I thought I’d begin this rant by sharing some of my thoughts on the historical figure known as Jesus of Nazareth. I think we can all agree that, unlike some of the other subjects I have weighed in on in the past, this is one on which people do not tend to have strongly held points-of-view, so there is little chance that I will offend and alienate readers right off the bat.

So let’s jump right into it then with observation #1: When the likely outcome of an unwed pregnancy is death by stoning, people can be really creative liars.

Nothing in the least bit controversial about that … right? Let’s move on then to observation #2: It is fully understandable why the lie was told, and even why many people in that era might have believed it; what is more difficult to understand is why tens of millions of people around the world still believe it 2,000 years later.

I doubt that I’ve lost anyone yet, so let’s quickly move on to observation #3: Jesus was initially described as coming from a line of men who worked with their hands, which was later interpreted to mean that he was a carpenter. Given though that the primary building materials in the land of his birth were sand and rock, it is far more likely that Joseph and his sons were stone masons. Just saying …

Observation #4: Jesus of Nazareth’s real father was undoubtedly a Roman citizen. Some have speculated that he was the product of rape by one of the notoriously ruthless Roman storm-troopers, but his later actions suggest to this completely impartial observer that it was more likely a consensual coupling and that the father was someone of considerably more importance than a mere soldier.

Observation #5: Jesus was very likely a controlled Roman asset. Just as, nearly two thousand years later, the obviously controlled asset known as Jesse Jackson replaced the slain Martin Luther King, and the equally controlled asset known as Louis Farrakhan replaced the eliminated Malcolm X, so it was that Jesus was maneuvered into position to replace the executed John the Baptist, who had, I’m guessing, become a bit of a problem for the Roman overseers.

The message that the emergent messiah delivered to those living under the brutal hand of those Roman occupiers was, by any rational analysis, exactly the wrong one. It was a message brimming with advice about loving neighbors and turning cheeks … a message that constantly reinforced the notion that it was better to be poor and oppressed than wealthy and powerful, for the poor, you see, were going to spend all eternity in the glorious ‘Kingdom of Heaven,’ while the rich were going to burn in the fires of Hell (unless they were somehow able to steer their camels through the eye of a needle, or something like that).

It was, in other words, a belief system seemingly designed specifically to suppress any thoughts of rebellion amongst the unwashed masses. And the beauty of it was that no one would find out if the fabled Kingdom of Heaven actually existed until it was too late for them to get a refund.

I know what you’re thinking here: “But Dave, didn’t the Romans execute Jesus, and do so in a horrifically brutal and sadistic manner – you know, like in that Mel Gibson torture-porn flick?”

Maybe they did and maybe they didn’t. Even if they did, that would not necessarily prove that Jesus was not a covert Roman operative. Most all assets are expendable if they become more valuable dead than alive. And it’s pretty clear that for the last couple thousand years, Jesus has proven his value as a dead martyr. But was he crucified? I tend to doubt that he was.

Consider that Mr. Nazareth was alone by choice when apprehended. He had supposedly wandered into a garden to gather his thoughts, or some such thing, allowing Roman authorities to conveniently apprehend him quietly and without incident. It was almost as if he had turned himself in, knowing that he was in safe hands. The most likely scenario is that
he was replaced with a look-alike at the private palace of Pontius Pilate, where he was taken to supposedly be tried and convicted (so to speak).

Bear in mind that whoever had the misfortune of resembling Jesus needn’t have been all that close of a double. By the time he was beaten, whipped and outfitted with a custom crown of thorns, the battered, bruised and bloody body would undoubtedly have been all but unrecognizable. And following the crucifixion, as we all know, the body, uhm, disappeared. Because it was, you know, resurrected from the dead. Or because it had to be disposed of before anyone caught on that it wasn’t really Jesus.

Personally, I’m going with option #2, primarily because I am not familiar with any documented cases of bodies being resurrected from the dead and I’m not really into taking huge leaps of faith. But maybe that’s just me.

As previously noted, the tactics deployed by the Romans circa 32 AD bear many similarities to the psychological warfare operations carried out today. And why wouldn’t they? After all, not much has changed in the last 2,000 years, including the identities of our overlords. I’m not much sold, as it turns out, on the notion that great empires rise and fall. Since at least biblical times, as best I can determine, there has only been one empire, though the perceived center of power has shifted in what basically amounts to a shell game.

The Roman Empire, in other words, did not fall just as its offspring, the British Empire, began to rise, nor did the British Empire fall just as its offspring, the American Empire, began to rise. No, the Roman Empire quite obviously transformed itself into the British Empire, which in turn used smoke and mirrors to create the ‘new’ American empire by sending a bunch of wealthy Masons posing as ‘Pilgrims’ over to the ‘New World’ and then later staging a patently fake ‘Revolutionary War.’ I mean, really people, do you honestly believe that the mighty British Empire, at the height of its power and with a formidable navy at its disposal, was unable to suppress a ragtag rebellion that most colonists had little interest in participating in?

And is it, after all, just a coincidence that the British countryside is littered with Roman ruins? Or that the Eastern Roman Empire fell, according to historians, circa 1453 AD, while the British Empire began its rise, according to those same historians, around 1497 AD? And is it also a coincidence that the British Imperial Century (which followed the 1st British Empire [1583-1783] and the 2nd British Empire [1783-1815]) ended in 1914, while the rise of the American Empire (never actually referred to as such) is generally pegged to the United States’ entry into World War I circa 1917?

And is it just a coincidence that the overwhelming majority of American presidents have been descended from royal British bloodlines? Speaking of American presidents, this seems like a good time to segue into a discussion of who our next fearless leader will be.

For a good many months, I was fooled into believing that President Blackbush was going to walk away with an easy win. After all, it was perfectly obvious that the ‘opposing’ party had gathered together an impossibly weak field of contenders, none of whom appeared to have any shot at all of occupying the White House, and the president’s own party was giving him a free pass in the primaries, despite his ever-increasing unpopularity. There didn’t, and still don’t, appear to be any significant hurdles standing between Barry O and another four years in the West Wing.

Nevertheless, I am now convinced that the White House will soon be occupied by someone with an (R) affixed to his name. But which one will it be? Presumably none of the former frontrunners who peaked much too soon and burned out much too quickly, like Rick Perry, Michelle Bachmann and Herman Cain. And obviously not the also-rans whose campaigns never seemed to gain any traction – people with forgotten names like Gary Johnson, Tim Pawlenty and Jon Huntsman.

Who then, of the four left standing, will it be? Newt Gingrich, the most recent of the temporary frontrunners to implode rather spectacularly almost immediately after attaining frontrunner status? Mitt Romney, the fallback frontrunner from the beginning of the race, though his support has always been tepid at best? The improbably resurgent Rick Santorum? Or Ron Paul, the guy who for many, many years has been hailed as a hero by a lot of people who should know better?
Obviously, Paul appears to have no chance of grabbing the nomination. But the dirty little secret is that neither do Romney, Santorum nor Gingrich. All four will ultimately fall by the wayside, as did many others before them in this lengthy campaign. As was obvious from the beginning, none of these miscreants has any chance of winning the general election, especially after taking a thorough beating throughout a tortuously long primary season, but that doesn’t mean that the GOP plans on throwing the election to Obama.

No, what the party plans to do is go ‘old school’ at the convention. The plan, as is becoming increasingly clear with each passing day, is for no one to arrive at the convention with the delegates necessary to clinch the nomination. Everything is in place for such an outcome, including the shuffling of the primary/caucus schedule, which was supposedly done to avoid a rush to judgment and allow more of the country to have a say in who the nominee will be. Our elected officials, however, don’t seem to care much about how democratic the candidate selection process is, so in retrospect it is unlikely that that was the real reason for the changes, which also included many states dropping a winner-take-all system in favor of a proportional allocation of delegates.

Notice, by the way, that a certain Barack Obama doesn’t have to navigate through a system that, with a similarly crowded field of Democratic contenders, could very well have denied him the delegates needed to clinch the nomination as well. Notice also the brazen manipulation in Iowa, which magically transformed Romney from being the clear frontrunner, 2-for-2 at the time and heavily favored to go 3-for-3, into being on equal footing with both Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum.

In addition to changing the playing field, the newly-created ‘superPACs’ have, for the first time, enabled candidates who have no chance of winning to stay in the race long past their expiration date. Gingrich at this point is pretty much being financed by just a single extremely wealthy benefactor, who has pledged to fund Newt’s campaign all the way to the convention in August. The fact that all other sources of funding have dried up should have sent Gingrich a clear message that he wasn’t a real popular choice for president, but that’s really beside the point in this primary season.

Gingrich is a seasoned pro who knows the role he is playing, just as Santorum and Paul undoubtedly know that they are only remaining in the running to siphon off ‘Tea Party’ votes. Any one of them alone, alas, would be unable to deny Romney the nomination, so all four will likely slug it out until August, or until it is statistically impossible for Romney to clinch the nomination.

So what we have here, in reality, is a bit of cleverly crafted theater. The formula seems to be to take an unusually large field of candidates, all of whom have more negatives than positives, put them through a gruelingly long primary process, complete with a seemingly endless series of debates designed to constantly reinforce those negatives, mix in a newly engineered playing field and a bottomless pit of corporate cash, and what you end up with is a voting public completely disgusted with all of the choices offered to them.

And that, it appears, is by design. The plan is not just to arrive at the convention with no presumptive nominee, but to arrive there with rank-and-file voters thoroughly underwhelmed by all the remaining candidates. Why? Because, as I already indicated, the GOP plans to go ‘old school’ – with a brokered convention. What will likely happen is that there will be a few votes taken, which will, as planned, fail in anointing a candidate. Then the big boys will retire to one of those ‘smoke-filled rooms’ from days of yore, where they will ‘decide’ to bypass all the remaining candidates and bring in fresh blood.

“Wait just a minute there, Dave,” you’re probably thinking. “They may have gotten away with such things back in the days of Woodrow Wilson, but surely they couldn’t pull off such a thing in these more enlightened times!”

Ah, but they can and they will. And all the pundits on all the cable news channels will feign surprise, as though no one saw this coming. And all the people in the convention hall will stand up and cheer. Loudly. And the people watching on their television sets at home will stand up and cheer as well.

They will cheer despite the fact that the dumping of the entire field of candidates means that the entire primary campaign breathlessly covered by the media – the hundreds of millions of dollars spent, the unprecedented number of
pointless debates, the endless barrage of campaign ads and robocalls, the ever-shifting field of candidates, the constant speculation over who the nominee would ultimately be – was all just smoke and mirrors. They will cheer despite the fact that it will represent yet another brazen attack on basic democratic rights.

I know this because I have run the brokered convention/throw-all-the-buns-out scenario past a few of my conservative friends and they have told me that nothing would make them happier. Their faces light up as if I had just told them that Santa had left a shiny new car for them in the driveway. And that is especially true when I tell them who I believe the nominee and his running-mate will be – Jeb Bush and Sarah Palin. That would be, I am told, a “dream ticket.”

Neither of the two, notably, has any real excuse for not having jumped into the race. Palin voluntarily walked away from a cushy government job, and Bush has declined to enter previous races that he could have easily won, leaving both of them plenty of free time to campaign. And it’s not as if the competition is very tough, in either the primary or the general election. Why then have both – particularly the usually high-profile Sarah Palin – remained unusually quiet through this raucous primary season? Most likely to avoid the bloodshed that has characterized this campaign and quietly await their late coronation.

Personally, I think the GOP should go the Fear Factor route. As some readers are probably aware, a recent episode of the series, which was to have featured contestants drinking donkey semen, was pulled by NBC shortly before it was to air. Rather than let that concept go to waste, and rather than staging yet another pointless debate, why not re-shoot the episode with the four remaining candidates filling in for the original four teams of contestants? Whoever can drink the most donkey semen in the allotted time – or perhaps, given that these are Republican candidates, it could be elephant semen – should be Obama’s challenger in the general election.

Speaking of Fear Factor, did anyone else notice how NBC really dodged a bullet by pulling that curiously timed episode? After all, it wasn’t long after that decision was made that news began to break of the arrest of LAUSD teacher Mark Berndt on multiple charges of having spoon-fed, you guessed it, semen to his blindfolded elementary school students, sparking justified outrage from parents across the city and across the country. In the wake of the disturbing revelations, it certainly would not have cast the network in a very positive light to air footage of fame-whores ingesting semen for entertainment.

And why, one wonders, did they make such a curiously timed decision? The episode was undoubtedly tasteless (no pun intended), but no one at the network seems to have been concerned when the semen-eating challenge was conceived, filmed, put through post-production, put on the television schedule, etc. So why did it suddenly become a problem, almost as if someone at NBC had advance knowledge of the soon-to-break story?

Such weirdness is, of course, par for the course whenever a big pedophile case breaks into the news. And this one is shaping up to be a big one, with a second male teacher, Martin Springer, under arrest and a female teacher’s aide identified in news reports as yet another perpetrator. Parents have been loudly screaming “cover-up,” as well they should, with media reports claiming the cases are unrelated despite the fact that Berndt and Phillips were friends who took their classes on joint field trips, while Berndt and the aide had adjoining classrooms with a common door through which they frequently communicated.

As has been widely reported, LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy took the unusual step of replacing the entire staff at the school, a move widely denounced by parents but fully supported, naturally enough, by the local media, who have not been shy about invoking the name “McMartin,” as though planting the seeds for what may yet be cast as another ‘witch hunt.’

At least no one involved in the case, as of yet, has turned up dead, which can’t be said of former Penn State coach Joe Paterno. I’m certainly not suggesting, of course, that there was anything suspicious about the curiously timed death. I mean, sure, he seemed to be pretty healthy for a man of his age, right up until he was fired a couple months ago for his role in the Jerry Sandusky pedophile scandal, after which we almost immediately learned that he had cancer. But it was, we were told, treatable, so it was a little strange that he dropped dead just weeks later, but shit happens.
And sometimes when shit happens, it gets reported before it happens. Like when it was reported in Australia that John Kennedy was assassinated hours before he actually was. Or like when it was reported on British television that the tower known as WTC7 had collapsed not long before it actually did. Or like when a number of media outlets reported Joe Paterno’s death some twelve hours before he actually died.

Things like that seem to arouse suspicion in some people, though I’m not sure why. It seems to me that such incidents represent the very best of journalistic achievements. That kind of aggressive reporting, which takes the notion of ‘getting the scoop’ to a whole new level, should be applauded. In fact, it should be rewarded with Pulitzer Prizes.

In this particular case, the premature reports were said to be traced back to what was dubbed a ‘hoax’ e-mail sent by a Penn State athletic director. Can something really be considered a hoax though if it proves to be true just twelve hours later?

When the Penn State story first broke, a few scattered reports held that the case ran far deeper than Jerry Sandusky – that there were indications that Sandusky had in fact been pimping out the kids under his control to wealthy donors. What appeared to have been uncovered, in other words, was not the depraved acts of a lone pedophile, but rather another Larry King/Franklin-type case involving wealthy and powerful pedophiles preying on the most vulnerable of children.

And there were, to be sure, impressive political connections. The recently departed Paterno, for instance, had such names as President Gerald R. Ford and President George H.W. Bush in his personal Rolodex (that would be, needless to say, the same George H.W. Bush who has himself been accused multiple times of being a sadistic pedophile, though the media naturally looks away from such unpleasantness when it occasionally surfaces). And then there is the Rick Santorum connection, the former Pennsylvania senator having been the guy who bestowed a congressional award upon Sandusky, a fact that his mudslinging adversaries have predictably opted not to use against him.

Another sign that the Sandusky case runs far deeper than the media would have us believe can be found in the curious story of Ray Frank Gricar, the longtime Pennsylvania District Attorney who opted not to prosecute Sandusky back in 1998. On April 15, 2005, just months before his scheduled retirement, Gricar went missing and has never been heard from since. While his abandoned car was found, his keys, wallet and other personal effects, including his laptop computer, went missing as well. His laptop was ultimately found, but without the hard drive, which was later found destroyed.

Gricar was declared legally dead on July 25, 2011, just a few months before the Sandusky case broke into the news. To make the Gricar story just a little more bizarre, Roy Gricar, Ray’s older brother, had gone missing under remarkably similar circumstances back in May 1996. The elder Gricar’s body was recovered from a river and his death was ruled a suicide. Until shortly before his death, Ray Gricar had been working as a private contractor at Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

Probably the clearest sign that there is far more to the Sandusky case than has generally been reported was the assignment of former FBI director Louis Freeh to oversee the investigation, which immediately brought to mind the assignment of former CIA director William Colby to investigate the death of Franklin investigator Gary Carradori. Since Freeh’s assignment, predictably enough, the media have largely turned away from the case. But that’s okay – I’m sure it was all just a witch-hunt anyway.