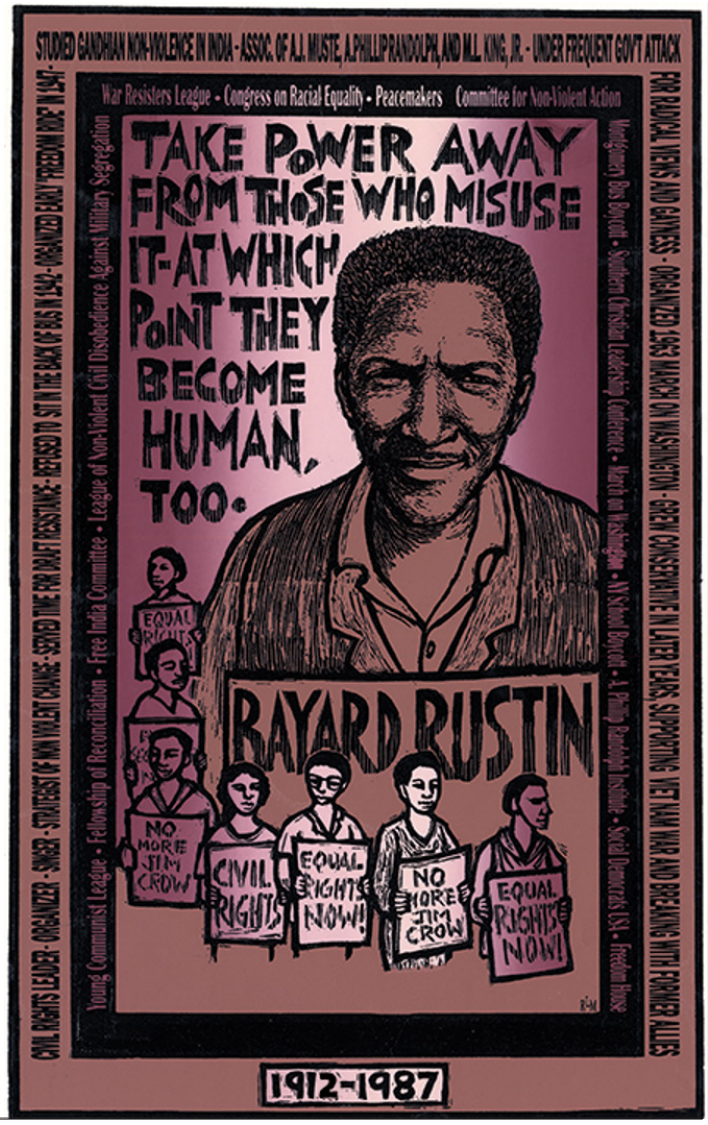
Rustin refused to register for the draft during WWII and was imprisoned for two years (1944-1946) for his convictions. Also, on principle, he opposed the interment of 120,000 Japanese during the war. These principled stands placed him, unfortunately, at odds with A. Philip Randolph. Upon release from prison, he became involved in various aspects of the civil rights movement.

In 1947, Rustin helped organize the Freedom Rides that paired seven pairs of Black and white men to ride on interstate commerce buses. Of interest, the NAACP disapproved of these tactics as being "too meek." Before Rosa Parks, he was arrested for sitting on a bus with a white man. As a consequence, he spent twenty-two days working on a "chain gang." His articles that described his arrest and work on chain gang helped end this practice in North Carolina.

Over the years, Rustin became more and more involved in international movements. Not unexpectantly, he opposed apartheid and discrimination in South Africa and helped form the South African Resistance Movement, which eventually evolved into the American Committee on Africa.

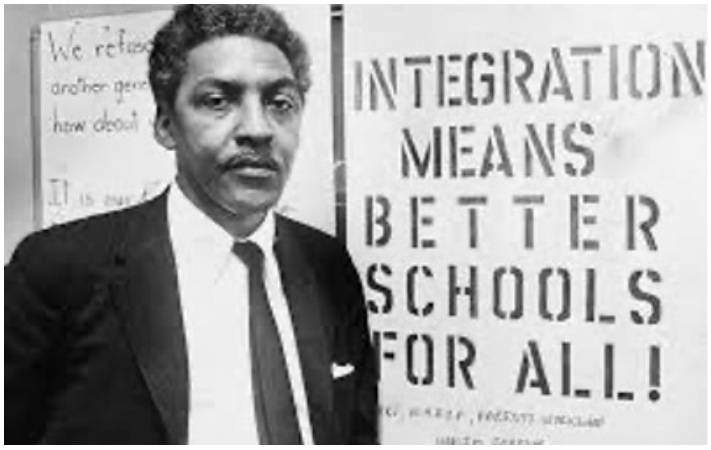
Although he never hid his same-gender attraction, which was well known to many, Rustin's leadership and effectiveness were compromised when he was arrested in Pasadena California for a "sex act" involving two men in a car. He served a sixty-day incarceration for that arrest. The "criminalization" of his being gay brought negative publicity with it. He subsequently resigned from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which harmed his relationship with his long-time trusted mentor, A.J. Muste.

Continued government surveillance of Rustin led to his being denied many key leadership positions. He was, however, always in demand as an organizer and advisor for others. He often wrote articles without his name being attached. Perhaps his most significant consultation was to Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), as he led the Montgomery, Alabama public transportation boycott. As accounted for, MLK, then only age twenty-six, was greatly influenced by Rustin's ideas concerning non-violence campaigns. This included not having armed men outside his house to protect his family. After Montgomery, MLK continued to use Rustin as an advisor and organizer. That was until 1960 when Adam Clayton Powell, a powerful Black Baptist preacher and politician in the House of Representatives from 1945-1971, threated to expose Rustin's same-gender attraction. This led to a distancing of Rustin from MLK. Several accounts mentioned that the threats included allegations of a gay affair between MLK and Rustin. Rustin, in 1964, was not chosen to head up the Southern Christian Leadership Council. This was allegedly due to his same-gender attraction, his Union leanings , and his past involvement in the Communist party. This further forced Rustin out of the spotlight of leadership, although he continued to be asked to organize key events in the Civil Rights Movement and other international movements.



Bayard Rustin: An Unsung Civil Rights Leader

After the March on Washington in 1964, Rustin helped organize the divisive city-wide boycott of New York Schools that involved an even larger crowd (400,000) than the March on Washington. The boycott pitted the Teachers Union with its white leadership and the Black community against each other.



Rustin forged alliances between the Black Labor Movement and the Democratic Party to enhance legislation that led to the passage of modern Civil Rights legislation under LBJ in 1964. His decision to align with the "establishment" put him at odds with several factions of other Civil Rights leaders who favored more confrontative and less means towards change. Many Black leaders felt that violence was needed, as both political parties were corrupt and anti-Black. They felt Rustin a "dupe" who was weak. They objected to his willingness to negotiate and compromise. One compromise that was pointed to be his failure to oppose the Vietnam War despite his lifelong pacifist principles. He did so in support of the Democrats who he was working with to expedite change. He did; however, speak out against actions taken by U.S. Troops in Vietnam when they occurred.

In 1965, Rustin became the Head of the AFL-CIO backed by the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which aimed at integrating formerly all-White Unions. He held this position until 1979. He continuously fought for the cause of justice and equality. He was involved in the 1969 Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike for better working conditions and higher wages. The slogan for the strike was the evocative: "I AM a Man." He encouraged MLK to visit Memphis on several occasions to increase the visibility of the nearly daily strikes and to show his support. MLK returned to Memphis to lead another march, which turned violent. During this strike, a sixteen-year-old was killed by police and sixty-four others were injured. After this strike, four thousand National Guardsmen were deployed to maintain the peace. More daily marches occurred. MLK returned six days later with a specific goal of leading a non-violent march. The night before, on April 3, 1968, he gave, recalling the life of Moses, his "I've been to the mountain top" speech. These were his last public words before his assassination on April 4, 1968. Shortly after, the City of Memphis agreed to the wishes of the sanitary worker.

In his last two decades, the 70's and 80's, Ruston worked expanded to international causes, in addition to national issues. He was an international election monitor like Jimmy Carter. He was very pro-Israel and was very interested in the tensions in the U.S. between Black people and Jewish people that had previously been Civil Rights allies. Similarly, he advocated for the ability of Soviet Jews to leave Russia.

At home, he advocated for gay rights. He pointed out that Black people had more laws to protect them from discrimination than did the gay people. He pronounced that gay people were the new litmus test or the barometer of social change. Due to the lack of marital equality laws at that time, he chose instead to adopt his significant other in 1982.

Rustin died on August 24, 1987, of a perforated appendix. His NY Times obituary noted that Rustin stayed true to his principles of:

1. Nonviolent tactics
2. Using Constitutional means and Democratic procedures with a respect for human personality and
3. A belief that all people are one!

Bayard Rustin Quotes:

1. "When an individual is protesting society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him."
2. "If we desire a society of peace, then we cannot achieve such a society through violence. If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society. If we desire a society that is democratic, then democracy must become a means as well as an end."
3. "The organizers and perpetuators of segregation are as much the enemy of America as any foreign invader."
4. "We are all one – and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way."
5. "Let us be enraged about injustice but let us not be destroyed by it."
6. "To be afraid is to behave as if the truth were not true."
7. "Bigotry's birthplace is the sinister back room of the mind where plots and schemes are hatched for the persecution and oppression of other human beings."
8. "The proof that one truly believes is in action."
9. "War is wrong. Conscription for war is inconsistent with freedom of conscience, which is not merely the right to believe but to act on the degree of truth that one receives, to follow a vocation which is God-inspired and God-directed."
10. "If we desire a society in which men are brothers, then we must act towards one another with brotherhood. If we can build such a society, then we would have achieved the ultimate goal of human freedom."

Rustin was praised by President Ronald Reagan for his work for civil rights and for human rights throughout the world. Rustin received the Presidential Medal of Freedom post-humorously from President Obama. In his comments that accompanied the award, President Obama said, "For decades, this great leader, often at Dr. King's side, was denied his rightful place in history because he was openly gay. No medal can change that, but today, we honor Bayard Ruston's memory by taking our place in his march toward true equality, no matter who we are or who we love.

In 2019, the Bayard Ruston Center for Social Justice was opened on his estate to honor his memory, his principles, and his actions to improve the world for all human beings. ■

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PostScript: A well-reviewed movie called "Rustin" was released in 2023. It is streaming on Netflix

Seize the Moment! Get involved!

By Ellen Sholevar, MD

Ellen Sholevar , MD

As I create this Co-Chairs column, I am recalling my days as a medical student

at the University of Washington SOM in Seattle, WA- the amazement and excitement of the first day of first year- that will never be forgotten. It was like starting on a voyage of exciting discoveries- the distinguished Dean of the School of Medicine spoke to the class and seemed omniscient. A thrilling and exciting beginning!

And, here we are, returning to Seattle for our annual meeting October 14, the frosting on the child psychiatrists cake! And now, as Life Members- more self-reflective, empathic, and wiser than earlier in life, back in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Get involved, either virtually or in person!

There are a lot of wonderful entrees, just waiting for you. Several are sponsored by our Life Members Committee:

- On Tuesday afternoon 4:45-6:15pm- "Medical Students, Residents, and Fellows Meet Life Member Mentors. This event with co-presenters Margery Johnson, Geri Fox, Aria Vitale, Peter Park, and me. We had two highly successful virtual mentor events since the last annual meeting. The Medical Students and Residents Committee co-sponsored and we had the opportunity to connect with trainees from all over the US. Their excitement and interest in our field was infectious and it was a learning experience both ways for Mentors and Mentees. If you are interested in being a Mentor-either in person next year or at one of the two virtual mentoring sessions during the year, you can indicate interest by signing up on the Members section of the AACAP web site. We would be delighted to have you, and you would have the opportunity to inform trainees what a career in child/adolescent psychiatry can be from your own experience
- On Thursday afternoon, 2:30-4:30pm, Marilyn Benoit chairs the Life Members Wisdom Clinical Perspective: Childhoods and Societies: Clinical Pearls From the Lives of Four Internationally Famous Individuals. Presenters include Rao Gogineni presenting on Mother Teresa; Cheryl AL-Mateen presenting on Nelson Mandela; Eugenio Rothe on Albert Schweitzer; and Peter Cohen on Elie Wiesel. If you have ideas for presentations at the annual meeting, let us know. Also, think about writing for the Owl Newsletter- articles are always appreciated!
- Friday morning from 9:00am-10:30 is the Life Members Committee meeting chaired by Marilyn Benoit and me. You are welcome to attend, share your ideas, thoughts, and let us know if you would like to be a future committee member! There is a new process for indicating interest in joining an AACAP Committee with the intent to engage the membership widely. Watch for the next window of opportunity and consider signing up for the Life Members Committee.
- And the Life Members Luncheon on Friday from 12:45pm to 2:30pm where you can enjoy the company of other Life Member friends and colleagues while also mentoring

our young award winners. Tickets are available when you register. In the past, we had a dinner meeting Thursday evening but as of this year, we are inaugurating the tradition of a luncheon instead.

Other highlights of the meeting that you won't want to miss include:

- Plenary sessions Tuesday including Presidential Interview with President Tami Benton, an inspiring leader, and a presentation on the impact of Climate Change.
- Plenary sessions Wednesday "Rethinking Mental Health in Foster Care" and the always wonderful Noshpitz Cline History Lecture. I will never forget the year we heard from survivors and family members of survivors of the Holocaust, and all sang together "Ode to Joy."
- Thursday Plenaries include AACAP Town Meeting with Drs. Benton & Oatis and the Lawrence Stone MD Plenary on Mental Health and the Juvenile Justice System.
- Wednesday evening Welcome Reception from 6:00-7:30pm.

As Life Members, we are "Building Bridges: Connecting Generations in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Each one of you "possesses a wealth of experience and wisdom" that can be used to nurture the next generation of child and adolescent psychiatrists through:

- Mentorship: Provide guidance and support to medical students and residents.
- Programming: Share career insights and wisdom during our Annual Meeting programs.
- Community Building: Foster community and connection among Life Members.
- Fundraising: Contribute to exposing future psychiatrists to AACAP's Annual Meeting.

There is no shortage of challenges for the mental health of children and adolescents in the US and world.

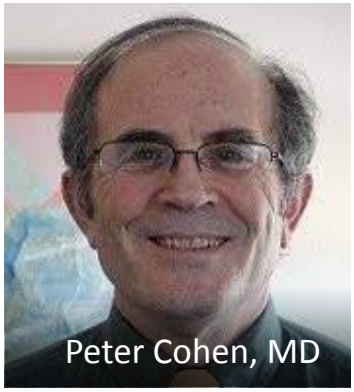
- US: " ADHD, anxiety problems, behavior problems, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in US children. Estimates for ever having a diagnosis among children aged 3-17 years, in 2016-19, are given below.
  - o ADHD 9.8% (approximately 6.0 million)2
  - o Anxiety 9.4% (approximately 5.8 million)2
  - o ehavior problems 8.9% (approximately 5.5 million)2
  - o Depression 4.4% (approximately 2.7 million) 2" (CDC)
- World: "Mental health conditions, such as childhood epilepsy, developmental disabilities, depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders, are major causes of illness and disability among young people. Worldwide, 10% of children and adolescents experience a mental disorder, but the majority of them do not seek help or receive care. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15–19-year-olds. The consequences of not addressing mental health and psychosocial development for children and adolescents extend to adulthood and limit opportunities for leading fulfilling lives." (World Health Organization)

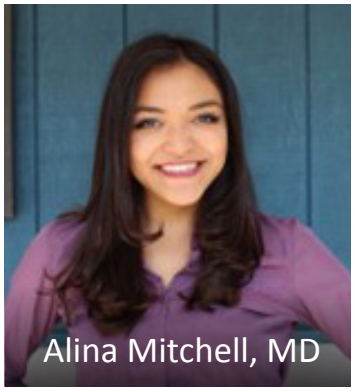
There is no shortage of challenges. We need a recipe for success that will take the combined efforts of all of us. We look forward to working together and seeing many of you in Seattle to achieve our goals and address our challenges.

Seize the moment! Get Involved!■

A Bronx Tale (1993)

By Peter Cohen, MD and Alina Mitchell, MD





Forward by Peter Cohen MD:

Who knows if George Bernard Shaw declared that …

"Youth is the most beautiful thing in the world — 'tis a pity it's wasted on the young!"

This mid-course septuagenarian counters with the following unattributed adage—"You are as young as you feel"—to which I must add "Sure, as long as my cervicalgia and lumbago don't do me in."

Until some dreaded day of collapse, I contend that the mentoring our Owls offer to younger souls is salve for our bodies and soul. Call it a magical blend of youthful curiosity, ambition, and aged experience.

A year ago, I met Alina Mitchell MD at a Life-Member mentorship event. She was about to begin her psychiatric residency. Though we were born more than four decades apart, raised in distinctly different cultures and subjected to very different life circumstances, the one thing we shared in common was a love for "the movies." We revered it as an essential art form, an instructional guide to human drama and comedy, as well as a shared entertainment, frequently accompanied by a box of popcorn and a tall cup of soda.

And in that light, this movie review intends to be the first of an ongoing series of correspondences between a retired psychiatrist and a bright up-and-coming trainee.

A Bronx Tale (1993)

"A Bronx Tale" doubles, if not triples back on itself. Its tension-filled coming-of-age slice-of-life story reflects the strengths and conflicts of its characters as well as its creators.

The film opens on 9-year-old Calogero who sits on his apartment front stoop in his solidly Italian neighborhood in the Bronx. In that summer of 1960, he becomes mesmerized by the unfolding non-stop action down the block where "local boss" Sonny holds court in front of the Chez Bippy bar.

Then in full daylight, the boy witnesses the mobster gun down a man for no apparent reason. Despite police pressure but with the support of his parents, he adamantly refuses to testify against the man. Relieved and intrigued, Sonny invites the lad into his circle. He also offers the father a job paying way better than driving a bus, in exchange for his silence. Lorenzo turns down without rancor what he privately views as a blood-money scheme, though he still warns the boss to keep his hands off his son.

Flash forward eight years later. Neither teenager Calogero ("call me C'") nor Sonny complied with father Lorenzo's demand. Finding himself more and more swept into the gangster's all-consuming gravity, C still attempts to steer between these two father figures, these two models of manhood. Though feuding, each man is committed by a different perspective to protect and instruct the boy. Will it be the emotions of love or fear win out and the influence of father or Sonny ultimately govern C's path into adulthood?

Adding to the boy's stress is his dealing with the race-baiting behavior of his boyhood friends, as he's involved in a secretive romance with Jane, a stunning and savvy high school classmate from the nearby Black neighborhood. With that mix of circumstances, what would transpire for Calogero during that summer of '68 could lead to hope or tragedy for himself, his family and Sonny.

Why The Movie "Works"

Alina: By 1993, De Niro had established himself as America's favorite crime lord. Here, he turns the audience's expectations on their head, playing against type. He is the omniscient amalgamation of a man worn out by the kingpin life, instead embracing humility and honesty as true testaments of masculinity.

Meanwhile, Palminteri portrays what he might have become had he accepted fear as his weapon of defense. At one point in the film, his character describes the relationship with his underlings: "Fear keeps them loyal… The trick is not to be hated. That's why I treat my men good but not too good. I give them too much then they don't need me. I give them just enough where they need me but don't hate me." As a result, his bumbling mafia lackeys may laugh and playfully punch each other, but they also stand shamelessly at the corner to await the snap of his fingers. But Chazz, like his character, might have chosen to live instead in doubt that the fear and violence he deployed might someday swing right back at him.

Peter: Another important ingredient of "A Bronx Tale" is its ability to pull in a wider audience. It does this by trusting in three elements of effective drama: storytelling, plot development and dialogue. It's a film full of passionate emotions and humor bolstered by expert pacing and timing in the verbal exchanges between characters.

It also refuses to resort to implausible motivations and resolutions. Nor does it wallop the audience on the head with moralization.

Finally, it resonates with what our most effective psychiatric teachers and mentors emphasize: the first obligation in helping a patient and family is to listen, observe, empathize, and move deftly between macro- and micro-perspectives without imposing one's morals and personal opinions. This stance permits respect to the ability of the patient and family make up its own mind about how to proceed with its presenting problems.

It appears that the finished film and its creative process reflected each other. How did that happen?

Alina: Start with the fact that Palminteri's first name was Calogero. As a 9-year-old living in the Belmont section of the Bronx he witnessed the murder of a mobster in front of his apartment.

Peter: Here's the incident that pushed him into writing this semi-autographical piece. By 1988, he's a struggling actor in his early 30's. Still needing to earn enough bucks on the side to survive, he becomes a bouncer and doorman at a NY nightclub. At a party that honors the legendary agent "Swifty" Lazar, Chazz doesn't recognize the fellow at the door. When he innocently asks for his credentials, the powerbroker has him immediately fired.

The now completely out-of-work actor has all the time to write the play. To his credit, his one-man production draws rave reviews and moves up the theatrical ladder of exposure. Two years later, De Niro sees the production on Broadway and recognizes its potential as a film.

Alina: I'll take it from here. He plucks Palminteri with only $200 to his name to write the screenplay and co-star as the mobster.

Peter: De Niro also insists that Chazz retain ownership of his vision, and he'll protect the piece by directing it. To heighten the risk, it was De Niro's first time behind a camera. Though highly rated, the movie never makes a profit. But it launches Palminteri's film and stage career, and years later, it's turned into a successful Broadway musical.

In essence, the fostering of this "project" reflects two major themes of the drama:

- Each one of us needs the right kind of mentor to guide us towards our destiny
- Based upon a line from the movie, "The saddest thing in life is wasted talent"

Consistent with the second theme is what happened to 17-year-old Lillo Brancato, who was picked to play the older Calogero. During the filming, he starts abusing substances. Despite interventions by De Niro and Palminteri, his disease worsens. In 2005 he begins serving eight years in prison for his role in a drug-related burglary in which his accomplice had murdered an NYPD officer. The good news is that Mr. Brancato is now married and substance free-for over eight years. He works in city public relations, continues to act in films, and counsels people in substance use recovery.

Alina: The making of this film also mirrors the movie in showing how only one or two significant people will influence the direction of your life, but ultimately, the path you choose is left to you.

Peter: A reality I think we all must face very intensely, especially early in our careers. Or as the Cowardly Lion says in "The Wizard of Oz": "Read what my medal says: "Courage". Ain't it the truth? Ain't it the truth?"

Why "A Bronx Tale" is Worth Watching with Colleagues and Professors

Alina: If only to discuss the dynamic of fear experienced in the lives of children that plays itself out in violence. And to think about how we might intervene.

If the world at large has taught me anything in my somewhat limited years, it's that the enemy of love is not hate, but fear. The anger or rage that people hold against each other often stems from the threats they experience to their safety and identity. In other words, behind the urge to hate someone or something is a fear they can't face up to.

Children who grew up amongst trauma and the anxiety and fear it elicits might act out violence. This reaction could stem from a defense mechanism, like identification with the aggressor, or from the only way they've learned how to make themselves heard.

Take for example a young boy whose parents and peers tell him to act tough in the face of whatever seems "different from the norm" and never show fear. He might, for example, view same-gender attraction as a threat to his own security and masculinity and become a bully. Another example is a community that feels persecuted for its identity and values—for just being who they are. Its inhabitants might then respond with a collective sense of hostility and resort to violence when an outside group threatens to occupy their limited space—their neighborhood.

A Bronx Tale shows how easy it is to give into that fear when it seems to be the only way to move up in a dog-eat-dog world, or the only choice for survival. What is harder is to say to oneself is the word "enough." Instead of resorting to attack and counterattack, we hold fast to a sense of security in our goodness, ward off fear and violence, and find the strength each day to resist succumbing to those temptations.
Our youth are vulnerable to the stress brought on by fear. They may constantly face scrutiny on social media, complex social politics in their schools, and tenuous relationships at home. I see our role as guiding them to find love and pride in themselves as they are. If they can identify and carry those qualities through their lives, they can then decide how to respond in a measured way to what in the future might get taken away from them.

Peter: The film highlights the intricate details of how boys come of age, even though the action takes place between '60 and '68, and without the intrusion of pocket-size smart phones and social media.

The stages and dynamics of adolescent development we see on the screen are universal: identity formation; early romantic intimacy; increased abstraction of thought alongside more sophisticated problem solving, emotional and behavioral expressiveness; the influence of spirituality, academic and vocational aspirations; and the increased reliance on peer affiliation. A boy must also come to terms with his adult models, within and without the family, then react with total, partial or complete rejection or embracement.

Where You Can Stream This Film

On AMC+ or Rent/Buy on Prime Video. ■

Passing the Baton

By Balkozar Adam, MD

Balkozar Adam, MD

I recently had the honor of joining the AACAP Life Members committee. In addition to feeling grateful for the opportunity to support the next generation of child and adolescent psychiatrists, I appreciated the opportunity to see my esteemed colleagues in different stages of their lives. Some are still practicing, and some are retired. I was surprised to learn that some are even busier in retirement than they were as full-time psychiatrists. They remain connected to psychiatry, writing and presenting on important issues in our field, while also making plans for future travel and new adventures. They seemed to be enjoying this next chapter in their lives. This sparked a thought I have been considering for a while now. Maybe it is time for me to join the ranks of the retired.

I admit that it's not an easy consideration. I've been working in psychiatry for four decades, and I love it. I've treated young children who went on to graduate high school and enter adulthood happy and well-adjusted. I've witnessed patients overcome what they thought was impossible. I've cried. I've laughed. I've learned. We're lucky that our chosen profession isn't as physically demanding as a lot of other jobs. It has enabled many of us to continue working beyond the typical retirement age. It's extremely rewarding to do what we do, and there's comfort in the familiar. I don't know what it will be like to wake up one morning and not power up my laptop and spend the day meeting with patients.

But part of nurturing the next generation of child psychiatrists is passing the baton.

We need to share the wisdom we have gained while making way for new leaders and teachers. I hope to tell them how much meaning and joy this work can bring, as long as we are here to serve the patients and their families first. I'll explain how what we do can change lives and laws. Of course, I'll share my war stories, too. I'll recount what it was like to deal with racism and discrimination. And I'll impress upon them the severe shortage our profession faces, and the need to recruit more child psychiatrists, particularly those who represent a diverse spectrum of identities.

I will also learn from them. Since I was a little girl, I devoured knowledge. As an adult, I put what I learned into action. That desire to learn and do still burns within me. I want to hear about the latest research they published and discuss new approaches they've adopted. My knees may be slowing down, but my determination isn't.

That's why I think that when I do retire, I'll never be able to truly walk away.

Don't get me wrong. I'm looking forward to having more time to attend my grandson's soccer games and go on trips that my friends and I have been talking about for years. I hope to finally start that exercise routine I've been meaning to get around to. I'll host more people for dinner and take up new hobbies. My daughter tells me knitting is both fun and satisfying.

Along with that, I want to remain active in our psychiatric organizations — AACAP, APA, ROCAP and my local APA chapter. Child psychiatry will always have a special place in my heart. My eyes well with tears when I think about all the patients I've treated, the families I've counseled, and the dear colleagues I've befriended. I want to continue writing and raising awareness about the issues that face the children and families who need us, from children of war to children trying to heal from inter-generational trauma, from Arab Americans to those from other cultures, races and religions, from refugees to migrants.

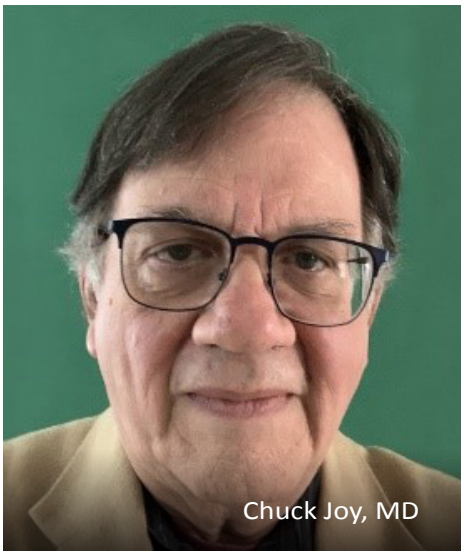
I've always cherished mentoring, and I plan to continue as long as I have something to give. Thankfully, mentorship is one of our key roles on the AACAP Life Members committee, as is programming for our annual meeting. I can't remember the last time I missed an annual meeting. They're the perfect place to learn and catch up with new and old friends, which brings me to another one of the committee's goals — fostering community and connection.

If you see me at the next AACAP meeting, please stop me and say hello.

I'd love to meet you and hear about what drew you to child psychiatry. If you're interested, I may just be able to tell you about life after retirement. ■

Great Hotels

By Chuck Joy, MD



In looking ahead to attending the Annual Meeting, I recognize one of the fondest perks of my whole career as a child psychiatrist, which is the yearly opportunity to be a guest at a great hotel. I'm already booked in Seattle.

My love for hotels says a lot about me.

I would love to live in a hotel. Instead, I live in a single-family home but who knows what the future holds. One of the surprises ahead for Owls like me is how congregate can the living get? Nursing home? Senior Living? My parents nurtured my love for great hotels, introducing them to me at a young age. And at the Annual Meeting among so many colleagues, the hotel feels like a temporary, quite luxurious, dorm.

Great hotels are great at any time but at the Annual Meeting our mission wraps its glow around the great hotel, that mission the enhancement of our understanding and practice of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, our branch of the healing arts and sciences dedicated to the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive benefit of children and families, a worthy pursuit and a big part of our identities. How exciting to enact that identity by participating in the Annual Meeting of our wonderful Academy! What better reason to stay in a great hotel?

Immediately upon arrival, I like to check in at that hotel, find my room, and drop my bag. I'm always pleased if there's a bedside radio. It's important the room be equipped with a coffeemaker for first thing in the morning, I find the Annual Meeting program so compelling I'm likely not to be back to the room until late at night. (I express my love for any hotel mostly in the waking and sleeping.) I care about coffee, and I like a café in the lobby or nearby for stops throughout the day. I might pull back a curtain to assess the view from the room then I take right off to find the meeting registration.

I love to take the hardcopy book with the program essentials back to the lobby bar in the great hotel where I can page through it in detail, making notes, drafting my personal schedule, while settling into being present. Maybe then a walk around the neighborhood (counts as exercise), followed by dinner in a restaurant in the hotel. That's my pattern when visiting any city: first night, eat at the hotel, all the rest of the nights, eat off grounds around the neighborhood, if there's even one evening left unoccupied by the program and related events including dinners and receptions in fabulous locations.

That neighborhood, the vigorous city, in this case Seattle, makes a glamorous backdrop. I find the program so compelling it feels like cutting class to step away. Last time in Seattle I walked to the Pike Place Market (four times), rode the Monorail (still the future), and visited the original Starbucks (you know, coffee). I am grateful to the Academy for the Annual Meeting and the yearly opportunity to visit a great hotel. ■

American Whitelash: A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress

Book by Wesley Lowery

Review By Marty Drell, MD

Wesley Lowery (born 1990) is a 33-year-old African American journalist who works for the Washington Post and CBS News. He was the lead journalist on the Post's "Fatal Violence Project," that attempted to collect data on police shootings in the United States. Their reporting of 990 police shootings in 2015 led to better national reporting of statistics on this phenomenon and a Politzer Prize in 2016. His reporting also led to further attempts to make sense out of the social struggles in America. His previous book in 2016 was titled: They Can't Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore, and a New Era in America's Racial Justice Movement. It explores the roots of these struggles and the forces that led to the Black Lives Matter movement. The 2023 best-selling book: American Whitelash builds on his precious work and focuses on violence subsequent to President Obama's election as America's first Black president, which, contrary to many people's hopes, did not open up an era of racial harmony. Instead, it led to a period of worsening racial tension due, in part, to a snapback ,"rubber band" effect, which he dubs "whitelash." This response seemed to follow Newton's 3rd law that says, "for each and every action in nature, there is an equal and opposite reaction," with the proviso that "anxiety" in racial issues often makes the reaction more than equal with disproportionate responses that often lead to a vicious cycle of escalating violence.

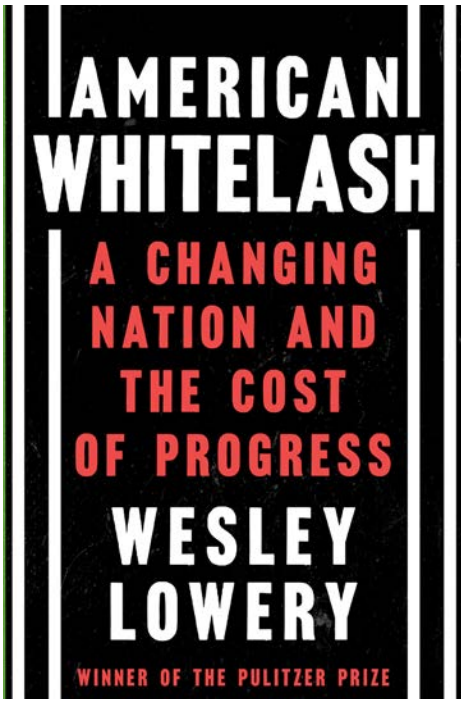
He proposes that the Obama Presidency exacerbated pre-existing worries in many whites, who felt that "America is changing ever so quickly for the worse," due to "privileges" like affirmative action initiatives that disproportionately benefit African Americans and other "culture changing" legislation such as the legalization of "same sex marriage." The influx of immigrants and refugees was also considered to be a contributing factor. Lowery comments that despite the United States being a majority white nation, many whites were afraid that the rights given to these "others" were endangering their own rights in what they take as a "zero-sum formulation." He reports on a poll that said 55% of whites, despite their "white privilege", were feeling they were being racially discriminated against. He continues to add that this anxiety was based on job insecurity,

Martin J. Drell, MD

layoffs, foreign trade that shipped jobs overseas, economic downturns, technology, and inflation. The totality of these and other variables accentuated an "us vs them (the others)" mentality that was, in turn, enflamed and reinforced by those to the extreme right on the political spectrum who saw these events as a way to "expand their base." He adds that the use of social media has intensified matters and led, in part, to the Trump Presidency, which, in turn, triggered another reaction that drove the left further left with a resultant revitalization of the civil rights movement that involved young people more than ever. He feels that these cycles have continued and intensified the politicalization and polarization with less and less compromise and a further escalation of violence.
This formulation is certainly not new and is set forth from different perspectives in other books such as: White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide by Carol Anderson (2016), White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo (2018), and The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America. Despite this, Lowery effectively makes his case in very cogent ways through his reporting on the impact of Obama's election and 6 incidents in the decade after this election.

Unlike many of these previous books, his choice of cases adds diversity to the argument as he does not focus just on African Americans. What is happening in America and in many other parts of the world is the expansion of the sense of who are these "others."

American Whitelash: A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress



His cases include:

1. The case of the murder of Marcelo Luciano, an Ecuadorian immigrant (2008)
2. A mass shooting at a Sikh/Islamic center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (2016)
3. The antisemitic attack on the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City in Overland Park, Kansas, in which ironically none of the 3 victims were Jewish.
4. The death of Oscar Grant which happened 3 weeks before Obama's Inauguration and is memorialized on the 2013 movie Fruitvale Station that seemed to be the first of many deaths (Eric Garner, Michael Baron, Sandra Blend, Philando Castile, Breanna Taylor, and George Floyd) that cumulated in a re-energized civil rights protest movement that continues to this day.
5. The events that led to and sustained the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, that are detailed in Lowery's previous book in 2015.
6. The events that led up to and culminated in 2017 with the death of Heather Heyer who was run over as she was counter protesting at a Unite the Right Rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Lowery gives details of what happened during these tragedies. Especially appreciated were his detailed histories that preceded these events. All examples are built upon prior events that can be tracked with precision. These histories predate the Obama presidency and have been present throughout our country's history, since its inception. To name but a few, think Tim McVeigh and the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building (known as the Oklahoma City Bombing), Ruby Ridge (1992), the standoff between Randy Weaver and the US Marshal's Service, the 1940s Zoot Suit Riots against Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, and the riots in South Chicago (1909) that led to 38 deaths (23 black and 15 white) secondary to the Great Migration of Blacks from the South. History tends to repeat itself over time.
Lowery refers to Gordon Alport's ground-breaking 1954 book on prejudice as a guide to understanding what is happening. The book brilliantly describes how disenchanted people can be "radicalized" through the same processes that have helped radicalize disenchanted militants throughout the world. The processes are just as pertinent for al-Qaeda and other militant organizations. The book cogently explores the impact of prejudice on white supremacist groups, neo nazis, skin heads, the KKK, the Aryan Nation, paramilitary groups, etc.

Lowery, interestingly enough, points out that 911 focused the US on the War on Terror and focused resources on externalized "others" outside the US. He said that this plus our focus on First Amendment Rights and other factors de-emphasized looking at divisive issues in the US that have worsened over the years since 911. With the waning of the perceived immediate danger of terrorism, Lowery feels that we now need to address internal terrorism. His detailing of this homegrown terrorism is spot on and makes for interesting reading.

The book does not deal specifically with what we as a nation can do. That is harder to report on and is perhaps another Book. . He instead ends his book "Whitelash" with the following, none-too-optimistic paragraph:
"… white fears may be the defining force of our time, the undercurrent beneath the thrashing of our society, politics, and culture. And as long as there are elements within our mainstream politics and media willing to cynically play to those fears – unwilling to call racism and bigotry by their rightful names – we can expect additional bursts of white racial violence, the horrific calling card of our era of American Whitelash." (p. 237) ■

AACAP Applauds New Federal Regulations to Strengthen Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity

Washington, DC, September 10, 2024 – AACAP applauds the new mental health parity regulations released by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury. These regulations will hold payors accountable for complying with mental health parity requirements and expand access to mental health care. AACAP has long advocated for stronger mental health parity laws, and today's final rule is a significant step toward achieving true parity.

Most of the regulations will take effect on January 1, 2025, ensuring psychiatrists are appropriately recruited into networks and reimbursed, including for out-of-network care. The rule will ban more restrictive utilization management practices, like prior authorization, if not equally applied to comparable physical health services.

The recent RTI International report highlighted significant disparities in access to in-network mental health care, showing that psychiatrists are reimbursed 19% less than physician assistants and 8.2% less than nurse practitioners, on average. For patients 18 years old or younger, psychiatrists are reimbursed 9% less than primary care physicians and 22% less than medical/surgical specialists. The data shows that better mental health parity compliance is long overdue. The final rule is intended to reduce mortality and increase use of mental health and substance use disorder services, resulting in better health outcomes. Sixteen years after mental health parity became law, patients will finally gain protection from unlawful parity violations. Read AACAP's comments on the 2023 proposed parity regulation here and here.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry promotes the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through advocacy, education, and research. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are the leading physician authority on children's mental health. www.aacap.org. ■

AACAP Urges Administration to Safeguard Youth Access to Mental Health Care via Telemedicine

On December 31, 2024, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will end the COVID-era flexibility on electronic prescribing of controlled substances. The public has yet to see the long-awaited DEA regulations that would implement a special registration telemedicine authority. If the current telehealth flexibility expires in the next four months, there will not be sufficient time for physicians and patients across the country to significantly adjust care plans without compromising continuity of care.

AACAP urges the Administration to safeguard youth access to mental health care via telemedicine and ensure that no new DEA regulation restricts access to child and adolescent mental health care.

The ongoing stimulant shortage already impedes patient access to critical medications needed to keep children in school, and no patient or their family should face additional barriers in accessing necessary stimulant medications or any other Schedule II or III medications approved for the treatment of mental health or substance use disorders.

AACAP provided feedback to the DEA on its 2023 proposed rule regarding online prescribing via telehealth without an initial in-person visit and participated in the DEA's stakeholder listening session on this issue. It is our hope that the Administration fully acknowledges that during a national children's mental health crisis, limiting access to telepsychiatry—a modality that has become essential for child and adolescent psychiatrists to reach underserved patient populations—would run counter to the Unity Agenda goal of strengthening our nation's mental health system.

AACAP calls on the Administration to extend the current DEA regulations governing the prescribing of controlled substances via telehealth without an initial in-person visit for an additional two years, starting January 1, 2025.

Read AACAP's letters to the White House, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate requesting an extension to current DEA telehealth prescribing flexibilities.

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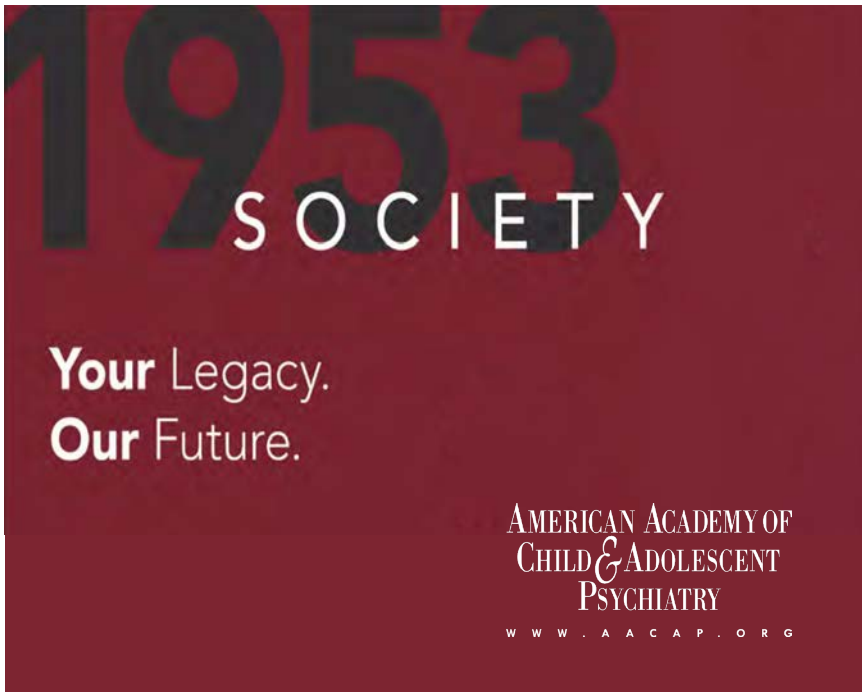

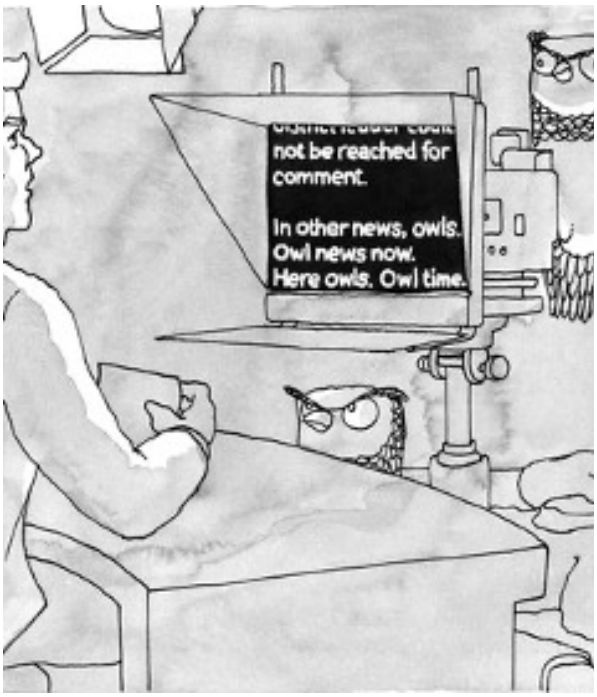

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