

Matt Yglesias

Aug 24th, 2009 at 6:14 pm

Endgame

Like a million elephants:

- Love [in a time of prawns](#).
- Chris Edwards on the GOP's [newfound love of entitlement spending](#).
- High-speed rail [and population density](#) for the millionth time.
- I would say this is less about extortion than it is about [limiting competition for existing yoga instructors](#) but either way it's a bad idea.
- The case for [optimism about America](#).
- *Mad Men* [footnotes](#).

I'm not sure I'd call it the [best song of the decade](#), but Outkast's "[B.O.B.](#)" is pretty fantastic and also weirdly prescient.

- [Comments](#)
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38 Responses to "Endgame"

1. [Mattyoung](#) Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 6:23 pm](#)

If the population density varies so widely then why is the federal government involved in directing transit funds to HSR. Why not give out the transit funds proportional to density and let the localities decide what works best. We already have regional transit authorities and regional rail authorities, they would be better deciding the use of transit funds.

Again, this is the Yglesias philosophy: Our efficient Congress is best at hiring federal workers and deciding issues for localities. Ya think it is because Yglesias lives in the federal work regions?

2. [Petey](#) Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 6:26 pm](#)

It's kinda funny how Yglesias is now on the same side as Ross Douthat.

Matthew thinks it's 2003 all over again...

3. *David B.* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 6:35 pm](#)

What's wrong with the rationale that prospective yoga instruction students should be protected from fly-by-night yoga "ashrams" that aren't run by competent people? This isn't special certification for students, but certification for those who would teach the actual instructors. I practice Bikram Yoga, and it's frankly relieving knowing that I'm being taught poses by people who underwent extensive training so that I can be more confident I won't wind up injured. You'd never hear an argument that law schools shouldn't be certified or accredited, and so doesn't the Cato argument really boil down to the notion that yoga isn't somehow serious? That there might be a baseline level of competence required to instruct?

4. *NattyB* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 6:49 pm](#)

yo, on madmen, anybody know where one could stream it or get the torrent from last night's episode?

5. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 6:51 pm](#)

Hey, Petey:

<http://yglesias.thinkprogress.org/archives/2009/08/max-baucus-flip-flops.php#comment-1653353>

Starts at:

<http://yglesias.thinkprogress.org/archives/2009/08/max-baucus-flip-flops.php#comment-1653335>

6. *Nicholas Beaudrot* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:00 pm](#)

Is "Hey Ya!" not in the top 10 on the principle one band shouldn't have two songs on it? And where's "stronger" or really any number of songs by Kanye West?

This list is also unfair to the anthems of early aughts garage indie. No "Main Offender" or "Hate To Say I Told You So"? "Take Me Out"? "Float On"?!?!?!

7. *godoggo* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:04 pm](#)

David B.:

I was under the impression that Bikram Yoga was dangerous even under a trained instructor.

8. *Jeffrey Davis* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:10 pm](#)

The best thing about *District 9* was Sharlto Copley's earnest bureaucrat. He makes the ridiculous premise of the movie temporarily believable and affecting. 2nd best thing: District 10. (What happened to District 1-District 8?) Worst thing: the collapse of the movie into a "Buddy Picture"

Mad Men is more than a wee bit dull. Smoking and drinking and treating women badly? 1 or 2 episodes. Yet, it's now in its 3rd big year.

And this guy wears a pork pie much cooler:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ZXdvN3orA>

9. *Petey* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:15 pm](#)

As the [story](#) says:

The story also quotes Podesta as saying: “This is a very good time to be a Democratic lobbyist . . . it’s incredibly exciting to be able to engage with Democrats and really see things happen. It’s always a good time to be Heather Podesta.”

So which healthcare insurance company has bought Matthew?

I know Cigna and HealthSouth have bought the Podestas. But I still think Matthew is wearing his scarlett L for UnitedHealth.

Yglesias will lie through his bared teeth about healthcare until his gums bleed. He likes following the money.

10. *live* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:18 pm](#)

That’s a SOTD I think we can all agree on. The ‘best of the decade’ claim is contentious, of course.

11. *The Lorax* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:23 pm](#)

LCD Soundsystem is great, but I don’t know if any of their songs should make the top-10. Then again, many of their songs are better than most of what is in the top-10.

Many of Radiohead’s song would warrant top-10 standing. And “Kid A” is a great, great album—as deserving as any I can think of as of top-of-the-decade.

12. *Jasper* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:28 pm](#)

Why not give out the transit funds proportional to density and let the localities decide what works best.

Well, personally, the main reason I’d cite for saying “no” to this idea is that a lot of local governments are heavily influenced by the pro-sprawl lobby, and will squander the resources on accommodating more cars.

13. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:30 pm](#)

Now, now, Petey. There are alternative explanations.

One of which is that Jennifer Palmieri really writes the posts for this blog and somewhere on an island in the Pacific, Matthew is trapped in a bunker with a wild-eyed Scotsman who yells “You gotta push the ENTER key!”

14. *Jeffrey Davis* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:32 pm](#)

2 best songs of the 2000s I've heard:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQoPAXIvLyA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd8we4UAogc>

15. *Klaus* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 7:38 pm](#)

@6

The list is 500 songs long. That's just the top 20.

16. *Petey* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:04 pm](#)

“Now, now, Petey. There are alternative explanations. One of which is that Jennifer Palmieri really writes the posts for this blog and somewhere on an island in the Pacific, Matthew is trapped in a bunker with a wild-eyed Scotsman who yells “You gotta push the ENTER key!”

This is the real Yglesias.

The last time something big was in front of Congress - the Iraq war - Yglesias dashed to the right to try to secure his own future, lying the whole time.

Now that the next something big is in front of Congress - healthcare reform's public option - Yglesias dashes to the right to secure his own future, lying the whole time.

In 2003, Matthew Yglesias (R-Neocon) put himself above the cause he purports to serve, and in 2009, Matthew Yglesias (R-UnitedHealth) again puts himself above the cause he purports to serve.

There is no Pacific island. Just the same old scumbag.

17. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:16 pm](#)

Petey at 16: “There is no Pacific island. Just the same old scumbag.”

Naw –here is a photo of Matthew being instructed to push the Big Red Enter Key every few minutes after Jennifer stops typing:

http://img.timeinc.net/ew/dynamic/imgs/060518/174542__lost_1.jpg

18. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:20 pm](#)

Another explanation is that Matthew didn't see the NY Times article because he was up at Netroots Nation in Pittsburgh when the story came out.

You know– the place where all the Progressive bloggers were listening to Bill Clinton Define the Progressive Agenda while they manfully struggled to “keep their self-congratulation to a decent

minimum”.

19. *cmholm* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:27 pm](#)

Re: the normalization of the filibuster in the Senate...

...it is the fear/threat of filibusters that's become normalized. Sure there have been a lot of filings and votes, but not that many [invoked](#). Sure the 106th, 107th, and 109th Congress were a bit screwy, but get over it already. If they can't handle a little parliamentary procedure, what the hell are we sending those punanis to D.C. for, anyway?

20. *rapier* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:30 pm](#)

Social conditions are by many measures far better now than 1969. Social issues are never unimportant but our problem is economic and profound because it lies at the very heart of the economic and then ultimately the social and political system.

Debt. The level of systematic debt worldwide is orders of magnitude larger than any time in world history. Obviously much of it will default. A way out of this crisis is being tried which involves massive increases in sovereign debt and central bank monetization of some of the government debt and a lot of the bad private debt. It may work but it is nothing less than a profound reordering of fundamental market principals.

Nothing in the 60's or 70's even comes close by any historic measure. The seeds of this were planted in the 80's and beyond which lead to the failure however so that's one strike against going all in with the same model to fix it.

21. *Benny Lava* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:33 pm](#)

Why not give out the transit funds proportional to density and let the localities decide what works best.

We've been over this before: because low density regions are overrepresented in Congress. Nebraska, Kansas, and Wyoming will get nothing and filibuster.

22. *Anonymous37* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:44 pm](#)

Outkast's "B.O.B." is pretty fantastic and also weirdly prescient.

Yes — Big Boi did have a son, which he named Bamboo.

I can't be too mad at the Pitchfork list, as I ended up listening to 2 amazing songs that I never would have otherwise: "I'm a Cuckoo", by Belle and Sebastian, remixed by The Avalanches, and "Chicago" by Sufjan Stevens. But as far as I'm concerned, any list that contains "Take Me Out" by Franz Ferdinand (a horrifically awful song) and the Jay-Z remix of Panjabi MC's "Mundian to Bach Ke" (with Jay-Z once again ruining a perfectly good song with pointless rapping: see also Amy Winehouse's "Rehab" and Rihanna's "Umbrella") is massively flawed, to say the least.

23. *fostert* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:45 pm](#)

“The level of systematic debt worldwide is orders of magnitude larger than any time in world history.”

Is that really true? I’m certainly not disputing it, I just can’t find any good data on it. We do know that many great empires of the past (England, Spain, Mughal Dynasty, etc.) collapsed from excess debt. But presumably someone else had loaned them the money and weren’t in debt. If leverage ratios are constant, it would seem debt as a fraction of wealth would remain so as well. Obviously, we have higher leverage ratios now than any time I can remember. But highest ever? I really don’t know.

24. *Duvall* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 8:50 pm](#)

Meanwhile, the last time something big was in front of the country, Petey tried to convince Internet Democrats to turn over their party’s nomination to an actual douchebag, the only candidate capable of losing to John McCain and Sarah Palin in the fall of 2008.

Fortunately, he was ignored.

25. *soullite* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 9:18 pm](#)

Does anyone have any real evidence of infidelity actually mattering in elections over the past 10-15 years? All I can think of is Ryan, and he didn’t really cheat on his wife. He wanted other men to fuck her. That’s a whole different level of ick. Maybe Condit, but I doubt it would have mattered if the entire media hadn’t basically pointed at Condit and screamed “MURDERER!”.

Everyone knows McCain wouldn’t have likely gone there. Everyone knows why. But even if he had, I don’t think it would have made a difference. They elected a black dude, another philandering white guy wouldn’t have made them blink.

26. *cmholm* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 9:18 pm](#)

Duvall, I pray to God that you’re referring to Edwards. 😊

27. *soullite* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 9:26 pm](#)

Don’t mistake your outrage with that of others. Edwards would have won just fine with his rhetoric and the environment that we had in late 2008. Hell, he may have won even bigger. The infidelity story would have likely broke earlier, and then the Bank Bailout and everything else would have turned the field right back over to Edwards.

In the environment we actually had, HRC could have shot Obama in the back, burned Denver to the ground and declared herself the nominee by arranging the bones of the dead delegates out “I AM QUEEN”, and she could have been elected. Hell, We could have been talking about “President Kucinich’s stimulus plan to build a new-age pyramid alien landing strips in every city right now.

28. *pseudonymous in nc* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 9:54 pm](#)

I’m sure that Petey will be supplying check stubs from UnitedHealth to Matt at the same time he shares

his invitation to the President Edwards Inaugural Ball.

29. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 9:57 pm](#)

If Hillary had gotten the nomination, we would have had thousands of Americans dying in Iran at this point. Because Haim Saban thought it was good for Israel.

And I highly doubt John McCain — one of the Keating Five — could have been trusted with \$24 Trillion in Bailout money.

Especially when backed by a Christian VP that evidently thinks God's Ten Commandants say that she should lie through her teeth six times before breakfast.

30. *Don Williams* Says:

[August 24th, 2009 at 10:07 pm](#)

Re 28: "I'm sure that Petey will be supplying check stubs from UnitedHealth to Matt "

Er.. Petey's point a day or so ago is that Matthew seems to be averting his eyes from the NY Times story that says Max Baucus ain't exactly the cowpoke driving this particular stampede. He's more like the designated scapegoat. A Red Herring.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/13/health/policy/13health.html?_r=5&pagewanted=1&th&emc=th

UnitedHealth checks made out to a different party. Or parties.

Although an entity funded by Herb Sandler's sodomization of Wachovia ain't like to cavil over trifles.

31. *kth* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 1:37 am](#)

25: Gary Hart. He was basically carrying on with Donna Rice, like Edwards with Rielle Hunter, while his presidential campaign was starting up. Not like Clinton, whose alleged indiscretions with Gennifer Flowers took place many years before the 1992 race.

It's possible that Edwards would have survived the revelation of an ongoing affair with a woman of a somewhat storied past (characters based on Rielle Hunter appear in novels by Jay McInerney and Bret Easton Ellis), that resulted in a child, while his wife was being treated for breast cancer, and gone on to defeat McCain. But I kind of doubt it, and I'm glad we never had to find out.

32. *Mike* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 1:47 am](#)

Very weird. I was browsing Michael Berube's blog archives the other day and found a post on the best songs since 2000. My mind went straight to B.O.B; he had Hey Ya in the top 5 but not B.O.B.

The only pop tracks I would consider possibly better are a couple off of Radioheads underrated *Hail To The Thief*. But B.O.B. probably still comes out on top.

33. *Cyrus* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 6:55 am](#)

I still think Matthew is wearing his scarlett L for UnitedHealth.

What is it with annoying self-satisfied crackpots, on both fringes of politics apparently, who leave out spaces between words? Also, Petey, I can't blame you for being obsessed with women named Scarlett, but there's only one t in the word for the color. And you know, this doesn't even make sense: wearing a scarlet letter is not something people do voluntarily.

34. [Petey](#) Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 7:38 am](#)

"And you know, this doesn't even make sense: wearing a scarlet letter is not something people do voluntarily."

I already provided the [link](#) upthread.

Podesta **voluntarily** wore an actual "scarlet L" to the Democratic convention **to advertise that she was taking money from Cigna and HealthSouth to help torpedo the public option.**

My only question is whether Matthew is getting dollars from folks like Cigna and HealthSouth now, or is being promised money from UnitedHealth once he's finished helping getting a genuinely good healthcare bill stopped and replaced with something that will funnel money to the health insurance companies from the citizenry and national treasury.

If it costs the nation billions and makes Yglesias a couple of hundred thousands, that's an equation Matthew is very much in favor of.

35. [DTM](#) Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 7:55 am](#)

*If the population density varies so widely then why is the federal government involved in directing transit funds to HSR. Why not give out the transit funds proportional to density and let the localities decide what works best. We already have **regional transit authorities and regional rail authorities**, they would be better deciding the use of transit funds.*

Does Matt Young really think Matt Yglesias would have a problem with the Feds doling out money to regional transit authorities and regional rail authorities on a density basis with no strings attached? Particularly if that same principle applied to all transportation funding (meaning lots of funds currently going to states specifically for highways would be shifted into discretionary use by dense regional authorities)?

No, the reason we don't do that has nothing to do with people like Matt Yglesias. And Benny Lava provided the basic explanation.

On an unrelated note: from prior experience, Petey isn't going to come off tilt until a health care reform bill is passed and we move on to the next thing.

36. [Klaus](#) Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 8:08 am](#)

A lot of people still understate how much of an impact McCain had in keeping the GOP from being completely demolished in 2008. The reason Obama only won by 6 points was a direct result of McCain cashing in years of media adulation and "maverick" image building. If early polls of general election match-ups are any indication, Huckabee or Romney would have gone down by about 10-15 points and

the electoral map would've looked like something from 1964.

37. *cd* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 8:11 am](#)

Those pitchfork lists are absurd.

38. *Why oh why* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 8:19 am](#)

In the 60s Americans were rich compared to the rest of the world. There was a large and relatively wealthy middle class protected by the government and unions. Health care wasn't a big problem and finance was heavily regulated. The US had a trade surplus and was loaning money to third world countries.

Compare all that to the economic apocalypse of the last year and the reckoning that is yet to come, when the dollar will finally lose its central role in the world, buried by trillions after trillions of debt. And to face all those problems, the most corrupt politicians in American history — including Obama and democratic senators.

Yes, racism and political violence were huge in the past, but they were eventually overcome. But Tim Lee is wrong when he says the situation isn't far worse today for the average American. And it's easy to understand why he is blind to the coming economic crisis: the "signs of trouble" he lists at the end of the 60s ("the top marginal tax rate was 77 percent", "The American auto industry was a cozy cartel not yet facing serious competition") were precisely what kept the middle class thriving.

On top of that, Bush-Cheney make Nixon look like Jefferson, and Obama is eager to cover up their crimes (torture, massive illegal spying on Americans...). Lee gives the example of FISA to prove things got better in the 70s, which is ironic since this iconic law was gutted by our current president.

To sum it up: Reagan fucked up everything, the Bush dynasty finished his work to destroy the middle class, and Lee loves them for it. No wonder the prospect of oligarchy doesn't frighten him.

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