

Members of the Incumbent Party don't have to fight against the entrenched interests of the major parties. They *embrace* the entrenched interests of the major parties.

It seems the Incumbent Party has all the benefits that traditional third parties fail to achieve. The only thing it lacks is the desire to change the system in any way whatsoever.

— Ross Levatter

**Choosing for you** — Washington was one of seven states that allowed the sale of the "Plan B" antipregnancy drug before the FDA legalized it nationwide. In that state the question has arisen: should pharmacists who morally object to Plan B be required to sell it anyway?

What was notable about the debate was how the libertarian way of thinking was entirely absent from it. In that view, a person or company in the business of selling — that is, as an owner — could decide not to sell certain merchandise for whatever reason or for no reason, because commerce should be voluntary. The pharmacists' claim, however, was not stated that way. It was stated that a pharmacist, as a pharmacist, should have the right not to dispense drugs if he did not approve of the customer's using them.

That most pharmacists work for drugstore chains was not mentioned. It was highly unlikely that a chain would allow employees to refuse to sell company inventory because of some beliefs they had. Really this whole issue was about a handful of pharmacist-owners, probably most of them in small towns. But the claim was not made that way.

The loud and insistent reply from urban progressives was that the moralistic pharmacist was denying the woman's access to the drug, and that it was none of his business to police her that way. And so, after initially ruling for the pharmacists, the state pharmacy board, under pressure from the state's (female) governor, ruled the other way. In Washington, pharmacists are required to sell Plan B to a legally qualified buyer if they have it in stock.

I can't see how that rule will affect me in the slightest. I'm a city guy, and probably if I were a pharmacist I would have the same sales policy as Walgreens. But I would also resent the state's usurpation of my decision about it, and the corresponding loss of liberty.

— Bruce Ramsey

**Plame game** — For three years now, the major news media have been bashing Bush with the allegation that he, or Cheney, or Rove, or someone else in his administration, delib-

erately "outed" Valerie Plame, the wife of Joe Wilson, in retaliation for Wilson's pushing the story that Bush had lied in his 2003 State of the Union address, in which he repeated the British allegation that Saddam Hussein had sought to buy uranium from Niger. The media were shocked, *shocked*, that leaking was going on! and demanded the appointment of a special prosecutor. They got what they wanted. Patrick Fitzgerald was anointed, and over the past three years has spent a ton of taxpayer money investigating everybody but managing only to get an indictment of Scooter Libby, Cheney's chief of staff.

With the admission by Richard Armitage, Colin Powell's deputy, that he was the source of the leak, the whole story has been shown to be a pack of lies. Wilson's allegations were long ago debunked, of course. But the story lingered on, with the media hoping to bring down Rove. But now we know that Bush, Cheney, Rove, and Libby were innocent all along, and that Armitage, and Powell, and Patrick Fitzgerald *knew* it all along. The silliness of the major news media is nothing particularly surprising. The treachery of Armitage (and Powell, for that matter) is harder to explain: how do you watch innocent men get attacked and indicted, when you know that they are innocent, because you committed the "crime"?

But the big lesson here is the inherently abusive nature of the office of special prosecutor. You give a person unlimited time and money to get indictments for any crime he can find, and eventually you will get some indictments. But you will also get injustice. In this particular affair, there never was a crime. Plame was not an undercover agent at the time her name was leaked, nor had she been one for a long time before the leak, and Fitzgerald knew it, which is why he never even tried to get an indictment of anybody for *that* bogus offense. No, he pulled the old prosecutorial trick of forcing people to testify to investigators and grand juries repeatedly, over months and years, until somebody trips up and contradicts himself — in which case you've "got him" for perjury. After the millions of bucks wasted, we've got Libby for perjury even though we know he had absolutely nothing to do with the leak.

When will we learn that special prosecutors are worthless as instruments of justice? You would think that the Democrats in particular would have learned that lesson after the Clinton-Lewinsky debacle, but no, they were behind the current pseudo-scandal, hoping to nail their archenemy Rove, and it has now blown up in their faces.

Just kill the whole concept. If you don't like a president — be it Nixon, or Reagan, or Clinton, or Bush — just vote against



him. If you hate his guts, then vote against him and donate a ton of money to his opponent. But quit using special prosecutors to do your political work. — Gary Jason