

EXHIBIT 107

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The 2012 Sidney Awards I

By DAVID BROOKS

At the start of the 1980s, about 5 percent of Harvard students were Asian-American. But the number of qualified Asian-American applicants rose so that by 1993 roughly 20 percent of Harvard students had Asian heritage.

But, according to Ron Unz, a funny thing then happened. The number of qualified Asian-Americans continued to rise, but the number of Asian-Americans admitted to Harvard fell so that the student body was about 16 percent Asian. Between 1995 and 2011, Harvard's Asian-American population has varied by less than a percentage point around that 16.5 percent average. Not only that, the percentage of Asian-Americans at other Ivy League schools has also settled at a remarkably stable 16 percent, year after year.

This smells like a quota system, or at least that was the implication left by Unz's searing, sprawling, frustrating and highly debatable piece, "The Myth of the American Meritocracy," in *The American Conservative*. It wins the first of the 2012 Sidney Awards, which go to the best magazine essays of the year.

You're going to want to argue with Unz's article all the way along, especially for its narrow, math-test-driven view of merit. But it's potentially ground-shifting. Unz's other big point is that Jews are vastly overrepresented at elite universities and that Jewish achievement has collapsed. In the 1970s, for example, 40 percent of top scorers in the Math Olympiad had Jewish names. Now 2.5 percent do. The fanatical generations of immigrant strivers have been replaced by a more comfortable generation of preprofessionals, he implies.

On Aug. 13, 1986, Michael Morton returned from work to discover his wife murdered in their bed. He had no motive and no history of violence. He passed two lie detector tests. The couple's 3-year-old son witnessed the murder and gave a relative a detailed description, explicitly saying that his father was not involved.

Yet prosecutors decided Morton was the killer. He was convicted, and he spent nearly the next quarter-century in prison. If you start reading "The Innocent Man," a two-part series on this case that Pamela Colloff wrote for *The Texas Monthly*, you will be propelled along by indignation at the arrogance and stupidity of the entire law enforcement system. You'll be thankful again for the Innocence Project, which uses DNA evidence to clear the wrongfully convicted.

I may be accused of favoritism, but there were two outstanding essays this year on Bruce Springsteen. The first was David Remnick's profile in *The New Yorker*, "We Are Alive," in which Springsteen wrestles with the gaps between his own life and his working-class material. The second was Jeffrey Goldberg's rollicking piece in *The Atlantic* on the Springsteen-mania of Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey.

Christie, Goldberg writes, "is a very large man who dances at Springsteen concerts in front of many thousands of people without giving a damn what they think." The nominal subject is Christie's then unrequited love for Springsteen (Springsteen has since spoken with him), but the real subject of the piece is political polarization, what people share beneath the political divides.

Mitt Romney's religion generated a tide of commentary. One of the more humane and nuanced pieces was "Confessions of an Ex-Mormon," written by Walter Kirn for *The New Republic*. When he was a teenager, Kirn's father was having a breakdown, his mother was threatening to leave and everything was falling apart. Suddenly a chance encounter brought them in touch with Mormonism.

Missionaries came to the Kirn home night after night for six weeks. They brought the Kirns into the church and stabilized their lives. Kirn

never became a committed member of the faith, but beautifully describes his brushes with it, concluding with a summary of the sheer power of its social support: “Nothing mysterious. Nothing cultish. Just a handshake.”

People used to die quickly, but now more do so slowly. There are more than five million Americans with dementia. By 2050, 15 million Americans will be demented at an annual cost somewhere north of \$1 trillion. In “A Life Worth Ending,” in New York Magazine, Michael Wolff describes the case of his own mother, the once great talker and wit, who has lost many of her faculties. He writes, “When my mother’s diaper is changed she makes noises of harrowing despair — for a time, before she lost all language, you could if you concentrated make out what she was saying, repeated over and over again: ‘It’s a violation. It’s a violation. It’s a violation.’ ”

On a more upbeat note, Raffi Khatchadourian told the amazing story of how Dallas Wiens lost his face in a construction accident, and then how a community of doctors and others rebuilt it. The article, “Transfiguration,” in The New Yorker describes the spiritual transformation of Wiens as much as the science of his physical one.

More Sidneys are on the way, next column.