

# Michael Finch's Riveting 'A Time to Stand'

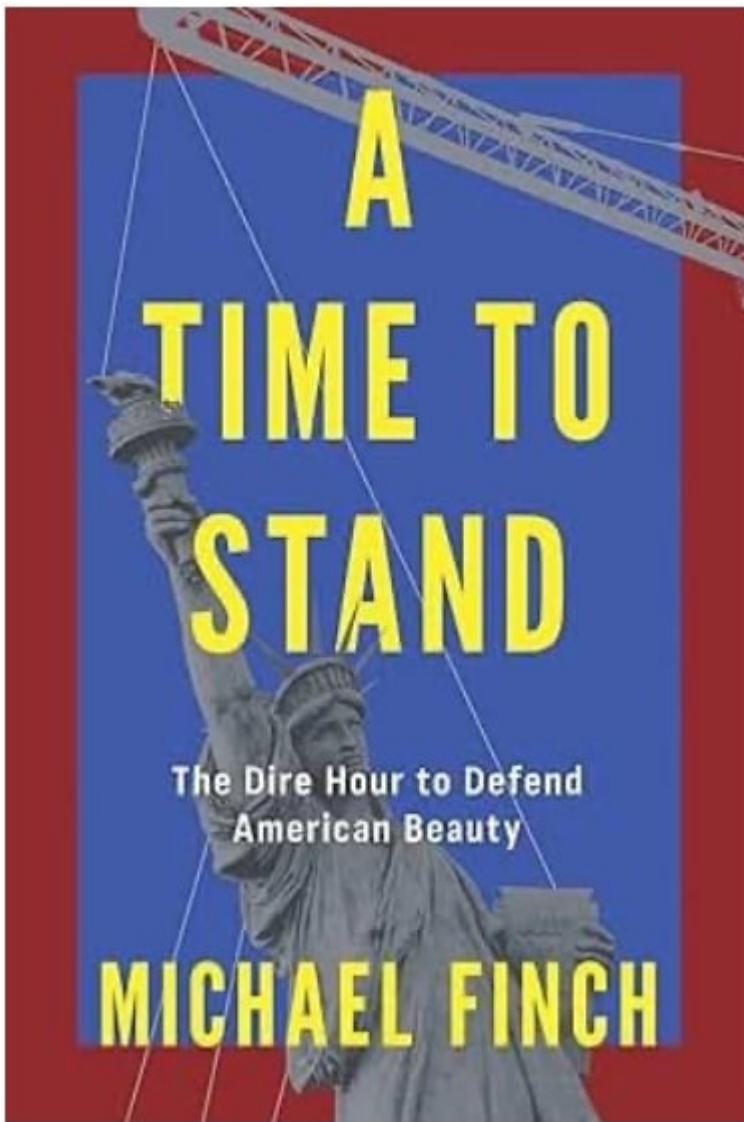
By Bruce Bawer

*Below is Bruce Bawer's Foreword to Mike Finch's new book, [A Time to Stand: The Dire Hour to Defend American Beauty](#). Prof. Jason Hill calls it "an aesthetic and political tour de force."*



**If David Horowitz – who has long been recognized as one of America's leading authorities on far-left ideology and one of its most eloquent champions of Western liberty – is the public face of the Freedom Center that bears his name, Michael Finch, the Center's President, is the modest figure behind the**

curtain, the man who keeps thin



But Michael is far more than that. He, too, is a writer. Like many others – including yours truly, as well as my superb colleagues Mark Tapson, Daniel Greenfield, and Robert Spencer, who have contributed introductions to the various sections of this book – Michael is a regular author for FrontPage Magazine as well as for other publications. Of course, each of us brings to his writings his own specific knowledge set and point of view. What Michael brings to the columns of FrontPage is something very special, something uniquely his own, that I will try here to describe fairly.

How to describe that unique something? Certain words come to mind. For whatever reason, they all seem to start with “p.”

Patriot. Philosopher. Prophet. Poet.

Let's start with this. Michael routinely, and reverently, reaches back into American history, contrasting today's corrupt and mediocre political class – and the preposterous cultural elites who support them – with our brilliant Founders and the greatest of our presidents, military heroes, artists, and authors. In an era of grubby race hustlers, insane transgender ideologues, appalling apologists for Islamic jihad, and miscellaneous merchants of madness, Michael patiently reminds us, time after time, that our beloved country is the product of the strenuous efforts of millions of men and women who, over many generations, and with a quiet nobility and extraordinary sense of self-sacrifice, settled the land, worked the land, and, when called to do so, took up arms for the land.

In some moods, to be sure, Michael is capable of expressing the view that the America that some of us are old enough to remember and were brought up to revere – the America of hard work and high principle – is slipping through our fingers, or is lost already: as he puts it, to Americans “over a certain age, this America, this culture, this society have become beyond foreign. It is not the country we grew up in and it is not the country we want to die in. It is alien.” More often, however, Michael is a man of hope and faith who is quick to assure us – and himself – that in spite of everything that the bad guys, the soulless self-seekers, have done to despoil it, our America “is still out there, that America that we remember, the one that was proud and strong, but also assured, humble – the one that embodied a quiet patriotism that didn't need boasting.”

Indeed, in a time when we are subjected constantly to the inane bombast of despicable political careerists and unscrupulous media lackeys, Michael reminds us that the nobility of our immigrant and settler ancestors was, indeed, overwhelmingly a humble nobility. And if he is so extremely effective in reminding us of this, it is because he himself

embodies that same kind of humble nobility, speaking to us, in most of his essays, not in a hectoring tone but in a gentle yet urgent voice that commands attention because it is speaking fundamental truths – home truths – about who we, as Americans, were, once upon a time, and who we can be again.

Yes, Michael can lay it on the line with the best of them, asking in one essay, with a richly justified asperity, “When did this war on race begin, where did this sudden hatred of white people come from? What is a white person anyway? Am I supposed to have more in common with say, a Bulgarian than with my Mexican-American neighbor or a black man that has roots in America going back almost four centuries? What foolishness is this?” In 2016, when some Trump supporters were “running for the hills” after the release of NBC’s infamous *Access Hollywood* recording of Trump saying a single vulgar word, Michael was able to work up genuine anger at these “quislings” and to mount an eloquent and stirring – and deeply wise and well-informed – defense of the future president:

*As conservatives, we love to think of America being founded, and for 240 years, run by nothing but pious Christian pilgrims. But, this is just fantasy. We have had very pious men in our history, but also very many rogues, drunks, gamblers, womanizers, etc., lead our country, fight our wars, and create our industries. We may not want to admit it, but the very same traits required to take risks, to lead men, to create and build, often coalesce with some of the traits that we find so morally repugnant.*

*George Patton, Ulysses S. Grant, Sam Houston, Andrew Jackson and so many others were hardly saints. Sam Houston’s bio reads like a rap sheet of drunkenness, criminal assault, cuckolding, and misery. And then... he went on to found the Republic of Texas. George Patton wouldn’t last five minutes in today’s Army of political correctness. He almost didn’t last past Sicily and the slapping of a soldier, not to*

*mention his many “insults.” But how many American lives and the lives in the German camps did he save by steamrolling into Germany months ahead of schedule?*

*We are not electing a pope – we need a leader. Conservatives fall into the trap of thinking that with a pious perfect Christian who is a moral saint, we are guaranteed the traits necessary to lead our country in a time of crises. I am sorry – they are not one and the same. Sometimes you get a deadbeat drunken failure like Ulysses S. Grant to take you to victory at Vicksburg. So, save the piety, conservatives, the man who leads us in battle or who leads our country through crisis is not the man you confess to on Sundays or the man who marries your daughter.*

(Note that in addition to being eloquent, stirring, wise, and well-informed, this is also funny.)

For all his readiness to stand up when necessary for the rough-and-ready Jacksonian tradition, however, Michael is more often inclined to celebrate the fact that for all America’s global power, and its readiness to use that power in the defense of liberty, its greatness is, at bottom, an unboastful, unpretentious, peaceable, and civilized greatness – the greatness of millions of decent farmers and factory workers, of devoted schoolteachers and homemakers, of patient and persistent dreamers whose inventions and discoveries and creations have transformed the world. Yes, Michael acknowledges, Americans have it in them to be arrogant, but, as he puts it, we “have a right to be.” After all, “[h]ow could we not be arrogant with what we have achieved in the course of human history?”

Indeed, America’s unparalleled record of achievement is never far from the center of Michael’s thoughts. He is one 21st-century American who is able to refer without a hint of irony to “this blessed land of America.” Despite all that has been

done by leftist ideologues to bring America down and render it unrecognizable, Michael still finds profound inspiration and meaning in John Winthrop's conception, in his 1630 sermon "A Modell of Christian Charitie," of the planned Puritan community in New England as a City on a Hill, the product of a sacred covenant in accordance with which the future settlers and their descendents would be obligated "to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God," to "be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities," and to "delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body."

For generations, most Americans strove, most of the time, to keep that covenant. And they prospered. "Those of us born in the aftermath of WWII," Michael writes, "were bequeathed a time that is, arguably, the greatest period of affluence and prosperity, not just in American history, but in the history of the world." But those glorious postwar days are now history. Many of America's most powerful institutions have fallen into the hands of utopians, Marxists, pagan worshipers of golden calves. Winthrop would say that by straying from the path in this way we are risking the wrath of God. For as he went on to say in his sermon: "if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world...Therefore let us choose life, that we and our seed may live, by obeying His voice and cleaving to Him, for He is our life and our prosperity."

It is no massive exaggeration to say that Michael, in a sense, is a present-day John Winthrop – an American prophet. But he is also, as I began by saying, a philosopher, a patriot. And, let us not forget, a poet. As Mark Tapson observes in these pages, "Michael Finch's deeply informed, deeply considered

work fairly thrums with a heartfelt passion in defense of liberty for all, and in defense of the values and legacy of the civilization that used to be known as Christendom.” Mark is right: Michael’s is a heartfelt passion. It is also a righteous passion, an infectious passion – and a passion that he expresses, time and again, in language that betrays the influence of such poets as Dylan Thomas, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Butler Yeats, and, most of all, perhaps, that good gray American bard, Walt Whitman. Just as Americans should be grateful to have Donald J. Trump in the White House – a man who embodies the promise of American renewal – we should also be delighted to know that one of the most important conservative political organizations in the country has at its helm an ardent patriot who possesses the mind of a philosopher, the spirit of a prophet, and the soul of a poet.

Michael Finch, thank you for your service. Reader, prepare for an engaging and stimulating journey through this selection of his prose writings.

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**See a brief selection of the praise for Michael’s [A Time to Stand](#) below:**

“Without any exaggeration, this book is simply a masterpiece. It’s destined to become a go-to resource for realizing and recalling the beauty and goodness that America represents – and what the American people must do now to save our nation.”

**–Mike Huckabee, Governor of Arkansas from 1996–2007.**

“Michael Finch’s *A Time to Stand* is an inspiring collection of his profound essays that celebrate all manifestations of the American experience – the beauty of the American continent, the resilience of its hallowed culture, and America’s preeminent role in the wider, global struggle to preserve Western civilization. A defiant optimism pervades Finch’s writing, suggesting his belief that, at last, slowly and

almost imperceptibly, we now unapologetic Americans are finally taking a stand to protect and enhance America's memories, traditions, history, and values amid challenges at home and abroad.

**-Victor Davis Hanson, Senior Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution and author of *The Dying Citizen*.**

"This beautifully written and wide-ranging book by Michael Finch peers deeply into the soul of America. It is part celebration of what Finch rightly calls the "gift" of Western civilization, brought so abundantly to fruition in the American Republic. But it is also part admonition and anatomy of political correctness and what Elon Musk has called "the woke mind virus." There are so many books about what ails America. This is one of the very best because it supplements a gimlet-eyed and informed criticism with a spirit of affirmation. *A Time to Stand* is destined to be one of the most significant books of the second Trump administration."

**-Roger Kimball, Editor & Publisher of *The New Criterion*.**

**Order '*A Time to Stand*': [NOW!](#)**

*First published in [Front Page Magazine](#)*