



# The New Xenophobes

BY ROBERT B. REICH  
Tribune Media Services

The Boston Marathon bombing has brought out the xenophobes.

Often when America suffers some large, inexplicable tragedy, we want to blame “foreigners” and look for ways to fortify ourselves against them. It’s more reassuring to believe that an evil lies outside our borders — in “them” — than to face the possibility that it’s randomly among us.

And like the communist scare before it, the so-called “war on terror” — a war without end — offers a convenient means of targeting the source as a foreign menace bent on destroying us.

Let’s blame immigrants, say the xenophobes. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) is urging Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to reconsider immigration reform because of the bombings. “The facts emerging in the Boston Marathon bombing have exposed a weakness in our current system,” Paul says.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), the senior Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is responsible for an immigration reform bill, is using much the same language — suggesting that the investigation of the two alleged Boston attackers will “help shed light on the weaknesses of our system.”

Whatever “weaknesses” exist in our immigration system don’t explain why Dzhokhar Tsarnaev did what he is alleged to have done. He came to the United States when he was 9 years old and attended the public schools of Cambridge, Mass., not far from where I lived.

Immigration reform shouldn’t be confused with national security in any event. The main purpose of reforming our outmoded immigration laws is to do what’s right and give the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in America — many of them here for years, working at jobs and paying withholding taxes, and many of them children — a path to citizenship.

We need to make sure they aren’t exploited by employers and others who know they won’t complain to authorities. And we should give their families the possibility of living here peacefully and securely without fearing deportation.

That path shouldn’t be so easy as to invite others from abroad to abuse the system. America has every right to demand that undocumented immigrants pay a



Robert REICH

penalty and move to the back of the queue when it comes to attaining citizenship. But the path should be reasonable, straightforward and fair.

The new xenophobia doesn’t end there. Other politicians want to declare the surviving Boston bombing suspect an “enemy combatant” and deny him the protections of the criminal justice system.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) argues this is necessary given “his radical Islamist ties and the fact that Chechens are all over the world fighting with al-Qaeda.”

Wait a moment. Tsarnaev was arrested on American soil for acts occurring in the United States. No known evidence links him to al-Qaeda. He is Muslim, but does Graham believe Muslims are presumed guilty until proven otherwise?

It’s true that during the Bush administration the Supreme Court upheld the indefinite military detention of Yaser Esam Hamdi, who was an American citizen. But the Hamdi case was entirely different. Hamdi was captured carrying a weapon on an Afghanistan battlefield. The court said the purpose of wartime detention was to keep captured enemies from returning to fight, and that “indefinite detention for the purpose of interrogation is not authorized.”

The so-called “war on terror” is analogous to the Cold War, which lasted almost 45 years. During its height we came perilously close to abrogating the rights of American citizens on suspicions they had ties to communists. If American citizens can be arrested and held indefinitely without a lawyer or proper trial, and without the full protection of our system of justice, because we suspect they have ties to terrorists, where will that end?

Our civil rights and liberties lie at the core of what it means to be an American. We have fought for over two centuries to protect and defend them. The horror of the Boston Marathon bombing is real. But the xenophobic fears it has aroused are not.

We need immigration reform. We must protect our civil liberties. These goals are not incompatible with protecting America. They are essential to it.

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# Is Football On Its Deathbed?

BY JOHN KASS  
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With all that college beef on parade this past week, the NFL draft is a wonder of sports marketing, a televised pageant for the multibillion-dollar American football industry.

But there’s something football fans should know: Football is dead in America.

Even through all the chatter and cheerleading and media hype, football as an American cultural institution lies in final spasm. It’s as dead as the Marlboro Man.

And if the professional game survives at all, it will be relegated to the pile of trash sports, like mixed martial arts or whatever is done in third-rate arenas with monster trucks and mud. It won’t be as American as apple pie. Instead, football will become the province of people with face tattoos.

Lawyers are circling football now. For years they’ve had their wings locked, cruising overhead, but lately they’ve swooped in low, landing and hopping over to take chunks out of the great billion-dollar beast.

But it’s not the lawyers who are the death of football. Blaming lawyers misses the point. Like their counterparts in nature, lawyers are merely the cleanup crew. What finishes football are the parents of future football players.

The NFL desperately needs American parents. Not as fans, but as suppliers of young flesh.

The NFL needs parents to send their little boys into the football feeder system. And without that supply of meat for the NFL grinder — first youth teams, then high school and college — there can be no professional football.

And yet every day, more American parents decide they’re finished with football. Why? Because parents can no longer avoid the fact that football scrambles the human brain.

In cultural terms, parents who send their 10-year-olds to play football might as well hold up signs saying they’d like to give their children cigarettes and whiskey.

Make no mistake. I loved football. I loved it desperately. Even now, four decades later, I remember endlessly damning myself for being too small to play it at a big-time college. Iached for it, for the violence of it, for the training, the salt pills and no water on hot August fields, the helmet scabs on the forehead, but mostly the collisions. And I still love it, but I can’t shake the guilt of supporting the physical ruin of great athletes. My wife and I wouldn’t let our sons play. We just couldn’t.

Future historians may explain all this in terms of cultural change, of more information about concussions, spinal cord injuries, paralysis and brain damage, and another football killer, taxpayer liability.

Some 4,000 former NFL players have joined lawsuits

against the league for allegedly hiding the dangers to the brain. This follows a rash of depression-related suicides, with some players shooting themselves in the chest so that their brains could be studied after their deaths. One of these was the great Chicago Bears safety Dave Duerson. He left a suicide note, asking that doctors examine what was in his skull after a lifetime of bashing it. College players have also filed suit.

Eventually, lawsuits will overwhelm the high schools. And high school superintendents won’t be able to increase property taxes to pay for the additional cost of subsidizing the game.

“The idea that five years ago I would have forbidden my kids to play football is hard to imagine,” said Joseph Siprut, a lawyer representing former Eastern Illinois University player Adrian Arrington and other athletes in federal court over the long-term effects of head injuries.

“It never would have occurred to me. Now, given what I know about the concussion issue — first as a lawyer who has litigation, but also as someone who reads the papers — for me as a parent, I don’t think I would ever let my kids set foot on a football field. Ever.”

Football may hang on for a few years, hang on desperately like a cat dying under a backyard deck, hissing as it goes. There are billions of dollars at stake, feeding owners, players, agents, advertisers, journalists, and most importantly, bookies. The NFL is about gambling.

The game is not just a contact sport — it’s a high-impact collision sport. It is about exploding into your opponent, refusing to break, while breaking others to your will and knocking them senseless.

For young players on the field and old spectators remembering, there is still joy in it. But expressing that joy has become culturally taboo.

Fans have been led to pretend that the violence is merely ancillary. But to say that violence isn’t at the heart of football is a lie. Remove the violence, and you remove what is great about the game, what is awe-inspiring and guilt-inspiring at the same time.

All sports can be dangerous. They involve physical and spiritual risk. But football is different from other team sports. It is designed to slam body against body, and often, head slams against head. There is no way to alter this fact, no way to spin it.

So if you’re wondering about the future of football during the NFL draft, try this experiment: Ask the parents of a little boy about tackle football, about concussions, and look into their eyes when they speak.

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required all the men, women and children inside to come out with their hand up. (Videos of some of these incursions may be found on YouTube.) Are civics still taught in high school? Does anyone remember the Fourth Amendment to the United State Constitution? It goes like this:

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall

issue, but upon probably cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

How ironic that Boston, the virtual birthplace of our democracy, should be the subject of such conduct when almost 238 years ago to the day colonists from the nearby towns of Lexington and Concord began the Revolutionary War with armed resistance to British soldiers sent to seize their firearms and arrest two of

our founding fathers, John Hancock and Samuel Adams. The British practice of having armed soldiers force their way into private homes was the principle precursor to the eventual adoption of the Fourth Amendment. Let us recall the words of another of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin; “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

## Collins Breaks A Code Of Silence

While it isn’t quite the same as Jackie Robinson breaking baseball’s color barrier, the announcement by an active National Basketball Association player Monday that he is gay does shatter a social barrier that has stood staunchly and resolutely for far too long.

The revelation came from Jason Collins, a 34-year-old journeyman center in the NBA who revealed his sexual orientation in an article written for the May 6 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. With that, Collins becomes the first male in a major American team sport to come out of the closet.

This breakthrough doesn’t reach the level of impact created by Robinson’s arrival in the major leagues in 1947, which came about only after centuries of struggle, enslavement and blatant, calculated segregation that so vigorously defined much of American history up to that point.

Nevertheless, what Collins has done is still important.

Professional sports have always been perceived in one stereotypical way: a high-testosterone, heterosexual way, if you will. Until now, no male athlete engaged in making a living in these sports has had the courage or the will to publicly declare that he’s different.

But here’s the thing: There have always been gay athletes, just as there have always been people in your sphere of travels who most likely were gay. For instance, former NBA great Charles Barkley and former baseball pitching star Curt Schilling said they have played against players they knew to be gay. Other athletes were almost certainly aware of this, too. So what Collins said shouldn’t be a shock, to that extent.

Coincidentally, Collins’ disclosure comes just days after Brittney Griner, one of the most dominant women’s college basketball players ever and who just became the first pick in the Women’s National Basketball Association draft, acknowledged she was gay. It made headlines — she also came out in a *Sports Illustrated* article — but they were minor ripples in comparison to Collins’ disclosure.

His announcement shatters the code of silence that these closeted players have felt the need to maintain. It brings what has always been into the light of day at long last.

The reaction of other athletes to Collins’ admission has been generally very positive and supportive. Several fellow NBA basketball players have come to his defense and/or support. Also, the Boston Red Sox have invited Collins, who played part of this past season with the Celtics, to throw out the first pitch at an upcoming game. And New York Mets pitcher LaTroy Hawkins told a reporter Monday, “Everybody knows somebody who’s gay. If you can’t deal with it in 2013, you need to go somewhere and hide in a cave.”

But there will be rough times ahead for Collins. Not all athletes are likely to be so supportive of him, although in this age, fewer of them are likely to be so blatant about it. And you can bet there will be some loudmouth fans who will not be so understanding of the situation when Collins takes the floor again. (This assumes he even will. At age 34, the center is nearing the end of his career and is now a free agent. There’s a small chance he may not land a job because of those factors, but some will likely point to his coming out as a reason for that, which would be a shame.)

Collins’ basketball career, a resumé that includes six teams and nine playoff appearances in 12 years, will likely not be vividly remembered by most fans. But his courage to reveal who he really is will. His action merely tells us that our professional sports universe — which can be utterly surreal with its outrageous salaries — looks a little more like real life than perhaps we had thought. Frankly, any problems he encounters would say more about us than about him.

*kmh*

## TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, May 1, the 121st day of 2013. There are 244 days left in the year.

**Today’s Highlight in History:** On May 1, 1963, James W. Whittaker became the first American to conquer Mount Everest as he and Sherpa guide Nawang Gombu reached the summit.

**On this date:** In 1707, the Kingdom of Great Britain was created as a treaty merging England and Scotland took effect.

In 1786, Mozart’s opera “The Marriage of Figaro” premiered in Vienna.

In 1898, Commodore George Dewey gave the command, “You may fire when you are ready, Gridley,” as an American naval force destroyed a Spanish squadron in Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.

In 1911, the song “I Want a Girl (Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad),” by Harry Von Tilzer and Will Dillon, was first published.

In 1931, New York’s 102-story Empire State Building was dedicated. Singer Kate Smith made her debut on CBS Radio on her 24th birthday.

In 1941, the Orson Welles motion picture “Citizen Kane” premiered in New York.

In 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over Sverdlovsk and captured its pilot, Francis Gary Powers.

In 1961, the first U.S. airline hijacking took place as Antulio Ramirez Ortiz, a Miami electrician, commandeered a National Airlines plane that was en route to Key West, Fla., and forced the pilot to fly to Cuba.

In 1963, the Coca-Cola Co. began marketing TaB, its first low-calorie beverage.

In 1971, the intercity passenger rail service Amtrak went into operation.

In 1982, the World’s Fair in Knoxville, Tenn., was opened by President Ronald Reagan.

In 1992, on the third day of the Los Angeles riots, a visibly shaken Rodney King appeared in public to appeal for calm, pleading, “Can we all get along?”

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush, co-piloting an S-3B Viking, landed on the deck of the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln off the Southern California coast; standing below a banner strung across the ship’s bridge proclaiming “Mission Accomplished,” Bush declared that major combat

in Iraq was over, but also said “difficult work” remained ahead. A magnitude 6.4 earthquake killed 177 people in Turkey.

**Five years ago:** Three dozen people were killed in a double suicide bombing during a wedding procession in Balad Ruz, Iraq. A military jury at Fort Hood, Texas, acquitted Army Sgt. Leonard Trevino of premeditated murder in the death of an unarmed Iraqi insurgent. A U.S. missile strike in central Somalia killed the reputed leader of al-Qaida in Somalia. President George W. Bush imposed new sanctions against property owned or controlled by the military junta in Myanmar. Deborah Jeane Palfrey, 52, the so-called “D.C. Madam” convicted of running a prostitution ring, hanged herself in Tarpon Springs, Fla. Philipp Freiherr von Boeselager, believed to be the last surviving member of the inner circle of plotters who attempted to kill Adolf Hitler, died in Altenahr, Germany, at age 90.

**One year ago:** In a swift and secretive trip to the Afghan war zone, President Barack Obama signed an agreement vowing long-term ties with Afghanistan after America’s combat forces returned home. Hundreds of activists across the U.S. joined worldwide May Day protests, with Occupy Wall Street members in several cities leading demonstrations and in some cases clashing with police.

**Today’s Birthdays:** Former astronaut Scott Carpenter is 88. Country singer Sonny James is 84. Singer Judy Collins is 74. Actor Stephen Macht is 71. Singer Rita Coolidge is 68. Pop singer Nick Fortuna (The Buckinghams) is 67. Actor-director Douglas Barr is 64. Actor Dann Florek is 62. Singer-songwriter Ray Parker Jr. is 59. Hall of Fame jockey Steve Cauthen is 53. Actress Maia Morgenstern is 51. Country singer Wayne Hancock is 48. Actor Charlie Schlatter is 47. Country singer Tim McGraw is 46. Rock musician Johnny Colt is 45. Rock musician D’Arcy is 45. Movie director Wes Anderson is 44. Actress Julie Benz is 41. Actor Bailey Chase is 41. Country singer Cory Morrow is 41. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer Tina Campbell (Mary Mary) is 39. Actor Darius McCrary is 37. Actress Kerry Bishe (Film: “Argo”) is 29.

**Thought for Today:** “He who is swift to believe is swift to forget.” — Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Polish-born scholar (1907-1972).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him.” John 1:32. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

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## YOUR LETTERS

### Police Overreaction?

William L. Heubbaum, Yankton

With all of the praise being heaped upon the Boston police in the wake of the Marathon bombing it seems to have escaped the media (save the blogosphere, such as The Daily Caller) that there were almost numberless door to door warrantless searches by local, state, and federal SWAT teams. They literally forced their way into private homes at gunpoint and