



## Weekly What #6

### Elaine Bennett's analysis of

“How Tom Wolfe Became...Tom Wolfe” by Michael Lewis, *Vanity Fair*, October 8, 2015

This is a really long piece—much longer than the usual pieces *Vanity Fair* publishes. I'm only going to share some excerpts with you here, but I hope you'll seek out and read the whole thing: <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2015/10/how-tom-wolfe-became-tom-wolfe>

[Note: if you read the full piece, you'll encounter some of the casual racism of the 1940s in Wolfe's youthful writing as well as the pervasive elitism of New York in the...well...forever.]

### Excerpt #1—the opening of 2 sections of the article

## How Tom Wolfe Became...Tom Wolfe

I was 11 or maybe 12 years old when I discovered my parents' bookshelves. They'd been invisible right up to the moment someone or something told me that the books on them were stuffed with dirty words and shocking behavior—a rumor whose truth was eventually confirmed by *Portnoy's Complaint*. The book I still remember taking down from the shelf was *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*. The only word in the title I understood was “the.” The cover showed a picture of a bored-looking blonde housewife nestled in the lap of a virile black man. It seemed just the sort of thing to answer some questions I had about the facts of life. It didn't. Instead, it described a cocktail party given in the late 1960s for the Black Panthers by Leonard Bernstein in his fancy New York City apartment. I'd never been to New York City, or heard of Leonard Bernstein, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and had only a vague notion of who or what a Black Panther revolutionary might be—and none of that turned out to matter. The book started out with this weird old guy, Leonard Bernstein, rising from his bed in the middle of the night and having a vision of himself delivering a speech to a packed concert hall while being heckled by a giant black man onstage beside him. I remember thinking: How would anyone know about someone else's bizarre private vision? Was this one of those stories that really happened, like Bart Starr's quarterback sneak to beat the Dallas Cowboys, or was it made up, like *The Hardy Boys*? Then, suddenly, I felt as if I were standing in Leonard Bernstein's apartment watching his waiters serve appetizers to Black Panthers:

“MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM. THESE ARE NICE. LITTLE Roquefort cheese morsels rolled in crushed nuts. Very tasty. Very subtle. It's the way the dry sackiness of the nuts tiptoes up against the dour savor of the cheese that is so nice, so subtle. Wonder what the Black Panthers eat out here on the hors d'oeuvre trail? Do the Panthers like little Roquefort cheese morsels rolled in crushed nuts this way, and asparagus tips in mayonnaise dabs, and *meatballs petites au Coq Hardi*, all of which are at this very moment being offered to them on gadrooned silver platters by maids in black uniforms with hand-ironed white aprons?”

Were the books grown-ups read supposed to make you laugh? I had no idea but ...

“But it’s all right. They’re *white* servants, not Claude and Maude, but white South Americans. Lenny and Felicia are geniuses. After a while, it all comes down to servants. They are the cutting edge in Radical Chic. Obviously, if you are giving a party for the Black Panthers, as Lenny and Felicia are this evening, or as Sidney and Gail Lumet did last week, or as John Simon of Random House and Richard Baron, the publisher did before that; or for the Chicago Eight, such as the party Jean vanden Heuvel gave; or for the grape workers or Bernadette Devlin, such as the parties Andrew Stein gave; or for the Young Lords, such as the party Ellie Guggenheimer is giving next week in *her* Park Avenue duplex; or for the Indians or the SDS or the G.I. coffee shops or even for the Friends of the Earth—well, then, obviously you can’t have a Negro butler and maid, Claude and Maude, in uniform, circulating through the living room, the library, and the main hall serving drinks and canapés. Plenty of people have tried to think it out. They try to picture the Panthers or whoever walking in bristling with electric hair and Cuban shades and leather pieces and the rest of it, and they try to picture Claude and Maude with the black uniforms coming up and saying, ‘Would you care for a drink, sir?’ They close their eyes and try to picture it *some way*, but there *is* no way. One simply cannot see that moment. So the current wave of Radical Chic has touched off the most desperate search for white servants.”

At some point came a thought that struck with the force of revelation: this book *had been written by someone*. Some human being must have sat down and scribbled the Hardy Boys series, along with the *Legends of the NFL*—how else would I have ever known that Dallas Cowboys defensive lineman Bob Lilly lifted a Volkswagen by himself? I’d never really stopped to ask who had written any of those books, because ... well, because it didn’t matter to me who had written them. Their creators were invisible. They had no particular identity. No voice. Now rolling around a living-room floor in New Orleans, Louisiana, howling with laughter, I asked a new question: Who wrote this book? Thinking it might offer a clue, I searched the cover. Right there on the front was a name!!! Tom Wolfe. Who was Tom Wolfe?

## Parachuting In

“Is he, like, really old?” Dixie asks. Dixie is my 13-year-old daughter, who, a few days earlier, had been told that her special trip with her father needed to be interrupted for the better part of a day so that he might pay a call on Tom Wolfe.

“Eighty-five,” I say. “But he’s a *very young* 85.” As if that helps. To a 13-year-old, 85 might as well be 2,000. She doesn’t like the idea of this trip at all. “Look,” I say, or something like it. “I want at least one of my children to meet him. I think he’s a big reason it ever occurred to me to do what I do for a living. Because the first time I ever thought ‘writer,’ I also thought ‘delight.’ ”

She’s not listening. She knows we’re going to see Tom Wolfe for reasons that have nothing to do with her. She doesn’t care what I do for a living. She doesn’t care who Tom Wolfe is—it was all she could do to drag herself to click on his Wikipedia entry. What she cares about, intensely, are plane crashes. She hates flying, and, in this case, I can’t say I blame her. So I try all over again to explain why, to travel quickly from Martha’s Vineyard to Long Island, you can’t fly in a normal plane, only a small one or a helicopter, and that the weather’s too dicey for a helicopter. That’s when our pilot finally appears. He’s got a swagger about him, which might be reassuring, or the opposite, depending on your feelings about male confidence. He leads us onto the Martha’s Vineyard airport runway and into a maze of Gulfstreams and Lear and Hawkers. The sight of the jets perks Dixie up—private planes aren’t nearly as small as she imagined. They’re sleek and indestructible, like the chariots of visiting gods. When our pilot stops, though, it is not beside a Hawker or a Lear or a Gulfstream. It’s not clear what it is. When I first spotted it I thought it might be a drone. I half expected the pilot to pull out a remote control and show us how to play with it. Instead he produces a step stool and shows us how to climb up on the wing without breaking it. My child looks at me like, well, like a 13-year-old girl being taken on a suicide mission to visit a 2,000-year-old man—and then crawls on all fours across the wing, to squeeze into the doggy door on the side.

“Where’s the other pilot?” I ask, before following.

“It’s jes’ me,” the pilot says, with a chuckle. It’s a reassuring chuckle. A faintly *southern* chuckle—though he’s not from the South. “Something happens to me, here’s what you do,” he says as he straps himself in. “This lever here.” He grabs a red knob beside his seat. “This shuts down the engine. Jes’ pull that back and you shut it down. And this lever here ... ” He grabs a bright-red handle on the ceiling over his head. “Yank down on this with 45 pounds of pressure. That’ll release the parachute.”

“*The parachute?*”

“No sense having the engine running with the parachute open,” he says, ignoring the 10 questions that naturally precede the one to which this is the answer.

“What did you say your name was?” I hadn’t paid attention the first time. Now that I was going to be parachuting into the ocean with his inert body I needed to be able to explain to the authorities who he was.

“Jack Yeager,” he says.

“Yeager?”

“Uh-huh.”

“As in—”

“I get that all the time. People think we’re related.” He fires up his toy propellers.

“You know who Chuck Yeager is?”

“Everyone knows who Chuck Yeager is.”

Dixie doesn’t know who Chuck Yeager is, but her brain is on tilt. One day, perhaps, she’ll want to know.

“You know why—right?” I holler.

“He broke the sound barrier.”

“No, I mean, you know why anyone knows Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier, or cares?”

He shakes his head. He’s busy declaring to the airport authorities his improbable intention to take off from their runway in his toy plane.

“It’s because of Tom Wolfe,” I shout.

“Who’s Tom Wolfe?”

You sense from the start that this isn’t the usual kind of celebrity piece *Vanity Fair* publishes. It’s as much about the writer, Michael Lewis, as it is about his purported subject, Tom Wolfe. This mirrors the style adopted by Wolfe and his cohorts in the “new journalism” school of nonfiction writing in the 1960s and ‘70s. A quick definition of “new journalism” from Wikipedia:

“...characterized by a subjective perspective, a literary style reminiscent of long-form non-fiction and emphasizing ‘truth’ over ‘facts,’ and intensive reportage in which reporters immersed themselves in the stories as they reported and wrote them.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Journalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Journalism)

Notice how Lewis introduces us to Tom Wolfe—by plucking his work off a bookshelf and reading this very curious scene through the eyes of his 12-year-old self.

Lewis doesn’t mention the name of his subject until the end of the first section. And note that he introduces it as a question: “Who was Tom Wolfe?” He engages us in the mystery he himself felt as a boy. We may know the answer (or we may think we know part of it), but we’re enlisted in the 12-year-old’s treasure hunt. We want to know how Lewis will answer that question.

Having hooked us, Lewis flips into the present and we find him flying to Long Island with his daughter Dixie, so he can interview Wolfe. Lewis is still the star of the piece; Dixie and the pilot play supporting roles.

If you’re going to do something like this—put yourself front-and-center in a piece that’s supposed to be about someone else—you’d better have a good reason, and Lewis has two beyond mimicking Wolfe’s style. First, his conversation with Dixie allows him to tell us that Tom Wolfe has remained an important influence in his life. And second, his conversation with the pilot allows him to drop in a hint about Chuck Yeager, the pilot who would be the centerpiece of Wolfe’s arguably greatest nonfiction work, *The Right Stuff*.

And note that this second section ends the same way the first one did: With the question, “Who is Tom Wolfe?”

After this, the article resumes a more conventional trajectory and style. Lewis uses the recent gift of Wolfe’s papers to the New York Public Library to tour the highlights of the writer’s life.

**Excerpt #2—Wolfe began his career as a newspaper writer, working his way up from small-town to Washington DC and, eventually, New York. The newspaper strike that hit New York City at the end of 1962 left him with a choice: sign up for unemployment benefits or find another job. [I added the emphasis below.]**

...Instead of going on the dole he went looking for work, and the work that naturally presented itself was magazine work. *Esquire* hired him to fly to California and explore the strange new world of custom-made cars. Wolfe wrote a letter to his parents to describe what he’d seen there:

“The trip was one of the most interesting I ever took. Los Angeles is incredible—like every new suburb in America all massed together in one plain.... Everyone drives, and drives and drives. Twenty-five miles for a hamburger is nothing....

The car-o-philes, or whatever they ought to be called, were an intriguing lot, especially the custom car designers. They starve for their art, such as it is, have many of the mannerisms and anti-social attitudes of artists, and, in general, are the Pentecostal version of High Culture’s Episcopal, if I may make such a comparison.” [April 1963.]

**To his parents he has no trouble describing what he has seen. Putting the words onto paper for *Esquire* proves more problematic.** He’s written hundreds of thousands of words in newspapers. He has a subject that interests him intensely—it’s not just about cars, it’s about the sincere soul of American life. He sits down to write and ... he can’t do it. The words simply won’t come. In the end he calls up his editor,

Byron Dobell, and tells him he just can't get the piece out of himself. Dobell tells him that *Esquire* desperately needs something, and soon. They've spent \$10,000 on a photo spread and they need the text to explain it. **Just write up your notes in a letter to me tonight**, says Dobell, *and I'll have someone hammer out the text for the piece*. And that's what Wolfe does. "Dear Byron," he writes—though he might just as easily have written "Dear Mother and Father:"

"The first good look I had at customized cars was at an event called a 'Teen Fair,' held in Burbank, a suburb of Los Angeles beyond Hollywood. This was a wild place to be taking a look at art objects—eventually, I should say, you have to reach the conclusion that these customized cars *are* art objects, at least if you use the standards applied in a civilized society."

A few pages in and he's not just relating what he's seen in a matter-of-fact way, the way you would if you were just trying to supply some poor editor with information to use in captions to some photos. He's letting it fly.

"Things have been going on in the development of the kids' formal attitude toward cars since 1945, things of great sophistication that adults have not been even remotely aware of, mainly because the kids are so inarticulate about it, especially the ones most hipped on the subject. They are not from the levels of society that produce children who write sensitive analytical prose at age seventeen, or if they do, they soon fall into the hands of English instructors who put them onto Hemingway or a lot of goddamn-and-hungry-breast writers. If they ever write about a highway again, it's a rain-slicked highway and the sound of the automobiles passing over it is like the sound of tearing silk, not that one household in ten thousand has heard the sound of tearing silk since 1945."

When he was done, his letter ran 49 pages. The exotic punctuation, the ellipses, the rococo mannerisms that sometimes enhance and sometimes detract from his later work aren't yet there, but his ability to see what others have missed, or found unworthy of attention, is sensational. The effect is of an opaque protective gauze being peeled back from the surface of the society to expose what's really under it. What really matters. In the morning, he walked his letter over to *Esquire*. "It was like he discovered it in the middle of the night," Dobell now recalls. "Wherever it came from, it seemed to me to tap a strain of pure American humor that wasn't being tapped. He didn't sound like Truman Capote or Lillian Ross ... or anyone else." Dobell scratched out the *Dear Byron* salutation and ran the letter as the piece, called "There Goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Kolored (Thphhhhhh!) Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby Around the Bend (Brummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm) . . . . ."

In Wolfe's papers there is a copy of a letter from early 1965—less than 18 months after he first got his voice on the page, and after he'd published a dozen or so magazine pieces, mostly for the *New York Herald Tribune's* new color supplement, *New York* magazine. The letter came from Rosser Reeves to the president of the *Herald Tribune*. Reeves was the splashiest adman in the 1960s; he's been fingered as a model for *Mad Men's* Don Draper. He begins,

"There is a man named Tom Wolfe who is currently writing for the Herald Tribune. He is one of the sharpest and most perceptive talents that has appeared on the scene in many, many years.... I discover that he is becoming the object of a cult." [Rosser Reeves to Walter Thayer, March 30, 1965.]

## Status Update

**Eighteen months! That's what it took for Wolfe, once he'd found his voice, to go from worrying about whether or not to go on the dole to a cult figure.** By early 1965, literary agents are writing him, begging to let them sell a book; publishers are writing to him, begging him to write one. Hollywood people

are writing to ask if they might turn his magazine pieces into movies—though really all they want is to rub up against him. ...

Many writers struggle to find their authentic voice—I wanted you to see that. And notice that he found his style once he stopped looking for a “writer’s voice” and just wrote as Tom—writing a letter to a friend. I imagine he’d been unable to write because there was nothing else out there that sounded like his writing. Would anyone publish something so strange? He was probably trying to force himself to sound like “a writer.” Instead, once he got out of his own way, he sounded like Tom Wolfe. And he would never have to worry about unemployment benefits again.

I’m sure you understand the point is not to find your voice so you can become rich and famous. The point is to find your voice so you can become a confident writer and say whatever it is you need to say.

### Excerpt #3—write, throw it out, write some more

Then, on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong stepped out of Apollo 11 onto the moon.

Like everyone else, Wolfe took an interest in the moon landing, but less in the mission than in the men. The early astronauts had some traits in common, he noticed. They tended to be born oldest sons, in the mid-1920s, named after their fathers, and raised in small towns, in intact Anglo-Saxon Protestant families. More than half of them had “Jr.” after their names. In other words, they were just like him. What was it about this upbringing, he wondered, that produced these men? It was another way of asking: *What strange sociological process explains me?*

The more famous Wolfe became, the less often he wrote to his mother and father—at least to judge from his archives. His father still wrote to him, however, and it’s clear that he still felt listened to, and consulted. At the end of a letter written after the moon landing he adds a note to his son:

“Apropos ... astronauts

A hamlet breeds heroes

a city breeds eunuchs. —Socrates”

[To T.W. from his father, 1969.]

Chasing that idea, Wolfe spends the better part of a decade crisscrossing the country. He pays for his research by publishing several other books. Some of these are forgettable (*Mauve Gloves & Madmen, Clutter & Vine*); some are long essays that still hold up amazingly well (*The Painted Word*); all of them are less important to him than the astronauts. Reducing their story to a narrative proves to be incredibly difficult. The archives here tell the story of a writer working his ass off. Never mind what percentage of genius is talent; this feels like all perspiration. There’s no main character. There are the seven astronauts scattered across the country, plus a lot of other people to track down. The reporting alone takes him seven years. His original idea of the story, he decides, is wrong. The astronauts were all drawn from the officer ranks in the U.S. military. They were indeed invariably Wasps; men born before the Great Depression; and often oldest sons. So of course they shared his basic background. But so did everyone else in the pool from which the astronauts were drawn. So, that alone was not interesting.

At great expense—and this is just about the best example a nonfiction writer could set for others—he abandons his first theory of the case. But because he is looking so hard, and so well, he finds another. The

story Wolfe discovers isn't precisely about the forces that made him possible. On the other hand, it isn't precisely not:

“This is really a book not about the space program but about status battles between pilots in the highly competitive world of military flying. To be successful the book should not expand our view of man into the dimensions of the cosmos—but draw the entire cosmos into the dimensions of man's love of himself or, rather, his ceaseless concern for his own standing in comparison to other men. This should not seem like a cynical discovery, but it should be amusing.” [T.W. letter, Box 126.]

This from a long letter Wolfe writes, as much to himself as to his editor, to explain what he thinks he's up to. *It's not really a book about the space program*. It turns out that it's not even, really, about flying. It's about the importance of status to men, and what happens when the rules of any status game change. There had been a status structure to the life of U.S. fighter jocks before the space program, and it was clear to everyone involved. At the top of the pyramid were combat pilots, and at the tippy top were the combat pilots who found their way to Edwards Air Force Base, in the California desert, to test new fighter planes. The courage and spirit required not just to get to Edwards but to survive the test flights, the pilots themselves never spoke of, but it's at the center of their existence. That unspoken quality Wolfe calls *the right stuff*. The embodiment of the right stuff—everyone knows it and yet no one says it—is Chuck Yeager. Hardly anyone outside the small world of combat pilots has ever heard of him. Here is how Wolfe, in a single sentence, will change that:

“Anyone who travels very much on airlines in the United States soon gets to know the voice of *the airline pilot* ... coming over the intercom ... with a particular drawl, a particular folksiness, a particular down-home calmness that is so exaggerated it begins to parody itself (nevertheless!—it's reassuring) ... the voice that tells you, as the airliner is caught in thunderheads and goes bolting up and down a thousand feet at a single gulp, to check your seat belts because ‘it might get a little choppy’ ... the voice that tells you (on a flight from Phoenix preparing for its final approach into Kennedy Airport, New York, just after dawn): ‘Now, folks, uh ... this is the captain ... ummmm ... We've got a little ol' red light up here on the control panel that's tryin' to tell us that the *landin* gears're not ... uh ... *lockin* into position when we lower 'em ... Now ... I don't believe that little ol' red light knows what it's *talkin* about—I believe it's that little ol' red light that iddn' workin' right' ... faint chuckle, long pause, as if to say, *I'm not even sure all this is really worth going into—still, it may amuse you* ... ‘But ... I guess to play it by the rules, we oughta *humor* that little ol' light ... so we're gonna take her down to about, oh, two or three hundred feet over the runway at Kennedy, and the folks down there on the ground are gonna see if they caint give us a *visual* inspection of those ol' landin' gears'—with which he is obviously on intimate ol'-buddy terms, as with every other working part of this mighty ship—'and if I'm right ... they're gonna tell us everything is *copacetic* all the way aroun' an' we'll jes take her on in' ... and, after a couple of low passes over the field, the voice returns: ‘Well, folks, those folks down there on the ground—it must be too early for 'em or somethin'—I 'spect they still got the *sleepers* in their eyes ... 'cause they say they caint tell if those ol' landin' gears are all the way down or not ... But, you know, up here in the cockpit we're convinced they're all the way down, so we're jes gonna take her on in ... And oh' ... (*I almost forgot*) ... ‘while we take a little swing out over the ocean an' empty some of that surplus fuel we're not gonna be needin' anymore—that's what you might be seein' comin' out of the wings—our lovely little ladies ... if they'll be so kind ... they're gonna go up and down the aisles and show you how we do what we call “assumin' the position” ‘ ... another faint chuckle (*We do this so often, and it's so much fun, we even have a funny little name for it*) ... and the stewardesses, a bit grimmer, by the looks of them, than *that voice*, start telling the passengers to take their glasses off and take the ballpoint pens and other sharp objects out of their pockets, and they show them *the position*, with the head lowered ... while down on the field at Kennedy the little yellow emergency trucks start roaring across the field—and even though in your pounding heart and your sweating palms and your broiling brainpan you *know* this is a critical moment in your life, you still can't quite bring yourself to *believe* it, because if it were ...

how could *the captain*, the man who knows the actual situation most intimately ... how could he keep on drawlin' and chucklin' and driftin' and lollygaggin' in that particular voice of his—

Well!—who doesn't know that voice! And who can forget it!—even after he is proved right and the emergency is over.

That particular voice may sound vaguely Southern or Southwestern, but it is specifically Appalachian in origin.... In the late 1940's and early 1950's this up-hollow voice drifted down from on high, from over the high desert of California, down, down, down, from the upper reaches of the Brotherhood into all phases of American aviation.... Military pilots and then, soon, airline pilots, pilots from Maine and Massachusetts and the Dakotas and Oregon and everywhere else, began to talk in that poker-hollow West Virginia drawl, or as close to it as they could bend their native accents. It was the drawl of the most righteous of all the possessors of the right stuff: Chuck Yeager." [From Chapter 3, *The Right Stuff*.]

Such was the grip Chuck Yeager held on the imaginations of brave young men. Then came the Russians, and the seemingly existential need to beat them to the moon. NASA's rockets required none of Yeager's skill or nerve. The astronaut's job could be done—was done—by a monkey. By the old standards—the true standards—the astronauts weren't even flying. The job was to sit still and cooperate with technocrats—and not alert the wider public that whatever you were doing required any less of the right stuff than it had before. The space program vaulted the astronauts to the top of the heap and reduced Chuck Yeager to an afterthought. The world needed them to be heroic pilots, and so they played the part, but no one (except for one American writer) thought to look more deeply into the matter. No one noticed the best story. Process had replaced courage. Engineers had replaced warriors. A great romantic way of life, a chivalric code, had been trampled by modernity. Not for the first time! (As Wolfe might write.) It's the story of the American South in the 20th century—or at least the story a lot of white southern men told themselves.

Anyway, it resonated with Wolfe, to incredible effect. Never mind journalism, new or old. *The Right Stuff*, in my view, is a great work of American literature. It's also the last nonfiction story Wolfe ever tells....

I wanted you to see what we might call the Circle of [Writing] Life—sometimes the idea you start with isn't the idea you end with. Sometimes you have to scrap everything and start all over again.

The letter to his editor in which he fleshes out the new idea, that's analogous to a book proposal—which, of course, Wolfe would never have had to write, given his status as a writer by the point. (Though I'm not sure book proposals were in wide use back in the '70s...)

So you see how many iterations he had to go through—and how many angles he approached the idea from—before it turned into the right idea.

And, oh my God, that paragraph-long sentence—like a cowboy James Joyce. See how it creates the atmosphere for you? It's more than a switch in tone from Michael Lewis's voice to Tom Wolfe's; it's folksy and charming and theatrical and...name your adjective. That's some kind of writing.

**Excerpt #4—the opening of the final section**

## Going to the Source

'Long Island's jes' ahead,' says our Yeager, with his faint, yet still detectable, drawl. The drone descends, and soon Dixie and I are back on the ground, in the Hamptons, and driving to the house in which Wolfe now spends a lot of his time.



We find the writer in his kitchen, with his wife, Sheila, whom he met when she worked as the art director at *Harper's*. The streets near his house are teeming with people in shorts and T-shirts, but he still wears his white suit and has it dressed out with a white fedora. Dixie meets him and sweetly hides her alarm ("When I saw him I was like, Whoa! That's a very outgoing fashion choice," she says later), then takes off for the beach with his dog. The next couple of hours Tom Wolfe supplies the answers to questions I've had since I was a child, along with some new ones....

But here I wanted to show you how neatly Lewis wraps up the "Dixie" storyline he began the piece with. He never mentioned his daughter after the opening I quoted you, but by bringing her in here, her little storyline gets some closure. And she leaves us with a memorable quotation.

And then Lewis ties up the article by returning to the book he wrote about at the beginning, the one about the cocktail party for Black Panthers at Leonard Bernstein's apartment.