

They now have a board that reviews his salary. He says, "It's based on a formula that is devised by our auditors and accountants—a base salary of \$300,000 and then compensation for speeches and things." Connerly no longer has his private company invoice his nonprofits: "I pay Connerly and Associates for those services out of funds I receive for ACRI, so they [Connerly and Associates] in fact became a sub-contractor to me." If this explanation seems convoluted, that's fine by Connerly.

Whose money is he using? It's difficult to say. During Connerly's push for Proposition 54, which would have banned California from collecting racial data on its employees or students, ACRC was sued by political opponents for breaking campaign-finance laws. The settlement revealed that Connerly's donors included a handful of deep-pocketed conservatives, including grocery magnate John Uhlmann and media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

Connerly was an odd candidate to become a favorite son of the conservative movement. Born in the ethnic melting pot of Louisiana at the start of World War II, he describes his ancestry as one-quarter black mixed with Irish, French, and Choctaw. His father left the family when Connerly was two, and his mother died when he was four. He was young enough to have experienced Jim Crow laws. After graduating with honors in political science from Sacramento State College, Connerly embarked on a low-level career in California politics, working in the Department of Housing and Urban Development and serving on various assembly committees. It was during this time that he befriended Pete Wilson, a legislator who later became governor.

In 1973, using the experience and connections he gained in California state politics, Connerly opened Connerly and Associates with his wife Ilene. His work

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki recently learned he was being spied upon by Washington, thanks Bob Woodward's latest book *The War Within*. One intelligence source reportedly related, "We know everything he says." If the Iraqis are now tearing holes in their walls to find the microphones, they might be disappointed. The latest surveillance technologies are variations on systems pioneered by the Russians in the 1980s and used with some success against the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. They use a transmitter that saturates a target space with subsonic noise. The noise is then picked up by a receiver on the other side of the target and the "holes" in the sound pattern are reconstructed to recreate the conversations taking place in the room. The technology can be defeated using secure rooms or "bubbles," but it is to be presumed that most Iraqi government meetings do not incorporate any special security measures.



Could the October Surprise happen again? There is considerable buzz among former intelligence officers that an overseas crisis is being engineered or allowed to explode. The spinning of the Georgia incident to create a faux conflict with Russia is a harbinger of things to come. As one officer puts it, how else might one plausibly explain so many otherwise manageable international situations being allowed to turn confrontational so close to the election? The deliberately provocative build-up of naval forces in the Persian Gulf and Black Sea; reports in the European media that an attack on Iran is imminent; the visit of Dick Cheney to Georgia and Ukraine; massive aid to rearm Tbilisi; and the launching of the first U.S. ground forces attacks inside Pakistan—all of this could have been deferred until after the election. The potential for a serious international crisis during the next 60 days has increased dramatically. And John McCain is clearly reading the tea leaves, not hesitating to stir the pot with increasingly harsh rhetoric targeting Russia. There is growing belief among intelligence officers that an incident will either be manufactured or allowed to occur to strengthen the electoral prospects of the Republicans' "national security" candidate. Few believe that the ethically challenged Bush administration would hesitate to engineer its own Gulf of Tonkin to guarantee a GOP victory.

The original October Surprise started with a rogue operation by the CIA chiefs of station in Madrid, Paris, and Rome, all classmates in the Operations Directorate who had come up together in Africa and the Middle East. In the summer of 1980, they arranged a series of secret meetings between Reagan's campaign manager, Bill Casey, and Iranian representatives that led to an Iranian agreement not to release the American hostages they were holding, guaranteeing electoral defeat for the hapless Jimmy Carter. But no one believes that a 2008 surprise would again involve the CIA, which has been purged and brought to heel to such an extent that any independent action is unimaginable. Look instead to the still well-entrenched neocons operating out of the office of Vice President Cheney. Their hopes for the future ride on a McCain victory.

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earned him a spot in the California Building Industry Hall of Fame, and he became well known among California's business and political elite. Soon everyone would know him.

Connerly was appointed to the University of California's Board of Regents in 1993, just as California politics took a dramatic turn. The Los Angeles riots had exposed new racial fault lines, and Republicans were taking advantage. In 1994, the California GOP achieved its first statewide majority in over three decades by supporting Proposition 187, which prohibited public services for illegal aliens. The initiative was quickly thrown out by the courts as unconstitutional. But Republicans and the media went searching for the next big thing in white backlash, which turned out to be opposition to affirmative action. Governor Wilson, a supporter of affirmative action as recently as 1994, began to champion "equality of opportunity" while eyeing the 1996 Republican presidential primaries.

If Wilson's embrace of anti-affirmative-action politics seemed poll-driven, Connerly's was also opportunistic. In the same year that Connerly discovered his opposition to affirmative action, he was very much a beneficiary of it. In 1994, his consulting firm was registered with the state as a minority- and woman-owned business. While telling media outlets that affirmative action was the equivalent of the "colored only" water fountains he encountered in Louisiana as a child, his firm was receiving a \$35,000 contract from the state of California to carry out energy conservation training. Under the same noncompetitive bidding status, his firm had secured a state contract worth \$100,000 in 1992 and another for \$1.1 million in 1989.

Despite this history, Connerly took up the anti-affirmative-action cause with vigor. In 1995, he became chairman of the California Civil Rights Initiative campaign promoting Proposition 209, which

would end state-sponsored affirmative action. The effort received generous funding from conservative donors. Murdoch, for instance, gave \$1 million to Republicans in support of Prop 209. The measure passed with 54 percent of the vote in 1996. A year later, Connerly formed his two nonprofits. He became the public face of anti-affirmative-action activism and, despite his long record as a moderate Republican with generally libertarian views on cultural questions, a fixture of the conservative movement.

His activism is not entirely cynical. Political convictions can evolve, even if the change is initially motivated by ambition. Connerly's work has exposed him to hysterical opposition from the old civil-rights establishment and every conceivable formulation of the "Uncle Tom" slur has been applied to him. He speaks movingly against racial discrimination. But even though successful political movements welcome true defectors, they don't usually crown them with wealth and fame for accomplishing nothing.

Not that this troubles the Right. David Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union, says that Connerly "is not only well-regarded, but he's earned it." Longtime conservative activist David Horowitz, who also runs a California-based nonprofit, justifies Connerly's take by citing the opportunity costs that come with doing political work—time away from business and lost clients. Further, says Horowitz, "His donors can look up his salary, and they're obviously happy with what he's doing." Keene cautions against "a superficial reading [of IRS filings], which don't tell the whole story. . . . It becomes a question of judgment on what was that work worth."

What was Connerly's Super Tuesday for Equal Rights worth? The potentially election-changing project has fallen apart. The contactors Connerly hired to obtain signatures are now battling over

fees. Meanwhile, the pro-affirmative action cause seems to be getting a better bang for its buck.

Connerly's past successes are also disappearing. Ending affirmative action in California's schools dramatically reduced minority enrollment for one year, but it didn't take long for administrators to find ways to get around Prop 209. According to statistician Richard Berk, new "comprehensive reviews" in UCLA admissions meant that between 1998 and 2001, Hispanics were still 1.8 times as likely as whites to be admitted and blacks 3.6 times as likely.

Yet Connerly's accolades continue to pile up. In 2005, he was awarded the Bradley Prize, a \$250,000 grant with no strings attached, usually given to a successful totem of the conservative movement. Writing in the *Weekly Standard* Andrew Ferguson observed, "the prize amounts to a parody of what liberals say conservatives always want to do anyway—in tax cuts, for example: boost the circumstances of people whose circumstances don't need boosting, pass lots of money to people who already have lots of money." The cofounder of Connerly's nonprofits, *National Review* president Thomas Rhodes, happens to sit on the board of the Bradley Foundation.

The political fight against affirmative action is supposed to be a battle for meritocracy, for a color-blind society rather than a color-obsessed one, for standards and accomplishment over the prerogatives of racial privilege. But with all the favor and blandishments of the conservative movement at his disposal, Ward Connerly has little to show for his efforts. He has paid himself a handsome salary to manage payments to his own firm. He receives every reward and honor conservatives can bestow, yet there is just as much affirmative action as when he started his political career.

Why is he the Right's man for the job? ■

Ron Paul's Party

WHILE TWITCHY COPS and party hacks congregated in St. Paul for the Republican Convention, 12,000 Ron Paul supporters assembled for the Rally for the Republic in Minneapolis. The counter-convention featured a dozen speakers—from libertarian luminaries Bill Kauffman and Lew Rockwell to ex-governors Jesse Ventura and Gary Johnson—plus musical acts Sara Evans and Aimee Allen (the freedom movement's answer to Avril Lavigne, with more talent and less tolerance for the Bilderberg Group). Barry Goldwater Jr. introduced Paul's keynote.

John McCain's big tent across the river brought together hawks of all persuasions, from Joe Lieberman to Sarah Palin to Rudy Giuliani. The Connecticut senator, as staunch an advocate for military adventurism as abortion, got a prime-time speaking slot. A certain pro-life, antiwar Texan was *persona non grata*.

"We offered our services. We would have been glad to have an opportunity, we would have been pleased to participate," Paul said. But "that wasn't available to us." McCain did not want his primary challenger even to be seen. "We had thought we would be able to go over, but my floor privileges have been strictly limited," Paul revealed. "They've given me a pass that is second class."

That pass required that the congressman enter and leave only by a certain door, be chaperoned by a McCain flack, and not bring any staff. Paul had no intention of attending under those conditions. Yet he didn't get mad—he got even. "We still have enough freedom in this country to get involved and become the party," he said, "and that's been our approach rather than complaining about it."

"The Republican Party ought to be welcoming me because I appeal to young people," Paul contended. Indeed,

one of the most remarkable things about Paul's presidential campaign was its ability to energize youth around the unlikeliest of causes: "One of the most exciting issues that we talk about with young people is monetary policy."

Even more than the Iraq War, the Federal Reserve stokes the passions of Paul's supporters. During his keynote, the Target Center shook to chants of "End the Fed!" Months earlier, during a Paul appearance at the University of Michigan, students burned Federal Reserve notes—money, or Uncle Sam's facsimile thereof.

Impressive as the rally was, even more portentous may have been the 600 activists who turned out for training put on by Paul's new organization, the Campaign for Liberty, in the days before. They sat through ten-and-a-half hours of political boot camp on Aug. 31 and another eight hours the next day. This was a promising start for the Campaign for Liberty, which aims to do for the small-government, antiwar side what the Christian Coalition did for religious conservatives in the early 1990s.

Yet it has tensions at the philosophical level. One activist observed that there seemed to be many "paleoconservatives" in the group's leadership, while much of the grassroots were "anarcho-capitalists." Paul recognizes the fault line. "I have many friends in the libertarian movement who look down on those of us who get involved in political activity," he acknowledged, but "eventually, if you want to bring about changes ... what you have to do is participate in political action."

The Campaign for Liberty's organizers emphasized that though there might be few candidates Paul supporters can get behind, there are always ballot issues and legislation that the grassroots

can organize to stop—tax hikes, gun registration, municipal bonds. Yet the great causes that animate the Paul coalition—war and monetary policy—are national. Paul is 73. If he doesn't run in 2012, where will his supporters go?

One man eager to take up his banner is former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura. "I wrote the book *Don't Start the Revolution Without Me*. Well, I'm here," he announced, hinting that "in 2012 we'll give them a race they'll never forget." The former pro-wrestler was charismatic—and kooky. He teased the 9/11 "truther" contingent in the audience by asking why Osama bin Laden had not been formally charged with the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. That way lies madness. If Ventura is the future of the Paul movement, it will go the way of the Reform Party.

A better prospect for 2012 might be the rally's other ex-governor—Gary Johnson of New Mexico. He doesn't have Ventura's presence, but he's witty. Describing his opposition to mandatory-helmet laws for motorcyclists, he said, "We have an organ donor shortage. If you want to ride your motorcycle without a helmet, go ahead." Johnson is even more of a non-interventionist than his admirers had suspected. "We have a military presence in 155 countries," he said, "We need to embark on a process of getting those 155 countries unoccupied, à la Ron Paul."

The Rally for the Republic made plain that Ron Paul Republicans will have no truck with McCain or Obama. But is there any other politician they can support, besides Paul himself? More than just their movement is at stake: Paul's revolution might be the last chance in a generation for sound money and a non-imperial foreign policy. ■