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## Dispatches From the Wild

By [Eric Betts](#) Posted: 09/27/2007



Chances are you've heard of Christopher McCandless, the 1990 graduate whose road adventures and eventual death in the Alaskan wilderness became the focus of the book and now the film "Into the Wild."

What you may not know, unless you read the book carefully, is that for one of his four years at Emory, McCandless served the *Wheel* as an assistant editorials editor.

During the 1987-88 school year, McCandless wrote numerous pieces for the opinion pages of the *Wheel* — columns which lambasted political candidates, refuted the claims of Christian scholars and touched on topics as diverse as AIDS research, the Nicaraguan Contras and the confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

Whatever the issue, McCandless' fervent arguments inspired no shortage of response. On one occasion, an entire page of the editorials section was devoted to responses to a McCandless column, the "Religious fanaticism is alive in Georgia" piece.

What follow are excerpts from several of those columns McCandless wrote for the *Wheel*:

**Sept. 11, 1987.**

**"Biden won't take his medicine"**

"(...) Ever since Biden was given chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee eight months ago he has bravely upheld his right to change, re-change or exchange his mind, the latter probably being the most prudent at this point.

Biden's brilliant campaign to undermine his own fidelity began with the now-infamous remark uttered last November, 'Say the administration sends up Bork and, after our investigation, he looks a lot like Scalia. I'd have to vote for him, and if the special interest groups tear me apart, that's the medicine I'll have to take.' How unfortunate it was when only a few months later Biden contracted 'specialgroupinterescitis,' a horrible disease which often strikes liberal politicians, causing severe allergic reactions to all types of 'medicine.'

The effect on Biden has been devastating. He has reportedly been seen wandering aimlessly, uttering incoherent phrases like, '...in light of Powell's special role I want a justice with an open mind...I don't want someone with a predisposition on every major issue...I can be President...'"

**October 23, 1987**

**"Religious fanaticism is alive in Georgia; society's ignorant reign"**

"Religious fanaticism showed that it is alive and well last week when the largest Southern Baptist church in Georgia, First Baptist Church of Atlanta, announced it would cut off its annual contributions to Mercer University on the basis that its president, R. Kirby Godsey, is not a 'bible believer.' (...)

Fred Powell and his church should be glad that Godsey is a universalist. The controversy initiated by First Baptist vividly displays the problems which arise when a group of fanatics with narrow and primitive religious views try to impose their beliefs on a man who has read books with his eyes open. (...)

Surely all Americans have the right to give their money only to those causes which they support. But what kind of society has this

created? A society where the ignorant reign. A society where enlightened must hold their tongues. A nation whose politicians must profess half-hearted devotion to an ancient fable or face the disastrous consequences of speaking their true mind.”

**April 1, 1988**

**“No one can say ‘Jackson can’t win’”**

“It seems that everywhere I turn I find people congratulating Jesse Jackson on the incredible feats he has accomplished in his drive for the Democratic presidential nomination. Most people are truly amazed, as I am, at the unprecedented success of his campaign, and appear to hold Jackson in high esteem.

However, when the question arises as to his actual chances for being the nominee most everyone gives him none. (...)

Some people might argue that Jackson ‘doesn’t want’ to be President. They maintain that Jackson is merely in the race to try to benefit the cause of black citizens. (...) Is it to become precedent that a black man can never be on the ticket because that ticket could then ‘never win’? Or is there supposed to be some ‘better time’ in the future for a black man to be on the ticket? When would this be, year 2000, year 3000?

The Democratic voters are the backbone of the party, and through their votes they have shown a strong interest in Jackson as the nominee. Let’s leave these ‘can’t’ win’ people to rot in their mire.”

**April 12, 1988**

**“Hijacking crisis shows new tactics are needed to deal with hostages”**

“The recent events that have transpired in the Kuwaiti airliner hijacking clearly demonstrate that a bold new policy is needed to rectify such situations. (...)

First, airport security must be tremendously overhauled. It is essential that an adequate military force brandishing assault rifles be present at the airport. (...) A couple of security guards with pistols is not going to offer adequate protection of airport gates. (...)

Second, security measures during the flight must also be tightened. Central to this idea is the in-flight guard himself. In-flight guards should carry assault rifles and wear some type of body armor. (...)

Finally, there needs to be some type of international policy for dealing with hostage situations should they occur. Basically, this entails a policy for for permission to land and refuel. Officials should abandon the previous policy of hesitancy and confusion. When officials try to bully terrorists in such an ineffective manner it results in the kind of disasters we saw last Sunday.”

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sacha · 201 weeks ago

+3

hey guys,  
great you posted this on the web. been searching for it. do you have any other columns he wrote?  
would be even greater.

thanks.  
sacha (the netherlands)

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Joe Mama · 196 weeks ago

-3

Who is this guy? Is he still alive?

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Serdar · 195 weeks ago

0

Nope, he dead in Alaskan wilderness alone living in the wild.

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THomas BRavo · 195 weeks ago

0

No he died in the Alaskan Wilderness dude

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Siddhant · 192 weeks ago

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He died 18 years ago in the Alaskan wilderness. His life inspired the Book "Into the Wild" by Jon Krakauer and the film "Into the Wild" by Sean Penn.

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