A Selection from *Tourists of History*[1]

Marita Sturken

FROM THE CULTURE OF FEAR TO THE CULTURE OF TERROR

Many of the tensions in late twentieth-century American society, such as the rise of right-wing militias and the prison industry and the intensely divisive and polarized political battles, were abruptly relegated to a more marginal status in the public arena after 9/11. The shock of 9/11 was such that narratives of history were quickly divided into before and after, between the era of the 1980s and 1990s and the post-9/11 context with its focus on terrorism. Yet there are many continuities between the culture of fear and paranoia that characterized late twentieth-century America and the fearful preoccupation with security that marks the post-9/11 era. While the 1990s culture of survivalism was restricted to the militia movement, it would expand in the post-9/11 context to include a much broader consumer public with many more bourgeois and middle-class manifestations. Paranoia about the government was the dominant narrative of extremist and mainstream conservative groups in the 1990s; a fear of terrorism and a paranoid xenophobia dominates the post-9/11 era. To say that this fear is justified is true, of course; however, I don't want to imply that the paranoia in the 1990s was completely unjustified about both the degree to which government agents were empowered to invade the privacy of citizens and the way the lives of cult members were perceived by federal agents and the public at large to be of less value than others. The post-9/11 fear of violence is a response to an increase in the potential for subsequent terrorist attacks as U.S. actions and policies continue to feed violent anger toward the country throughout many parts of the world. Yet how American citizens have responded to this charged context has been influenced by the discourse of consumerism that has circulated since 9/11. Indeed, as Dana Heller notes, "9/11" has itself "attained the cultural function of a trademark."[2]

1 This selection was originally published in Sturken's (2007), *Tourists of History: Memory, kitsch, and consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Republished by permission.

2 Heller, "Introduction: Consuming 9/11," in *The Selling of 9/11*, 3.

Significantly, one of the first responses to the shock of the events of 9/11 was the emergence of a belief, fueled by the media, that the national tone needed to change. In particular, in a time of fear and vulnerability it was no longer appropriate for American popular culture to be steeped in irony. This narrative revealed the degree to which irony was understood to be a symptom of a culture that was flippant about violence and its causes. Thus, it could be argued, irony in U.S. popular culture constitutes a knowing wink in a cultural context in which violence is always constructed and merely the source of disinterested shrugs. It may be that this concept of irony is particularly American, given that irony can be a key aspect of how certain cultures, such as those in Eastern Europe, have mediated repression. The American irony that was under attack immediately following 9/11 was in many ways an integral aspect of consumer culture, as American advertisers have increasingly deployed postmodern styles and ironic humor to speak to media-savvy consumers. Advertisers have thus helped to create a pervasive sense of ironic matter-of-factness in the face of postmodern ennui, contributing to the general sense that if you can't be new (and modern) and optimistic, you can at least be knowing and ironic. The dominant structures of feeling that emerged in the post-9/11 context were about fear, preparedness, and security, and these seemed to be at odds with ironic disengagement.

This concern that irony was inappropriate in a time of loss and grief also helped to fuel the turn toward sentiment and ultimately toward kitsch consumerism that characterized the response to 9/11. Irony is fundamentally about how things are not what they seem to be and a contradiction between the literal meaning of something and its intended meaning. The prescribed codes of sentiment that define kitsch culture offered simple and consumable emotional registers. It didn't matter that a post-9/11 souvenir might be kitschy in offering prescribed sentiment because emotions were so present and easily tapped into.

The post-9/11 concerns about national tone also translated into an attack on postmodernism, as if somehow postmodernism were responsible for Americans being unprepared for global terrorism. In a much-discussed essay in the *New York Times* Edward Rothstein wrote that postmodern thought produces a relativism in a time when "this destruction seems to cry out for a transcendent ethical perspective." He added, "One can only hope that finally, as the ramifications sink in, as it becomes clear how close the attack came to undermining the political, military and financial authority of the United States, the Western relativism of pomo [postmodernism] and the obsessive focus of poco [postcolonialism] will be widely seen as ethically perverse."[3] Rothstein's essay demonstrates the degree to which the sense of crisis after 9/11 produced a desire for comforting models of

3 Edward Rothstein, "Attacks on U.S. Challenge Postmodern True Believers," *New York Times*, September 22, 2001. See also Stanley Kurtz, "Postmodernism Kills," *National Review*, August 12 2002. http://www.nationalreview.com.

thought, including the reassuring philosophical frameworks that could uphold such simple binaries as evil and innocence. Postmodernism, with its constant questioning and refusal to affirm binary ways of thinking, had to be set aside, if not demonized, in a time of vulnerability.

The crisis that immediately followed 9/11 was not only political and national (if not philosophical); it was a crisis of economics and consumerism. It revealed the degree to which American culture is dependent both symbolically and economically on the activity of consumerism. In the first weeks following 9/11, consumer culture in the United States was at a standstill. The airlines did not fly any planes until September 14, and then resumed on very limited schedules, losing billions of dollars. With most Americans in a state of shock, there was little activity that fell within the framework of normality. Most obviously, television stations did not show regular programming for several days, running twenty-four-hour coverage of the crisis and losing almost $400 million in revenue.[4] Lynn Spigel writes about "the broader havoc that 9/11 wreaked on television—not just as an industry—but also as 'a whole way of life'":

> The nonstop commercial-free coverage, which lasted for a full week on major broadcast networks and cable news networks, contributed to a sense of estrangement from ordinary life, not simply because of the unexpected nature of the attack itself but also because television's normal routines—its everyday schedule and ritualized flow—had been disordered.... By the weekend of September 15, television news anchors began to tell us that it was their national duty to return to the "normal" everyday schedule of television entertainment, a return meant to coincide with Washington's call for a return to normalcy (and, hopefully, normal levels of consumerism). Of course, for the television industry, resuming the normal TV schedule also meant a return to commercial breaks and, therefore, TV's very sustenance.... Just one week after the attacks the television networks discursively realigned commercial entertainment with the patriotic goals of the nation.[5]

The return to the television schedule was not only a return to programming, it was a return to advertising as the economic underpinning of television and also as a signifier of the comfort of routine. The reappearance of television commercials thus marked the end of the state of emergency. Advertisements signaled routine and the comfort of the mundane. This move from shock and mourning to routine consumerism, and an increased urgency about promoting consumerism, took place quite rapidly. Strangely, while taboos about irony and

4 Wayne Friedman and Richard Linnett, "Commercial-Free TV: Cost $400 Mil," *Advertising Age* 72.38 (2001): 3. They reported $378 million in losses, while the *Wall Street Journal* estimated $320 million. Venessa O'Connell, "TV Networks Cut $320 Million of Ads in Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, September 19, 2001, B5.

5 Spigel, "Entertainment Wars," 236-37.

comedy were still in place, a belief in consumerism reemerged within a week after 9/11 without creating much controversy. For many consumers, the turn to retail apparently functioned as an expression of patriotism, if not defiance, a way to demonstrate that they had "not given in to the terrorists at all."[6]

Among the objects that Americans purchased in large numbers in the first week or two after 9/11 were American flags, which quickly sold out throughout the country; Wal-Mart sold 116,000 flags on September 11 alone.[7] In many parts of the country these flags were displayed most prominently on cars and trucks. Susan Willis writes, "Taped to the inside rear window, tattooed into the paint, or streaming from tailgate or antenna, the auto flag makes every roadway into a Fourth of July parade route."[8] Using the flag as decoration on automobiles had an ironic effect, given the role of oil politics in the crisis, yet this irony could not be acknowledged in the demand for patriotism.

These small American flags, which were ubiquitous in the first months after 9/11, are at once simple yet complex objects. One could argue that the fevered consumption of these flags, the vast majority of which are produced not in the United States but in China and Korea, was not necessarily an obvious response to the grief felt at the time. The flags emerged when people were searching for a symbol that could provide a visual signifier of their sense of solidarity with those who had been killed and a sense of their own trauma. Was their message one of solidarity and belonging? A few years later, the artist Art Spiegelman would ask, Why flags? "Why not a globe?"[9] In a certain sense, the ubiquity of the flags suggested the paucity of shared symbols of unity for Americans. Even social critics such as Todd Gitlin argued at the time that Americans could embrace the flag as a symbol of belonging, that the flag could be meaningful to citizens (even educated, left-leaning ones) beyond simple, unquestioned patriotism, that, in Gitlin's words, his own act of displaying the flag was "not meant as support for the policies of George W. Bush but as an affirmation of fellowship with an injured and resolute people."[10]

The proliferation of post-9/11 flags was the beginning of a period of policing the flag's iconography. Ironic commentary on the flag, which has a long history in American art and popular culture, was already under siege by 9/11, but the kitschification of the flag took on new dimensions after 9/11. Its status as an icon of the kitsch aspects of American patriotic culture has become so overdetermined (one could argue, so fragile) that the U.S. Congress took to posturing around amendments to ban flag burning (the House passed such an amendment in

6 Scanlon, "Your Flag Decal," 176.
7 Ibid. 177.
8 S. Willis, *Portents of the Real*, 20.
9 Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, 7.
10 Gitlin, *The Intellectuals*, 129.

June 2005 and the Senate narrowly defeated one in June 2006), despite the fact that it appears that no one is actually attempting to burn flags. Given that an ironic engagement with the flag is impossible in this climate, the flag itself has taken on new dimensions of kitsch in its proliferation in consumer products in times of crisis; it has been used to sell pizza, is worn as a T-shirt, and, in one of its most kitsch manifestations, was worn by Bono inside his jacket as he sang at the January 2002 Super Bowl halftime show while the names of the 9/11 dead scrolled behind him on the massive stage.

In the first weeks after 9/11, the consumption of flags signaled the beginning of promotion not simply of patriotism but of consumerism. One of the most revealing aspects of this shift from mourning the dead to entreaties to consumerism was the degree to which public officials very quickly began to speak to U.S. citizens specifically as consumers. For instance, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who was lauded in the media as a reassuring and heroic presence in New York City after the attacks and who had spoken in eloquent and compelling terms in the first week of the crisis in ways that comforted many people directly affected by the attacks, quickly turned to a kind of New York boosterism by the end of the first week. Asked how Americans could help New York in this time of crisis, Giuliani told Americans to spend money, to get on airplanes and fly to New York, to go to the theater, to buy what they could (and, by implication, could not) afford. These statements would normally be unremarkable in that they fit within an ongoing national discourse on consumerism; as statements by a public official in a time of national crisis, however, they are quite stunning. Rather than telling Americans to work together to help their neighbors, to build community, to volunteer, to contribute money to the families who had lost loved ones, or to help their own communities access their own security needs, the mayor, at the absolute height of his popularity, with the national public listening to his every word, told people to act as individuals, to spend money on themselves, to consume products and entertainment because their true mission as citizens was to bolster the economy, even if they put themselves and their savings at risk.

Just as the return to television advertising signaled a return to "normalcy," the return to consumer practices provided a sense of community with fellow citizens. One Wal-Mart store manager told the media, "The day of the attacks, we had many people who were alone come into the store because they wanted to be around other people and have someone to talk to." Writes Jennifer Scanlon, Wal-Mart "simultaneously offers itself as the necessary link between Americans and their need to keep consumer identity intact: even when the world is turned upside down, we can right it."[11] In this sense, the desire to turn to Wal-Mart as a

11 Scanlon, "Your Flag Decal," 177.

place of connection demonstrates the degree to which consumer malls have truly replaced the village square as an expected site of congregation. Through their patriotic marketing, Wal-Mart, McDonald's, and other brands, have succeeded in allying their corporate image with the nation. When Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans four years later, Wal-Mart proved to be exceptionally more reliable and better prepared than the federal government, solidifying in many ways its reputation as Wal-Mart America.

In fall 2001, the fear that tourism in New York would not rebound for a long time revealed the degree to which certain segments of the economy of New York City are particularly dependent on tourism. Indeed, New York boosterism has often taken the form of tourism as one of the few aspects of New York that allows non-New Yorker Americans to like a city that they normally disdain as arrogant and un-American. As Mike Davis wrote in November 2001, "Now folks in Iowa watch grisly television footage of the FBI raking the rubble at Fresh Kills for rotting body parts...and thank God that they still live on the farm, or, at least, in a gated suburb of Des Moines. However much they may admire the Churchillian pose struck by Rudolph Giuliani or the fortitude of New York's rescue workers, family vacations are not usually envisioned as exercises in 'overcoming fear.'"[12] However, as I discuss in chapter 4, the destruction in lower Manhattan would become a draw for tourists in a very short period.

In the first few weeks after 9/11, the shocked suspension of consumer spending created a crisis in itself. As early as September 19, the media became preoccupied with the story and was reporting consumer spending coming back (though, in fact, this early reporting was overblown).[13] President Bush also began speaking about consumerism on the national stage. By late September, he was sent out on a number of press events, traveling around the country to convey the message, according to the White House, "Get on board. Do your business around the country. Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed."[14] This public relations attempt to promote the travel industry had Bush flying around the country to demonstrate that air travel was safe—a ploy that rang false given the barrage of security that surrounded him on Air Force One. (It's worth noting that Disneyland was under high security and had been considered a potential target. It has since been under much more strict security measures and has been at the forefront of exploring new forms of surveillance.)[15] In late October, after the war in Afghanistan had begun and

12 Davis, "The Flames of New York," 11. This essay was originally published in *New Left Review* 12 (November/December 2001).

13 Leslie Kaufman, "Consumer Spending Returning to Normal," *New York Times*, September 19, 2001, C1.

14 James Gerstenzang, "Response to Terror: Bush Works to Get a Point Across: Time for Life to Return to Normal," *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 2001, A3.

15 At various times of heightened security, such as the period before the beginning of the Iraq

with spending still low, the International Mass Retail Association, a lobbying group, and several House Republicans went shopping at a Target store in a photo opportunity to "lead by example." While eating a hamburger at the Crystal City, Virginia, McDonald's, Rep. John U. Peterson told reporters, "If we just hunker down in fear and don't spend normally, millions of Americans will lose their jobs." With apparently unintended irony, he added, "I had a gentleman tell me the other day, 'I bought an SUV to help the economy.' Those who can afford to kick in a little ought to do it."[16]

All the elements of Lizabeth Cohen's consumer republic are at work here: the equation of citizenship and consumerism and the selling of consumerism as the avenue to freedom, democracy, and equality. It is also the case that increasingly over the past few decades, as it has shifted from an industrial to a postindustrial base, the U.S. economy has become remarkably dependent on a high level of consumer spending. Writes the *New York Times* reporter Louis Uchitelle, "Nothing props up the economy more than consumers, and dips in their spending frighten forecasters.... Consumers in America spend because they feel they must spend. More than in the past, the necessities of life, real and perceived, eat up their incomes."[17] While government outlay and business investment form the other big factors in the economy, added together they come to less than half the amount of consumer spending. The post- 9/11 rhetoric that people should start spending money in order to save the economy was based on an economic reality. Yet it was also in conflict with the fact that spending is often equated with optimism. Thus, the demands of the economy were directly at odds with the necessary response to a national security crisis. The historian T. J. Jackson Lears told the *Los Angeles Times* on September 29, "It is one of the real paradoxical concepts of living in a market economy and consumer culture that depends on people maintaining a state of optimism. [This] runs counter to the wartime mentality that they also need. Bush and other leaders have to promote confidence, whether or not they feel it themselves. They have to persuade the public that there is nothing to be afraid of. But there is a real danger of encouraging indifference and not maintaining a state of readiness."[18] Here again, Cohen's consumer republic is clear: one of the key features of the notion that consumerism, rather than civic engagement, is the primary means to achieve social equality is the idea that one does not and should not have to experience sacrifice in order to participate fully in the nation.

War and at times of security alert, there is a focus on Disneyland as a potential target. See Connie Skipitares, "California Theme Parks Tighten Security," *Knight Ridder Business News*, March 27, 2003, 1.

16 John Lancaster, "The Homeland Shopping Network," *Washington Post*, November 1, 2001, C1.

17 Louis Uchitelle, "Why Americans Must Keep Spending," *New York Times*, December 1, 2003, C1. Uchitelle state that in 2003, with consumer debt at a record level of almost $8 trillion, government outlays were $2.1 trillion and business investment $1.2 trillion, whereas consumer spending was $7.6 trillion.

18 Gerstenzang, "Response to Terror."

The advertising industry was particularly badly hit in the initial weeks and months, when everyday slogans that celebrated the pleasures of consumption seemed suddenly inappropriate. Many ads were quickly pulled from publications, including numerous ads that had images of the twin towers, such as a Bacardi rum ad of the twin towers rocking, and ads with now inappropriate icons, such as a Toyota ad at the Pentagon.[19] Other ads whose slogans had now become offensive were removed from pending publications, such as Coca-Cola ads that declared, "Life Tastes Good," and an American Trans Air offbeat print campaign that showed an image of a gladiator with the headline "If there's going to be a war, we'll fight it out on own turf" and a billboard with the tagline "Fly Without Being Taken."[20] Iomega Corporation, which makes computer disks, rushed to pull an ad from the September 17 Newsweek that featured the headline, "Tom Survived the Crash. Everybody has a story. Put it on a zip."[21] Many companies were too late to pull ads that were already in production, and the *New York Times* ran a front-page apology on September 16, stating, "The Times regrets that some references to events are outdated and that the tone of some articles and advertising is inconsistent with the gravity of the situation."

Very quickly, however, many advertisers began to devise ways of speaking to the crisis rather than pretending it had not happened. Here is perhaps an unintended consequence of a consumer republic: many of these ads succeeded in speaking to the feeling of belonging to a nation in a way that the government did not in that time of crisis. Many companies ran full-page newspaper ads that were attempts to pay tribute to those killed on 9/11 while also reaffirming their company's existence in the context of a national and economic crisis. Rushed into production, many of them appearing within a few days, these ads uniformly had a spare visual style of simple text on large white space, which evoked the gravity of the time. A number listed the names of the dead and offered condolences to the families and friends of those who died. In these ads, the corporations themselves spoke the language of the nation, evoking protection, mourning, condolence, and concern for safety.

These ads are, in effect, memorials, which speak to a mourning local and national public, yet simultaneously they are also legitimation ads intended to establish corporate citizenship and particular brands in positive terms. Those ads for companies that had been directly affected by the crisis functioned in ways similar to the many posters of missing people that circulated in New York in those first few weeks. One ad by the firm Sidley Austin Brown and Wood read, "We thank our clients and friends for your expressions of concern and support.

19 Stefano Hatfield, "New Boundaries for Advertisers," *Guardian*, September 19, 2001, http://www.guardian.co.uk.

20 "Judging the Mood of the Nation," *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, October 24, 2001.

21 Judann Pollack et al., "Marketing Put on Hold," *Advertising Age* 72.38 (September 17, 2001): 1.

We mourn for all who suffered loss. We continue to hope and pray for our missing colleague, Rosemary Smith, and rejoice in the safety of all of our other colleagues from our World Trade Center office." In this ad, the mere mention of their missing colleague, her naming, retains a certain power. Morgan Stanley, which had several thousand employees in the twin towers, ran an ad signed by Chairman Philip J. Purcell: "This past Tuesday, many of us who work at The World Trade Center returned home to our loved ones. Sadly, all of us did not." These ads spoke in moving terms of loss, the loss not only of employees but of a workplace, and thus effectively manifested personalized sincerity. Companies without a direct connection to the trade center ran similar tributes, including an ad by Best Buy with small text on a large white space reading, "As you weep, we weep, As you pray, we pray, As you endure, we will endure." Such ads blur issues of corporate voice in odd ways. (Who is "we" here? Best Buy? Americans?)

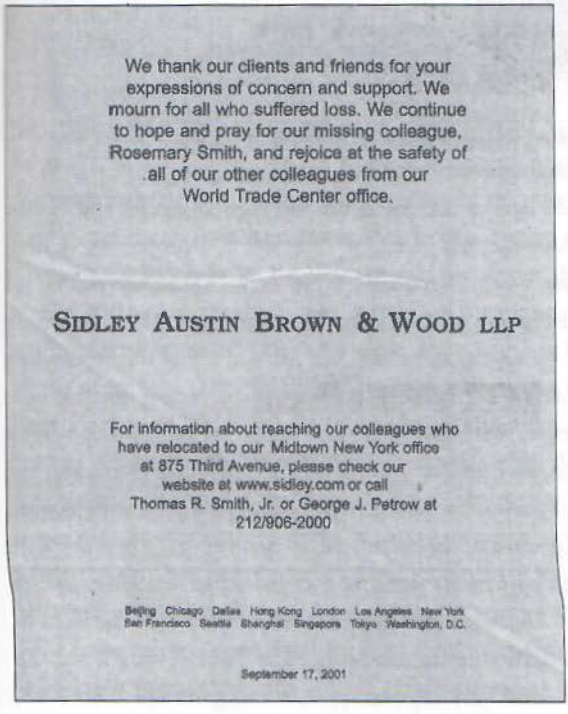

Fig. 2
Sidley Austin Brown and Wood ad, New York Times, September 17, 2001

Ads were run by cities and governments of other countries. One of the first of these was published on September 13 in the *New York Times* by the Oklahoma City National Memorial and the State of Oklahoma: "Oklahoma Cares," it read, adding, "You Stood With Us in Our Darkest Hour. Now We Stand With You." In this ad, an immediate connection is made between the trauma of the Oklahoma City bombing and the events of 9/11, and the support networks that the response to each implies.

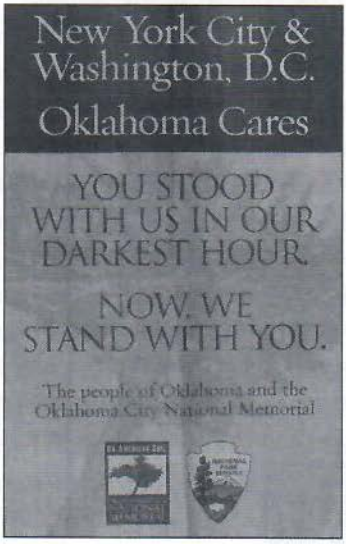

Fig. 2
Okalahoma City National Memorial ad, New York Times September 13, 2001.

The use of advertising as forms of both mourning and affirmation was also evident in several television ads that emerged in the first months after 9/11. Cantor Fitzgerald/eSpeed's offices had been on the high floors of the North Tower, the exact place where the first plane hit; they lost 658 people, more than any other company in the World Trade Center. In early 2002 they ran an ad called "Our Floors" featuring one of their surviving employees, Mike. Standing alone before the camera, he says that he was late for work that day and when he exited the subway, he says, "I remember looking up and seeing that big hole and I was thinking to myself, you know, that's our floors." He continues talking about how work was the most important thing for those who survived, and the ad ends with the tagline, "To work with us, visit www.espeed.com www.cantor.com." It's a risky strategy, given the association the ad has just made of work with death. Yet the ad also aims to present work, and in particular working for this company, as life-affirming. Another advertisement used the voices of the dead to persuade viewers to make charitable contributions. The Twin Towers Fund ran a moving black-and-white ad of Timothy Stackpole, a firefighter killed on 9/11, talking in a 1998 video about how much he loves being a firefighter.

Most of the ads that emerged as a response to 9/11 deployed patriotism in order to urge consumers to spend money and to travel. This discourse of corporate consumerism, in which corporations speak to consumers as citizens, has a long history. Since the mid-nineteenth century, advertisers have used national crises as a means to sell products as American. For instance, during World War II, U.S. advertisers spoke regularly to consumers about how rationing and thriftiness as well as purchasing American goods were an important part of the war effort.

After 9/11, this kind of patriotic advertising took many forms. One week after 9/11, United Airlines ran an ad that included this text:

> On Monday, when you asked people how they were doing, without much thought, or much contemplation, they replied "fine" or "good."
> On Monday, we passed strangers without much regard.
> On Tuesday, September 11, all that changed.
> On Tuesday, September 11, strangers died for each other.
> On Tuesday, September 11, America was knocked to its knees.
> On Tuesday, September 11, America got back up again.

K-Mart took out full-page ads with an image of the American flag and the directions, "Remove from newspaper. Place in Window. Embrace freedom." Merrill Lynch pronounced itself "Bullish on America," and Southwest Airlines promised to "Get America Flying."

Of these ads selling patriotism, the campaign of the *New York Times* was the one that most explicitly staged the events of 9/11 in the context of history. It published a series of ads starting in November 2001 that borrowed from the history of patriotic kitsch images in remaking several Norman Rockwell paintings from World War II. In one ad, a reproduction of Rockwell's well-known 1943 painting *Freedom from Fear*, a mother tucks in sleeping children while the father stands over them, holding a newspaper. In the original image, the newspaper had a headline relating to World War II, with the words "Horror" and "Bombings." In the 2001 remake, the father is holding the September 12 *New York Times*, with its large headline, "U.S. Attacked: Hijacked Jets Destroy Twin Towers and Hit Pentagon in Day of Terror." The ads make an explicit connection between Pearl Harbor and 9/11 for those who know the original Rockwell painting and borrow on the kitsch Americana of Rockwell's style. As Francis Frascina writes, the image was transformed into "a post 'September 11' digitized signifier of sentiment, family security, and the nation state under threat."[22]

The *New York Times*' use of nostalgic Norman Rockwell images was clearly an attempt to provide images of paternal comfort and reassurance: the image of a father figure connected to the world of politics via the newspaper who is a reassuring presence in a child's bedtime ritual. In the months after 9/11, marketers talked often about the comfort of familiar brands and predicted that activities that affirmed tradition and homeyness would be popular. The marketing forecasters Trend Center predicted the following indicators for post-9/11 life by October 1: "Community—people will seek out ways to socialize, including hobbies and special interest clubs. Dining—consumers will enjoy hearty comfort food rather than haute cuisine. More time will be spent with the family rather

22 Frascina, "The New York Times," 100.

than in restaurants. Fashion—will be either defiant, with bright colors and crisp styles or subdued with darker shades."[23]

Realtors reported that numerous well-to-do families almost immediately began to redecorate in materials like soft cotton that conveyed "comfort feeling."[24] Like the Kenneth Cole ads with which I began this chapter, many advertisements reverted to images of comfortable furnishings and human contact. That comfort was being sold fit quite readily within the branding of the nation, in which national symbols are sold as forms of security and identity formation. Before 9/11, the brand of the nation was already constructed as an affirmative social space in which to construct individual identities. This enabled the connections between comfort and nationalism that proliferated in the first few post- 9/11 years, with the attendant consequence that dissent or public debate became marked as the antithesis of comfort and thus "anti-American."

Many of these ads succeeded in speaking to a post-9/11 audience that was already participating in the consumption of symbols of patriotism. Yet even in a context in which kitsch patriotism was rampant, certain ads that aimed to capitalize on making connections between their products and the 9/11 crisis were subject to criticism. The humor magazine *Onion* capitalized on this with the satiric headline "Dinty Moore Breaks Long Silence on Terrorism with Full-Page Ad." In an age when consumers are particularly savvy to the construction of advertising slogans, patriotic messages are subject to the same kind of cynicism as many traditional ads. Within the advertising industry, there was debate about where the line existed between tasteful campaigns that spoke to mourning consumers and campaigns that crassly attempted to cash in on tragedy. The ad executive David Lubars told the *Los Angeles Times* that it is better to run a traditional spot "as opposed to attaching some transparent, plastic patriotism to it."[25] One General Motors campaign, "Keep American Rolling," and Ford Motors' campaign "Ford Drives America" were slammed by the *Advertising Age* columnist Bob Garfield for precisely that. General Motors' campaign promoted zero-interest financing and featured the voiceover, "On Sept. 11, the world as we knew it came to a halt. We sat glued to our television, watching events unfold that shook us to our very core. And, suddenly, the little things that had previously divided us became wholly insignificant. Now, it's time to move forward." Noting that GM was advertising a consumer incentive it would normally have been selling anyway and calling this one of several campaigns that was "beyond belief and beneath contempt," Garfield wrote that the Keep

23 Becky Ebenkamp and Andrew Greenfield, "Seeking Situation 'Normal,'" *Brandweek*, 42.36 (October 1, 2001): 16-17.

24 Noel C. Paul, "Who Is the New American Consumer?," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 22, 2001.

25 Greg Johnson and Marla Dickerson, "Running Ads Up the Flagpole," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 2001, A1.

America Rolling "zero-interest sales promotion (McCann-Erickson Worldwide, Troy, Mich.) was one of the most unseemly episodes in the history of American marketing. Want to help your country? Buy a Buick. How dare they? Ford had a nearly-as-contemptible me-too version."[26] Garfield compared the opportunism of these ads to a Makita power tools ad that ran after the Oklahoma City bombing, in which the company thanked the rescuers and called attention to its donation of power equipment in the rescue effort. Similarly, when Motorola used an image in its annual report of two New York firefighters with the company's radios, it was roundly criticized. Firefighters, who were concerned that malfunctions of the radios had cost lives, called the use of the photograph a "disgrace and an offense."[27]

Marketers thus believe that it is risky for companies to flaunt their charity work in times of crisis. Kenneth Cole's "Today Is Not a Dress Rehearsal" campaign was consistent with Cole's reputation for speaking to social issues and donating proceeds to charity, but there were other companies that were accused of using 9/11 tie-ins to sell products under the guise of charity. For instance, Madden shoe company sold thirty-five thousand pairs of sneakers called The Bravest for $49.95 with the promise that proceeds would help the families of dead firefighters. Only after confronted by reporters did the company pledge 10 percent of the profits to firefighter charities. The Madden chief executive defended the company's profits of $400,000 by saying, "We have stockholders, so we walk the line between doing what is good for the stockholder and the company and doing these good deeds." He added a statement that would be laughable were it not in concert with the political spin at the time: "The most patriotic thing we can do is make money."[28]

In the first months after 9/11, the majority of ads that directly addressed the economic crisis were produced by companies that were specifically threatened, in particular, airlines, car dealers, and the travel industry. Saudi Arabia, which had been the home country of a significant number of the hijackers, ran several newspaper ads in the weeks after 9/11 that offered support and condolences.[29] When that country also produced an expensive television campaign in May 2002 which featured images of U.S. leaders, such as Colin Powell, meeting with Saudi leaders and the tag lines "The People of Saudi Arabia: Allies against Terrorism," a number of cable channels refused to run them.[30]

26 Bob Garfield, "The Bad, the Worse, the Ugly," Advertising Age 72.52 (2001): 14. See also Bob Garfield, "Patriot Games," *Advertising Age* 72.42 (2001): 1.

27 Heller, "Introduction," 12.

28 David Barstow and Diana B. Henriques, "9/11 Tie-Ins Blur Lines of Charity and Profit," *New York Times*, February 2, 2002, A1.

29 Katherine Kinnick, "How Corporate American Grieves: Responses to September 11 in Public Relations Advertising," *Public Relations Review* 29.4 (2003): 443-59.

30 Associated Press, "Saudi Arabia Launches P.R. Campaign in U.S.," May 1, 2002 (on FoxNews.com website).

Significantly, many ads attempted to make connections, between the economic crisis and the workers whose jobs would be the most affected if Americans did not begin to consume as they had before. After marketing research showed that the public found employees to be credible, United Airlines produced several ads in October 2001 that placed its employees directly before a stationary camera and asked them to speak about their work.[31] In one ad, flight attendants, mechanics, and pilots, some of them visibly moved, introduce themselves and talk about their feelings about working after 9/11. One woman says that she was told to take a break after working eleven days straight, to which she responded, "I don't want to. I feel that I need to be here." Others remark, "As a company we have grown closer together," and "As long as we stick together and stay together, no one can divide us. We are United."

Fig. 3a, b, c.
United Airlines TV ad, "We are United," 2001. Produced by Fallon.

In its visual simplicity and intimacy, the ads effectively showed that work was a strategy often used by people to deal with loss. At the same time, the ad was a reminder that a number of United Airlines employees had died on 9/11, in terrifying and brutal ways. American Airlines ran a television ad campaign in early 2002 that included a montage of images of employees walking through airports, of planes framed by sunsets, and of employees guiding planes into airport gates, with the text: "We are an airline. But we realize we are something more. We are an engine that powers the free flow of people and ideas and products and joy."

It is easy to criticize this kind of affirmation advertising that connects corporations to the nation. This deployment of national and patriotic discourses, with its ideological linkage of airline travel with idealized concepts of freedom and the "free flow of people and ideas," obscures the complexity of the role of the airline industry in the post-9/11 context. Similarly, the United Airlines campaign's use of employees performing their loyalty to the company depicts an idealized context in which issues of labor disputes, low pay, downsizing (all very present after 9/11) are unacknowledged in a mystification of labor. It is the case, of course, that while American popular culture, advertising, and government entities often present affirming images of work, U.S. government policies and industry practices have actively aided in the draining of large numbers of jobs

31 "Marketing Mood," *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, December 27, 2001, http://www.pbs.org.

from the American economy. Work, like innocence, is a highly mythical aspect of national narratives.[32] Yet one can have little doubt that these testimonies are genuine. When a site of work becomes a site of violence and emergency, it creates a heightened sense of purpose. Aaron Shuman and Jonathan Sterne write:

> The conceit of the United ads was that the airline discovered its workers had better things to say than anything the ad agency had scripted. So it put them on the air to tell their stories: as if United were a benevolent corporation, transparent in its motives, with the same stake in the process of business recovery as its employees. Their declarations of pride and determination in the face of grief and loss suggested their recovery was our own as well, customers and labor linking arms in a mission of holy consumption to save a corporate country.[33]

It is crucial to see the way that these ads, however they glossed over the different stakes of corporate officials and workers, are effective in making the connection between consumerism and the nation in ways that are more compelling than the specter of the president talking about smoking out terrorists or congressmen eating burgers at McDonald's. These ads speak to the stakes of the dependence of the economy on consumers in terms that make clear that those stakes are about workers keeping their jobs. These airline ads thus perform nationalism effectively. They speak to "a people" in ways that can make one can feel easily interpellated by. The ads offer comfort and reassurance to traumatized consumers, promising that the experience of flying on an airplane will return to normalcy.

These ads are also about selling security, not only the security to get on an airplane and to speak the language of consumerism, but also the security to proclaim the airline industry's survival and the promise of continued employment. In that the airlines are often understood to be national industries that represent the United States to other nations, these ads are selling both the security of the nation and the security of familiar brands. They thus form a continuum with the marketing of home security and the prevalence of a security aesthetic that has emerged full force in the post-9/11 context.

DEFENDING THE HOMELAND: THE CONSUMERISM OF SECURITY

One of the primary modes of comfort in post-9/11 consumerism is the selling of preparedness. In this context, consumer products and lifestyle modes are marketed by corporations and promoted by government agencies as a means to sell not only the idea that citizens must be prepared for adverse circumstances such as terrorist

32 Thanks to Erika Doss for making this point to me.

33 Aaron Shuman and Jonathan Sterne, "These Colors Don't Run: Things They Roll Over, and Some Issues that Stick," *Bad Subjects* 59 (February 2002), http://bad.eserver.org.

attack, but also the idea that they *can* be properly prepared for such events. The selling of preparedness is not simply selling the idea that one can prepare for particular adverse situations; it has broader implications, since it sells the comforting idea that one can actually be prepared for the unpredictability of life and, by implication, that life is not arbitrary. In this, preparedness consumerism is deeply related to the central tenets of paranoia, which defines adversity as a "vast conspiracy" rather than something unpredictable and uncontrollable. It is thus not surprising that preparedness is a key factor in the consumer society of right-wing militias and was the key theme of the large preparedness expos before the turn of the millennium. In the case of both paranoia and preparedness consumerism, it is the comfort of structured narratives (we can be prepared for whatever comes; it is a planned conspiracy that is making this happen) that reassures.

A consumer culture fixated on preparedness and home security has emerged with particular force in the post-9/11 era, spanning everything from barrier architecture to home security products to security style. This selling of preparedness and security, which is promoted by the U.S. government as well as private corporations, has been propelled forward by the crisis of 9/11, yet its lineage can be seen in direct relation to the preparedness culture of fear of the 1990s that fueled not only the extremist militia groups but also the public support for mandatory sentencing that produced the prison industry culture. Whereas in the 1990s, the culture of fear manifested in the brutal system of mass incarceration of millions of Americans, in the post-9/11 context it can be seen in the public acquiescence not only to the war in Iraq, but also to Bush administration policies on torture and the incarceration of terrorism suspects at Guantánamo Bay and in secret prisons without legal recourse or basic human rights. This political acquiescence is directly shored up by security consumerism that offers the promise of protection and safety in times of threat and thus mediates, if not justifies, these government policies.

The post-9/11 selling of security directly borrows from the rhetoric of defending the home deployed by survivalist groups in the 1990s and has explicitly created connections between the idea of the "homeland" promoted by the federal government and the home as the front line of national turf. This slippage from the home to the homeland and back to the home is revealing. It is now common knowledge that the war on Iraq, which has cost American taxpayers several hundred billion dollars, has come at the expense of adequate funding to properly prevent future terrorist attacks on the United States. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which was established in 2002 to oversee domestic security issues, is increasingly viewed as inept. In the aftermath of the tragic crisis of Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, when both the

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the DHS (in which FEMA is now housed) were shown to be appallingly incompetent, the public impression that the government would do little to protect citizens from terrorism was solidified. In addition, Washington politics has produced a context in which antiterrorism funding, funneled through DHS, is distributed by state rather than by need, resulting in a large per capita funding for states like Wyoming and low per capita funding for states like New York. In June 2006, this resulted in a 40 percent cut in DHS funding to New York City and Washington, D.C., the two cities that were targeted on 9/11 and which remain the most likely future targets.[34] Because of a prevalent understanding after 9/11 that the federal government would not adequately protect New York, the city created its own counterterrorism unit of the police department in early 2002.[35]

While the concept of a nation as a home has a long history, the use of the term "homeland" is quite recent in the U.S. context, where historically the idea of a homeland has more often been invoked to describe the place that immigrants have left behind. Amy Kaplan writes that emergence of the term homeland where political rhetoric has previously used terms like "civil defense," "home front," or "domestic security" marks "a transformative moment for American nationalism. For one, the usage always entails the definite article (*the* homeland), indicating its unitary meaning, as opposed to pluralistic definitions of national identity."[36] Kaplan writes that it is precisely because of this connection of the term homeland to the experiences of diaspora and exile that homeland "may evoke a sense not of stability and security but of deracination and desire."[37] Thus, she notes, the concept of homeland security "is actually about breaking down the boundaries between inside and outside, about seeing the home in a state of constant emergency" that ultimately "draws on comforting images of a deeply rooted past to legitimate modern forms of imperial power." The use of the term homeland is clearly intended to evoke a comforting image of a place of security and belonging; at the same time, it affirms the capacity of the nation to stake out terrains elsewhere, to extend its sense of belonging to other terrains.

The marketing of products that sell the militarism of domestic life to mediate fears of global insecurity effectively bridges home and homeland in its rhetoric and aesthetics. In this consumer context, corporations speak in national terms, urging citizen-consumers to assume military protocols and to surround themselves with goods that evoke security and defense. Ultimately, the integration of military technologies and lifestyle protocols into domestic life

34 Dan Eggen and Mary Beth Sheridan, "Anti-Terror Funding Cut in D.C. and New York," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2006, A1.

35 See Finnegan, "The Terrorism Beat," 58.

36 Kaplan, "Homeland Insecurities," 59.

37 Kaplan, "Violent Belongings," 9.

takes place at the level of aesthetics. *Style* is the key attribute through which the domestic home is articulated within the nation in the context of global terrorism.

The federal government is a key factor in this construction of the American home as the locus of security. In the post-9/11 context, the federal government has actively sold the idea through promotional campaigns that U.S. citizens and residents must be prepared for further terrorist attack and that readiness is a key feature of safety. The DHS has actively promoted preparedness by selling the idea that individual consumerism of preparedness products is about doing one's part for the nation. One of the first frenzies that erupted around this government-promoted consumerism was prompted by a mundane household product: duct tape. This silver tape (which was actually developed by the military in World War II) has always had a mystique as a household produce that can fix, at least temporarily, any problem.[38] Stories have long been told of cars held together with duct tape and elaborate plumbing problems for which it was the magical adhesive. Duct tape is a sign of American bricoleur culture, in which an average Joe can fix anything as long as he has his trusty tape in hand, a symbol of an independent, can-do spirit of fix-it culture.

In early 2003, duct tape emerged on the national front when the DHS began issuing high alerts in its color-coded system: red for severe, orange for high, yellow for elevated. There was increased public fear that the impending war in Iraq would result in more terrorist attacks within the United States. For many critics, the alert system is merely a way for the government to avoid liability risk—to he able to say, in the case of disaster, that government officials could not be blamed because they had warned of impending attacks (unlike with 9/11).[39] Thus the alert system has been widely regarded with suspicion, as what it means citizens should do in response is never clear (be *more* suspicious?) and because the Bush administration was accused of using the alerts to deflect public attention from negative news and to help boost presidential approval, in particular during the 2004 presidential campaign. Nevertheless, the issuing of an alert is guaranteed to get media attention. In February 2003, on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the DHS issued a set of guidelines for average citizens to protect themselves in case of potential chemical attacks. The $1.2 million "ready campaign" was nothing if not commonsensical (with what the *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd called a "D'oh!" website), advising people to keep on hand water for three days, flashlights, and a battery-powered radio and to have a communication plan.[40] The campaign, which was developed with the input of focus groups put together by the Ad Council, also advised homeowners to buy

38 See William Safire, "Why a Duck? Old Taping System Makes the Headlines," *New York Times Magazine*, March 2, 2003, 24.

39 Robertson, "High Anxiety," 18.

40 Maureen Dowd, "Ready or Not...," *New York Times*, February 23, 2003, sect. 4, p. 11.

plenty of plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal their homes.[41] The response to this missive was instantaneous; while late-night comedians made duct tape jokes and politicians rose quickly to state that "duct tape is not enough," millions of Americans emptied the shelves at their local home supply stores.[42] Soon, Tom Ridge, then head of the DHS, was forced to explain that people should wait for word from the government before beginning to seal their homes shut.[43]

Besides being comical, the duct tape episode was quite revealing for the ways it demonstrated the calming and reassuring effects of consumerism on national anxieties. Even when people knew that the small measures were unlikely to help much in the case of a serious attack, they purchased the duct tape anyway; sales of the adhesive rose 1,000 percent during that time.[44] Significantly, this act of consumerism helped to enable the transference of actual threat. On the eve of attacking Iraq, U.S. citizens were encouraged to use consumer products to occupy the status of the victim, in other words, to inhabit the position of the potentially attacked rather than the position of the attacker. This consumerism of defense successfully obscured the fact that the people who were truly threatened were in Baghdad, not in the United States.

It is one of the stated functions of the DHS to provide guidance on how to respond to potential terrorist attacks—in other words, to sell the idea and means of preparedness. The agency does this through a variety of campaigns, all of which aim to interpellate the citizen as a citizen-soldier-consumer, whose job is to protect not only the family but the home. The campaign sells the idea that readiness is the key antidote to fear with the tagline "Today America's families declare, we will not be afraid and we will be ready." On its website, www.ready.gov, the DHS explains various measures that individuals can take in case of a broad range of attacks, including biological and chemical attack, radiation from a dirty bomb, attacks with conventional bombs, and nuclear disaster, often in calmly neutral language that seems reminiscent of the procedures of civil defense in the cold war era.

In 2005, the DHS produced the "America Prepared Campaign," which featured, among other elements, the tagline "Homeland Security Starts at Home," promoting the idea that families need to create emergency plans and a "family communications plan."

41 Lynett Clemetson, "Reshaping Message on Terror, Ridge Urges Calm with Caution," *New York Times*, February 20, 2003, A1.

42 Sarah Sue Ingram, "Silver Symbol of Troubled Times," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 2001, E14.

43 Aaron Zitner, "Ridge Revisits Terrorism Preparedness," *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 2003, A24.

44 Gary Strauss, "Duct Tape Makers Swing into High Gear," *USA Today*, February 14, 2003, B1.

Fig. 4.
Department of Homeland Security "America Prepared" campaign, 2005. Courtesy of Department of Homeland Security/ Ad Council.

The campaign included a series of ads produced by the Ad Council which are based on the notion that the defending unit of American society is the family and which focus on the idea that American families need to prepare with emergency plans: "If there's an emergency, does your family have a plan?" In the print campaign, various family members pose before the camera, each with a list of instructions printed next to him or her. One father's list is "Fill up gas tank, drive home, pack minivan with emergency kit"; one young girl's is "Wait for Mommy at school," while the family dog is told "Grab chew toy, hop in back of minivan." The campaign aims at inclusiveness by showing an African American family, but its construction of the American family is revealing. These are middle-class suburban families, families who have two children and a dog, families who drive minivans. Given that the risk of terrorist attack is significantly higher in urban areas, with New York having the highest risk of being targeted, this campaign looks more like a form of reassurance to suburban America than an effective pedagogical strategy. In a city such as New York, where the vast majority of residents ride trains, subways, and buses, where huge numbers of people do not live in traditional nuclear families or with families at all, these ads would barely

resonate. One final ad in the "Everyone should have a plan" campaign shows a version of a Mad Lib, those children's games used to relieve boredom on long car treks, in which a paragraph leaves certain words blank to be filled in by someone who can't see the text, thus producing an often comic effect of mismatched words. The ad reads, "If there's a(n) _____ (adjective) terrorist attack, everyone in the family should try to call _____ (phone number) to get in touch with _____ (proper name).... Finally, we decide if we should drive to _____ (distant location) or stay in our _____ (room in your house)." Given that Mad Libs are often used for vulgar humor, with players suggesting words to make the phrases deliberately offensive, this ad has the potential for an unintended comical effect.

Government efforts to create a populace that is prepared to respond in orderly fashion to terrorist attack reassure citizens that the government is doing everything it can to keep the country safe. Thus, the emphasis in the DHS campaigns on how individuals should respond to a crisis elides the fact that individual citizens or families can do little to affect the most important security decisions of the country, such as the securing of borders and cargo. The ready.gov campaigns take place in what is largely understood to be a security vacuum on the part of the U.S. government. Not only has the DHS alert system been exposed as a sham, but the news is filled with stories about the United States not properly screening cargo on boats and airplanes entering the country, while its resources are drained in the war in Iraq. In the wake of the crisis of Hurricane Katrina, the images of citizens drowning and stranded on rooftops, deserted by both federal and state governments, affirmed the popular sense of the government's incompetence. In this context, the focus on the individual home as a site for security measures makes perfect sense: if the homeland is not well defended, then the home must be defended. Ironically, the message of preparedness that is sold to citizens by the government can have the effect, not of giving the impression that the government is prepared, but of encouraging citizens to act solely as individuals. This message of self-reliance has as its counterpoint the fact that consumer-citizens are asked at the same time to subject themselves to increased governmental and consumer surveillance in the name of security. As Mark Andrejevic writes, this message of self-reliance is the

> compensatory response to the disturbing recognition that the lumbering institutions of mass society—mass armies and their hyper-extensive equipment—aren't nimble enough to counter the flexible threat of terrorism. The work of defense has to be offloaded onto the civilian population. As the risk is generalized individual participation at every level is required. This participation takes two forms: the interpassive one, in which data about every transaction, every purchase, and every movement is aggregated within the government equivalent of the total

> demographic database; and the interactive form in which citizens are encouraged to take responsibility for their role in the war on terrorism as part of their daily lives at work, at home, and at school.[45]

As Andrejevic makes clear, the invocation to U.S. citizens to be self-reliant and to actively participate in a consumerism of security and preparedness also requires that consumer-citizens subject themselves willingly to a society of intense monitoring and surveillance.

The advocacy of individual action in the face of government ineptitude has manifested in many ways. Elaine Scarry uses the example of the passengers on United Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and American Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon, to show how security functions poorly within government bureaucracy. Scarry charted the time it took the military to respond to the information that planes had been hijacked and the time it took passengers on Flight 93 to decide to act: "The military was unable to thwart the action of Flight 77 despite fifty-five minutes in which clear evidence existed that the plane might be held by terrorists and despite twenty minutes in which clear evidence existed that the plane was certainly held by terrorists. In the same amount of time—twenty-three minutes—the passengers of Flight 93 were able to gather information, deliberate, vote, and act."[46] Scarry argues that the United States needs a more egalitarian, democratic approach to national defense, one that relies on the actions of ordinary citizens. Ironically, this position is remarkably reminiscent of the rhetoric of the right-wing militias, for whom the concept of individual action is paramount. Like Scarry, they believe that collective action of value can only take place outside of government bureaucracies and structures. Unlike the position of the militias, Scarry's is a utopian view of citizens working for the public good. Yet the emergence of a citizenry concerned with security has taken place in a context of individual consumerism and in relation to the selling of the idea of the home as an individually defended space.

The home defined by preparedness consumerism is also a networked home. James Hay writes that the home defined by post-9/11 homeland security is a "smart" home that is constructed through networks: "The fashioning of the smart home as a safe and secure home has occurred amidst two intersecting developments: one toward greater responsibility at home, and another toward the proliferation of networks from the home to private/ professional providers of programs for in-home support."[47] The home that is targeted by marketers and advertisers is already constructed as a source of middle-class leisure spending, with such big-box store chains as Home Depot and Lowe's selling not only home appliances and products but the idea that the home is the source of endless

45 Andrejevic, "Interactive (In)Security," 447.

46 Scarry, *Who Defended the Country?*, 27.

47 Hay, "Designing Homes," 370.

projects and infinite consumer goods. This construction of the home as a primary impetus for consumerism predates 9/11, of course, and in the post-9/11 period it has expanded to include a broad array of consumer goods aimed at selling preparedness and security. Yet, despite the duct tape episode, this consumerism of security has been largely the province of the middle class and the wealthy and has defined life in the age of terror as one in which individuals with means will arm their households against threat at the expense of broader community needs. This has taken the form of an increased reliance on the consumption of high-end emergency supplies for offices and private households, the marketing of terrorism survival guide books, and the repackaging of military vehicles for domestic use. This consumerism promotes a pervasive sense that private citizens must take security into their own hands and defend themselves, echoing the defense rhetoric of the survivalist militia groups who barricaded their homes to wait for the apocalypse. The home must be constructed as a kind of bubble, immune from attack. One company, Regional Environmental Hazard Containment Corporation, has been selling inflatable plastic rooms to consumers at a cost of $3,200 to $5,000 to be used in case of chemical attack.[48]

As an industry, the selling of home (and work) security parallels the prison industry in terms of booming economic success. The Defense Department's attempt to set up an office that would trade on the futures of terrorism was closed down after it was ridiculed in the press, but trading on the uncertainty of terrorism can take place in many other forms. The selling of homeland defense has taken place in the privatizing of the military and disaster relief services through outsourcing to private companies, what Naomi Klein refers to as the Disaster Capitalism Complex; as Hay and Andrejevic note, it has also occurred through lucrative business speculation on homeland defense.[49]

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 used two key aspects of modern life, airplanes and skyscrapers, as their weapons; the consumerism of security for the home and office has focused in part on both. The fears of people who work in tall buildings have been exploited by a number of companies that are selling emergency kits with personal parachutes for corporate executives, who can imagine themselves parachuting to safety in case the buildings are targeted. The "Executive Chute" is marketed by one company as "the life preserver of the sky" and sells for $799; Safer America, a company that specializes in safety products, sells a "high rise kit" for over $1,000 which includes a protective suit, a gas mask, and an escape parachute.[50] Many experts say that such personal parachutes are unlikely to save

48 Kenneth Chang and Judith Miller, "Duct Tape and Plastic Sheeting Can Offer Solace, If Not Real Security," *New York Times*, February 13, 2003, A21.

49 Hay and Andrejevic, "Introduction," 343; and Naomi Klein, "Pay to Be Saved: A Future of Disaster Apartheid," *ZNet Commentary*, August 29, 2006. See also the special issue "Homeland Securities," of *Radical History Review* 93 (fall 2005), edited by Philip, Reilly, and Serlin.

50 See http://www.saferamerica.com

lives and may in fact encourage people to jump into dangerous urban landscapes when leaving by fireproof staircases could be safer.[51] Yet it is easy to see where the desire to buy the emotional comfort of a parachute (long a symbol of a safety net) comes from; the most haunting images of 9/11 were those of people who jumped to their deaths, their fragile bodies falling through the air.

Similarly, tall buildings and urban buildings have been the subject of increased barrier and fortress architecture. The guarded, barricaded, and gated community has a long history in the United States. Fortress architecture emerged in marked ways in the 1980s and 1990s as a manifestation of the fear of urban crime, what Mike Davis identified as "an unprecedented tendency to merge urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a single, comprehensive security effort."[52] In addition, the past few decades have seen a dramatic rise in the building of gated communities around the country. In the post-9/11 era, barrier architecture has proliferated in public spaces and at building entrances in cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, primary potential targets in the case of terrorist attack. In Washington, D.C., security barriers have been erected around government buildings, and throughout the world, U.S. embassies are now barricaded like bunkers. The rebuilding of Ground Zero in lower Manhattan has resulted in the design of several heavily fortified buildings, with concrete bases and no storefronts. This image of the nation as a fortress is increasingly evident in the construction of public urban spaces and private homes as sites of defense.[53]

This new defensiveness is not limited to temporary barricades due to security concerns; it very quickly became a kind of urban aesthetic. People are accustomed to being searched when going to cultural institutions such as museums and the theater and have grown used to living in environments that are designed to resemble secure locations, with few, if any, public spaces. Many of these measures are based on antiterrorism plans developed by cities that have long histories of violence, such as Jerusalem and London; they are also pursued in an arbitrary manner that reveals the degree to which they constitute a kind of performance of security. Cultural institutions like theaters and museums began searching bags almost immediately after 9/11, even though they are not likely sites for attack; airline passengers are subjected to an elaborate array of security measures but airline and shipping cargo is not.

The marketing of security has produced not only a new array of products but a new set of design challenges and design style. It has thus helped to create an aesthetic of security that not only integrates security measures into daily life,

51 Heather Sinclair, "Personal Parachutes: The Ethics of Safety," October 19, 2001, http://www.dropzone.com.

52 Davis, "Fortress L.A.," in *City of Quartz*, 224. See also Ellin, Architecture of Fear.

53 Low, "The Memorialization of 9/11," 328. See also Blair Kamin, "Land of the Sort of Free," *Chicago Tribune*, October 29, 2001.

but also gives defensiveness and militarism a kind of aesthetic coolness. In this context, a security barrier doesn't have to look like a concrete bunker, it can look like a sleek modernist bench. There has been a surge of design attention to barriers in particular as security that can be art at the same time, what the *Wall Street Journal* terms "security disguised as art."[54] Much of this design has focused on the concrete barriers that are used to prevent the entry of vehicles into buildings. The 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing both had high destructive impact because trucks were able to get into or next to the buildings. This has produced an industry in the construction of such devices as bollards and NoGos. Steel or concrete bollards, which now surround the vast majority of government buildings, are designed to stop a truck going fifty miles an hour. Sleek bollards are now a key feature of security design. In a particularly effective use of them, the new federal building in Oklahoma City, which sits next to the Oklahoma City National Memorial, is surrounded by bollards housed in large metal cylinders that are lit decoratively at night, in a way that echoes the lit chairs for the bombing victims that sit nearby. While Washington, D.C., has been the site of the most obvious barriers for federal buildings, there are now many projects to situate bollards around tourist sites such as the Washington Mall in ways that are less intrusive and more aesthetically pleasing.[55] Designer bollards have been created by Frederick Reeder and others to integrate into urban landscapes unobtrusively.

Fig. 5.
Security bollards by Frederick Reeder. Courtesy of Frederick Arlen Reeder.

Reeder has also designed modernist benches that can protect building entrances. His "anti-ram" bench is a thirty-five-foot slab of black granite weighing 43,000 pounds that sits before the steps of the headquarters of Fleet Bank in Boston; it looks like a work of modernist public art. Other bollards are artfully disguised as theme park elements; SecureUSA has built bollards designed as giant golf balls for a golf course near a military base and a massive gorilla bollard installed at the entrance to a theme park.[56]

54 Mark Maremont, "Disguising Security as Something Artful," *Wall Street Journal*, June 24, 2004, A1.
55 Catesby Leigh, "A Monumental Task of Security and Aesthetics," *Wall Street Journal*, June 30, 2005, D8.
56 Maremont, "Disguising Security as Something Artful."

Similarly, NoGos, which are designed by Rogers Marvel, are heavy concrete blocks covered in bronze and disguised as sculptural forms. NoGos are now used on the streets of lower Manhattan near the New York Stock Exchange. Writes Farhad Manjoo:

> They resemble a comic-book artist's take on a barricade, a playful and handsome gem whose actual purpose—keeping a speeding truck laden with explosives from getting anywhere near the Stock Exchange—is invisible to the public. In fact, people have found many uses for the barricades. At 2-and-a-half feet tall, a NoGo makes an ideal seat. Suited Wall Street types crowd about the NoGos at lunchtime and kids climb and stretch on them as if there were a downtown jungle gym.[57]

The desire of designers to effectively mask the function of security barriers and to give the appearance of open space in secure contexts is often in conflict with the aims of security consultants, for whom the appearance of security is as important as actual barriers. This results in "security creep," in which security experts now trump the work of architects and designers; current fears are incorporated in long-term ways into urban landscapes. Writes Manjoo, "Architecture is an art form of anticipation, the challenge of building structures that will continue to be meaningful and useful in the decades and centuries to come. Truck bombs, on the other hand, are an acutely modern phenomenon."[58]

The proliferation of high-end security design has brought with it a significant amount of ironic commentary in the design community. In 2005, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) produced the exhibition *Safe: Design Takes on Risk*, which combined both straightforward designs for risky environments and designs that critiqued risk culture as privileged paranoia.[59] The MoMA show demonstrated the degree to which safety concerns are incorporated into the mechanisms of daily life: fortified baby car seats, gas masks (distributed to every Israeli citizen), outfits of protective armor that can shield from physical harm and biological hazard, and earthquake survival tables. The show also revealed the degree to which designers have engaged playfully with the culture of fear. For instance, the designer Matthias Megyeri has created a line of "placebo products" that mix cuteness with defensive design. These include fences with animal shapes as spikes, "whose smiley faces, proud beaks and floppy ears allow you to inject a sense of energy into otherwise lifeless urban landscapes," jagged glass shards in whimsical shapes that can be placed on backyard walls, smiling teddy bear padlocks, and whimsical razor wire with "Mr. Smish & Madame Buttly" shapes.[60]

57 Manjoo, "Cityscape of Fear."
58 Ibid.
59 Antonelli, *Safe*.
60 See Megyeri's website, http://www.sweetdreamsecurity.com

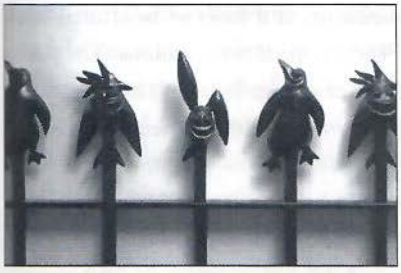

Figure 6.
Peter Pin, R. Bunnit, and Didoo railings; Billy B. Old English Padlock, 2003.
Sweet Dreams Security™ series by Matthias Megyeri.

Megyeri's design is a "comment on the growing demand for security in our modern culture, mixed with the saturation of exaggerated niceness in everything that surrounds us," according to MoMA.[61] Megyeri situates these placebo products in the context of contemporary cultures of paranoia and kitsch, but he is particularly interested in having his products operate as both an ironic commentary on contemporary security concerns and as stylish and functional designs. The fact that the rabbit icon on his security fence has one ear up and one down may be a cute gesture, but it also has a very specific security design function.[62]

Other designers in the exhibition commented on the culture of fear of those living in relatively safe locales. For instance, Anthony Dunne, Fiona Raby, and Michael Anastassiades produced the *Design for Fragile Personalities in Anxious Times Project*, which consists of several pieces of "hideaway furniture" that merge with the floor and surroundings, allowing someone to disappear within an abode. Ralph Borland's *Suited for Subversion* is a suit to protect someone participating in civil disobedience demonstrations from the blows of police batons.[63] Perhaps most revealing, the exhibition showed the complexity of the world of risk design by mixing straightforward designs with ironic commentaries on risk and essentially refusing to make many distinctions between the two. Thus, the contemporary world of design represented by the exhibition demonstrates the fluid boundaries between design for actual risks (including design for disaster relief, such as temporary housing) and designs for imagined ones. Many designs, like Megyeri's, straddle this border between straight engagement with risk and ironic commentary on risk paranoia. Kosuke Tsumura's design for *Final Home 44-Pocket Parka*, for instance, is designed as a "wearable shelter."[64] The parka is

61 Antonelli, *Safe*, 100. See also Julie V. Iovine, "Which Way Design?," *New York Times*, April 21, 2005.

62 Telephone conversation with Matthew Megyeri, September 20, 2006.

63 Antonelli, *Safe*, 72-73, 84.

64 Hideki Yamamoto, "Final Home 44-Pocket Parka" and "Final Home Bear," in Antonelli, *Safe*, 70.

designed for the contemporary nomad (here, "final" signifies "ultimate"), with pockets that can be used to store food, medicine, and tools or be stuffed with insulating material such as newspaper or Final Home down cushions. The parka is accompanied by the *Final Home Bear*, a stuffed orange bear with an emergency sign on it, which functions as a "comforting toy or insulation when stored in the pockets of the Final Home jacket."

Fig. 7.
Final Home Bear
by Kosuke Tsumura. 1994.

Notably, the MoMA catalogue description makes clear that the parka can be worn as "survival gear" by middle-class consumers, who are then encouraged to return them when they no longer need them so that they can be distributed to refugees and disaster victims. Much security design slips somewhat fluidly between these domains: the serious and the ironic, the bourgeois security market and the world of refugees and disaster victims in need of shelter, and the world of poverty that survives in part on the hand-me-down discards of middle-class consumers.

These kinds of shifting tones can also be seen increasingly in the incorporation of certain styles of militarism into middle-class consumerism, with the recoding of a military style from conservatism to coolness or, at a minimum, corporate cool. Marketing analysts have discovered that baby boomer consumers tend to like overengineered products. The trend of wearing hiking boots in urban settings and purchasing high-tech mountain gear for wearing in mild suburban winters are what the market researcher Jim Bulin calls "preparedness chic": "It's about not letting anything get in your way and, at the extreme, about intimidating others to get out of your way."[65] This correlates with the trend beginning in the 1990s of people purchasing high-end Nike running shoes as fashion items and the marketing of urban styles as outdoor wear by such chains as Urban

65 Jim Bulin, quoted in Bradsher, *High and Mighty*, 106.

Outfitters. Overengineering is not seen as something that needs to be apologized for by middle-class consumers; rather, it is an attribute that signifies consumer confidence and know-how. Preparedness chic is also an element in the trend that emerged during the Iraq War of recent veterans being employed to run fitness "boot camps" for urban professionals. At the Pure Power Boot Camp in New York City, former Marines and Iraq War veterans train stockbrokers, lawyers, and other professionals at 5 A.M. each weekday. When a participant skips a session, the former Marines have been known to turn up at their workplace demanding to know why. One participant, who paid close to $1,000 for six weeks of training, states, "I love the fact that they are authentic and they've actually gone through this."[66] It hardly needs to be pointed out that this kind of military consumption masks many realities of the lives of actual military personnel during this time of war.

Sports utility vehicles (SUVs) are one of the most obvious symbols of the militarization of American domestic culture and the overengineering of consumer products; while they are marketed as vehicles that can drive on rough terrain, most people are driving them in suburban and urban locales. Car manufacturers began retooling their pickup truck frames in the early 1980s to make SUVs for the suburban family market, and the surge in SUV purchases, largely unforeseen by industry analysts, helped to fuel the economy in the 1990s. Statistics show that the design of SUVs, which sit high on top of truck frames, is inherently unsafe, causing higher numbers of rollovers than minivans. In his book *High and Mighty*, Keith Bradsher puts the problem of the SUV bluntly: "SUVs are the world's most dangerous vehicles because they represent a new model of personal transportation that is inherently less safe for road uses and more harmful to the environment than cars."[67]

Nevertheless, SUVs sell, according to marketers, specifically because consumers feel safe in them. Market research for the SUV was famously done by the marketing guru G. Clotaire Rapaille, a former anthropologist who specializes in luxury goods. Rapaille, who uses Jungian psychology and psychoanalysis in his work, has wowed the marketing world by analyzing what he calls the "reptilian," rather than emotional or intellectual, urges of consumers. Not surprisingly, he attributes the SUV craze to the preoccupation with fear and security in American culture, what was described in the pre-9/11 era as an "irrational" fear. Bradsher writes

> For Rapaille, the archetypes of a sport utility vehicle reflect the reptilian desire for survival. People buy SUVs, he tells auto executives, because they are trying to look as menacing as possible to allay their fears of

66 Amy Chozick, "Military Fatigue: Iraq Vets Find Work Shaping Up Urbanites," *Wall Street Journal*, October 15-16, 2005, A1, A8.

67 Bradsher, *High and Mighty*, xviii. See also Lauer, "Driven to Extremes."

> crime and other violence.... "I usually say, 'If you put a machine gun on the top of them, you will sell them better,'" he said. "'Even going to the supermarket, you have to be ready to fight.'"[68]

The gender politics of the SUV are revealed in the shifts of how they have been marketed. As Nicholas Mirzoeff writes, the early SUV had masculine names such as Isuzu's Trooper, whereas later models targeted at suburban women had softer names that took on "resonances of the digital frontier, with titles like the Ford Explorer and the Lincoln Navigator directly borrowing the names of the most popular web browsers. Perhaps the only honestly named SUV is the vast Chevy Suburban."[69]

The paradox of the SUV craze, according to Bradsher and others, is that the very features that consumers say make them feel safe are the ones that make the cars unsafe. Consumers told Rapaille that they felt safer higher up in the car because it's easier to see if someone is lurking behind it. They said they felt unsafe if someone could easily look in the windows of their car. Yet, it is precisely the height of SUVs and their awkward maneuverability that make them unsafe to their drivers and even more so to other drivers who might get hit by an SUV. According to Malcolm Gladwell, this means that SUV drivers treat "accidents as inevitable rather than avoidable" by choosing the passive safety of a massive vehicle over the active safety of a vehicle that handles effectively enough on the road to avoid accidents.[70]

The paradoxes of the SUV acquired new resonance in the post-9/11 era and the lead-up to the war in Iraq, when the ultimate SUV, the Hummer, took off in the consumer market. A military vehicle that was first used by the United States in the 1991 Gulf War, the Hummer skyrocketed in popularity in the post-9/11 context, selling well just as the war in Iraq was being planned and duct tape sales were off the charts. While sales of Hummers began to plateau in 2004 and have sagged since, they remain a key symbol of the post-9/11 era. The Hummer is defined by its marketers as a vehicle for "rugged individualists" that sells excess without guilt.[71] One of the ads for the H2 features the tag line "Excessive. In a Rome at the height of its power sort of way."

In the pre-9/11 world of 1991, when Hummers were first being tentatively marketed to a domestic market, they were targeted at Gulf War veterans, who, marketers felt, would be nostalgic for the powerful feeling of these hyper-jeeps. Though he is not a veteran of an actual war, one of the initial consumers was, in fact, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who was famous for driving his around his

68 Bradsher, *High and Mighty*, 96. See also Rapaille, The Culture Code.

69 Mirzoeff, *Watching Babylon*, 36.

70 Gladwell, "Big and Bad," 31. See also Lauer, "Driven to Extremes."

71 Keith Bradsher, "G.M. Has High Hopes for Vehicle Truly Meant for Road Warriors," *New York Times*, August 6, 2000, 1.

Los Angeles neighborhood before such vehicles were commonplace. In many ways, Arnold himself is a signifier of the consumerism of security: faced with an uncharismatic governor and a threatening deficit, the voters of California chose him as governor in 2003 as a symbol of defiance to the inevitable pain of budget cutbacks to come. During a campaign debate he flaunted his image as a Hummer driver, at one point telling rival Arianna Huffington, "I could drive my Hummer through [your tax loopholes]."[72]

The typical Hummer owner has an annual household income Of $200,000 to $300,000 and has purchased the vehicle (which carries a price tag of $40,000 to $100,000) as a second or third car.[73] The Hummer evokes power and safety, but in real-life situations of combat, such as the war in Iraq, Humvees have actually been death traps for American soldiers. In Iraq, an inadequate number of Humvees are armored, since the war was rushed into action without adequate supplies. This caused a minor scandal in December 2004 when a soldier confronted Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld with a pointed question at a press conference in Iraq about the makeshift "hillbilly armor" that troops were forced to construct to protect the vehicles.[74]

The Hummer is a potent symbol of gas-guzzling denial on the part of Americans at a time when the country's insatiable desire for oil has taken it into yet another war. This has made it a favorite target of anti-SUV activists, including an arson attack on a Hummer dealership by the Earth Liberation Front, now classified as "domestic terrorism" by the FBI. The response of Hummer fans to criticism and protests is to see owning the vehicle as a form of patriotism, claiming that the H2 is "a symbol of what we all hold so dearly above all else, the fact we have the freedom of choice, the freedom of happiness, the freedom of adventure and discovery, and the ultimate freedom of expression. Those who deface a Hummer in words or deeds...deface the American flag and what it stands for."[75] In these words, reminiscent of Cohen's consumer republic, freedom is clearly defined as the freedom to purchase a particular kind of vehicle regardless of the political implications.

The Hummer demonstrates a triumph of the aesthetics of a domestic militaristic safety, one that affirms the U.S. imperialist ventures around the world *through style*. The marketing campaign for the H1 Hummer defines it as "a vehicle that can go almost anywhere and do almost anything. One that gives you an incredible feeling of freedom, and allows you to experience the world,

72 Tim Goodman, "Candidates' Debate—All Sizzle, No Steak," *San Fransisco Chronicle*, September 25, 2003, A15.

73 Brian O'Reilly, "What in the World Is That Thing?" *Fortune*, October 2, 1995, 146.

74 See Michael Hirsch, Barry, and Dehghanpisheh, "Hillbilly Armor," 24; and Scott Shane, "Hillbilly Armor," *New York Times*, December 16, 2004, sec. 4, p. 4.

75 Danny Hakim, "In Their Hummers, Right beside Uncle Sam," *New York Times*, April 5, 2003, C1.

and your place in it, as never before."[76] It is worth noting that it is not simply the power to trespass and invade that is being sold, but also a sense of belonging ("your place in it"). The idea of being "at home" is key to any imperialist project. This is, according to David Campbell, a "biopolitics of security":

> The SUV is the vehicle of empire, when empire is understood as the deterritorialized apparatus of rule that is global in scope but national and local in its effects. The SUV is a materialization of America's global security attitude, functioning as a gargantuan capsule of excess consumption in an uncertain world.... The SUV draws the understanding of security as sizeable enclosure into daily life, folds the foreign into the domestic, and links the inside to the outside, thereby simultaneously transgressing bounded domains while enacting the performative rebordering of American identity.[77]

This linkage of the world of consumer defensiveness and preparedness chic connects the nuclear family to the family of the nation. One Hummer ad, "First Day," shows a mother driving her children to school. She offers to leave her young son at the corner, but no, he insists, she can drive him to the school entrance. There, he walks through a phalanx of older kids, bullies, who clear the way for him as they turn to the Hummer and say, "Nice ride."

Fig. 8a, b, c.
Hummer H2 ad, "First Day/ Nice Ride," 2004.
Produced by Modernista!

This ad portrays the Hummer as the vehicle with which to protect the family in its movement between home and public institutions. Thus, the Hummer as nation drives its children to school with its display of technoprowess; the nation watches its children move past the threshold into hostile territory. The military vehicle keeps the school bullies at bay, and the Hummer/nation promises to seduce school bullies (read: terrorists) into loving American consumerism. The message is that consumerism is precisely what Americans are supposed to be using as public diplomacy.

This ad points to a key aspect of the selling of SUV and Hummer security: the way they have been marketed to women as an emblem of the secure home. Susan Willis notes that during the 2004 election, the media dubbed the "security mom" a viable political type. These media portrayals, writes Willis, "conjure the plight of white suburban moms who, notwithstanding their husbands or the

76 See http://www.hummer.com.

77 Campbell, "The Biopolitics of Security," 967.

obvious comfort of their lives (clean, well-dressed kids, pleasant neighborhoods with well-tended playgrounds and schools, newish often large cars), still profess an overriding, deep-seated, and persistent fear for their security."[78] The security mom, Willis notes, is always depicted as white and never as concerned about the truly fearsome aspects of contemporary American society, such as rising health care and education costs and domestic gun violence.

And this returns us to the home. The home is defended because the homeland is so amorphous. Just as the paranoid narratives of the militia movement emphasized the defense of the home against invasive government forces, the militarized home, with its military vehicle in the driveway, offers the only comfort available in a time of uncertainty, when each day the policies of the U.S. government increase the risk to its citizens. Paranoia and the notion of preparedness provide similar forms of comfort. Paranoia, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes, is anticipatory. Thus, the essence of a paranoid narrative is that it succeeds in precluding the unexpected; in Sedgwick's terms, "There must be no bad surprises."[79] All negative consequences and outcomes are fantasized and anticipated in the state of paranoia in order to prevent the state of shock of (innocent) unknowing.

Similarly, a consumerism of preparedness promises that we can be prepared. Participating in an aesthetics of militarism, consumers engage in a style that affirms the dangerous policies of an imperialist government. This consumerism sells comfort in the face of fear and the promise that we can be prepared, not simply for the violence that is inevitably to come and for the unpredictable nature of global terror, but for life itself. In this sense, paranoia and preparedness are modes of being that are as politically disabling as kitsch, since both foreclose on particular kinds of political action. The paranoid citizen is, in many ways, hampered by a sense of disempowerment that comes from seeing life as conspiracy-driven, and the consumerism of preparedness provides the sense that it is enough to protect one's home and not to be engaged in political action. Ultimately, it is comfort that is offered by each.

The prison and the shopping mall, the consumerism of preparedness and the militarization of everyday life, the selling of patriotism and the branding of the nation—these converge in contemporary American culture to maintain the notion of American innocence. The presence of the Hummer in the driveway masks the use of the Humvee in the war in Iraq, and the presence of the suburban big-box retailers allows for the erasure of the prison complex on the outskirts of town. The consumerism of comfort, whether it takes the form of kitsch or of preparedness chic, operates primarily to smooth over conflict and mask the

78 S. Willis, *Portents of the Real*, 129.

79 Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 24.

consequences of the nation's action. It is thus a primary aspect of the tourism of history, encouraging a tourist-consumerist relationship to the contemporary crisis of security in the United States. As the citizen-consumer has replaced the citizen, the maintenance of the innocence of that citizen is contingent on the effects of U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. prison industry being rendered invisible. These aspects of American society are clearly in evidence in the context of the Oklahoma City bombing and its aftermath.

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