



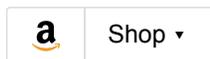
Douglas Pizac/AP Photo

VICTIM CULTURE 08.03.15 1:00 AM ET



What Fueled the Child Sex Abuse Scandal That Never Was?

A wave of scandals about brutal child sex abuse in the 1980s caused widespread panic. But many of the stories, pursued with zeal through the courts, were false and extremely destructive.



It started in August 1983 with Judy Johnson, a resident of a wealthy and bucolic Los Angeles suburb, who told police she suspected her 3-year-old son, Matthew, was being molested by one of his preschool teachers.

Matthew had been complaining of an itchy anus and was obsessed with playing doctor, a game he said he played at school. Johnson believed one of his teachers, Ray Buckey, had sodomized the boy with his “thermometer.”

Soon after, other parents of children under Buckey’s care at the McMartin Preschool in Manhattan Beach alerted police that their children had confessed to being fondled, sodomized, and forced to participate in pornographic films.

There were reports that McMartin teachers slaughtered animals and babies in front of the children before abusing them.

Five McMartin teachers were ultimately arrested and charged, along with the school’s administrator, Peggy McMartin Buckey, and its 76-year-old founder, Virginia McMartin, with what detectives and child therapists determined was

ritualistic satanic abuse.

The school shut down for good in January 1984. But no evidence—no pornography, no semen, no corpses—was ever recovered.

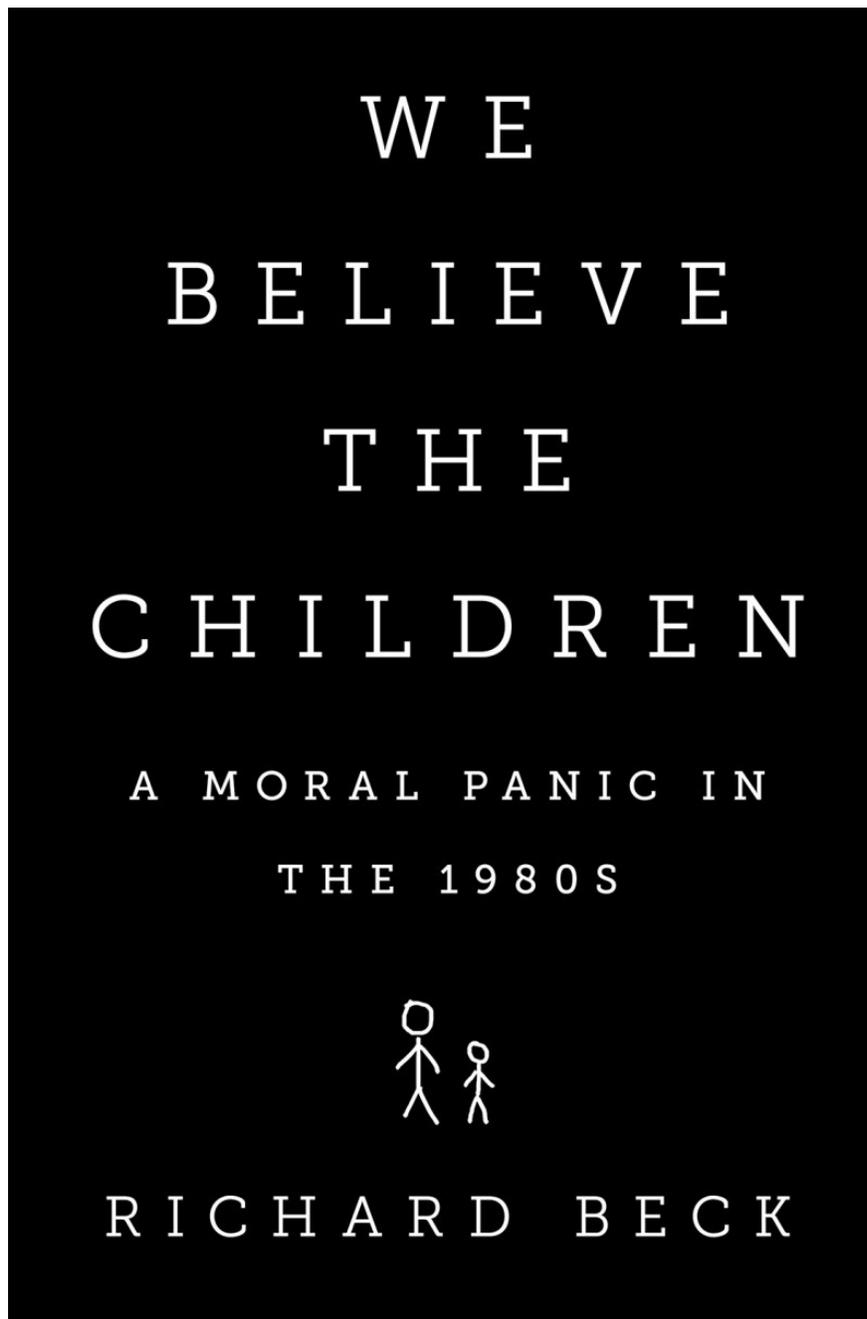
The McMartin case was symptomatic of a nationwide panic about an “epidemic” of child sexual abuse at day-care centers in the '80s, with other high-profile cases in Minnesota, Massachusetts, North Carolina, New Jersey, and Texas all fomenting media hype, legislative changes, and mass hysteria.

It would be a decade before the panic that led to more than 80 convictions proved to be largely unfounded.

In his new book, *We Believe the Children*, author Richard Beck—also editor of *n+1* magazine—revisits these Kafkaesque cases involving child pornography rings and devil-worshipping cults.

Drawing on interviews, archival research, and court transcripts, Beck illustrates how “therapists, social workers, and police officers unintentionally forced children to fabricate tales of brutal abuse” that spoke to American society’s deepest fears and introduced the stereotype of the playground pedophile.

Beck argues, convincingly, that the sexual revolution of the '60s and '70s provoked a conservative backlash in the '80s, fueling parental paranoia. The social and political conditions at the time set the stage for the most destructive moral panic since the Salem witch trials.



Amazon

Indeed, the day-care investigations in the '80s echoed several specific aspects of the 1692 witch hunts.

“In each episode,” Beck writes, “children were thought to have been abused by a secretive group of conspirators, and each time it was the adults who first began to suspect that a conspiracy was at work.”

Those accused in Salem were said to possess such demonic powers that their victims were re-traumatized during the trials, frequently crying out in pain in the courtroom.

Concern in the '80s that children would be similarly re-traumatized led the state of California to pass a law allowing children under 14 to testify outside the courtroom via closed-circuit televisions.

While the judge and jurors who presided over the Salem trials eventually

apologized and awarded monetary reparations to the accused, very few of the major players who relentlessly pursued the day-care cases apologized to those who were wrongfully convicted.

Many innocent people whose lives were ruined, including the children, have been denied reparations.

When the McMartin trial finally ended in 1990 with no convictions, the McMartin family filed a slander suit against one parent who led the witch hunt in Manhattan Beach back in 1983.

The judge ruled in the McMartins' favor, but determined that the defendant couldn't have damaged their reputations any more than the subsequent six-year-trial—the longest and most expensive (\$15 million) in U.S. history to date—and national media coverage of the sex abuse accusations. The plaintiffs were awarded \$1 each.

Much of *We Believe the Children* centers on the McMartin Preschool case, with Beck devoting four of the book's 10 chapters to the McMartin allegations, preliminary hearing, trial, and verdict.

“I had rooms in my brain where I needed to think very clearly, and be honest with myself, and try really hard to remember if anything happened.”

Coercive interview and interrogation tactics were used on children in many of the child sex abuse cases across the country. (Predictably, these led to false confessions.)

To be sure, *We Believe the Children* does not set out to prove that child abuse never happened in the '80s.

The Minnesota sex ring panic in 1983 began with a single allegation against James Rud, who turned out to have two prior child sex abuse convictions—one in Virginia and one in Minnesota.

And the charges against Arnold Friedman, a “beloved and award-winning” teacher in Great Neck, New

York, (the Friedman family was the subject of Andrew Jarecki's 2003 documentary, *Capturing the Friedmans*) were not entirely unfounded. In 1987 the Feds found a stack of child porn magazines in his basement.

“Whether Arnold Friedman was a child abuser became a very controversial topic in the late 1980s,” Beck writes, “but there is no question that he really was a pedophile.”

While there was ample evidence that Arnold Friedman was attracted to children, it was never clear that he acted on it.

After Friedman's son Jesse was also accused of abuse, he deliberately played into the hysterical narrative perpetuated by police and the media, claiming his father had homemade pornographic videos. But the hysteria

ultimately obscured whether or not Arnold was guilty of abuse.

The recent Jerry Sandusky molestation scandal at Penn State demonstrates the imperative of reporting allegations of child sex abuse.

But Sandusky got away with serially molesting young boys for years not because people mistrusted children's accusations, but because those accusations were covered up by

the corrupt bureaucracy at the university.

We Believe the Children focuses largely on the children in the McMartin Preschool case—beginning with Judy Johnson's son—who were grossly manipulated and even threatened by adults until they confessed to what the adults wanted to hear.

Kee MacFarlane, an unlicensed therapist who worked with the nonprofit Children's International Institute, was hired by the Manhattan Beach district attorney's office to help investigate the case. She designed sessions with 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children to mimic forensic interviews.

Her priority was not children's emotional well-being but ensuring that they recalled events accurately.

Digging through transcripts, Beck finds that MacFarlane told one 5-year-old boy "you're just a scaredy cat" when he repeatedly denied that he and other children had been inappropriately touched.

"Well, what good are you?" she asked another child who wouldn't confirm her suggestion that he had participated in sexual games with Ray Buckey. "You must be dumb," she added, speaking to him through a puppet.

Even when she wasn't bullying her preschool patients, MacFarlane frequently interpreted children's statements that were "clearly made in the context of some imaginative game as straightforward accusations of abuse," Beck writes.

By the end of December 1983, MacFarlane had interviewed more than 30 McMartin children, a number that would eventually balloon to 375.

Like most people, MacFarlane genuinely believed these children were abused. But after jurors in the McMartin case reached a "not guilty" verdict, they told reporters that MacFarlane's tapes made it impossible to distinguish less plausible accusations from more plausible ones because they "never got the children's story in their own words."

After the McMartin trial wrapped, MacFarlane admitted in a 1990 interview with *The New York Times* that she was "naive in never having been part of a case like this," but defended her controversial interviewing techniques.

“Neither in tapes [sic] on the witness stand do children just say what happened. Some children said they never went to the McMartin School, even though they did.”

MacFarlane was at least partially influenced by the psychiatrist Roland Summit, who rose to prominence in the '70s and theorized that children were not psychologically capable of lying about sexual abuse.

Beck points out that corroborating evidence then became “a superfluous adjunct to a truth the therapist already knew.”

Many other therapists and social workers who worked with children on ritualistic sex abuse cases in the '80s operated on the same dangerous assumption. So did parents and law enforcement officials.

“Believe the Children” was not just an oft-repeated mantra in Manhattan Beach, but a community banner through which which some parents formed an organization and advocacy center where any and all information on ritual abuse was discussed.

It gave many parents, particularly stay-at-home mothers, a sense of purpose and a role in bringing about political and social change.

The irony, of course, was that their fevered determination to protect children caused them harm and suffering instead.

It's impossible to know the extent of the emotional damage that the McMartin children and others across the country suffered into adulthood (very few have spoken out publicly).

But Beck interviews one pseudonymous woman, Jennifer, who was 7 when her mother first took her to the police in 1984, when her former day-care teacher was accused of sexual abuse.

She began going to therapy shortly afterward and tells Beck “that was where all the trauma happened.”

No matter what Jennifer said, her therapists insisted she had been abused. This led her to question her own memories of what had happened (she still questions them to this day), though she initially told the police she wasn't molested.

“I had rooms in my brain where I needed to think very clearly, and be honest with myself, and try really hard to remember if anything happened,” she tells Beck. “And at the same time, I had to keep it completely hidden and protected from my mom and the therapists.”

The young children in the McMartin case also underwent forensic testing developed by a physician named Bruce Woodling: anal examinations (“wink tests”) in which he swabbed a spot near the patient's anus that supposedly determined abuse.

If the child's anus opened during wink tests, the child had been sodomized; the further the child's anus opened, the more frequent the abuse.

Woodling hired an inexperienced assistant, Astrid Heger, to examine young girl's hymens for microscopic abrasions and variations which, according to Woodling's (now-discredited) findings, often indicated sexual trauma.

Heger determined that 80 percent of the 150 children she examined had been abused, but she sometimes arrived at that conclusion even when she found no abrasions or variations.

"This was based on a conviction—one she shared with Roland Summit—that medical professionals had a special social role to play in bringing the problem of child abuse out of the shadows," Beck writes.

In cases across the country, medical professionals, detectives, prosecutors, parents, and therapists simply *believed* children had been sexually abused: They manipulated "the truth" to fit their version of the truth and fabricated evidence where none existed.

When cases went to court, the judicial system's "innocent until proven guilty" model was seemingly inverted: as Beck puts it, "the pursuit of justice demanded the suspension of disbelief."

In the court of public opinion, the only just verdict was a guilty one.

The number of convictions that came out of these cases, almost all of which were eventually overturned, shows how easily we can deceive ourselves and others—how the pursuit of justice results in gross injustice—when "the truth" is preconceived.

Beck attributes society's unwavering belief in the '80s child sex abuse cases to a number of forces that came together in America at that time: a conservative backlash against the counterculture that had dominated the '60s and '70s, with its rejection of law enforcement and authority; a similar backlash against the sexual revolution and feminism, which dismantled the nuclear family, sending women to work and children to day-care centers; homophobia linked to the AIDS epidemic and an attendant fear that men who were caretakers outside the home were pedophiles; the rise of conservative Christian evangelicals, many of whom had helped elect President Ronald Reagan and feared the proliferation of pornography.

"Social hysteria is born of an unmanageable surplus of anxiety and fear," Beck writes, "and as a result panics themselves behave in excessive ways, improvising a series of crises and fabrications that build until the whole process breaks down under the weight of its own internal contradictions."

It took a while for this particular panic to break down, and even then it occasionally resurfaced: in the mid-'90s, 43 adults were arrested on more than 29,000 charges of child sex abuse in a pedophile ring operation in Wenatchee, Washington.

There were also people like Ellen Bass, a poet turned activist, who piggybacked on abuse rhetoric at the tail end of the '80s hysteria, spinning off the 1988 bestselling self-help book, *The Courage to Heal*.

The self-help element was grounded in the idea of healing through recovered

memory, which therapists capitalized on in the mid-'90s.

Beck notes how the book recast victims as survivors and “made victimization into an identity with its own kind of bleak attractiveness...the testimony of some survivors suggested that much of what made the process appealing were the crises themselves.”

But recovered memory therapy had its own traps, and many argued that the women who sought it out were not healing as much as they were simply being taken for a ride.



Beck doesn't suggest that the rhetoric in *The Courage to Heal* is echoed in some of the rhetoric surrounding sexual abuse today. Perhaps he did not want to be waded into that fraught feminist debate.



But the desperation to protect children at all costs in the '80s is not unlike the desperation to protect women on college campuses today amidst what many have declared an epidemic of campus rape.

We Believe the Children should serve to remind us of the dangers of the “we must believe the victim” mindset in the case of any criminal offense. A faith-based pursuit of justice can lead to a miscarriage of justice.



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GO AWAY ALREADY 08.04.15 1:08 AM ET



The Duggars Are Broke or Just Greedy as Hell

Since getting kicked off TLC, the *19 Kids and Counting* family are working their 'fans' for donations.



The Duggars could be in financial trouble or maybe they're just getting greedy. Since losing their TLC show in mid-July amid the scandal surrounding eldest son Josh Duggar's confessed molestation of five children—four of them his sisters—members of the embattled fundamentalist family have issued four separate calls for public donations.

First, shortly after the cancellation of *19 Kids and Counting*, Duggar daughter Jill and husband Derick Dillard asked again for donations to their tax-deductible organization Dillard Family Ministries, which funds their evangelical work in Central America. The Dillards currently accept donations online with suggested monthly donations ranging from \$15 to \$100.

The Arkansas Secretary of State's website shows that the nonprofit paperwork for Dillard Family Ministries was filed on June 17, a little less than a month after the allegations against Josh first came to light.

Then, shortly after TLC reportedly confirmed the cancellation of her wedding special two weeks ago, newly-engaged Duggar niece Amy gave out an address on Instagram for any fans who would like to send "cards and etc.," promising to "personally hand write" a letter to anyone who sent a card or—wink, wink—an et cetera. Amy denied she had any financial motivations for the post.

"For us it's not really about the gifts or money, but we would like the chance to personally thank everyone!" she wrote.

Next, on or around July 30, the social media hive mind spotted a donate button on the Duggar children's YouTube channel Duggar Studios, which currently has just 15 videos, none of them longer than 10 minutes. The last video was uploaded three months ago and it is only 12 seconds long. After widespread outcry on Twitter, the donate button was removed.

But Duggar Studios' fundraising efforts continued. On July 31, their Twitter account advertised a \$20 heather gray T-shirt featuring the YouTube channel's logo.



DuggarStudios
@DuggarStudios

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Check out our Duggar Studios t-shirts at:
duggarstudios.com/merch/8paaras3...

11:34 PM - 31 Jul 2015

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The merchandise page for the shirt promises that “[t]he contribution you make, when buying these t-shirts, will enable Duggar Studios to produce more quality videos.” So far, their definition of “quality videos” includes things like the Duggar boys doing doughnuts in the snow and sinking a full-court basketball shot. The T-shirt appeared on the merch page in late June as TLC was reportedly in the midst of deliberating the future of the family’s reality show.

The pattern has tabloids buzzing that the family is bleeding money but talk of the Duggars going flat broke is likely premature. As International Business Times reports, several Duggars still have lucrative speaking deals and the family does not appear to have cut back on their spending—although the latter is not necessarily an indication of good financial standing in and of itself.

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\$25,000 to \$40,000 they once made

But the immediate loss of the estimated \$25,000 to \$40,000 they once made per episode of *19 Kids and Counting* is almost certainly affecting the family's bottom line.

per episode of *19 Kids and Counting* is almost certainly affecting the family's bottom line, especially after lost book deals and endorsements are taken into account.

Although patriarch Jim Bob Duggar owns a real estate agency, the adult Duggar children's sources of income are much less clear. Josh, 27, resigned from his salaried position as executive director of the ultra-conservative Family Research Council in the midst of his sex abuse scandal.

According to varying reports, next-eldest son John David, 25, owns a tow truck business and works as an Arkansas constable, a local law enforcement position that comes with little to no pay. His twin Jana plays the piano and may or may not be training to be a midwife. All of the children have been homeschooled and none have graduated from a traditional four-year college.

The Duggars famously pride themselves on living within their means by budgeting for groceries, buying used cars, making their own laundry detergent, and cutting their own hair, which only makes their recent pattern of public requests for money all the more conspicuous. Racked by scandal and suddenly cut off from their seven-year-long stream of TLC money, the future of the Duggars' media empire is increasingly uncertain.

The Daily Beast reached out to the Duggar family for comment through their official media request page and received an automatic reply that included the following: "If you are interested in purchasing a book you can click on the link at Duggarfamily.com for book sales."



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Julius Shulman and Juergen Nogai/J. Paul Getty Trust

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THE NEAREST FARAWAY PLACE 06.30.15 12:00 AM ET

Ancient Rome Rises From The Ashes at the Mythical Getty Villa

At the Getty's off-the-beaten path antiquities museum, lush courtyards and marble statues transport you to the summit of Mt. Vesuvius.

presented by 

Within your own backyard lies adventure that will transport you to a place that feels miles from home. So leave your passport behind and start exploring The Nearest Faraway Place.

There is a simple breeze, light at first, coming off the ocean that churns about a half-mile down the hill. It carries the scent of...sage? Chamomile? Lemon? There's something in the mix that's at once harmonious and unfamiliar—a sharp, herbaceous smell that seems to belong to a different place entirely, perhaps a different time. It is an admittedly small thing, but something no Hollywood blockbuster can recreate, much less match.

The interplay of Pacific breeze with the trees and herbs that border the Getty Villa may be among the first elements that conspire to make a visit to the meticulously recreated 2,000-year-old Roman vacation house and antiquities museum a profoundly transformative experience.

The Getty Villa is a spare-no-expense reimagining of the so-called Villa dei Papyri, the Italian home believed to have belonged to Lucius Calpurnius Piso (aka Julius Caesar's father-in-law) which had been partially excavated from the volcanic ash that engulfed it when Vesuvius erupted some 2,000 years ago.

“Hollywood has virtual reality. This is physical reality.”

It is tucked into a canyon up a winding path and far off the road. Which is to say the building that dangles over the highway that people have pointed at for years and called the “Getty Villa” is not *the* Getty Villa. That structure is not even owned by the Getty Trust; the home commonly considered the Getty Villa by most PCH commuters is in fact a private residence built 50 years earlier called the Villa De Leon.

No, the Getty Villa requires a bit more exploration than what a mere drive-by lookie-loo affords. In many ways, the place is a monument to the very idea of exploration.

Built in the early 1970s when modernism was all the rage in museum architecture, the villa is a manifest of oil magnate J. Paul Getty's positively retrograde idea: Why not house the incomparable collection of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan antiquities he had spent most of his adult life acquiring in a place that precisely resembled the kind space you would have encountered in ancient time?



Lisa Talbot/J. Paul Getty Trust

“Hollywood has virtual reality. This is physical reality,” says Kenneth Lapatin, the Getty Museum Associate Curator of Antiquities. “You come here and you get to feel and experience something like how an ancient villa actually operated.”

Indeed, as both a perfectly realized reconstruction and also the third largest antiquities-only museum and the only one dedicated solely to ancient Mediterranean art, the Villa is a mind-bending combination of Hollywood stagecraft and absolute authenticity.

As you walk the outer peristyle gardens filled with ancient herbs and fountains (the largest one empty due to California's drought) you will notice how few people are compelled to whip out their phones. They seem content instead to quietly observe and talk amongst themselves about art, architecture, and philosophy the way they would in ancient times. "Time slows down here," explains Lapatin.



Julius Shulman and Juergen Nogai: J. Paul Getty Trust

When you reach the Villa, you will want to search out the Lansdowne Herakles (Hercules if you aren't feeling ancient Greek), a marble representation of the club-wielding, lion-hide-carrying hero that was originally found near the villa of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Getty purchased the masterwork for a mere \$10,218 in 1951 during a period when the British Lordship who owned it had fallen on hard times. (The Villa is, among many things, a temple to J. Paul's shrewd dealmaking).

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whip out
their phones.

Like many of the statues at the Getty, Herakles is nude. If you are traveling with kids, prepare for anatomy lessons alongside historical ones. But really it is mythology that's most at play here: seeing a raucous Dionysian adventure play out across the carved marble of an ancient sarcophagus can be just as breathtaking as anything playing in 3D IMAX.

The second floor was completely redone when the Villa was renovated in 1996 and now its main corridors flood with natural light. Its galleries shift

from ancient Greek gold and silver work to ancient Egyptian death portraits and a fully intact mummy.

While the museum is free to the public, you do have to pay for parking—a cost of \$15 a vehicle. (This is non-negotiable as they don't allow walk-ups unless you take the bus, not that there is street parking nearby anyway). Your visit will take a bit of planning: the Villa requires a parking reservation, which depending on the season may take a few day of planning.

Try booking a day during one of those more sweltering weeks in late August or early September and beat the heat the way they did in 49 A.D.: under a grapevine pergola, with the help of an ocean zephyr that carries with it a dizzying array of undefinable scents.

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PUNDITRY 08.04.15 8:30 PM ET



The Birth of the Political Divide: 'Best of Enemies' William F. Buckley Vs. Gore Vidal

This exclusive clip from the documentary 'Best of Enemies,' about the

famous '68 debates between Buckley and Vidal, explains how America became separated along political lines.



Forget Rush Limbaugh, Fox News, and the hysterics of the millennial news machine: The most riveting hurly-burly to hit the political stage went down over 40 years ago when bitter rivals William F. Buckley and Gore Vidal shook up the airwaves in a series of televised debates, sending NBC's ratings skyrocketing in the process.

Their epic showdown is chronicled in *Best of Enemies*, a new doc from Robert Gordon and *20 Feet From Stardom*'s Morgan Neville that details how the brutal face-off between the O.G. neocon and the lefty polemicist played out in the summer of '68.

A breakout premiere at Sundance, *Best of Enemies* blends archival clips of the two late intellectuals with analysis of their ten groundbreaking debates that ushered in a new era of divisive political punditry.

Perfectly matched nemeses with no love to spare, the duo were a match made in hell whose heated exchanges over policy often devolved into nasty personal attacks, like when Vidal famously dubbed Buckley a "crypto-Nazi" and got called a "queer" in return.

The public ate up every delicious barb.

In a Daily Beast exclusive clip, *Best of Enemies* peers into the pre-battle machinations of the onscreen gladiators through their own respective recollections, with Kelsey Grammer voicing Buckley and John Lithgow as Vidal —and highlights how their landmark blood sport foretold the ideological divide splitting the country today:



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Brian Frank/Reuters

SHOW, DON'T TELL 07.31.15 1:00 AM ET



Eleanor
Clift


How to Fix Hillary's Trust Deficit

Poll after poll shows that few voters think Clinton is honest and trustworthy. After decades in the public eye, is there any way to fix that?

Tell us something we don't know—that's one suggestion for Hillary Clinton, who is looking to rebuild her cratering trust numbers with voters. Not about policy, something personal, like the summer she spent in Alaska washing dishes at a national park and sliming salmon at a fish processing cannery.

"Get people saying, 'I didn't know that,'" says Charlie Cook, founder of the Cook Political Report and a seasoned political handicapper.

"At some point we're going to see her walking through the neighborhood where she grew up in Chicago," he says. "Do the whole package," he advises, not just her mother, get her talking about her father. He was a pretty stern fellow. When she didn't put the top back on the toothpaste tube, he'd toss it out the window and she had to find it, even in the snow.

And go easy on the grandmother schtick. "She borders on overplaying that," says Cook.

Political analysts and academics asked by The Daily Beast what Clinton should do about her sinking numbers, and how much they matter, agree that she is on the right course trying to humanize herself in an unforgiving partisan

environment. “A lot of people see her as smart and competent but not necessarily as a person,” says Cook. “Make her a human being.”

Clinton has been so guarded for so long that she is wary of opening up to the media or letting voters into what she considers her zone of privacy. But showing vulnerability and making an emotional connection is the key to reaching voters, especially women. She can't match Barack Obama with African-American voters or the excitement he generated among young people, but she can out-perform him with women, especially white married women, who Mitt Romney carried in the last election.

Clinton is also correct in concentrating on “one on few” meetings as opposed to the “one on many” large rallies that were Obama's signature events, says Bill Galston with the Brookings Institution, a liberal think tank. “He needed to lend credibility to a long shot and even quixotic campaign; she needs to connect with voters in a more intimate way.”

Negative stories about her email server, her paid speeches and the continuing investigation into Benghazi have taken their toll, bringing the high favorable rating she enjoyed as secretary of state “down to mere mortal level,” says Cook. A Quinnipiac poll last week found the number of voters who see Clinton as honest and trustworthy dropped to 34 percent in Colorado, 33 percent in Iowa and 39 percent in Virginia. In each of those swing states, she lost in theoretical matchups with Jeb Bush, Scott Walker, and Marco Rubio, a flashing yellow warning sign to Democrats.

Clinton's ramped-up public appearances show she's paying attention along with the orderly rollout of policy positions designed to appeal to progressives while not veering too far from the center where she came of age politically. Speculation that Vice President Biden might yet enter the race picked up after this latest round of polls, but for Democrats to panic would be silly: Clinton is still the most commanding non-incumbent presidential candidate either party has seen in modern times.

“Candidates are big packages,” says Cook. “Bill Clinton got elected and reelected with lousy trust numbers...There are other issues, like being an adult and knowing stuff.”

Asked how serious Clinton's trust deficit is, Galston replied, “I'm going to say exactly what you expect me to say. It's early, number one, and number two, the comedian Henny Youngman put it best, ‘Compared to what?’ If people continue to see her as a strong, knowledgeable, experienced leader, that is going to be worth a lot in the end. That's her ace in the hole, and she can play it to great advantage.”

Al From worked with Bill Clinton to help develop a centrist policy agenda that could move the Democratic Party back to the middle after losing three successive presidential elections. “The thing that would help her the most, which is what she's starting to do, [is

“Bill Clinton got elected and reelected with lousy trust numbers... There are other issues, like being an adult and knowing stuff.”

to] lay out a clear agenda and give people a reason to vote for her. And when she does that, I think she'll be fine,” From told The Daily Beast.

“The Clintons never come without controversy, but they also have enormous support. She has to energize her people, but the main thing is to lay out where she wants to take the country compared to the Republicans. There always were questions about trust with President Clinton. But if she makes a good case for being president, her numbers are going to go up and her

trust number will go up as well. Presidential elections are a choice and it's about the future of the country. We have a lot of serious problems, and she's well equipped to deal with them.”

The Democratic Leadership Council, founded by From in 1985, provided a policy framework that carried Bill Clinton to the White House. Calling for 100,000 more cops on the street and promising to “end welfare as we know it” positioned Clinton to win back Reagan Democrats that had fled the party.

The DLC folded in 2011, bankrupt financially and resigned to a different era requiring different policy prescriptions. Hillary Clinton is developing her signature ideas in a noisier media environment than her husband faced in 1992, or that she faced eight years ago. Still, there are some truisms, says Jack Pitney, a professor of American politics at Claremont McKenna College.

“Talk about the future rather than the past. She doesn't want to get dragged into a discussion of the scandals of the nineties. ...So long as she stays substantive and puts out a coherent and persuasive policy agenda, she will put the focus on the issues.”

That focus on issues kept Bill Clinton's approval rating high as president even in the midst of impeachment. “I need to get back to work for the American people,” he would say. News broke of his relationship with a White House intern shortly before he was to stand before Congress and deliver the State of the Union address. A record number of people tuned in to see what he would say about the scandal, Pitney recalled. Clinton didn't mention it.

A final piece of advice to Hillary, says Pitney: The last thing she should say is “Trust me, I'm trustworthy.” She needs a better answer than the one she gave CNN when she said, “People should, and do, trust me.” As with all good drama, a successful campaign is more show than tell.



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