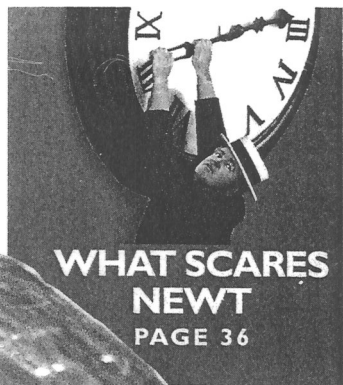


MOTHER JONES

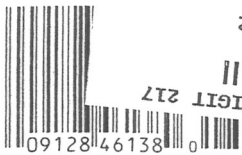
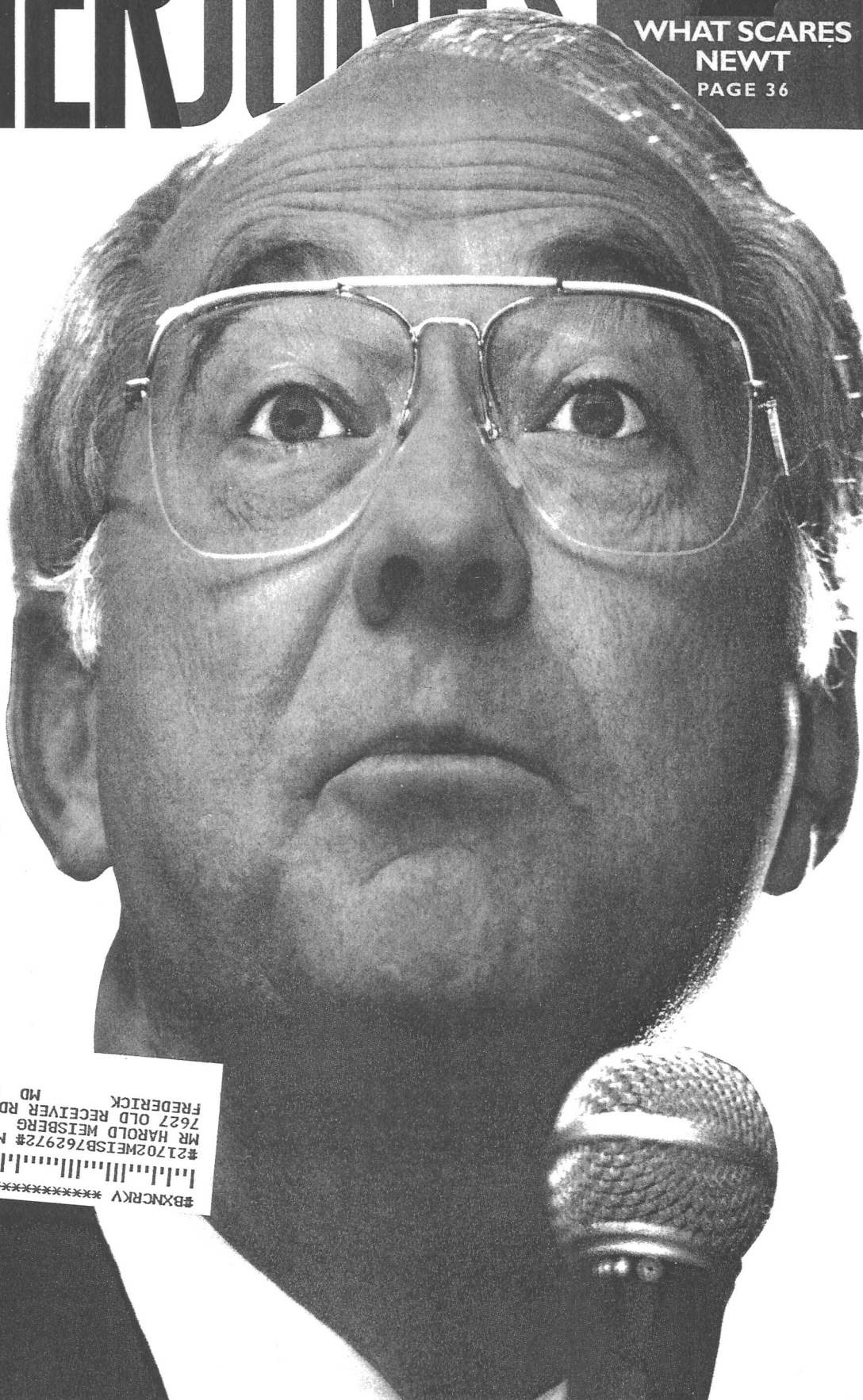


WHAT SCARES
NEWT
PAGE 36

EXPOSÉ

Phil's felon

TOUGH GUY candidate
Phil Gramm has a soft
spot—for white drug
dealers and gun nuts who
hate the government.
We talked to one he
sprung from jail.



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#21702WEISB762972# MJ 96M/J
MR HAROLD WEISBERG
7627 OLD RECEIVER RD
FREDERICK
MD 21702-2752
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\$3.95/USA \$4.95/Canada
GST#129596532

It's easy to mistake this dogged discipline for tranquility. The giveaway, hidden behind the podium and out of camera range, lurks in Gramm's hands. Whether they're resting on the podium, fastened at his belly, or clasped behind his back, he's constantly grinding his thumbs and fingers together like hungry teeth. The grinding appears hard and abrasive, not casual, and it never stops. Even when he gestures or shakes hands with one arm, the other hangs at his side, gnawing itself, as though all of the restless craving strangely absent from the rest of his body has drained into his fingertips.

MIDWAY THROUGH GRAMM'S SPEECH, A VOICE SHOUTS FROM THE crowd, "You ain't fightin' for me!" The heckler is hard to miss. He's tall, bearded, and dressed from head to toe in black, including his skin. Although nearly 1,300 black students attend Texas A&M, only four blacks, including this protester, stand scattered among the sea of white faces. Of them, just one supports Gramm. As a volley of cannon fire salutes Gramm's exit, I move toward the protester. A pack of white Gramm partisans promptly surrounds us.

The protester turns out to be a former construction worker who spent five years in the Army. When he mentions that he campaigned against Oliver North in Virginia last year, a Gramm follower in cowboy boots and a military cap blurts out triumphantly: "You don't have a job!" Like others around the circle, this man wears a button certifying him as an "Official Wagon Puller." The button alludes to the distinction at the core of Gramm's worldview, between taxpayers who "pull" the wagon of government and welfare bums who "ride" in it.

Others in the pack join the attack. "You don't even work," a young woman barks at the black man. "You're not paying taxes," shouts another. A short, plump woman with curly brown locks, sporting a pair of "Wagon Puller" buttons, advances to within striking distance, her face a red ball of fire. "We've heard 40 years of lies and speeches and garbage and spending and putting black people into slavery!" she screams at him out of a mouth twisted with rage. "That's what the Democrats have done!"

The tall black man in the center of the ring hangs his head and stares discreetly at the ground. "All right, ma'am," he assures her in a gentle, conciliatory voice. "It's all right."

THIS WASN'T THE ENEMY PHIL GRAMM HAD IN MIND WHEN HE WAS elected to the House of Representatives in 1978. Armed with a Ph.D. in economics, he came to Washington to fight inflation by balancing the budget. No cow was sacred; every ox would be gored. But over the years, Gramm changed. Economics gave way to politics. He stopped being tough on "us" and started being tough on "them." Now, as he seeks the office that will crown his metamorphosis, the self-proclaimed candidate of toughness is betting that we can't tell the difference.

Till now, he's won the bet. He's sold the media, friend and foe alike, on his shtick of hard-nosed constancy. "Gramm has always held strong and extreme views," frowns *GQ*. "He makes fewer political compromises than almost anyone else in public life," gushes the *Atlantic*. "No one expects Gramm to change," sighs *Texas Monthly*. "True Believer," proclaims *Newsweek*.

Gramm doesn't care whether these reviews are kind or harsh. Either way, they play into his hands. "The people who are for me and the people who are against me are for me and against me for exactly the same reason," (Continued on page 27)

Phil's felon

AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, PHIL GRAMM VOWS TO PUT CRIMINALS IN JAIL "AND KEEP THEM THERE." BUT HIS RECORD WITH DRUG DEALER BILL DOYLE TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY.

SEVEN YEARS AGO, WHEN REPUBLICANS DENOUNCED DEMOCRATIC presidential nominee Michael Dukakis for letting Willie Horton and other criminals out of jail, Phil Gramm charged that Dukakis "vetoes bills providing mandatory sentences for drug pushers" and "lets murderers and rapists out on the street...so they can practice their trade."

Running for president this year, Gramm lambastes President Clinton for "overturning minimum mandatory sentencing" for pushers. He insists that inmates serve "85 percent of their sentence." He rails against putting criminals "back out on the street" after they're "convicted five or six times." If elected, he vows, "I'm going to put these people in jail and keep them there."

When Gramm first arrived in Washington, he had a chance to practice what he now preaches. He was petitioned for help by the family of federal inmate Bill Doyle, a white, middle-class Texas drug dealer. Doyle had served a total of fewer than seven years in jail—and less than half of his latest sentence—on three adult and eight juvenile offenses, many of which involved narcotics, guns, or explosives.

What did Gramm do? He lobbied long and hard to put Doyle back on the street. Instead of pursuing information that might have exposed Doyle's ammunition sales with militias, Gramm had that information excluded from a parole hearing. He offered to help Doyle get taxpayer funds, including a student loan, to develop an electronics business.

After Doyle was released, he devoted that electronics business to helping drug dealers guard their operations against the police. Meanwhile, he opened three new drug franchises, helped his gun-running accomplice conceal firearms from the cops, and spent his leisure time crafting silencers for a machine gun. He's been in and out of jail three times since Gramm sprang him, and he's utterly unrepentant.

HERE IS THE OFFICIAL SYNOPSIS OF DOYLE'S CRIMINAL CAREER, as it was presented to Gramm in February 1979 in a report by Doyle's probation officer.

- In 1966, Doyle burglarized an aeronautics company, a high school, two construction firms, a chemical company, and an airplane hangar. His booty totaled more than

back on the street within five months. "All of a sudden there was a major turnaround, and they let me out," says Doyle. He wrote Gramm, "Your interest and concern in my case very probably made the difference between my upcoming release and having to do another 1 or 2 years."

GRAMM TOOK UNUSUAL INTEREST IN DOYLE'S CASE. "I HAVE reviewed all the existing presentence reports, charges, and sentences covering Mr. Doyle over the past 13 years," he wrote Doyle's parole commissioner. "I have personally interviewed numerous individuals who have known Mr. Doyle over the past 15 or 20 years."

criminally oriented individual but rather one who became involved in making a great deal of money very easily and...has a great appreciation for some of the more material aspects of life."

In 1980, Gramm intervened similarly on behalf of Bobby Curry, a soldier who had been convicted of selling drugs. After Curry apprised Gramm that "my Dad was going to give me one of his franchises of Pepperidge Farm," Gramm wrote Curry's parole commissioner, "Your consideration of parole for this man will afford he and his family the opportunity to work together in a worthwhile business enterprise and further to make a marked contribution to their community."



"IT WOULD BE INCREDIBLY EASY FOR ME TO PULL ANY STUNT ON THEM EQUIVALENT TO OKLAHOMA CITY OR WORSE."

SHORTLY AFTER HIS RELEASE from prison in 1980, Doyle justified Gramm's faith in his entrepreneurial talents—albeit in a twisted way. He launched a consulting firm specializing in customized alarm systems to protect pushers

Why did Gramm take a fancy to a drug dealer? Doyle believes that Gramm sided with him against overzealous law enforcement. He remembers little of his one phone conversation with Gramm, but says Gramm "seemed to have not a lot of tolerance for bureaucracy."

Gramm was also impressed by Doyle's entrepreneurial spirit and knack for electronics. In letters forwarded to Gramm's office early in 1979, Doyle reported excitedly that he was designing a home-security system: "I hope the feds decide to let me go soon, before someone else comes out with something similar." Doyle's project touched Gramm's blind faith in free enterprise. In his June 11 letter to Doyle's parole commissioner, Gramm bubbled, "I have had an opportunity to study the outline of Mr. Doyle's...project and I am very impressed."

Better still, Gramm offered to help Doyle obtain taxpayer funds to complete his business plan. He wrote Doyle, "If I can be of assistance to you in securing grant/loan information required to complete your...project, please let me know. Also, I would be pleased to look into areas where education funds might be available for you."

Gramm's efforts on behalf of other inmates underscore this weakness for entrepreneurs. In 1979, he tried to abort a mandatory sentence given to Arnold Gene Tate, a onetime armed robber who had allegedly embezzled \$200,000 in federal student aid. Gramm's apparent rationale for helping Tate is suggested by a parole commission report furnished to Gramm: "Tate does not appear to be a particularly

from the police. "The bulk of my customers were smugglers or drug dealers," Doyle says. "They're people that are very interested in security, obviously." Doyle provided devices to tip them off if cops were bugging them, staking them out, tracking their cars, or raiding them.

In 1981, Doyle went back into the drug business himself. He says he invented a new chemical process for making methamphetamines. Instead of producing the drugs himself, he sold his formula, along with the requisite customized equipment, to three pushers in his new hometown, Sacramento. They each paid him \$5,000 up front and \$100 per ounce of drug produced. They also had to kick back "a few ounces of product." In this way, Doyle made money and got high-quality dope without risking arrest. "I looked at it as a franchising or a licensing operation," he explains.

Doyle invited one of his pushers to move into the house next door. In 1982, the pusher got busted and the feds traced him to Doyle. A search of the two adjacent houses turned up eight rifles, four pistols, two shotguns, a machine gun, three silencers, 10 books on silencers and machine guns, four hand grenade bodies, and a missile. Six of the guns were semiautomatic; at least three were loaded. A grand jury indicted Doyle, his wife, and his neighbors on 11 drug and firearms offenses. In addition to several drug charges, Doyle and his wife were indicted for possessing an unregistered machine gun, two rifles, and three unregistered silencers that had been adapted to the machine gun.

Doyle says that his pusher manufactured and sold

\$100,000 and included one case each of dynamite and blasting caps. He got off with three years' probation.

• In February 1970, seven months into his probation, Doyle was busted for selling drugs. He had also bought a rifle illegally and converted it into a machine gun. He explained that he had "heard that someone was planning to kill him over some bad narcotic drugs that he had sold." Convicted of both charges, he finally went to jail in June 1971.

• Doyle was paroled in October 1973. Less than a year later, he was caught operating a methamphetamine laboratory and was sentenced to eight years in jail. Doyle now confirms that from 1969 to 1974, he ran a methamphetamine and LSD ring whose market share comprised "a fairly sizable percentage of the Texas area."

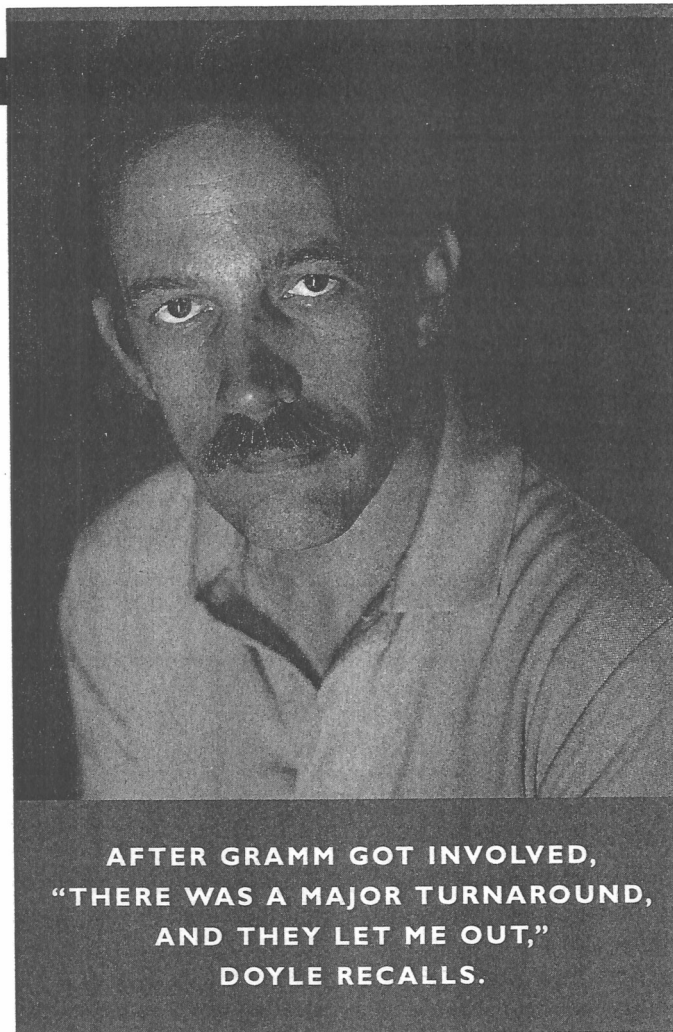
In 1977, Doyle's parole commission refused to parole him after the customary third of his sentence. So on December 12, 1978, Doyle wrote to his brother Jim, who was in the Army at the Pentagon, asking, "Do you know anyone in Washington that might be able to help in some way?"

Luckily, Jim Doyle did know someone. His neighbor, Mary Fae Kamm, worked for Congressman Phil Gramm.

GRAMM DECLINED *MOTHER JONES'* REQUESTS FOR AN INTERVIEW. But according to records and the recollections of the Doyles, Gramm and his aides intervened in three ways.

First, they repeatedly called parole authorities about Bill Doyle's situation. Gramm's office "put the parole commission on notice that someone's looking over your shoulder," Doyle recalls. "The contact was made...on several occasions."

Second, Gramm wrote letters lobbying for Doyle's release. On April 16, 1979, he instructed Doyle's parole commissioner that "it would be in the best interest of Mr. Doyle and the community to afford him the opportunity to re-establish



**AFTER GRAMM GOT INVOLVED,
"THERE WAS A MAJOR TURNAROUND,
AND THEY LET ME OUT,"
DOYLE RECALLS.**

himself as a worthwhile, contributing member of society... [I] urge that he be paroled at the earliest possible date."

When the parole commissioner wrote back that "based on [Doyle's] prior record...and the seriousness of the current offense it would appear that further incarceration is appropriate," Gramm turned up the heat. On June 11, he wrote, "Your decision is anxiously awaited by the prisoner, his family, and me."

Third, Gramm's staff cleansed Doyle's files. Records available to the parole commission included two unproven charges against Doyle. One was an arrest for "threat to life," which Doyle claims was

bogus. The other was a "possession of bomb" charge. Although this charge was dismissed because it was based on an unwarranted search of his car, Doyle now admits that he and a friend were caught transporting a homemade bomb to his "testing field" to detonate it, and "we could have been looking at a felony possession of a bomb charge."

Doyle's brother Jim says Gramm's staff "investigated" these unproven allegations. If so, they should have tracked the arrest for bomb possession to what Doyle now admits was his "weapons trading" with militia members and military thieves. "You were always looking for...stolen military ammunition and supplies," Doyle recalls. He engaged in "large ammunition sales" with an all-white militia anxious over racial unrest and armed with "anti-tank weapons, grenades, rocket launchers, the whole show."

Gramm's "investigation" seems to have ignored these leads. Instead, Gramm essentially functioned as Doyle's lawyer. Gramm "had people challenge" the unproven charges, says Jim Doyle. "When it came time for the parole hearing, that information was taken out of the files."


In August 1979, the parole commission agreed to put Doyle

back on the street within five months. "All of a sudden there was a major turnaround, and they let me out," says Doyle. He wrote Gramm, "Your interest and concern in my case very probably made the difference between my upcoming release and having to do another 1 or 2 years."

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Doyle says that his pusher manufactured and sold

submachine guns and silencers and “collected a lot of Nazi stuff.” In fact, he explains, “The guns that are listed on that indictment are just a small portion of the guns that he actually owned.” After his pusher was busted, Doyle reports, “I went to his house, and I filled a ’73 Ford Torino...with weapons from his house, and took them out and put them in storage for him.” Why? “I knew if the cops wanted to come out and search his house, things would go a whole lot smoother if there weren’t 40 or 50 or 60 rifles sitting around.”

DOYLE PLEADED GUILTY TO ONE COUNT OF SELLING DRUGS IN A plea bargain. He served four years and got out in 1987. Since then, he’s been sent back to prison twice for failing drug tests. He was released from his latest term—his fifth stint in jail, for his 14th offense—last September.

Sixteen years after Gramm assured parole authorities that Doyle had been rehabilitated, Doyle apologizes for nothing. He speaks of the law and its enforcers with contempt. He thinks Gramm would “make an excellent president,” in part because “he’ll rein in some of those federal agencies.”

At times, Doyle sounds like a *reductio ad absurdum* of Gramm’s war on government. He says a Texas judge who was assassinated by a drug dealer years ago “put himself in that position by being totally unfair.” As for the deaths of four ATF agents in Waco, Doyle pronounces, “It couldn’t have happened to a more deserving federal agency.” And alluding to his expertise in explosives, he volunteers, “It would be incredibly easy for me to pull any stunt on them equivalent to Oklahoma City or worse. I’m not ever going to... [But] I built better explosive devices back when I was a teenager.”

FOR YEARS, GRAMM HAS TALKED A TOUGH LINE ON CRIME. KEEP repeat offenders off the street? Doyle had 11 prior offenses including violations of parole and probation when Gramm took up his cause. Ten years without parole for selling drugs to minors? Doyle says it’s “quite likely” that his Texas drug ring sold to kids, yet Gramm got him out in just five years. Deny student loans to convicted drug traffickers? Gramm offered to *help* Doyle get a student loan.

Gramm has plenty of questions to answer. *Mother Jones* reconstructed his work for Doyle from partial records of Gramm’s early years in Congress. Gramm hasn’t released records from more recent years. How many other inmates has he helped? All of the inmates for whom Gramm lobbied in those early years were white. Has he ever taken similar interest in a nonwhite criminal? How many crimes must a felon commit before Gramm refuses to give him another break?

Whether Bill Doyle deserved that break can be debated. One thing is certain: Had another politician given it to him, Phil Gramm would be the first to demand answers. —W.S.

(Continued from page 24) he insists, “because they believe that I mean it.” In a slap at Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, who are just now scurrying to the right, Gramm boasts, “I was conservative before conservative was cool.”

An investigation of Gramm’s career tells a different story. Gramm was a deficit hawk until tax-cutting was cool. He was a libertarian until gay-baiting was cool. He was an apostle of sacrifice until selfishness was cool. He was a poverty fighter until blaming the victim was cool. If, after all these changes, Gramm can still claim to be conservative, it’s only because conservatism itself has changed. It has achieved coolness by becoming indulgent, unserious, negligent, vindictive, and cynically divisive. This pseudoconservatism, not the rigorous tradition Gramm once represented, is what his presidency would wreak on America.

THE OUTSTANDING THING ABOUT THE PHIL GRAMM WHO STEPPED from the classroom into the political arena 15 years ago was his candor. He refused to let his constituents blame runaway government spending on the poor. In April 1980, at a chamber of commerce banquet in his district, he dissected the “stereotype image of people receiving all this government money at the end of welfare and food stamp lines.... Every one of us has somehow been seduced by the federal government’s spending.” In an interview with the local press, he reeled off examples: “The local shoe store receives a loan from the Small Business Administration, the farmer is more in debt to the Farmers Home Administration every week, and the corporate jet is 95 percent subsidized by the federal taxpayer.”

Gramm didn’t hesitate to spoon out the castor oil. “Cutting spending means cutting programs, and the cuts will affect everybody in this room,” he warned listeners at a February 1981 town meeting in Fort Worth. Two months later, he told 300 angry residents at a town meeting at Texas A&M that they, too, would feel the pain of budget cuts. When a woman employed by a federally funded research program complained that she might lose her job if the grant were cut, Gramm answered bluntly, “I’m sorry it’s going to directly affect you, but if that is a price we’re going to have to pay, we’re going to have to pay it.”

Every politician has one poignant moment that shows him at his best. Bill Clinton’s moment came in 1992 in New Hampshire, when he knelt down to hug an old woman who couldn’t afford to buy medicine she desperately needed. Phil Gramm’s moment came in 1981, at a town meeting in his district, when an elderly man rose to his feet to tell the young congressman, “I get two little ol’ checks: I get a little ol’ veterans check and a little ol’ Social Security check. But if you have to cut ’em, then do it.” When the meeting ended, Gramm came over and hugged the old man. If Clinton’s embrace was an affirmation of human needs, Gramm’s was an affirmation of the sacrifice by which a society meets those needs. The Phil Gramm who stood in that room might have made a fine president.

FOURTEEN YEARS LATER, PHIL GRAMM STANDS BEFORE AN APRIL 1995 town meeting in Nashua, N.H., and tells the crowd of 150 how easy it will be to balance the budget. Evading questions about specific cuts, he talks vaguely of “setting priorities” and “saying no.” He never alludes to cuts without suggesting that any taxpayer who loses benefits will recover that money in