

## **Libertarianism: Yet More Individualism in Politics**

(excerpts from the book “Persuaded By Reason and the Rebirth of American Individualism” by Jeff Rigenbach)

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..... Meanwhile, political events were taking place that would steer Joan ever more surely back into direct political involvement of a kind she hadn't experienced for nearly a decade – since the Goldwater campaign of 1964. In 1971, a handful of disgruntled Goldwater Republicans and now rootless students of Objectivism (the latter cast adrift by the implosion of NBI) had gathered in Denver and founded a new political party, the Libertarian Party (LP). A year later the LP nominated a University of Southern California philosophy professor, John Hospers, and an Oregon broadcaster, Theodora “Tonie” Nathan, as its presidential ticket. A renegade Nixon elector from Virginia, Roger MacBride (he was, in fact, treasurer of the Virginia Republican Party at the time) cast his vote in the Electoral College that year for Hospers and Nathan. All this made Joan sit up and take notice – and begin questioning her previous commitment to the Republican Party as the best hope for change in the American political scene.

Between the many hours she'd spent of late immersed in the world of 19<sup>th</sup> Century radical political activism among the abolitionists and the even more recent hours she'd devoted to consciousness raising, Joan soon found herself in the thick of this campaign. And why wouldn't she, given her background? What Objectivist or other libertarian could object to the wording of the proposed state ERA? “All people are born free and equal,” it read, “and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; that of acquiring, possessing and protecting property; in fine, that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness. Equality under the law shall not be denied or

abridged because of sex, race, color, creed or national origin.”<sup>1</sup> As Joan argued years later in her interview with Duncan Scott, this wording was “wonderful – what was billed as an Equal Rights Amendment was a statement of rights.” The language was just as “written by John Adams, with just a little amendment substituting ‘people’ for ‘men.’” And not only did the proposed amendment specify that “all people have rights,” it also stated that “among these are life, liberty and the acquisition and maintenance of property, which is better than the Declaration of Independence.” Again, what libertarian would not rush to the defense of such an amendment? So Joan set about making sure that the Massachusetts Libertarian Party became one of those independent organizations backing the proposed state ERA. “I got involved in the libertarian movement,” she told Duncan Scott in 2004, “through trying to get the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts to support” the proposed state ERA.<sup>2</sup>

Her effort both succeeded and failed. Lee Nason, the co-founder of the Massachusetts Libertarian Party, recalls that though “[w]e all agreed with her completely (I don't remember any dissent at all)...there was no formal endorsement or press release – we were pretty small and didn't really have any mechanisms in place. I don't remember a formal vote but there may have been one of the executive committee at the time.”<sup>3</sup> And after that, one thing just led to another. Joan joined the party. She made friends. She found that many of the party members knew her name and work, that many of them were students of Objectivism. She impressed just about everyone with the depth of her knowledge, with her verbal facility, and with her gift for diplomacy – her ability to moderate differences, find common ground, and work with people toward mutual goals despite serious disagreements. It wasn't long before she was elected by her fellow

Massachusetts party members to fill a seat on the Platform Committee at the 1977 national Libertarian Party convention in San Francisco.

## II

Meanwhile, she had received an *extremely* interesting telephone call from an *extremely* interesting young man, one Roy A. Childs, Jr., twenty-eight years old, who was taking over the editorship of a small publication called *Libertarian Review*, with the assignment of turning it into a monthly magazine of issues, events, and ideas – a sort of *National Review* or *The Nation* or *The New Republic*, only monthly (rather than weekly or fortnightly), and from a libertarian perspective. To be more exact, Childs was *re-taking* the editorship, which had once been his, but had long belonged to another – an interloper from the world of science fiction who ended his own career many years later as a “Ufologist” – that is, a specialist in reports of unidentified flying objects. In Childs’s own mind, at least, his re-assumption of the editorship of *Libertarian Review* was altogether in the spirit of a Restoration.

*Libertarian Review* had been established five years earlier, in 1972, when Childs was twenty-three, by Robert Kephart, the publisher of *Human Events*, a conservative anti-communist weekly headquartered in Washington, D.C. Kephart had thought himself a conservative but had been convinced by a series of conversations with Childs that he was in fact something else – a libertarian. Childs had sketched for Kephart his grand vision of a growing, prospering libertarian movement, led by a crusading, muckraking magazine, *Libertarian Review*, and Kephart had been sold – up to a point. He allowed Childs to talk him into buying the stock and the mailing list from the SIL Book Service, an attempt by the Society for Individual Liberty (SIL), a libertarian organization founded

in 1969 and headquartered in suburban Washington, to cash in on the same idea that had proved so profitable for NBI and Academic Associates. He allowed Childs to talk him into trademarking the name *Libertarian Review*. But he balked at the idea of launching a full scale magazine just yet. Instead he beefed up the old *SIL Book Review*, adding pages and new reviewers, and changing the publication's name to *Books for Libertarians*.

Kephart reasoned that if *Books for Libertarians* grew and prospered, then, after a few years, it could be expanded further. He had in mind going to a tabloid format reminiscent of the *New York Review of Books (NYRB)*, trotting out the *Libertarian Review* name he was holding in reserve, and ending up with a libertarian version of the *NYRB*. This was a little different from Childs's vision, but it was something Childs could live with very easily. He enjoyed the sorts of long review-essays the *NYRB* specialized in, and he looked forward to writing such pieces himself. Childs settled in as editor of *Books for Libertarians* and settled down to the work that brought him early fame in the libertarian movement – the work of introducing the former students of Objectivism who made up the lion's share of the emerging libertarian movement to the works of Murray N. Rothbard.

Rothbard (1926-1995) was nominally an economist. He held a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia and taught economics at Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn (now the school of engineering and applied sciences of New York University), the very same school where, right down the hall, Leonard Peikoff taught philosophy. Rothbard had published a massive treatise on economics, *Man, Economy, and State*, and had written widely in the field. But the fact is that he was as much at home in history or political philosophy as he was in economics. And he offered a version of libertarianism

that drew on his deep knowledge of all three disciplines. Rothbard's libertarianism was very similar to Rand's except that he was willing to pursue the logic of premises like hers wherever they led him. Where Rand wanted a tiny, severely limited, night watchman State, Rothbard had decided that the free market could provide all the services ordinarily supplied by government, and do it more efficiently, to boot. Government, he concluded, was unnecessary and should be abolished.

Rothbard had read *Atlas Shrugged* in 1957 and had sent Rand an admiring and congratulatory letter about the experience. She had responded by inviting him to an evening at her apartment with some members of her Inner Circle – an experience mercilessly lampooned in Rothbard's satirical play *Mozart Was a Red*.<sup>4</sup> The play's protagonist, Keith Hackley, has little reason ever to pay a return visit to the home of Carson Sand, imperious author of the bestselling novel *The Brow of Zeus*. He has no reason at all to submit himself ever again to the company of Carson Sand's acolytes, Jonathan and Greta.

But Rothbard did return. In the first place, he had met Rand before; the evening after the publication of *Atlas Shrugged* was not their first encounter. So he had known what he was getting himself into before he ever wrote that fan letter. He had first met Rand in the early 1950s, not long after she had moved back to New York from Los Angeles, while she was writing *Atlas Shrugged*. Like her, he had acquired a coterie of younger students, followers, and supporters. He had taken these acolytes with him to at least a couple of gatherings at Rand's apartment in the years immediately preceding the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*. Each time she had what he frankly called "a depressing effect" on him. Yet, for some years, at odd intervals, he kept coming back.<sup>5</sup>

One reason was probably Rand’s undeniable power as a spokesperson for political individualism – libertarianism. When *Atlas Shrugged* “shot to the top of the best-seller lists,” Justin Raimondo writes, Rothbard had to sit up and take notice. This was a “dramatic breakthrough for the mass dissemination of libertarian ideas” – “a book, albeit a novel, explicitly advocating laissez-faire capitalism and the centrality of private property as the basic organizing principle of a free society.” How could he not feel “sympathetic and even enthusiastic about the success of [such a] book”? Surely it didn’t matter that, personally, he found its author something of a drag.<sup>6</sup>

The problem was that it did matter, and profoundly. The new mass following Rand was attracting for libertarian ideas was, Rothbard felt, “generally ill-read and in need of education in several key areas,” and the thought of playing an important role in educating these people was genuinely appealing to him. But increasingly the idea of spending “virtually every waking moment with the most rational people in all of New York City, if not the world” seemed like, well, a drag. “[W]hat if,” Rothbard was forced to ask himself, “you didn’t like, even couldn’t stand, these people?”<sup>7</sup> One or two members of Rothbard’s circle (Robert Hessen and the economist George Reisman, for example) went over to Rand; the others, like Murray, just gradually dropped out of the Objectivist scene. It would take the rising *Wunderkind* Roy A. Childs, Jr. to bring the two groups together once again a decade later.

“Roy A. Childs, Jr. was born January 4, 1949 in Buffalo, New York,” Joan wrote of him in the mid-1990s, “and claimed to have been interested in political issues since the age of nine. He began reading some of the classics of libertarian thought when he was in high school. He told me that he read Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead* in 1965, and found

it so disturbing to some of the religious ideas he had been taught that he burned it. But he recovered, and went on to read *Anthem* and *Atlas Shrugged*. He reported he was ‘enthralled’ by Ludwig von Mises’ *Human Action* the Christmas before he was seventeen, that Rose Wilder Lane’s *Discovery of Freedom* ‘more than any other book’ made him a libertarian, and that the two predominant intellectual influences on him during these years were Ayn Rand and Leonard Read of the Foundation for Economic Education.”<sup>8</sup>

Having graduated from high school in 1966, Childs enrolled at the nearby State University of New York at Buffalo, determined to earn a Ph.D. and get a job as a college or university professor. But during his freshman year, “he became interested in the teachings of Robert LeFevre and his Freedom School, and in 1967 he won one of forty full-tuition scholarships to LeFevre’s Comprehensive Course.” LeFevre had given his Freedom School (established in 1957, the summer before *Atlas Shrugged* was published) a new name by this time. It was now Rampart College, and LeFevre was busily hiring faculty and making plans for the school to become an accredited, degree-granting, four-year college as soon as all the necessary details were worked out.

Childs made a big impression on LeFevre and on his teachers and fellow students in the Comprehensive Course that summer of ’67. Scarcely had the course been completed than “[t]he *Rampart College Newsletter* announced...a new Pine Tree Features Syndicate [which] would distribute columns by writers such as Murray Rothbard, F. A. Harper (the founder of the Institute for Humane Studies), Robert LeFevre, [economist] Hans Sennholz – and some graduates of the course, including R. A. Childs, Jr. Columns of his were distributed by Pine Tree Features in 1967 and 1968, and

in the Spring of 1968 *Rampart Journal* brought out his first published article, ‘The Contradiction in Objectivism.’”<sup>9</sup>

The “contradiction” Childs believed was bedeviling Objectivism from within was essentially the same one Murray Rothbard had identified about a decade earlier: if you followed Ayn Rand’s arguments about the nature of government and individual rights to their logical conclusion, you would have to conclude that the State was an illegitimate institution that should be abolished. In other words, Ayn Rand, if she were as consistent as she always claimed to be, would be an anarchist. At this point, Childs was nineteen years old, just finishing up his sophomore year in college.

He quit college at the end of the Spring 1968 term, however, to “join the Rampart College teaching staff...as an assistant instructor.” He even packed up and moved to Larkspur, Colorado. But within a few months of his arrival, “the entire Freedom School enterprise (including *Rampart Journal*, Pine Tree Press, and Pine Tree Features) collapsed in September 1968, and Robert LeFevre moved Rampart College (mainly its home study course) to California. Roy went back to SUNY Buffalo in the fall of 1968” and continued working, not only on his courses, but also on his argument on the contradiction in the Objectivist position on political philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

By the following summer, he felt he’d perfected it. He rewrote it, in the form of an open letter to Ayn Rand herself, and submitted it to *The Rational Individualist*, a small-circulation monthly being published in suburban Washington, D.C. by a group of former students of Objectivism who called themselves the Society for Rational Individualism (SRI). “An Open Letter to Ayn Rand: Objectivism and the State” by R. A. Childs, Jr. appeared in the August 1969 issue of *The Rational Individualist*, along with an

editorial introduction by Jarret Wollstein of SRI. Wollstein wrote that “SRI had changed its declaration of principle, because ‘Mr. R. A. Childs’ had convinced them that any government was immoral.”<sup>11</sup> SRI, which had aspired to succeed NBI as the institutional home of the Objectivist movement, had just taken a stand that would separate it forever from any officially sanctioned Objectivist movement, a stand that was more Rothbardian than Randian. You might say that SRI was one of Roy Childs’s first big victories in his campaign to sell Rothbardianism to students of Objectivism.

The fall of 1969 was a busy season for the nascent libertarian movement. At the same time SRI had jumped the Randian ship and turned Rothbardian, the student activists who had made up the Libertarian Caucus of the conservative youth organization Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) had decided to walk out of YAF en masse and seek institutional support for their activities elsewhere. That fall, SRI merged with the former Libertarian Caucus of YAF to create the Society for Individual Liberty (SIL). And it did not take the leadership of the new organization long at all to conclude that the increasingly influential “Mr. R. A. Childs” should be lured away from his current career as an undergraduate at SUNY Buffalo “to become the Associate Editor of *The Individualist* (the new format of the *Rational Individualist*) and to run the SIL Book Service.”<sup>12</sup>

Childs left SUNY again at the end of the Spring term of 1970 to take that job with SIL in Silver Spring, Maryland. And, as we have seen, he was still there two years later, when he talked Bob Kephart into buying the SIL Book Service and converting the *SIL Book Review* into *Books for Libertarians*. The *SIL Book Review* became *Books for Libertarians* in July 1972. A little more than two years later, in October 1974, *Books for*

*Libertarians* became *Libertarian Review*. About a year and a half after that, *Libertarian Review* abandoned the old newsletter format it had inherited from *Books for Libertarians* and went to a tabloid format not unlike that of the *New York Review of Books*. With the previous issue, January-February 1976, *LR* had converted to a bi-monthly publication schedule.

But by the time all these changes took place, Childs was long gone. He didn't even stick around long enough to see *Books for Libertarians* become *LR*. He didn't last even two years as editor of *Books for Libertarians*. His first issue was July '72; his last was April '74. A twenty-five-year-old has-been, he had been ignominiously shitcanned from the publication that was his idea, his creation, his baby. And why? For repeatedly failing to meet his deadlines. I met Childs in the fall of 1972, only a few months after he started *Books for Libertarians*, and I knew him for twenty years. In all that time, I never knew him to pay much heed to deadlines. Whether he was writing something or editing something, he did it at his own pace and he finished when he finished, and if the issue was late as a result, well, so be it. Getting a thing right was always more important to him than getting it done.

Kephart, on the other hand, wanted to get each issue of the periodical done and done on time. He didn't see any other way for the publication to break through to financial independence. When he let Roy go, he hired a thirty-year-old writer and editor named Karl T. Pflock, who had been working for the American Enterprise Institute but was increasingly feeling too libertarian to remain in such conservative company. At the beginning of his time in Kephart's employment, Pflock was listed on the masthead of *Books for Libertarians* as Managing Editor. No Editor (or Editor-in-Chief) was listed.

This situation continued when *Books for Libertarians* became *LR* in October 1974; it wasn't until the April 1975 issue that Pflock was officially identified as Editor of *Libertarian Review*.<sup>13</sup> As a regular contributor to both *Books for Libertarians* and *LR* during this period, however, I can personally testify that, whatever Karl's title was, he was running the publication and making its editorial decisions on his own. One wonders if Kephart wasn't, in effect, holding Childs's job open for him, not-so-secretly hoping that Childs would knuckle under, agree to meet his deadlines, and resume the editorship both he and Kephart knew was properly his and his alone.

Childs wasn't going to take this setback lying down. But neither was he going to knuckle under, to Kephart or anybody else. He immediately got to work on his comeback, writing and publishing major articles and reviews that he knew would bring him and his work to the attention of movement movers and shakers – not only the intellectual leadership of the movement, but also the wealthy individuals like Bob Kephart who had the resources to make the plans of intellectuals come to fruition. One essay, “The Defense of Capitalism in Our Time,” won him an all-expenses-paid trip to Brussels for “the 1974 meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society,” where he mingled with just such people as this. Another piece, “The Invisible Hand Strikes Back,” a devastatingly clever dissection of Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick's National Book Award-winning *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), was first “presented at the third Libertarian Scholars Conference in 1975.” Childs “also spoke at the 1976 and 1977 Libertarian Scholars Conferences, and in 1977 he became a research associate of the Center for Libertarian Studies in New York, and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Libertarian Studies*.” Eventually, what he had been working toward finally developed. “One of

Roy's speeches so impressed Charles Koch" – a fabulously wealthy Kansas oilman who had previously provided much of the financial support for Robert LeFevre's Freedom School – "that he bought *Libertarian Review* from Robert Kephart to turn it into a national magazine that Roy would edit."<sup>14</sup>

And so it was that Roy Childs had called Joan at her home in Stockbridge early in 1977, to say he was assuming editorship of a new national libertarian magazine, and would Joan like to write for him? This was not the first time Childs had contacted Joan, though it was the first time he had done so by telephone. She had first heard from him in January 1966, his senior year in high school, just after he had seen Ayn Rand's endorsement of *Persuasion* in *The Objectivist Newsletter*. "I intend to enroll in the Political Science course at the State University of New York at Buffalo next September," he had written. He was, he said, "extremely interested in...the Objectivist point of view on political issues facing us today." He requested "any recent issue of *Persuasion*, for which I will gladly reimburse you, and all necessary information concerning how I might subscribe."<sup>15</sup>

A year and a half later, just before leaving for Colorado and his first taste of Robert LeFevre's Freedom School, he was back with another letter. "Some time ago," he wrote, "I...asked for information concerning *Persuasion*, and you sent it to me. I didn't do anything, mainly because the issue you sent me (December 1965) didn't really impress me. But today, while looking through your table of contents, I became interested in a number of your other issues." He wondered "if all or most of your back issues are still available."<sup>16</sup> He obtained and read them. And he emerged with a higher opinion of

*Persuasion* and Joan Kennedy Taylor than the one he'd originally formed, perhaps somewhat hastily, at the age of seventeen.

So now that he was back on track with his magazine, he decided to contact her. He wanted *LR* to reflect a broadly ecumenical frame of mind toward libertarianism; it wouldn't be a magazine just for Objectivists or just for Rothbardians; it would be a magazine for libertarians of every stripe (or, at least, of many stripes). He had already secured Murray Rothbard's agreement to write regularly for *LR*, and he had recruited two Rothbardians, the historian Leonard Liggio and the economist Walter Grinder, as associate editors. Now it would be nice to be able to add at least one Randian to the masthead. But it would have to be an unusually broadminded Randian – one who could work with Rothbardians on an ongoing basis. And it would have to be a Randian who could write as knowledgeably about current issues and events as the best of the Rothbardians, and do it with at least equal facility – it would have to be a Randian who could pull his own weight. Or *her* own weight. Now there was an idea! But where was there a female Randian who was knowledgeable about current issues and events, could write, and could be tolerant of Rothbardian anarchists? There was Joan Kennedy Taylor, of course. But she hadn't written anything on current issues and events in ten years. And would she be tolerant of the Rothbardians? Well, there could be no harm in trying.

He tried. She took him up on his offer to get back into political writing. She provided an article of around four thousand words for his very first issue (July 1977), a vigorous, knowledgeable, and impassioned defense of the individualist and proto-libertarian elements in the feminist movement. She provided an article or review for five of the magazine's next six issues. By September, she had joined Liggio, Grinder, and yet

another Rothbardian, historian Joseph Peden, on the magazine's list of associate editors. By that time she had also, at long last, made the personal acquaintance of Roy A. Childs, Jr., for he was in attendance at the national Libertarian Party convention held in San Francisco in July 1977.

In Massachusetts, Joan had found many students of Objectivism among the Libertarian Party members she met. She had found that Ayn Rand was far and away the dominant intellectual influence on her new political comrades. She found more of the same in San Francisco. She found that, in San Francisco as in New England, she was treated as a welcome newcomer – and not only by the students of Objectivism in her midst. Perhaps most important of all, Joan found a seriousness of purpose and a level of intellectual competence among the libertarians that she hadn't been certain earlier that she should expect. "I was very impressed in general," she wrote later about her experience at the convention, "with the level of the discussions [and] the caliber of the people."<sup>17</sup> The people in the LP were impressed, too. An "Editor's Note" appended to an article Joan wrote for the September-October 1977 issue of *Libertarian Party News*, the party's official newspaper, for example, calls her "[o]ne of the most diligent members of the Platform Committee at the 1977 LP National Convention," a member who "participated actively in the proceedings and kept copious and accurate notes."<sup>18</sup>

Joan herself had particular praise for "the fairness and tolerance of the [Platform Committee] chair, Walter Grinder." Grinder, one of Joan's colleagues at *LR*, was also one of nineteen men on the Platform Committee that year; Joan was the only woman. And not only was she surrounded by men; she was also surrounded by Rothbardian anarchists. Grinder was one of them. Roy Childs was another. Ralph Raico was still

another. L. Neil Smith, who would later go on to a very successful career as a science fiction writer, was yet another. Rothbard himself was a member of the Platform Committee that year. And Grinder “almost converted me to a belief in anarchy,” Joan later reported, “as he managed to guide us through the entire platform by Wednesday night (making the scheduled meeting on Thursday morning unnecessary) by a policy of never invoking even the ‘modified’ rules we were supposedly operating under and of allowing everyone to speak as much as he or I wished.”<sup>19</sup>

Grinder didn’t really convert Joan to “anarchy,” of course. Nobody ever would. The fact that the Rothbardians and LeFevrians she was now working with in the LP and on *Libertarian Review* were anarchists – well, that was just one of the things about her new libertarian colleagues that Joan would simply have to learn to accept and work around. She had other differences with them as well, at least in the beginning.

### III

Perhaps the most significant of these, in the beginning, was foreign policy. Up to this time, the greatest single influence on Joan’s thinking about foreign policy – the greatest single influence on Joan’s thinking about politics in general – was Ayn Rand. And that presents a problem, because, as Robert Hessen puts it, “on a lot of subjects within foreign policy, it’s not possible to know what she [Rand], in fact, held or why she held it. She had very strong emotions on the subject. But if you look for the reasons behind her positions, you just can’t find them.”<sup>20</sup> One is reminded, ineluctably, of the powerful emotional commitment Rand made as a child to the cause of the individual

impoverished by a State speaking in the name of “society” – an emotional commitment that preceded and may well have led her to her later intellectual formulation of the case for the individual against the collective.

The problem was that Rand never really worked out an intellectual formulation of her views on foreign policy. She just went with her “stomach feelings” – the ones she found so unreliable in dealing one on one with other people – and shot from the lip. And the problem with that was that, when it came to foreign policy, she tended to talk out of both sides of her mouth. One side was a pure individualist. “Wars,” that side wrote in 1967, “are the second greatest evil that human societies can perpetrate. (The first is dictatorship, the enslavement of their own citizens, which is the cause of wars.) When a nation resorts to war, it has some purpose, rightly or wrongly, something to fight for – and the only justifiable purpose is self-defense.” In the case of the Vietnam War, then much in the news, Rand could see no justification for the view that the U.S. government was acting in self-defense. She therefore considered the Vietnam War “a war in which American soldiers are dying for no purpose whatever.”<sup>21</sup>

There was a sense, though, in which this same side of Ayn Rand saw the Vietnam War as no worse, no more blameworthy, than any of the other wars the U.S. government had been involved in during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. “There still are people in this country,” she wrote in 1974, “who lost loved ones in World War I. There are more people who carry the unhealed wounds of World War II, of Korea, of Vietnam. There are the disabled, the crippled, the mangled of those wars’ battlefields. No one has ever told them why they had to fight nor what their sacrifices accomplished; it was certainly not ‘to make the world safe for democracy’ – look at that world now. The American people have borne it all,

trusting their leaders, hoping that someone knew the purpose of that ghastly devastation. The United States gained nothing from those wars, except the growing burden of paying reparations to the whole world – the kind of burden that used to be imposed on a defeated nation.”<sup>22</sup>

Out of the other side of her mouth, however, Rand talked pure anti-communism. She once dismissed the John Birch Society as “futile, because they are not *for* capitalism, but merely *against* communism.”<sup>23</sup> But, at times, she herself seemed to make a very similar mistake: she allowed her fervent anti-communism to overcome her commitment to individualism. Robert Hessen, who spent two years (1959-1961) working as Ayn Rand’s personal secretary while an impecunious graduate student at Columbia, puts it well when he says that at times she spoke and wrote as though “we should simply smash and pulverize the enemy and teach them an object lesson which would apply to the rest of the world. There’s something called the Crazy Motherfucker Theory which says America should strike out almost blindly at anyone who deserves to be hit without regard to the fact that it doesn’t strike out at *everyone* who deserves to be hit, because this will teach an object lesson to all the others that they shouldn’t mess with us. I think that was part of her feeling, that we have to assert a military dominance over the entire world in order to prevent any kind of threats to America’s security interests or to America’s world wide hegemony.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, like those of her students who had written, edited, and published *Persuasion* magazine, she supported Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona in the 1964 presidential election. “I disagree with [Goldwater] on a great many things,” Rand told

*Playboy* magazine early in 1964, “but I do agree, predominantly, with his foreign policy. Of any candidates available today, I regard Barry Goldwater as the best.”<sup>25</sup>

In the next few years, once Roy A. Childs, Jr. had embarked on his campaign to sell Rothbard to students of Objectivism, Rothbard’s writings became more and more well known among followers of Ayn Rand. More and more of them defected from the Objectivist ranks. More and more of them began to acknowledge Rothbard as a major influence on their thinking. The pace of all these changes increased after the Rand-Branden Split.

And now Joan found herself in a movement in which Ayn Rand remained the most influential single figure, but in which Murray Rothbard was rapidly gaining on her. And she was now working for a magazine (albeit at a distance, from home, with only infrequent contact with her colleagues) most of whose editors took for granted the truth of Rothbard’s point of view on foreign policy and national defense. It was enough to produce at least a mild case of culture shock. *Persuasion* had never slavishly toed the Objectivist line on foreign policy (how could it, since no such line could definitely be identified?), but neither did it adopt any views or push any interpretations that got it into any serious trouble with Ayn Rand – which meant it was properly respectful toward the anti-communist side of Rand’s split foreign policy personality.

The very first issue of *Persuasion*, in fact, issued during the Goldwater campaign, contained a panegyric on the Arizona Senator’s staunch anti-communism. “Despite some specific positions which may be questioned,” Elonore Boddy wrote, “Senator Goldwater is still the best representative we have of individual freedom.

But this wasn't the whole story. Like Rand, *Persuasion* was of two minds when it came to foreign policy. On the one hand, it was necessary to stand up to communism, to be tough and intransigent. On the other hand, was it possible the communist menace had been exaggerated? David Dawson thought so. Noting that many anti-communists acted, wrote, and spoke as though their enemy was "omnipowerful, omnipresent [and] all-knowing," he argued that this kind of demonization was "profoundly anti-intellectual." It led to a kind of forgetfulness. It led people to forget that the political battle, ultimately, was a battle of "good and bad principles." It led people to forget that "ideas... must be countered by ideas." It led them to think instead in terms of "men who must be identified and destroyed." And who was it exactly that was thinking in this way? Well, Dawson answered, "[t]his absolute faith in the power and majesty of the Communist Conspiracy is shared by many within the spectrum of American right-wing political opinion." Barry Goldwater, for example. And for such people, "it is not thought that will save the political institutions of man, it is action against evildoers."<sup>26</sup>

The foreign policy that would be advocated by people who grossly overestimated the size and power of the Soviet menace in this way would be very likely, therefore, to focus upon the necessity of taking action against communist evildoers, wherever in the world they might chance to pop up. And so it is, Dawson wrote, that "[t]he sun never sets on the military power of the United States. Today more than a million and a half servicemen are overseas; one out of every six is in the Vietnamese war zone. There are U.S. troops in thirty countries. The United States has committed itself to possible future wars through four regional alliances and through mutual defense treaties with forty-two nations. It provides military aid to nearly a hundred countries."<sup>27</sup>

David remembered a very different world as recently as two decades before, when he had been mustered out of the Navy at the end of World War II. Though younger by five years, Ronald Steel (b. 1931) remembered the same thing, and said so in his 1967 book *Pax Americana*, which David reviewed in the December issue of *Persuasion*. “Had someone predicted this state of affairs in 1946, ‘he would have been considered mad,’ states Ronald Steel, author of *Pax Americana*, a recently published critique of United States foreign policy,” David wrote. “What is his view of that policy? ‘These entanglements happened more by accident than by design,’ he states, but nevertheless they add up to assuming ‘a moral hegemony over the entire world.’” And what was David Dawson’s view of Ronald Steel’s view? “[T]here seems to be something to what he says,” David acknowledged. “The United States cannot defend the whole world, nor consider itself responsible for it.”<sup>28</sup>

This was a kind of talk no Rothbardian would have even the slightest problem with. But it was also as radical as *Persuasion* ever got in the area of foreign policy. On the rare occasions when this kind of thing ran in *Persuasion* at all, it was always carefully balanced by a certain amount of anti-communism. So Joan’s new, very Rothbardian environment was a big change for her. In this environment, no one ever talked about anti-communism, since they took it for granted that of course a libertarian would disapprove of the politics of the Soviet bloc. But Joan was nothing if not adaptable and tolerant. She believed it was necessary for political success to find ways to work with those with whom one didn’t perfectly agree. To her, that was the essence of the political process; if you were going to be intransigent, why engage in politics at all?

She had developed this point of view years earlier in a manuscript called “Rational Compromise,” which she submitted, sometime between January 1962 and December 1965, to *The Objectivist Newsletter*. As Joan saw it, “one of the major tenets of our political system is that force must be totally abandoned as a way of settling internal differences of political opinion.” This is possible because “there is no difference of opinion which can arise under the Constitution of the United States which cannot be discussed, and ultimately settled by discussion.” In fact, Joan argued, in the United States, “[p]olitics is the assumption that you can deal with your opponent and find common ground with him, wrong as you may consider him to be [emphasis added].” And since “political questions can all be solved by discussion, argument, and rational compromise,” there are only three possible outcomes of the political process: either “[y]ou persuade your opponent to go along with you, or you recognize that the time is not ripe for your specific position to prevail. Or you may even be yourself persuaded to change that position.” Objectivists, Joan had come to think, were too hung up on ideological purity to be effective in politics. “It is wildly inappropriate,” she wrote, “to enter the political area with the idea of solving problems by ostracism, or by refusing to deal with those who disagree with your economic theories.”<sup>29</sup>

Predictably, Ayn Rand “took enormous exception” to “Rational Compromise” and “refused to publish” it. But this conflict, though painful, “didn’t lose me her friendship, because I agreed with her criticism.”<sup>30</sup> It is unclear here whether Joan means that she believed Rand’s criticism was just and on target or merely that she was able to hang onto Rand’s friendship by feigning such agreement – by nodding and smiling and saying, “I see what you mean.” In any case, Joan continued to proceed politically just as

though she actually believed what she had written in “Rational Compromise.” She willingly hung out with Rothbardians and LeFevreians at the convention in San Francisco, rather than ostracizing them. And when *LR* moved to San Francisco in January of 1978 and Roy invited her to come and work with him there – in the belly of the Rothbardian beast, so to speak, she didn’t hesitate to take the offer very, very seriously indeed. She and David talked it over and decided they’d rent a house and spend the summer of that year in San Francisco, to see how they liked it. Then Joan could give Roy his answer.

#### IV

When Charles Koch had bought *LR* for Roy to convert into a full-scale magazine, he had rented an office for the publication in New York City, where Roy was living and wanted to stay. But Roy proved to be no better at meeting his deadlines this time around than he had been between 1972 and 1974. Within about four months, his magazine was nearly a month behind its official publication schedule, and the situation was growing worse with each passing day. In Koch’s mind, what was needed was a publisher who would crack the whip or dangle a tastier carrot or whatever had to be done to get Roy to do the work Koch knew he was capable of and get *LR* out on time each month. Koch himself lived in Wichita, 1500 miles from New York, too far away to keep a tight rein on Roy himself, even if he’d had the time or inclination to do so. He needed someone else to do this job, someone knowledgeable enough about libertarianism to understand what a genuinely and superbly gifted young man Roy was and why it was important to the movement that he have control of a major organ of analysis and opinion, and someone

businesslike and professional enough to figure out how to manage him. Maybe Ed Crane?

Ed Crane was an ambitious and highly intelligent young investment counselor who hailed from Los Angeles but had gone off to Berkeley for his college years and fallen in love with the San Francisco Bay Area. Koch had hired Crane in 1977 to serve as president of a new libertarian think tank he was funding. Murray Rothbard, who had been involved in the project from the beginning and had played a crucial role in talking Koch into investing several million dollars in something that had never been tried before – a libertarian equivalent of the Brookings Institution or the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) – had suggested the name that was finally settled upon for the new think tank: the Cato Institute, named after *Cato's Letters*, a series of newspaper articles published in London newspapers in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century by a pair of radical English individualists named John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, who published their “letters” on current political topics under the pseudonym “Cato.” *Cato's Letters* were widely reprinted by American newspapers of the day and are generally credited with helping to lay the philosophical foundation for the American Revolution.

Crane had opened the Cato Institute in 1977 in San Francisco, because that was where he was living and that was where he wanted to stay. It also put him in a convenient spot to oversee another of Charles Koch's ideological enterprises, the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS), an educational foundation that marketed libertarian ideas to college and university students and faculty from offices in Menlo Park, adjacent to the Stanford University campus, about thirty-five miles south of San Francisco. Koch had already decided that while Ed was at this business of overseeing Cato and overseeing IHS

he could also oversee the national office of the new student organization Koch had decided to fund – Students for a Libertarian Society (SLS). It, too, would be headquartered in San Francisco, to make things convenient for Ed.

So why not move *LR* to San Francisco, too, and let Ed oversee Roy Childs as well? And so it was done. By July of 1978 all of the pieces were in place. The Cato Institute occupied half a floor of a new, four story, red brick office building at 1700 Montgomery Street, near Levi’s Plaza, about a mile north of downtown and about six blocks north of North Beach, at the foot of Telegraph Hill. *LR*, SLS, and the headquarters of the Libertarian Party of California (to which Charles Koch and his brother David had recently become major contributors) occupied somewhat less upscale offices at 1620 Montgomery Street, a converted warehouse two doors down Montgomery in the direction of Broadway. The Institute for Humane Studies was thirty-five miles down the road in Menlo Park. Ed Crane was overseeing all of it. And all of it was, by design at least, thoroughly Rothbardian in its basic approach.

David Gordon of the Ludwig von Mises Institute has stressed in his online history of Murray Rothbard’s dealings with the “Kochtopus” – “a derogatory name,” Gordon reports, “for the group of libertarian organizations funded by billionaire Charles Koch” – that “the Cato Institute was at its inception distinctly Rothbardian in orientation” and was, in fact, “established to promote his [Rothbard’s] distinctive variety of libertarianism.”<sup>31</sup> This is true as far as it goes, but it fails to go far enough. It was not only Cato, but the entirety of the Kochtopus that was, at its inception, distinctly Rothbardian in orientation. I had not fully understood this myself when, in the spring of 1978 I agreed to move from Los Angeles to San Francisco and take a job on the editorial staff of *Libertarian Review*.

But Ed Crane set me straight on that issue very quickly and unequivocally in one of the first of a series of conversations we had in his car or his office during June of 1978, immediately after I had arrived in San Francisco and begun working at *LR*. “Murray is the reason all of us are here,” he told me in his office at Cato. And by “all of us,” he didn’t mean just Cato. He meant the whole shebang, the whole Kochtopus. It wasn’t only Cato that “had been founded to promote Rothbardian ideas.”<sup>32</sup>

None of this put Joan off at all, as we have seen. She and David rented a house in San Francisco for the summer of 1978 to get a sense of how they might like living in the City by the Bay. They “loved it,” she told James Pegolotti in 1999 at her home in Stockbridge. David had had some experience in San Francisco; it had been his home port when he was in the Navy. Joan had never spent any time there before the summer of ’78. But they both loved it. And they agreed to move there for a minimum of one year, to give both the City by the Bay and the new job at the Rothbardian magazine a more lengthy try.<sup>33</sup> They made arrangements to rent a house for a year starting the following April, then went back to Stockbridge and began to pack.

Finally, all was in readiness. It was 15 April 1979, Income Tax Day. They were just a few days shy of their planned departure date. Their car was fully checked out for the trip. They were expected in San Francisco by the end of the month. And suddenly, David dropped dead of a heart attack at the age of fifty-two. Joan was devastated. David had been her lover, her partner, her best friend, the fulcrum at the center of her world, for more than twenty years. She had known him for most of her adult life. Who she was at this juncture, her very identity, owed more than she could say to her interactions over three decades with David J. Dawson. As Michael Cook put it years later, “David was her

rock. David grounded her in a way that really allowed her to thrive just by being who she naturally was. He made it possible for her to play to her own strengths.”<sup>34</sup> Now, with grotesque suddenness, he was gone. How could she go on?

But, of course, she did go on.....

The funeral behind her and an undiscovered country, Life Without David, lying before her with no roadmap or other instructions ready to hand, Joan considered what to do. She could stay in Stockbridge and live off the meagre fees she could collect for freelance writing, copyediting, and proofreading jobs, while dealing as best she could with the difficulty of getting around, especially in winter, when one didn’t drive a car. She could go back to New York and earn her keep as a paralegal. She could even take attorney Paul Morofsky’s advice and go back to school; she could earn a law degree of her own. She had been working for Morofsky as a paralegal for a year and a half now, commuting back and forth from Stockbridge on the bus and staying a few nights every week in Manhattan. He thought she could have a brilliant future in the legal profession. Already, she had developed a strong interest in Constitutional law.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, she could pursue that emerging interest in Constitutional law outside the legal profession, as a journalist, writing about Supreme Court cases and related matters in the pages of *Libertarian Review*. She could go to San Francisco after all, find a place to live, and try to build a new life from scratch in a new place. And, after a bit of soul-searching, it was this last option that she decided to take. She arrived in San Francisco one day in May of 1979, with little more than the clothes on her back and the contents of a couple of suitcases. And she walked right into the middle of Ed Crane’s

conscientious effort to find a way to get Roy Childs to do what Charles Koch wanted him to do.

Crane's first strategy in attempting to get Roy back on schedule and improve the overall professionalism of his magazine was to bring in a libertarian with professional journalism experience. Marshall Schwartz had studied economics under Murray Rothbard while earning baccalaureate and masters degrees in math at Brooklyn Polytechnic in the '60s, then headed out to Stanford in 1967, bent on earning a Ph.D. in statistics. While there, he had fallen under the ideological sway of a fellow graduate student, the consummate young Rothbardian, Williamson "Bill" Evers. He had also become more and more interested in politics and current issues and events and less and less interested in statistics. By 1969, when he dropped out of his Ph.D. program, Schwartz had served as editor of the *Stanford Daily*, and that led to a reporting gig at the *San Francisco Chronicle*.<sup>36</sup>

By 1972, though, he was back in New York, working as a medical writer for Planned Parenthood. He also put in some time at his alma mater over the next five years, doing public relations for Brooklyn Polytechnic (by now the Polytechnic Institute of New York, incorporating the New York University engineering school). Then Evers tracked him down and asked him if he'd be interested in taking an editorial job back in San Francisco on *Inquiry*, a new fortnightly opinion magazine he (Evers) was heading up. It was to be published by a new think tank called the Cato Institute. The offer was tempting. The money was competitive. The job was located in San Francisco, which Schwartz, native New Yorker that he was, tended to prefer to the Big Apple because of its more hospitable climate. And it was an opportunity to actually make money

promoting libertarian ideas, something Schwartz was strongly interested in doing whether he was remunerated or not. As an undergraduate, he had been so much in tune with Rothbard's approach to economics that, more than a decade later, Rothbard remembered him "as the only person who never showed up for his class and still got an A." In later years, Schwartz "ran as the LP candidate for California Assembly...(coming in third of four with over five percent of the vote) and was the first chair of the LP of SF."<sup>37</sup>

Schwartz took the job at *Inquiry*, then moved on to *LR*, where he was defeated in fewer than nine months by Roy Childs's virtuoso passive-aggressiveness. He was unable to get the magazine back on schedule. On top of that, for reasons I'll come back to a little later, circulation declined on his watch. Crane decided to offer me Schwartz's job. Why me? Well, like Schwartz, I had a professional background in journalism. At the time Crane originally contacted me – in early May of 1978 – about the possibility of my working for *LR*, I was working part-time as a reporter and producer for Public Affairs Broadcast Group, a small company in Los Angeles that provided two thirty-minute documentaries on current public issues each week to a network of around 150 radio stations coast to coast. This gig, like the radio job that had preceded it – the six years I had spent at KFWB, the dominant all-news radio station in L.A., where I had been the on-air book critic and had worked also as a fill-in anchor and writer – involved a lot of interviewing, and Crane thought *LR* should run more interviews. He'd been particularly impressed with an interview I'd done for the magazine with California tax rebel Howard Jarvis of Proposition 13 fame. It was running in the current issue (May 1978) when I accepted his offer to join the editorial staff of *LR*. (This was a few months before he decided to move me up into Marshall Schwartz's slot.)

Crane knew I was freelancing for the *Los Angeles Times* in this period as well, contributing to the Sunday book review section and the Sunday arts and entertainment section as well as to the op-ed page. He knew I taught broadcast journalism to community college students three mornings a week at Pierce College out in LA's San Fernando Valley and that I taught an extension class in reviewing and criticism one evening a week at U.C.L.A. He'd seen all this information about me in the bio lines he read every month at the end of my frequent contributions to various libertarian publications, including *Reason* and Samuel Edward Konkin III's *New Libertarian*, as well as *Inquiry* and *Libertarian Review*. And from Roy, Crane knew that I was a longtime movement libertarian dating back to the '60s (if you counted my time early on in the Objectivist movement) and a personal friend of Roy's for about six years. I think he figured that history of personal friendship might make it easier for me to do what Marshall Schwartz hadn't been able to do – find a way to impose form on the creative chaos that was Roy A. Childs, Jr.

I was able to get the magazine back on schedule before Joan appeared on the scene, but a serious problem remained. Neither Roy nor I had the editing skills needed to improve the professionalism of our magazine beyond a certain point. We were both good writers, and we were good enough at rewriting our other contributors to bring their copy up to something like our own standard. But we were mediocre proofreaders at best, and our ineptitude as copyeditors was appalling. The February 1979 issue of *LR*, one of the most famous we ever published, the one with an Aubrey Beardsley drawing and the title "In Praise of Decadence" on the cover, is crammed with embarrassing editing and proofreading errors, particularly in the lead article.

That issue also marked the nadir of *LR*'s circulation. It was mailed to fewer than 3,500 subscribers. Ed Crane was acutely aware of our declining circulation and the need to do something about it; I suspect one of his reasons for approving Roy's suggestion that Joan be added to the staff was to take some of the editing and proofreading pressure off me so I could devote some time to getting a subscription campaign written and designed and in the mail. Every magazine, no matter how loyal its subscribers, loses some of those subscribers every year. Some of them, for whatever reason, don't renew. This means that unless you stay constantly in the mail hustling for new subscribers, your circulation will inexorably decline. This is what was happening at *LR*. Marshall Schwartz's job as executive editor included such functions (normally handled by the publisher of a small magazine) as maintaining the budget, hiring and firing staff, overseeing advertising sales, and hawking subscriptions. But Schwartz hadn't done any direct mail at all since taking over management of the magazine.

Not that he hadn't had his reasons. Charles Koch had made it clear that he wanted the magazine to grow, so that, in time, it could become independent of his largesse. He had also made it clear that, though his pockets were deep, they were not bottomless; he did not want to be confronted at year's end by a deficit any larger than the one he had agreed at the beginning of the year to pick up. The policy was clear: grow circulation, but don't exceed the budget in the course of doing so.

The problem was that this was impossible. Circulation was rupturing so fast that it could only be stanchied by expenditure of far more on direct mail than was permitted by the budget. Schwartz had a choice: conserve money and run the risk of being fired for allowing circulation to decline or build circulation and run the risk of being fired for

spending too freely. He chose the first option. I chose the second. The February 1979 issue went out to a little more than 3,000 subscribers. The September 1980 issue went out to a little more than 10,000 subscribers. I had managed to triple circulation in a year and a half by viciously throwing Charles Koch's money at the problem. In the process, I lost my job for spending too freely. My successor, Chris Hocker, reverted to the Marshall Schwartz strategy: he stayed within budget and presided over another decline in circulation. This one was terminal.

But I get ahead of my story. By the time that September 1980 issue had been dropped in the mail to 10,000-plus subscribers – long before, actually – Joan had managed to whip our little magazine into shape with respect to the copyediting and proofreading that went into it. In the end, it was she, not I, who truly imposed order on the chaos that was *LR*. But by September 1980 she had done far more than just that. She had also done a great deal of first rate writing, much of it on the Supreme Court and its cases and on various questions in Constitutional law. She was particularly interested in the whole area of law relating to freedom of expression. Pornography became one of her pet issues.

Also, and in many ways more important, by September 1980 Joan was well on her way to becoming the first really prominent libertarian feminist. A libertarian feminist was a fairly scarce thing back then, though the Association of Libertarian Feminists (ALF) did exist already – it had been founded, according to Tonie Nathan, “on Ayn Rand's birthday, February 2nd, 1973, in my home in Eugene, Oregon. The first members included men, as well as women.” Then, “In September, 1975, ALF became a national organization at a meeting held in New York City.”<sup>38</sup>

That New York meeting was held at a Libertarian Party convention, the same convention that nominated Roger MacBride and Southern California attorney David Bergland (MacBride was the renegade Nixon elector from Virginia who had cast a vote in the Electoral College for John Hospers and Tonie Nathan in 1972) as the LP's standard bearers in the 1976 presidential race. Sharon Presley, a graduate student at City University of New York, where she was working toward a Ph.D. in psychology, recalls that it was that meeting at the LP convention in New York "where [ALF] really got rolling, where officers were actually elected."<sup>39</sup> Presley was, in fact, one of those newly elected officers. "I was made National Coordinator and Tonie was made President."<sup>40</sup> Neither of them was overly busy, however. Membership was low in ALF in the '70s. At that point in time, most libertarian women tended to view feminism with suspicion – weren't feminists those angry, whiny, bra-burning women who wanted the taxpayers to be forced to pay for their abortions and their daycare? Weren't feminists those women who hated men and blamed them for everything that was wrong in women's lives? ALF needed a few years to educate these women, help them to see that feminists could be individualists and even libertarians. It would also help to have an exemplar – a prominent libertarian woman, a leader, a person of genuine achievement, who publicly identified herself not only as a libertarian, but also as a feminist. Such a woman could lead by example. Such a woman could make a big difference.

Joan, it quickly became obvious, was just such a woman. Between 1975, when ALF went national, and 1980, when *Libertarian Review's* circulation topped out at around ten thousand, she emerged as unquestionably the most prominent woman in the movement outside of Ayn Rand herself. Just in that year and a quarter between her

arrival in San Francisco and the publication of the September 1980 issue, she had written tens of thousands of words, much of it on the feminist movement and what attitude libertarians ought to adopt toward it; she had whipped *LR* into shape with regard to its editing and proofreading; and she had taken on additional movement-related responsibilities, above and beyond her writing and editing for the magazine – she had chaired the Platform Committee at the 1979 National Libertarian Party Presidential Nominating Convention in Los Angeles, the convention that nominated the ticket of Ed Clark and David Koch to represent the party in the 1980 presidential election, and she had become a bi-weekly commentator on current issues and events on the nationally syndicated daily radio program, *Byline*.

## V

Since I had a good deal to do with the last of these accomplishments, it would perhaps be well for me to supply a bit of additional information about it. When I arrived in San Francisco to work for *LR* in June 1978, Ed Crane, knowing that I had a background in radio news and public affairs programming, asked me if I'd be willing to listen to something and give him my opinion of it. Sure, I said. Crane gave me a 7-1/2 inch reel of tape that turned out to contain five episodes of a five-minute radio program called *The Cato Forum*. The Cato Institute was paying a consultant in Washington, D.C. to produce this program Monday through Friday and market and distribute it to stations. It wasn't enjoying much success. The stations that had agreed to air the program weren't very numerous. Nor were they very large or very prosperous stations. They didn't command large audiences. And they scheduled the program at times of day when hardly anyone was listening.

Truth be told, the only reason they ran the program at all was the FCC's current rules on news and public affairs programming and on "fairness." At that time, the FCC required that every radio station in the country, as a condition of its license to broadcast, devote a certain percentage of its broadcast day to news and public affairs. This is why, before the mid-1980s, most radio stations had news departments and offered regular hourly newscasts. This is why, before the mid-1980s, most radio stations offered thirty-minute or hour-long documentary programs and interview programs at three o'clock on Sunday morning. Public Affairs Broadcast Group, the company I worked for in Los Angeles for a couple of years before heading up to San Francisco and the Kochtopus in 1978, owed its livelihood to these FCC Rules. The president of the company, Mark Bragg, was candid in his pitch to stations considering buying our service, which provided an hour a week of public affairs programming. Buy our programs, he told them, and we guarantee that you'll fulfill your FCC public affairs requirement. Of course, we worked very hard, those of us reporting and writing and producing these programs, to make that hour of programming as interesting and listenable as we could. We wanted people to listen to our stuff and to recognize us for the fine journalists that we either believed ourselves to be or aspired to be. But we knew that, without the FCC rules, no matter how intelligent and listenable our programs were, most stations would never run them at all, even at three o'clock on Sunday morning. Most stations lived by music and had no real interest in news or public affairs, both of which just cost money and drove music-minded listeners away.

The FCC had another important rule back in those days – the so-called "Fairness Doctrine." This doctrine stated that, if, in the course of covering news and public affairs,

you gave more air time to one viewpoint than another, you could be required to provide free air time to proponents of the viewpoint you had “slighted.” This meant that providers of public affairs programming to stations – companies like Public Affairs Broadcast Group – had to bend over backward to insure that their programs were extremely evenhanded with regard to any controversies that might rage about the topics they profiled and discussed.

I told Crane I thought *The Cato Forum* was a bit dull, but that the basic idea of producing a daily radio program and giving it away to stations was a good one. I pointed out that, thanks to commuter traffic, radio commanded a larger audience than any other medium of news and entertainment – even TV. (This was true in 1978.) People sitting in their cars were a captive audience, and a great many of them wanted news and information. National Public Radio, which serves those commuters today, was in its infancy then. *Morning Edition* had only just gone on the air, and *All Things Considered*, while it had been on the air for nearly a decade, was by no means as popular and ubiquitous as it had become by, say, 2005. Instead, those commuters were served by commercial all-news radio stations – WINS and WCBS in New York, KFWB and KNX in Los Angeles, WIND in Chicago, KYW in Philadelphia, KCBS in San Francisco – and these all-news stations were typically in the top ten in their markets when it came to attracting listeners. It was a different world from the one we see around us today.

I told Crane I thought *The Cato Forum* should be shortened, renamed, and pitched to all-news and talk radio stations, and, secondarily, to highly rated music stations in large markets that wanted programming that would fulfill their FCC requirements. He asked me to take over as executive producer of the program. He named a figure. I

approved it. *The Cato Forum* became *Byline* and shrank from five minutes to two minutes. A commercial all-news station would run a self-contained two-minute “mini-feature” (as such programs were known in the industry at the time) in drivetime if it were intelligent enough and interesting enough and listenable enough. They would not run a five-minute program in drivetime, no matter how intelligent, interesting, or listenable it might be.

Each daily episode of *Byline* would consist of a ninety-second commentary on current issues and events, along with an intro and close that, together, would take another thirty seconds. The intro would say: “*Byline* – informed commentary on today’s critical public issues from liberal, conservative, and libertarian perspectives. Today’s *Byline*...” followed by the name and affiliation of that day’s commentator. No commentator would appear more often than once a week. In each week, there would be at least one liberal commentator, at least one conservative commentator, and at least one libertarian commentator. In each week, there would be at least one commentary on civil liberties, at least one commentary on economic issues, and at least one commentary on foreign policy. We always had to keep those standards of “balance” and “fairness” firmly in mind. The close would credit “the Cato Institute of San Francisco” and assure the listener that “opinions expressed on *Byline*” were “those of the commentators and do not necessarily reflect the views of this station or the Cato Institute.” To voice the intro and close, I hired Chuck Walsh, the voice, familiar to millions of big city residents, that said, “You give us twenty-two minutes; we’ll give you the world!” on WINS in New York, KFWB in Los Angeles, WIND in Chicago, and KYW in Philly. I produced the new intro

and close with Chuck at a studio I knew in Burbank. We now sounded absolutely first-rate, fully worthy of morning drive in the top five markets in the country.

Our commentators were first-rate, too. We had liberals Nicholas Von Hoffman, Nat Hentoff, and Julian Bond. (Later we added Michael Kinsley.) In the conservative corner, we had Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire, appearing once a month to present his Golden Fleece Award for that month's most egregious case of wasteful expenditure of taxpayer funds. We also had California tax rebel Howard Jarvis. In his recent "freewheeling history of the modern American libertarian movement," Brian Doherty quotes me as having told him that "the idea of *Byline*" was "to have people identified as liberals like Nat Hentoff and Nicholas von Hoffman, and people identified as conservatives, like Tom Bethell and Howard Jarvis, we'd pick people from either side who weren't apt to emphasize things libertarians would find offensive, then slip in libertarians among them as if they were of equal stature with the others, and pull the wool over the public's eye and win the revolution. So far as I've been able to ascertain, it didn't work."<sup>41</sup>

Sigh. Attempts at humor are wasted on some people. I did make those comments about pulling the wool over the public's eye and winning the revolution, but I meant them as a light jest – a playful reference to the somewhat romanticized vision of what we were all doing that so many of my Kochtopus colleagues seemed to take so very seriously indeed. To them, as I also told Doherty, "this [the Kochtopus effort in San Francisco] was the revolution," and "what we were doing here [was] changing the world."<sup>42</sup> In fact, *Byline* was designed to do something much more modest than win a revolution. It was designed to plant the idea in people's minds (and gradually get them used to it, until it

seemed obvious to them) that “libertarian” was another choice on the political spectrum, different from “liberal” or “conservative” but of equal stature with either of them. I suspect it worked. I suspect listening to Chuck Walsh saying “informed commentary from liberal, conservative, and libertarian perspectives,” saying it day in and day out, day after day, week after week, for nearly *eleven years*, had the desired effect. I suspect nearly eleven years of hearing Michael Kinsley one day, Jeff Rigenbach the next, Senator William Proxmire the next, and Joan Kennedy Taylor the next – just as though all these people were of equal or comparable stature – eventually *made* them of equal or comparable stature in the minds of millions of listeners. They may not have agreed with the libertarian take on current ideas and issues (I personally received enough hate mail in response to my own commentaries to convince me that many of them certainly didn’t), but they could no longer regard it as either a lunatic fringe thing or as something they’d never heard of at all. Thanks to the Kochtopus, they now heard about it on the radio every few days, and when they picked up their daily newspapers, thanks to the Kochtopus, they read articles by writers identified as editors of *Libertarian Review* and articles about the activities of something called the Libertarian Party.

I teamed up with Leslee Newman, another veteran of the radio wars (and, in her case, of the television wars) in Los Angeles, to produce and syndicate the program. Leslee, who had built the network for the National Leukemia Foundation’s original Leukemia Radiothon in 1972, was articulate and persuasive, whether in person, on camera, or on the telephone. (I myself found her altogether irresistible, as I had proved by marrying her a couple of years before I moved to the Bay Area to take the job with the Kochtopus.) *Byline* was underwritten by the Cato Institute from early in 1979 to the last

day of 1989. Doherty reports that the program was “aired by 150 stations at its height,”<sup>43</sup> but in fact these are only the stations not affiliated with any network – the stations that received the program on tape directly from Cato via the U.S. mail. *Byline* was also on the NPR satellite (we saw the future coming and were trying to be prepared for it), and could be downloaded from there by any of the more than 600 public radio stations then operating in the United States. *Byline* was also on the Associated Press satellite and could be downloaded from there by any of the more than one thousand stations then subscribing to AP’s radio service.

We had no way of knowing how many programmers at stations like these aired *Byline* without ever telling us they were doing so. But I know such programmers existed. A year or two after *Byline* ceased production, I spent a few months working part-time as a fill-in producer and program host, working other people’s vacations and illnesses, at a classical station and NPR affiliate in one of the top ten markets. There I met a fellow who had previously been operations manager at public radio stations in St. Louis and Orlando. He knew my name and my voice from *Byline*, which he told me he had aired at both his previous stations. How many such people were there at stations affiliated with NPR or AP in the 1980s? Who knows? I am confident, however, that *Byline* played a role in bringing about the upsurge of interest in libertarianism – political individualism – during those years. To repeat myself a bit in the interest of making my point as emphatically as possible, *Byline* was on the air *every day of the week* (Monday through Friday) on *at least* 150 radio stations around the country *for more than ten years*. I suspect there are more than a few Americans for whom it became a familiar part of the work week during that period.

When I created *Byline* from the ruins of *The Cato Forum* late in 1978, I inherited an all-male cast. We had not a single female commentator. I told Ed Crane I thought this was a mistake in the category-sensitive time we were living in. We had a black commentator (Julian Bond) and I thought the program would look better to programmers at stations if we had at least one woman on the air as well. After all, blacks made up about ten percent of the population; women were *half* the population. The problem was, we needed a woman who would sound a libertarian note. The liberals we put on the program were liberals with a libertarian streak, like Von Hoffman, or liberals who tended to be obsessed with issues on which libertarians agreed with them – Hentoff, with his preoccupation with freedom of speech, was a good example. In both cases, we ended up with liberals who seldom said anything a libertarian would disagree with. We chose our conservatives in the same way. Howard Jarvis and William Proxmire were mainly concerned with high taxes, and libertarians were always in favor of lower taxes. Later, Donald Lambro and Tom Bethell could be counted upon almost never to adopt a view any libertarian would regard as questionable. Was there a woman, either liberal or conservative, who could be expected to do the same? Was there a woman who could be expected to do the same who could compete comfortably with Hentoff and Von Hoffman when it came to smooth, persuasive delivery? Could we find a woman who would sound good in morning drive in the top five markets and who wouldn't say anything that would offend a libertarian?

I proposed Joan. I'm not sure why I proposed her, to tell the truth. I didn't yet know her that well. I was a bit surprised hearing myself propose her when I did. But I'd been reading her *LR* articles for a couple of years, and I knew she wrote smoothly and

clearly. I knew she was a hardcore libertarian. I didn't know she had a background in radio – *The World of Books* for three years in New York in the '50s – but somehow I felt confident on the basis of talking with her and reading her stuff that she would grasp the assignment and fulfill it admirably. She did, and more than admirably – splendidly. She remained an every-other-week commentator on *Byline* for as long as the program remained on the air.

By the time Cato decided to cancel *Byline*, at the end of the 1980s, the Reagan administration had abolished the Fairness Doctrine and wiped out the news and public affairs requirement, which had wrought havoc with our “renewal rate,” I suppose you might call it. Many music stations (and, of course, almost all radio stations since the rise of TV in the 1950s have been music stations) began dropping their news and public affairs programming entirely around that time. Others, in the absence of the Fairness Doctrine, saw no reason to go on airing *Byline* or any other program that included expression of views with which the station's owners disagreed. The ratings of all-news and all-talk stations in most of the largest markets were beginning a long period of decline during this time, for a tangle of reasons; already, such stations no longer dominated their markets in the way they had a decade earlier. In just a few short years, NPR stations coast to coast would rise up to absorb the news and talk stations' former listeners – but those few short years hadn't passed yet. Cato's directors felt that, at the beginning of 1990, the institute's funds were better spent on other media – cable TV, for example, which was just beginning to rise meteorically in popularity – than on a radio program with a slowly declining audience.

Back in 1979, this bleak future seemed nowhere on the horizon, however. *Byline* was rapidly building both audience and influence. It was yet another feather in Joan's finely feathered cap. Still another, as has been noted, was her chairmanship of the Platform Committee at the 1979 Presidential Nominating Convention of the Libertarian Party. This was the committee that wrote the platform that served as the ideological infrastructure for the two candidates – Ed Clark and David Koch – who drew more votes and a larger percentage of the total vote than any Libertarian Party presidential ticket either before or since. The platform was hammered out over the course of a few days in early September by what, judged in hindsight, would have to be described as a “blue ribbon” panel. Rothbard was on it. So was Bill Evers, Rothbard's young acolyte and now editor of *Inquiry* magazine, the Cato Institute's fortnightly of analysis, commentary, and opinion. Others were less prominent at the time but would gain plenty of prominence in the years to come.

There was Michael Grossberg, who would later found both the Libertarian Futurist Society (presenter of the Prometheus Award for libertarian science fiction and fantasy) and the Free Press Association (presenter of the Mencken Award for journalism in support of individual rights). There was Jule Herbert, a lawyer from Alabama who would move to Washington D.C. later that year to serve, first, as vice president of the National Taxpayers Union, then as president of the National Taxpayers Legal Fund, and, finally, during the second Reagan administration, as Chief of Policy and Senior Staff Counsel to the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee – where he helped implement deregulation of trucking and railroads. There was Tom Palmer, at the time an undergraduate at St. John's College in Maryland, who would go on to a distinguished

career as a teacher and popularizer of libertarian and classical liberal ideas at the Institute for Humane Studies and, in later years, the Cato Institute. There was Sheldon Richman, a young newspaperman from Wilmington, Delaware, who would go on to work for the Associated Press and then take a series of influential writing and editorial jobs with libertarian foundations, including the Institute for Humane Studies, the Cato Institute, the Future of Freedom Foundation, and the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE). There was L. Neil Smith, whose first and most famous science fiction novel, *The Probability Broach*, the first of twenty-odd such works, was published a few months after the final gavel rang at the convention. There was David Theroux, who would go on to preside over the operations of two important public policy research foundations – the Pacific Research Institute (which has no longer toed a libertarian line under subsequent management) and the Independent Institute.

These committee members were not of one mind, to say the very least. They were divided on a number of issues, including the ERA, and also on the much more general question of how libertarian principles should be applied to problems sure to arise in the future from scientific and technological advances. The ERA was, of course, a special enthusiasm of Joan's, as was the whole category of abortion rights. Twenty years later she recalled what she thought of at the time, in the early 1980s, as the supreme importance of a public libertarian stand for “the protection of abortion providers, and for the rapid legalization of RU-486, the drug treatment that can be administered in any doctor's office or hospital and completed by taking a pill at home, thus giving hope for dismantling the hunting preserves that abortion clinics have become for those who say they believe in ‘life.’” Otherwise, she argued, how would women see that libertarians

were, at the most fundamental level, on their side? “In the abortion and the ERA fights,” Joan wrote in 1999, “women were asking for help in repealing unjust laws that were aimed at them. The Ed Clark presidential campaign on the Libertarian ticket in 1979 and 1980 took full advantage of this, and issued a position paper on ‘Women’s Issues’ that pledged libertarian support for these objectives, saying that the LP is truly a ‘women’s rights’ party.”<sup>44</sup>

Of course, it had been Joan herself who had applied that phrase to the party. It had been Joan herself who had written the Clark campaign’s position paper on “women’s issues.” She hadn’t been able to get any language on abortion rights or the ERA inserted into the platform.<sup>45</sup> So she took her concerns to the presidential campaign, and there she had her way. Michael Grossberg recalls Joan “speaking up about women’s rights” in the Platform Committee meetings, but thinks her effort was doomed from the start. “I don’t think there was much support for the ERA around that platform committee table at all,” he writes, “so [when] Joan did speak up about it, everyone reacted with politeness but not passion because there was no chance of it passing.”<sup>46</sup>

As for the proponents of platform planks that took into account the problems likely to emerge from advances in science and technology, their proposed planks faced the same sort of indifference or outright hostility that greeted Joan’s arguments for abortion rights and for ratification of the ERA. Rothbard publicly ridiculed these libertarians in his column in *LR*, calling them “space cadets” and warning that these “crazies...and fantasists who refuse to learn or care about real-world political issues but instead hold up science fiction as the true and ultimate embodiment of libertarianism...could wreck the best and brightest hope for liberty in over a century.”<sup>47</sup>

Rothbard, according to L. Neil Smith, “felt the LP would be embarrassed by forward-looking ideas like establishing private property rights in space and in the oceans, opposing UN treaties that had the opposite effect, and calling for a moratorium on violence against ‘certain simian and cetacean species until it can be scientifically determined whether they possess intelligence, and therefore rights, equivalent to our own.’” This didn’t surprise Smith particularly, however, since he had met Rothbard’s financial angel, Charles Koch, two years earlier, while serving on the Platform Committee at the 1977 LP convention in San Francisco, and had found him to be “just another Republican who had no use for any of the ideas I found interesting.”<sup>48</sup>

Michael Grossberg recalls “being among the ‘space cadets’ who did the plank on property rights in outer space.” Oddly, he says, “I don’t recall much discussion about it, or much opposition, but [I] vaguely think Joan voted in favor of it.”<sup>49</sup> If there was in fact little discussion and little vocal opposition, it was probably because the Rothbard anti-space cadet forces already had the votes to defeat the space cadet planks and didn’t want to waste time on pointless argument. According to LP founder David Nolan, “Ed Crane and his people wanted to make sure they had absolute control over the platform in the nominating convention in ’79, and when it was rumored, accurately, that I was seeking to become chair of the platform committee, they moved heaven and earth to keep me from getting on the platform committee at all, and proposed Joan Kennedy Taylor as chair.”<sup>50</sup> Nor is Nolan alone in suspecting a Kochtopus effort to, in effect, pack the Platform Committee, in 1979 and thereafter. L. Neil Smith told me that “Crane cared enough about the platform committee to keep me off of it” at the next national LP convention, the one held in Denver in 1981, in celebration of the party’s tenth anniversary. Crane

himself acknowledges, a bit shamefacedly, that the substance of what Nolan and Smith told me “is all true. I'm embarrassed to have come under Rothbard's spell. Not his hardcore libertarianism...but his Leninist tactics, which involved complete control of everything. Alas, I was better at it than Murray. In any event, we viewed Nolan as too conservative and Smith as an anarchist flake. Joan was a friend who, while pretty radical for an Objectivist, was reasonable on how to present ideas in the real world.”<sup>51</sup>

## VI

The methods of “complete control of everything” introduced into libertarian politics by Ed Crane during the Kochtopus days created quite a bit of resentment among party members and party leaders not allied with what quickly came to be known as “the Crane Machine.” To those who watched the prime time soap opera *Dallas* during those years, it was no exaggeration to say that “Boss Crane” (as he came to be known almost universally within the party in that period) was the J. R. Ewing of the libertarian movement. This was a style of leadership that was alien to Joan’s way of looking at things. It felt uncomfortably like the authoritarianism she had encountered in the Objectivist movement more than a decade before. And it may well have hastened her departure from LP activism in the early 1980s.

As of right now, however, in the late summer of 1979, Joan was happily exercising her own kinder and gentler sort of leadership within the existing party apparatus. As chair of the Platform Committee, Michael Grossberg told me, she was “[q]uite a lady...very mature, gracious, wise and savvy.”<sup>52</sup> L. Neil Smith thought she “was businesslike but civil, pleasant, but without much sign of a sense of humor.” She did, he recalled, have “a tendency to get all tangled up in protocol and parliamentary

procedure,” but then, “don’t we all, from time to time?” Smith doesn’t “remember anything special about Joan's relations with Bill [Evers] and Murray [Rothbard]... which means, I think, that she was a good chair.”<sup>53</sup> Dave Nolan, speaking from personal experience, agreed that “you want a fun task, try to chair a committee with Evers and Rothbard on it.”<sup>54</sup> So, by doing so, and by doing so with as much aplomb and as little muss and fuss as possible, Joan would seem to have passed a key test on the road to being deemed a successful Platform Committee chair.

As we have seen, however, she was much more than just that. She was a writer, an editor, a nationally syndicated radio commentator, and an adviser to a third party presidential campaign. By any standard she was a hyper-achiever, one of only a dozen or so in the entire movement at that time – all of them but her, men. For now that, thanks to Charles and David Koch, the movement had some real money, it was all guys in the important jobs – except for Joan. She was unquestionably the leading woman in the movement. Three younger women who would loom large later and would work closely with Joan on various of their own projects – Sharon Presley, Wendy McElroy, and Marty Zupan – had not yet emerged into the limelight. Presley, having taken time out to co-found one of the most important libertarian institutions of the last century, Laissez Faire Books, was back in grad school finishing up her Ph.D. in psychology at the City University of New York. McElroy wouldn’t put together her career-launching anthology on libertarian feminism (including, of course, an essay by Joan) until 1982. Zupan wouldn’t take over the editorship of the movement’s premier magazine, *Reason*, until 1984 and wouldn’t become president of the Institute for Humane Studies until 2001. In the late summer of 1979 and for several more years to come, if you were looking for a

really prominent, influential libertarian woman, a model libertarian feminist, Joan was really the only game in town.

She was doing brilliantly well in her new career. But behind the scenes, backstage if you will, the road was not always so smooth or so easy as it might have looked from the outside. “I am a woman, a writer, a libertarian, a feminist, a mother and daughter, and a widow,” she wrote sometime in 1979. “I had a good and happy life that is now over, and I am in the process of creating a second life, from scratch – except for the help of loving friends. Most of the time, I think I can do it.”<sup>55</sup>

She did it. The man who was rapidly becoming first among her loving friends, Roy Childs, a gay man who lived alone, invited her to move in with him. She did. And over the next eighteen months or so, from the summer of 1979 to the end of 1980, their place on Cathedral Hill (it was on Gough Street between Pine and Bush) became a center of libertarian activity and the site for a series of memorable parties. But all good things must end, and by the day after election day 1980, it had come time to relieve me of my command for the crime of spending too much money building circulation. My successor, Chris Hocker, late of the Ed Clark for President Campaign, was already waiting in the wings. He wanted to move the magazine to Washington, D.C., which he regarded as the center of the political universe and the only place for a political magazine to be located if it wanted to be “taken seriously.”<sup>56</sup> This idea was fine with Charles Koch, who had already decided to take Ed Crane’s advice and move the Cato Institute to Washington, where Crane (and Koch) felt it could have a more direct impact on policy development. Better move *LR* back there, too, then. That way, Ed Crane could keep a close eye on it, just as he had in San Francisco.

As it happened, *LR* moved to Washington almost a full year before Cato did. I stayed behind, with a reduced salary and a small budget to operate a two-room West Coast office. The other three editors – Roy, Joan, and Victoria Varga – moved to Washington. The rest of the staff – our part-time editorial assistants, our staff writer, our one-and-a-half-person art department, our Jill-of-all-trades administrative assistant and front desk person – was let go. Once again, Joan was uprooted. But now she had the sense of stability and continuity provided both by her job and by her deepening friendship with Roy. The two of them moved into a townhouse on Capitol Hill and invited their fellow editor, Victoria Varga, to move in, too, if she liked. She liked.

But this new home was to prove even more ephemeral, even more evanescent, than the one in San Francisco. Joan, Roy, and Victoria moved into their new digs on Capitol Hill in the very late fall, just before Christmas, of 1980. By August 7 of the following year, scarcely eight months later, Joan had been called to a meeting at which, she told her friend Barbara Abrash, she and the other members of the *LR* staff “were informed that the *Libertarian Review*, which moved to Washington in January and brought me with it, was ceasing to exist with its December issue and we should therefore look for jobs, as we would be ‘free’ in early November.” For Joan, this couldn’t have come at a worse time. As she wrote to Abrash, “I have been spending my weekends since Spring helping my mother move from Stockbridge to Connecticut (she still hasn’t sold her Stockbridge house, but she’s pretty well settled in the new place) and just recently, seeing my uncle through an eye operation in Miami,” and “no sooner did these family matters get under control than this new challenge occurred.”<sup>57</sup>

She rose to the new challenge, however, and quickly. Before the end of September she was writing to Marty Zupan, still on *Libertarian Review* letterhead, that “[e]ffective in two weeks [12 October], I am leaving D.C. and moving to New York. Mail can be addressed to me at my new office from now on. The address is Joan Kennedy Taylor, Publications Director, ICEPS, 20 West 40<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10018.”<sup>58</sup> ICEPS was the International Center for Economic Policy Studies, a free market think tank established four years earlier, late in 1977, by Wall Street lawyer and speculator (and former Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman) William J. Casey and British chicken magnate Antony Fisher, who had become convinced by F. A. Hayek during the late 1940s that the democratic socialism he saw developing in England after World War II would lead inexorably to the very same totalitarianism that had just been defeated at such great cost in that war. On Hayek’s advice, he began investing his millions in free market think tanks, to help retard or even prevent such an outcome.

He began in 1955 by founding the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), and it was the IEA’s brilliant success that inspired him twenty-two years later to try to duplicate that success on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>59</sup> Fisher’s emerging method was to found a think tank, then step out of the picture entirely (except for further fundraising) and leave matters like day-to-day operations and choice of appropriate projects to the discretion of people hired for that purpose. In the case of ICEPS, Fisher left everything in the hands of Casey, the lawyer he had hired to set up the foundation and run it for him once it was set up. In choosing Casey, of course, he had made the same error he had made earlier in England – that of assuming conservatives (whether they called themselves Tories or not) were advocates of a truly free marketplace.<sup>60</sup> But in this case, the consequences of his

error were mercifully short. By the fall of 1980, Casey had learned he would be leaving the think tank world to become Ronald Reagan's Director of Central Intelligence. Fisher had to find someone else to run ICEPS.

And this time the man he found really did favor a free market. William M. H. Hammett, the son of a career U.S. Foreign Service officer, grew up all over the world. In his teens, he fell under the sway of Ayn Rand. Later, at the University of Chicago, he fell under the sway of F. A. Hayek. He was working as an investment counselor when Fisher, probably at Hayek's suggestion, looked him up and offered him the presidency of ICEPS. Hammett took the offer and immediately began making changes. He didn't like the organization's name, he told me not long after being informed that the job was his. What did I think about the name "Manhattan Institute"? Did I think it would make people think of the Manhattan Project? Might that be a negative association? Hammett had called me because he was impressed with the job I had done thus far for the Cato Institute with *Byline*, and he wondered if it might be worthwhile to do something similar at ICEPS – er, the Manhattan Institute. The previous (Casey) administration had, in fact, started up such a radio program just before Hammett's arrival on the scene. It was more or less patterned on the old *Cato Forum* (that is, dry, academic-sounding, and too long for drivetime). Would I listen to some samples of it and give him my opinion?

Over the next few years, while I was producing and syndicating *Perspective on the Economy* for Bill Hammett and the Manhattan Institute (Leslee Newman and I had by now established a small company called The Syndicate, which offered a full range of services to nonprofit organizations that wanted to use the medium of radio to bring their message to a wider public), Joan was looking for potentially important books the institute

could help to get written and published and out into the marketplace of ideas. One day in the spring of 1982 she came upon an extremely interesting thirty-five-page pamphlet, published by the conservative Heritage Foundation, in which an obscure social scientist of whom she had never heard, Charles Murray, argued that federal efforts to help the poor through welfare had been not only ineffective, but actually counterproductive. She ran it by Hammett. Did he agree with her, she asked him, that this article could be expanded into a powerful and important book?

Hammett did agree. He invited Murray to participate in a panel discussion the Manhattan Institute was sponsoring in June at the University Club, and there he met Murray and sized him up. He liked what he saw. By July he had raised the money to offer Murray a \$30,000 grant so he could work full time for a year on the manuscript that eventually became his first major book, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (1984). Hammett asked Joan to call Murray and sound him out – would he be interested in such a project? Joan called and found him very receptive indeed. The following month the papers were signed, the deed was done, and Murray got down to work.

Born in 1943, Murray had come from Iowa – where he read *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* in high school – to Harvard, where he earned an undergraduate degree in history. After graduation, he had joined the Peace Corps, which took him to Thailand, where he lived for six years. In 1971, he came back to Cambridge and enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Political Science at MIT. What followed his next graduation was most of a decade of social science research, largely on projects intended to measure the effectiveness of various anti-poverty programs. Typically, these studies were funded by

the U.S. government, which had contracted with Murray's employer, the American Institutes for Research, to undertake them.<sup>61</sup> As Murray himself puts it, "I'd been making my living evaluating social programs – that's what I did. For the government."<sup>62</sup>

Generally speaking, however, when the bureaucrats who run government programs conduct research to determine the effectiveness of those programs, it is because they are required to do so by laws or by executive orders or by court orders; they certainly have no intention of changing anything about the way they run those programs just because of some impertinent social scientist's conclusions. They certainly have no intention of allowing any negative reports that might come back from any impertinent contract researchers – any reports showing that the program in question is, say, both ineffective and counter-productive – to interfere with their continued employment in service of what they continue to regard as the common good.

As Murray tells it, despite his youthful enthusiasm for Ayn Rand's vision of the untrammelled individual, "I was sympathetic to the people who were administering these programs. I did not go into my evaluations assuming the programs weren't going to work." On the other hand, "My experience evaluating them was that they never did work." As a result, Murray found himself "writing reports that nobody ever read. I mean, I felt like the person who carves the gargoyles on the cathedrals of Europe which can't be seen from the ground. I was writing for the eye of God."<sup>63</sup> But he wanted to reach human readers as well as celestial ones. He decided he'd try his hand at writing for some of the think tanks that seemed to him to share his emerging skepticism about government efforts to solve or even ameliorate socio-economic problems. His first such undertaking was "Safety Nets and the Truly Needy," the Heritage Foundation pamphlet

that brought him to the attention of the Manhattan Institute and set him on the path to a very different and more public sort of success than he'd ever experienced before.

Joan was placed in charge of the project. She edited Murray's book as he wrote it. "I would send her chunks," he told me, "and she would get back to me about them. I think she usually did this on the phone."<sup>64</sup> On a few occasions, though, she got back to him by letter. On 19 January 1983, for example, she wrote, "As we have discussed, the more you can apply Lord Acton's dictum [and] anticipate criticism, the more convincing your study will be, which leads me to the only suggestion I *might* have" – namely that he might consider introducing some of his evidence a bit earlier in the manuscript, in order to anticipate criticism on the part of the reader. Joan bends over backwards in this letter to stress that she does "not mean to encourage you to consider making any changes in [the current batch of] chapters now," since she finds them "totally logical and convincing." She only wants to mention a *possible* suggestion.<sup>65</sup>

Joan's comments in this letter are extremely general; nowhere in it does she focus in on particular lines, particular word choices, even particular paragraphs. "I don't recall much line-by-line editing," Murray told me. "But then, to be frank about it, if you're an editor, I'm a pretty good person to have as one of your authors. I don't require a lot of handholding. The draft I send in is pretty clean. So I've never had editors who asked for large numbers of changes. My wife does, but she sees an earlier draft than my editors see." Nor, according to Murray, did Joan try to steer his analysis ideologically, make it more systematically or explicitly libertarian. As Murray tells it, he wasn't a libertarian when he began writing the book; it was, in large measure, writing the book that made him a libertarian. "When I started out on *Losing Ground*," he told me, "I saw myself as

someone who had been disabused of his former belief in the efficacy of the usual social programs for dealing with social problems, but I did not really think of myself as a libertarian. But in the course of writing that book, I'd written the first two or three parts, which were all data driven, and then I'd gotten into the chapters about the limits of helping, where I started to talk about the constraints on how much you can do for anybody through government programs because of the built-in, inherent, inescapable incentives, and also the ways in which a lot of these incentives could only be right if the government withdrew altogether. It was as if I was discovering libertarianism *de novo*. Not quite *de novo* because I had been reading Nozick – *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, which I absolutely loved. I've always been a kind of a fan of Ayn Rand, too, so there was always that kind of thread in my background. But as I started writing the chapters, I found I was coming at libertarianism from my perspective. I was sort of convincing myself on my own terms as a social scientist who analyzed social programs as opposed to someone who had an ideological predisposition. Quakers have this distinction between birthright Quakers and Quakers by conviction. Birthright Quakers are born into it and Quakers by conviction are those who become Quakers later in life. And I think I'm a libertarian by conviction; I'm not a birthright libertarian.”<sup>66</sup>

As his libertarianism emerged, however – whatever sort of libertarianism it might have been – Joan was delighted to see it. “It was when I did that chapter on the limits of helping and the chapter with the smoking experiment in it – you know, challenging people to a thought experiment, which said, okay, let's say the government wants to spend money to reduce smoking by providing people with incentives not to smoke. And at the end of the chapter I had to conclude that there is no way that you can do it. You're

definitely going to increase the net number of smokers if the government provides incentives to stop smoking. And Joan got those chapters. And I remember her saying to me (I don't know if it was in person or on the phone), 'This is what I knew you had in you!' So she never proselytized, but I think she saw from the beginning that that was the kind of thing that I was eventually going to be moving toward."<sup>67</sup>

Murray tried to incorporate her very tentative suggestion of January 19 that he consider moving some of his most convincing evidence to an earlier point in the manuscript. "Enclosed," he wrote her on 11 February, "is a new closing to the Prologue...I'm not satisfied with the last page, where I try to give a preview, but I'm afraid to spend any more time on it. After the draft has cooled for a week or so I will probably be able to say it better."<sup>68</sup> And so the book progressed. By November, it was finished. On November 11, 1983, Murray submitted the finished manuscript to Basic Books.

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<sup>1</sup> Gladstone, "Equal Rights Amendments: State Provisions."

<sup>2</sup> "Joan Kennedy Taylor Interview," 4 April 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Nason, personal e-mail to the author, 20 August 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Murray N. Rothbard, "Mozart Was a Red: A Morality Play i One Act." Online at <http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/mozart.html>

<sup>5</sup> Raimondo, *An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard*, p. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 121-122.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 122, 124.

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<sup>8</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, “Roy A. Childs: A Biographical Sketch” in Roy A. Childs, Jr., *Liberty Against Power: Essays by Roy A. Childs, Jr.*, ed., Joan Kennedy Taylor (San Francisco: Fox & Wilkes, 1994), pp. xiii-xiv. Leonard Read’s Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), then as now the oldest continuously operating libertarian organization in existence, was founded in 1946. Read himself argued that in a free society, “anything that’s peaceful” would be legal. See Leonard E. Read, *Anything That’s Peaceful* (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1964).

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, “Roy A. Childs: A Biographical Sketch,” p. xiv.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> For general information on Karl T. Pflock, see [http://www.forteanimes.com/strangedays/obituaries/378/karl\\_t\\_pflock.html](http://www.forteanimes.com/strangedays/obituaries/378/karl_t_pflock.html)

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, “Roy A. Childs: A Biographical Sketch,” p. xvi.

<sup>15</sup> R. A. Childs, Jr. to Joan Kennedy Taylor, 1 January 1966. The original letter may be found in Box 17, Folder 2 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>16</sup> R. A. Childs, Jr. to Joan Kennedy Taylor, 5 May 1967. The original letter may be found in Box 17, Folder 2 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>17</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, “The Making of a Platform,” *Massachusetts Liberty* [newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts], undated photocopy found in Box 18, Folder 4 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>18</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, “Platform Updated to Reflect New Issues,” *Libertarian Party News* September-October 1977, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, “The Making of a Platform.”

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview by the author with Robert Hessen, 8 July 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Ayn Rand, “The Wreckage of the Consensus,” *The Objectivist*, Vol. 6, No. 4, April 1967, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ayn Rand, “Moral Inflation, Part II,” *The Ayn Rand Letter*, Vol. III, No. 13, 25 March 1974, pp. 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> “Playboy Interviews Ayn Rand” in *Playboy Interviews*, ed., the editors of *Playboy* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1967), p. 120.

<sup>24</sup> Personal interview by the author with Robert Hessen, 8 July 2008.

<sup>25</sup> “Playboy Interviews Ayn Rand,” pp. 118-119.

<sup>26</sup> David J. Dawson, “A Red Under Every Bed,” *Persuasion* Vol. II, No. 9, September 1965, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>27</sup> David J. Dawson, “Wish Fulfillment as Foreign Policy: A Review of Ronald Steel’s *Pax Americana*,” *Persuasion* Vol. IV, No. 12, December 1967, p. 21.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 21, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, "Rational Compromise." Unpublished manuscript. Undated [ca. 1962-1965]. Box 1, Folder 3, pp. 4, 6, 8, 10-11 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, "Memories of Ayn Rand," p.4.

<sup>31</sup> David Gordon, "The Kochtopus vs. Murray N. Rothbard," 22 April 2008. Online at <http://www.lewrockwell.com/gordon/gordon37.html>

<sup>32</sup> David Gordon, "The Kochtopus vs. Murray N. Rothbard, Part II," 12 May 2008. Online at <http://www.lewrockwell.com/gordon/gordon39.html>

<sup>33</sup> Pegolotti, "Joan Kennedy Taylor – From a Conversation with Jim Pegolotti, June 19, 1999."

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview by the author with Sally Begley and Michael Cook, 8 June 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Cook, personal e-mail to the author, 10 April 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Marshall E. Schwartz, personal e-mail to the author, 19 August 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.alf.org/aboutalf/founding.shtml>

<sup>39</sup> Sharon Presley, personal e-mail to the author 21 August 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Sharon Presley, personal e-mail to the author, 18 August 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement*, p. 694.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>44</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, "Why Aren't More Women Part of the Libertarian Movement?" *ALF News* No. 70, Spring 1999. Online at <http://www.alf.org/alfnews/alf70.html>

<sup>45</sup> Plank 5 of the "1980 Platform of the Libertarian Party, the Party of Principle, Adopted in Convention, Los Angeles, California – September 6-9, 1979," a single paragraph on p. 4, under the heading "Population," reads, in its entirety: "We support an end to all subsidies for child-bearing built into our present laws, including all welfare plans and the provision of tax-supported services for children. We further support the repeal of all laws restricting voluntary birth control or the right of the woman to make a personal moral choice regarding the termination of pregnancy. We call for the elimination of special tax burdens on single people and couples with few or no children. We shall oppose all coercive measures to control population growth." This is the only reference to abortion (notice, though, that it carefully avoids using the word "abortion") or to women's issues in the entire platform.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Grossberg, personal e-mail to the author, 10 June 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Murray N. Rothbard, "The Plumb Line: The Menace of the Space Cult," *The Libertarian Review* February 1979, p. 14.

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<sup>48</sup> L. Neil Smith, personal e-mail to the author, 9 June 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Grossberg, 10 June 2008.

<sup>50</sup> Personal interview by the author with David F. Nolan, 24 May 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Edward H. Crane, personal e-mail to the author, 26 August 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Grossberg, 10 June 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, 9 June 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Nolan, 24 May 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor, “Who Is Joan Kennedy Taylor?” Undated fragment found among the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers (Box 11, Folder 1) on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>56</sup> One assumes that the editors of such political magazines as *National Review* and *The Nation* (published in New York) and *Mother Jones* (published in San Francisco) were nonplussed to learn that their periodicals would no longer be taken seriously.

<sup>57</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor to Barbara “Bobbie” Abrash, 12 August 1981. A carbon copy of this letter, retained by Joan, may be found in Box 20, Folder 7 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California. The uncle to whom Joan refers was Mary Kennedy’s brother, Foster Kennedy, an architect and real estate investor in South Florida.

<sup>58</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor to Marty Zupan, 28 September 1981. A carbon copy of this letter, retained by Joan, may be found in Box 5, Folder 8 of the Joan Kennedy Taylor Papers on deposit at the Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

<sup>59</sup> On the IEA’s success see, for example, Christopher Muller, “The Institute of Economic Affairs: Undermining the Post-War Consensus” in Michael D. Kandiah and Anthony Seldon, eds., *Ideas and Think Tanks in Contemporary Britain: V. 2* (London: Routledge, 1997). According to Muller, “[m]any of the other think tanks considered” or otherwise “discussed in this volume” were “relatively new creations” at the time of his writing – “indeed often in response to the work of the IEA.” The IEA, “[h]aving been established to conduct a war of ideas against the political and economic consensus,” Muller writes, must be judged “largely successful,” for “it has been relatively instrumental in inducing a genuine change in political thinking and expectations,” with the result that “much of the philosophical agenda of the IEA is no longer novel” in Britain (pp. 88-89).

<sup>60</sup> Hayek could have set him straight on that score. In Hayek’s view, one of the “characteristics of conservatism” is “its fondness for authority. ... Order appears to the conservative as the result of the continuous attention of authority.” Hence “the characteristic complacency of the conservative toward the action of established authority and his prime concern that this authority be not weakened rather than that its power be kept within bounds. This is difficult to reconcile with the preservation of liberty. In general, it can probably be said that the conservative does not object to coercion or arbitrary power so long as it is used for what he regards as the right purposes.” And, in the end, this means that the conservative has more in common with the socialist than with the libertarian. For “[l]ike the socialist, he is less concerned with the problem of how the powers of government should be limited than with that of who wields them; and, like the socialist, he regards himself as entitled to force the value he holds on other people.” Unlike both the conservative and the socialist, Hayek writes, the libertarian holds “that moral beliefs concerning matters of conduct which do not directly interfere with the protected sphere of other persons do not justify coercion. This may... explain why it seems to be so much easier for the repentant socialist to find a new spiritual

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home in the conservative fold than in the [libertarian].” Hayek notes that conservatism is marked by a passionate “hostility to internationalism.” Thus “[c]onservatives are usually protectionists” rather than believers in free trade, like libertarians. Conservatives are also characterized by their “proneness to a strident nationalism,” Hayek maintains – a nationalism that is “frequently associated with imperialism.” For “the more a person dislikes the strange and thinks his own ways superior, the more he tends to regard it as his mission to ‘civilize’ others – not by the voluntary and unhampered intercourse which the [libertarian] favors, but by bringing them the blessings of efficient government.” See Friedrich A. Hayek, “Why I Am Not a Conservative” in *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 397-411.

<sup>61</sup> In documents filed with the General Services Administration, the American Institutes for Research notes that “[s]ince AIR’s founding in 1946, the federal government has been our largest and most important client.” See [https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/ref\\_text/GS10F0112J/GS10F0112J\\_online.htm](https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/ref_text/GS10F0112J/GS10F0112J_online.htm)

<sup>62</sup> Personal interview by the author with Charles Murray, 30 May 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Joan Kennedy Taylor to Charles Murray, 19 January 1983. Original letter in the possession of Charles Murray.

<sup>66</sup> Personal interview by the author with Charles Murray, 30 May 2007.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Murray to Joan Kennedy Taylor, 11 February 1983. I am indebted to Charles Murray for providing me access to his copy of this letter.