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almost immediately. I feel dismissed as being no use to his ambition. He probably guesses I am an old hippy, a tiny cell of the social cancer he wishes to wipe away like scum off a glass slide. I have worked for bosses like him: you don't exist to them except when useful or perceived a threat.

Relate to me, I snarl at Newt in the mirror. Tell me about the malignancy within. Say it loudly: True Americans must eradicate untrue Americans. Tell me that society has to be ethnically cleansed of persons you call "abnormal Americans," who are presumably people like me who are to the left of Attila the Hun; uppity pushy women who frighten the testicles off white males; non-Christians and "aliens", who are everyone of color no matter how many centuries their ancestors have lived here, even those who greeted Columbus and assisted Lewis & Clark.

Convince me I owe my life and labor to a plutocracy that enriches itself by impoverishing the rest of us, I shout silently at Newt's mirror face. Inspire me that a "great" America depends on removing "inferiors and undesirables who must be given the chance to die of their own weakness" by abolishing every opportunity for life, liberty and their pursuit of happiness.

I think of something a woman suggested to me. Hey Newt, I smirk at his reflection: What if invitro testing not only determined a person's sex but also its sexual preference — would your pro-life homophobic friends propose abortion for homosexual fetuses?

Newt's reflected mouth moves as relentlessly as a drumbeating rabbit in a battery commercial. "Our goal is simple," Newt says. "To train by April 1996, 200,000 citizens as a model for replacing the welfare state and reforming government."

I get the chills and gasp at his audacity: Newt is proposing to raise a private army election year, a rabble of true believers recruited to make domestic politics as severe and confrontational as the Cold War with communist Russia. No mercy for the "other side" or anyone else who resists the new Kingfish. Huey Long reincarnate. "Politics and war are remarkably similar systems," Newt says almost reading my mind. "We are a happy bunch of Vikings who don't mind a fight."

Newt's brand of Americanism makes me think of an old cartoon poster of Nixon and Agnew who are unshaved cooks in a gag and barf cafe. Nixon shoves a plate of red, white and blue spaghetti with stars for meatballs at the observer. "Shut up and eat it!" he snarls.

I wonder if Newt's loyal corps whom he intimidates into obedience realize that their narrow and flogging perception of democracy disrupts the majority they claim to represent. Yet their claim might be real. That has always been the problem with majority rule. A majority is easily bullied to bully; laceration of deep inferiority feelings works almost every time. People react with fear and loathing, usually against minorities. The irony is that it is usually minorities who strive for liberty and justice, just as it is a minority that craves raw power and will do anything to get and keep it.

The bartender refills my Red Death. "Waste of time listening to those peckerheads," he says. He looks grimly at Newt's table. "Maybe being a liberal isn't so popular nowadays," he says, "but at least we've got larger alimentary canals than rednecks and don't keep all that shit bottled up."

Newt explains capitalism to his eagerly capitalistic

listeners. "The capitalist system gives everyone the opportunity to move up and achieve," he says. "We should look at it that everyone has an opportunity to achieve but not necessarily accomplish equal results." Some become more equal than others, accumulating more than equal property, wealth and power, which of course shrinks the equality of the rest. Newt thinks that's the way it should be. Natural selection. Social Darwinism is a fact, he says. He follows this disingenuous alliteration to Adam Smith with a gem of doublethink. "The engine that pulls the train must continue to be fueled," he says. He spells it out. Tax breaks for low income people must be sacrificed for high income tax breaks. "Affluent taxpayers must receive breaks because they invest money and create jobs for others," Newt says.

I sneer at Newt's bald-faced image in the mirror. Those 'affluent taxpayers' don't invest in anything except their own stock portfolios, and they not only don't pay their fair share of taxes, they gorge on public money which people like Newt call welfare when distributed among the poor and investment when extorted by the rich. At the same time Republicans cut off welfare to unwed teenage mothers and downsized workers, they initiate special tax breaks to favored corporations that amount to billions of dollars. They cut the taxes of Big Business and the rich and spoil them with billions more in subsidies they claim are essential to the free market, which is regarded as a natural force. Public services and poverty programs are gutted to make up the shortfall. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. That is Republican tax policy and the taproot of its counterfeit revolution. Newt's "crown jewel."

Maybe Newt and his gang should be allowed to rule without protest or resistance in the interests of the nation's new Tories and roll back the hard won laws and principles of two centuries. Ordinary people might realize what they have to lose and take back what they've lost, which should sober up the next couple of generations. But maybe no one will be inclined to retrieve rights our forebears knew were essential to liberty and equality. Maybe Democracy didn't win the Cold War after all. Old coarse fascism in modern populist disguise has triumphed. Hothouse capitalism exists best in strictly controlled environments in which social classes are rigidly defined and no one is allowed to question or reform the arthritic incompetence and desolation such corrupt and moribund mediocracies usually foster and perpetuate like fetid molds.

You try to confuse us, I say to mirror Newt. You claim corporate capitalism is free market Americanism. You try to convince us that Big Business willingly and enthusiastically competes for sheer love of competition in an unfettered emporium of commerce. I laugh harshly at Newt's facile face and drink a long swallow of Red Death. Tell me you actually think the ruthless takeover wars that eliminate thousands of jobs are essential to your almighty free market, I snarl silently. Are you going to lie and say you don't suspect that corporations are inherently socialist rather than capitalist and that their bitter competition to dominate the American economy is winner take all?

Hey Newt! I say, leaning across the bar at the mirror. This is a war between the robbers and the robbed. And you, you old draftdodger, you're the robber warlord.

One of the regulars slops against me at the bar. He looks over at Newt. "I know that guy," he says.

"Oliver Cromwell."

"Noooo...that TV guy. Donahue."

Newt gets spacy as the drinks flow. He touts a "virtual world," simulated, distracted from the real world. Instead of cake as suggested by Marie Antionette, Newt wants the common folk to feed on sugar frosting. "We can develop populism in space and the beginning of citizen involvement by initiating a tourism program for the American people," he says, and blames the "welfare state" for "the decision to not move more quickly into space."

"If you think about the notion that the great challenge of our lifetime is first to imagine a future that is worth spending our lives getting to," Newt says, "and then, because of the technologies and capabilities we have today, to get it up to sort of a virtual state, although that's done in your mind..."

What did he say?

"I find it fascinating that we are not in a new place," Newt says. "It's just becoming harder and harder and harder to avoid the place where we are."

Newt is lost in spacebabble. He rants about "factories and jobs in space," a "honeymoon on the Moon" and a "host of high-tech efforts to spread a new electronic gospel."

Moonbeamy. Technoholic. Newt is future drunk.

Technomania in eternal combat with technophobia. He foresees intense rivalry in the very near future as a result of overpopulation and depletion of resources as his grand opportunity. He is staking out the pennant of the rich and famous as his very own mainspring to absolute power.

"You're making sure your rich patrons get through the Millennium by sacrificing the rest of us. All for yourselves and nothing for anybody else," I mumble aloud to Newt's somewhat blurred virtual-face in the mirror. "You and your gang are stripping away everything that counts — even clean air, clear water, the last forests. You're giving everything back to the big polluters and the rape and pillagers and make it virtually impossible for preventive litigation or lawsuits for public or personal damages. You say you're a futurist but you act as crazy as Watt who said environmentalism was unnecessary because God was going to terminate the planet any minute."

A crowd comes in and quickly fills the *Top Of The Astor*. Rush Limbaugh sits at a table with Pat Robertson and Robert Dole. Ralph Reed and several Christoliticans take a large table. Pat Buchanan sits by himself. Tattooed skinheads in cutoff leathers and swastika emblems maraud in at the bar. A large group of beergut commandos in military camouflage armed with NRA-approved assault rifles marches in. Mark Hemphill, who damn near singlehandedly bought this year's Legislature, surrounds Newt with his Oregon Business Roundtable. Newt raises his glass in salute. "Money is the mother's milk of politics," the Speaker of the House says cheerfully.

Clamo, Derfler and Tieman lick Newt's shoes while he sings, "The morning will come when the world will be mine. Tomorrow belongs to me." I recognize it from *Cabaret*, an angelic Nazi boy singing in a beer garden.

Rita squirms through the crowd to Newt's table. She bends to pick up empty glasses and full ashtrays. Tieman laughs and pinches her fanny. She smacks the tray against his head, which disappears in an explosion of ashes and shards of glass. I see it all in the bar mirror and rush over to the table, prepared to say everything on my mind. I splash Red Death in Newt's face like Jose Ferrer did to Fred MacMurray in *Caine Mutiny*. "You slimy reptile," I say.

The Republican majority of the Oregon Legislature appear from everywhere in the restaurant and bar. I am engulfed. Hands grasp me, lift me off the floor and throw me through an open window next to the table. As I fall eight floors from the *Top Of The Astor* to the street I see anchored oil ships staining a toxinated river empty of salmon and sea lions; the city's scalp skinned of trees; smoke pumping into the ozone and sewage into the river from fully computerized papermills and aluminum plants wall to wall on the waterfront; vacant shabby or burnt shells of old houses falling down the hills. Downtown is desolate, boarded up. Out of work Astorians fight each other for scarce food stamps or squat along curbs smoking shit or drinking piss. Wolfpacks of homeless children roam through the city. Newt's America.

I hit the sidewalk and wake up.

Most quotes attributed to Newt Gingrich are from his own mouth.

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