

Fareed Zakaria:
An exclusive talk
with Wen Jiabao

Pakistan:
The generals are
back in charge

Cyberbullying:
Why technology
makes it meaner

John Lennon:
Thirty years
later, he lives on

TIME

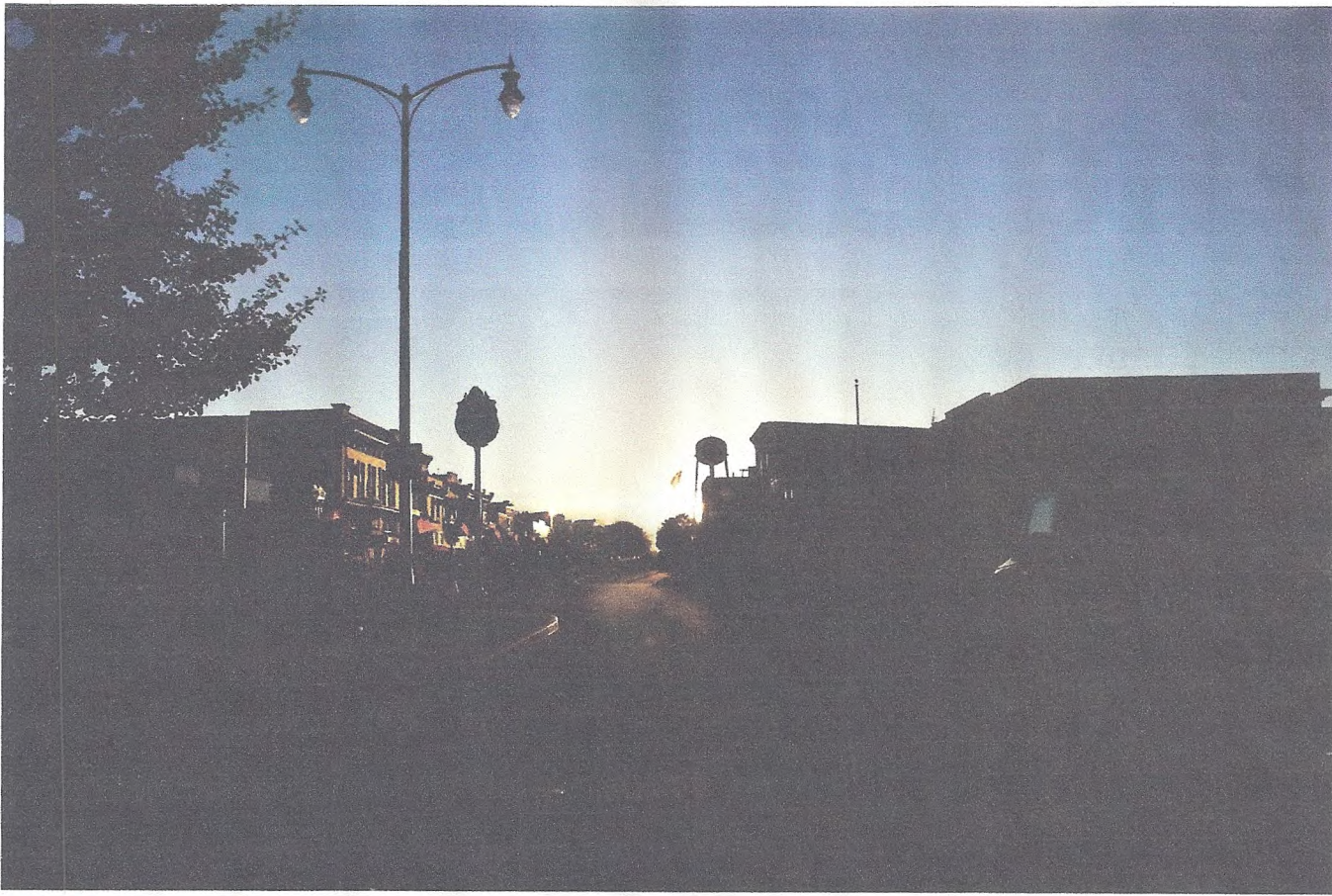
An American Journey

6,782 miles. 12 states. 24 days. 576 songs.
One road trip reveals the issues people are talking
about—but politicians aren't. *By Joe Klein*



#BXBDJLX *****CNR-RT LOT**C-033
#2354 5633 930#TD 331CA22 B #U611
0015# WILLIAM CHAVEZ
#D4154 214 BRAYTON LOOP
P00088 YUBA CITY CA 95993-5905

DAY 16
I-25 South, just north
of Albuquerque, N.M.



A small Wisconsin town at sunset “We seem to be mired in mediocrity,” said a woman in Arizona, “while China is steaming ahead.”

him). “We need manufacturing jobs for the nongeniuses. I can’t believe we’ve let this happen.”

Clinton used to say that the manufacturing jobs that went away weren’t coming back, and he was undoubtedly right about that. But Obama would be cheered by most Americans if he showed a little spine with China—if, for example, he backed the recent House legislation giving him the right to slap tariffs on the Chinese for currency manipulation. “The great fear is about American supremacy,” said Anne Mariucci, chair of the Arizona Board of Regents. “We all believed that if you followed the basic compact, worked hard and played by the rules, that we’d have the highest standard of living in the world. And we were always on the front edge of the next new technology—but we’re not anymore. We seem to be mired in mediocrity while China is steaming ahead.”

Many Americans were confused and frustrated by the constant state of war since 9/11. But for every occasion they raised Afghanistan, they mentioned China 25 times

A Mirage in a Tense Time

A READER NAMED BILL CHAVEZ INVITED ME TO DINNER WITH his neighbors in Yuba City. It was a warm evening in the Central Valley. Bill and his wife Pattie set out tables on the front lawn of their home in the bankrupt Dunmore subdivision. The neighbors proved to be remarkable. On one side lived Hindus from Indian Punjab; on the other side lived Muslims from Pakistani Punjab. A Zimbabwean immigrant studying to be a medi-

cal technician wandered over; Jeannie Klever, the chair of the local Democratic Party, and her husband Dale dropped by. The Mexican Americans from across the street, a business manager and a bilingual schoolteacher, came after they’d finished feeding their kids. Bill—who is half Filipino, half Panamanian—told me that Yuba City had the largest Sikh population outside

India (approximately 16,000). But the talk mostly turned on ordinary things: organizing a block party, the tyranny of constant soccer practices.

It was a perfectly American scene—perhaps not Sarah Palin’s America, but a demonstration of the nation’s greatest principle and its greatest strength: that no matter where we come from, the things we have in common as human beings are more important than the things that divide us. Bill later took me to a community meeting that was filled with all the same complaints—about

the incivility of public discourse, about the loss of jobs to China. But my mind kept wandering back to the scene on Bill and Pattie’s front lawn, which seemed as much a hope, and a dream, as a sunset reality—the neighbors eating chicken and vegetarian spaghetti, a raft of kids playing in the street. I asked Boniface, the Zimbabwean immigrant, if this was how he’d imagined America, and he said, “Yes, this is how I imagined it. Exactly.”

It was always how I imagined America, at its best, too. But it now seems almost a mirage in a terrible, tense time. ■