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THE PROVERBIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANINGS OF "WHO'S YOUR DADDY?"

Abstract: At the end of the twentieth-century and early twenty-first century, "Who's Your Daddy?" spontaneously chanted by large crowds at sporting events in the United States drew national press attention. Journalists usually reported the ritualized chanting of the question being of recent origin, but differed over whether it was meant to be offensive or endearing. In this essay, I use linguistic, paremiological, historical, folkloristic, and ethnographic research to show that the phrase could be considered a "proverbial interrogative" indicating social dominance associated with patriarchy and probably dates to the American frontier experience in the mid-nineteenth century. Through the twentieth century, it became associated with African-American street culture and the "beat scene," often with sexual connotations. In its latest iteration, I argue with reference to "frame theory" that the frame of sports allowed for psychological projection in this and other folk sayings of anxieties about declining power of men in a feminizing American society.

Keywords: African-American, Barack Obama, basketball, blues, Bob Knight, catchphrase, frame theory, frontier, Hoosier, interrogative, masculinity, psychology, sports, patriarchy, politics, weightlifting.

The day after Indiana University's overtime victory in basketball over Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, February 13, 1999, news headlines across the country appeared more concerned with the meaning of a chant hurled by fans at Indiana's fiery coach Bob Knight than the outcome of the game. Most members of the press corps present that day reported that Northwestern fans in a spontaneous outburst repeatedly yelled in unison "Who's Your Daddy?" although some reporters heard it as "Hoosier Daddy" with reference to Indiana University's team moniker. Realizing that the taunt would have to be contextualized within the frame of a hotly contested sporting event and two high-profile, combative coaches, journalists scurried to find background to explain what might appear to be a cheer departing

from the usual "Go team!" variety of spectator shouting. No one could identify who started the chorus, but it sounded increasingly familiar to participants as a growing number of voices echoed through the arena. Spectators seemed to be enjoying themselves, but judging by Bob Knight's reaction the expression was inappropriate and insulting. Knight was known for dishing out verbal abuse, but he did not seem to take it very well because the message from the home crowd obviously bothered him. After the final buzzer sounded he turned to the student section of the arena, pointed to the scoreboard, and angrily bellowed "Who's your daddy now?"[1] Moments later at midcourt Knight gave Northwestern coach Kevin O'Neill, seventeen years his junior, a tongue-lashing about the chant at a spot where coaches usually shake hands cordially after a contest. O'Neill took umbrage at Knight's tirade and the Wildcats coach grabbed Knight's trademark red shirt before the Hoosiers' coach ripped his arm away. O'Neill had to be restrained by assistant coaches to prevent a scuffle. Questioned on the incident by reporters, Knight later related that although he is accustomed to harangues from fans, this ritual taunt was out of line even in a playful arena where yelling invectives is commonplace. Using rhetoric that suggested that abusive cheering is comparable to homosexual rape, Knight exclaimed, "The crowd can get on my butt, they have all things to get on my butt about, but that's not the kind of thing that should be part of college basketball. The crowd needs to have the same class as the team does" (Gano 1999). Coach O'Neill claimed ignorance of the situation. He responded that he did not know what the crowd said, was unaware of the chant's meaning, and certainly could not control the crowd even if he did.

Rick Gano writing for the Associated Press (AP) reported that the game was hardly the first time the chant was used but it was notable for causing two renowned coaches to nearly come to blows. Gano reflected that the meanings of the phrase are "open to interpretation." He wrote, "Sometimes parentage is involved; sometimes it's a generic put-down. Other times, it can mean whatever the crowd wants it to mean" (Gano 1999). He noted that in the same season Stanford students harassed Arizona and Connecticut players with it, but observed that Duke's fans used it endearingly when encouraging their own star forward Shane Battier, because, he speculated, of the "lyrical bounce" of "Who's

your daddy, Battier?" (his name is pronounced Bat-ee-ay). Another interpretation was that it referred to his habit of frequently taking "charges" on the court which meant he withstood a punishing force from an opposing player. Duke fans and players even used it as a motto emblazoned on t-shirts during its run for the NCAA tournament championship (the team eventually lost in the tournament final game in 1999). Administrators at the predominantly black Milwaukee King High School in 2012, however, did not appreciate the assonance of the phrase when it was shouted by white Germantown High fans in an emotionally charged Division 1 title game at the state capital (Causey 2012). They believed the crowd was raising a stereotype of African American deadbeat and absent fathers. The Germantown High School principal defensively announced that the phrase was actually "Hoosier Daddy" meant as encouragement for its star player—Luke Fischer—an imposing 6 foot, 10 inch, junior center who had committed to play for the Indiana Hoosiers.

One might conclude from these examples that joining a chorus of "Who's your daddy?" is a scholastic basketball fan tradition and is appropriate because of youthful exuberance and showmanship expected of spectators in frenzied high school and college arenas. Yet in major league baseball, fans hounded famed pitcher Pedro Martinez with taunts of "Who's Your Daddy?" beginning with the 2004 American League Championship series when the normally successful Red Sox pitcher referred to the Yankees as his "daddy" because he lost to them so often (Verducci 2004). The phrase is commonly also heard in male-centered powerlifting venues because training often involves working with a male partner who yells encouragement, often goading the lifter with challenges to show his superior manliness. Apropos, at the Weightlifting Hall of Fame in York, Pennsylvania, a large poster of York Barbell founder shows Robert Hoffman flexing his exaggerated muscles under a large banner blaring "Who's Your Daddy?" Outside of sports settings, recording artist Toby Keith had a number one hit on the country charts with "Who's Your Daddy?" (2002). The song described a non-committal young woman attracted to "college boys" who apparently toy with the down-to-earth singer. In his performance, Keith boasts "You know I got it, Come and get it." The repeated chorus contains the lines "Who's your daddy, who's your baby?

Who's your buddy, who's your friend?" In the heavy metal genre, the band Lordi had success in Europe in 2006 with the song "Who's Your Daddy?" containing the dom lyrics "Who's your daddy, Say who's your daddy? Who puts you in your place? Who's your daddy, Bitch, who's your daddy?, Surrender and obey, who's your daddy?" Several rock bands, often claiming an affinity for blues and jazz music, share the name "Who's Your Daddy?" (Wild 2010). In broadcast media, Fox Network sponsored a reality television show in 2004 titled *Who's Your Daddy?* The controversial show featured an adult female contestant adopted as an infant trying to guess which man is her biological father. Three years earlier, Inner City Games Designs released a board game called "Who's Your Daddy?" that involved players trying to pin the paternity of their children on other players. Hundreds of sites claiming "Who's Your Daddy" sprouted on Facebook in the early twenty-first century and a 2003 B-movie titled *Who's Your Daddy?* was released about an adopted Ohio high school senior who discovers he is heir to a porn empire. More memorable cinematic moments, though, are Denzel Washington's character Coach Boone in *Remember the Titans* (2000) screaming the phrase to establish his authority at two arrogant football players and Angelina Jolie's character Jane Smith in *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (2005) asking the question after forcing her husband John Smith played by Brad Pitt into submission.

Taking notice of the circulation of the saying in mass media, the *Washington Post* declared in 2005 that "Who's your daddy?" had become in the reporter's words, "mainstream" and although it might have a shady past in the argot of black pimps, it had become acceptable in mixed company (Farhi 2005). That is not to say it was entirely clear what it meant. But it appeared to be used as a boast of power or mocking insult hurled at an adversary. Looking at oft-repeated Wikipedia descriptions and popular press reports of the saying, the inherited wisdom is that the interrogative phrase proclaims social dominance and has a recent popular culture source. In the absence of scholarship on the saying, the popular press reported that it was of late twentieth-century vintage and circulated primarily in the United States, often in sports settings. A commonly cited, if unlikely, source for its rise is the 1968 hit song "Time of the Season" by the English rock band Zombies who sing "What's your name? Who's your

daddy? Is he rich like me?" (reaching no. 3 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in March 1969). Composer Rod Argent told *The Guardian* on February 21, 2008 that the words "Who's your daddy? Is he rich like me?" were an "affectionate nod" to one of his favorite records, George Gershwin's "Summertime" (containing the line "Oh, your daddy's rich" at the start of the second verse) (Lynskey 2008). Listeners did not perceive the lyrics negatively as they did the repetition of "Who's your daddy now?" on March 28, 2013 by an obese naked man who on live television revengefully pounced on David Phelps, a member of the Westboro Baptist Church known for taking virulent anti-gay stands (Rasheed 2013). The phrase also fueled controversy when popular comedian Chris Rock referred to President Barack Obama as his "daddy" on February 7, 2013, and critics questioned whether his imagery had racial or sexual connotations of a black street pimp, despite Rock's denials (Rosen 2013).

Discord still swirls around the saying because the line between playful fun and aggressive abuse is often ambiguous. Even if it has structural similarities to proverbial or sarcastic interrogatives such as "who's your friend?" and "who's the man?," "who's your daddy?" appears risqué because of its questioning of the sensitive personal matter of paternity (Doyle 1975; Doyle 2008; Mieder 2004; Spears 2000, 443). This line of questioning and its rhetoric that draws attention to itself indeed suggests that the phrase has a symbolic meaning rather than merely being a figure of speech. Reporters that I have cited so far often mention that it is more prevalent or public in the early twenty-first century than ever before but still debate its message or cultural context. The journalistic fiction that it is a new phrase suggests that it represents something special or novel currently occurring in the society. A noticeable context that frequently arises around Father's Day is the decline of the strong, authoritarian father figure in modern, postfeminism American society (Skenazy 2013; Wild 2010). A raft of movies, popular books, apparel, and television episodes, including the ones previously mentioned, use "Who's Your Daddy?" to playfully refer to a weak or absent father. The popular television show *House* (2006), Season 2, Episode 23, used the title in reference to the female hospital administrator's search for a sperm donor. *George Lopez* (2002), Seasons 1-2, Episode 5, blares the same title for comedic effect in an episode that features George

spinning a yarn about his wonderful father only to admit at the end that he never knew his absent father. The novelty company CoolAprons sold aprons for men with "Who's Your Daddy?" emblazoned on them, apparently to signify the feminine role of cooking filled by the male wearer. Not surprisingly, the smash hit *Star Wars* movie franchise (*Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, 1980) has spawned novelty attire including attire showing the image of Darth Vader with "Who's Your Daddy?" on it (the powerful Vader from the "dark side" turned out to be the absent father of Luke Skywalker from the Rebel Alliance). All these iterations tone down sexual connotations and in their place refer to the change of the nuclear family with its male provider head from the late twentieth century to an often female-centered or egalitarian household. A Pew Research Center report released in 2013 found that four in ten households with children under the age of 18 included a mother who was the sole or primary breadwinner (Wang, Parker, and Taylor 2013). The percentage of female earners had risen sharply since 1960 when only one in ten households had females as primary providers. Indeed, many women who are heads of families have never married; the share of never married mothers among all single mothers had increased in the same period from four percent to 44 percent (Wang, Parker, and Taylor 2013). A notable finding that many readers found counter-intuitive was that the total family income was higher in the United States when the mother, not the father, was the primary breadwinner. Of significance to my analysis of the context for "Who's Your Daddy?" is that around the time of the headlines regarding "Who's Your Daddy?" the American public was divided as to whether the rise of female breadwinners was a positive trend. The Pew Research survey in 1997 found that forty percent of respondents in 1997 preferred a husband earning more than his wife but that figure declined to 28 percent in 2011 (Wang, Parker, and Taylor 2013; see also Rampell 2013). It appears that when the *Washington Post* in 2005 observed mainstreaming of "Who's Your Daddy?" this allusion of the saying to the weakening of the father role in popular culture productions is what it meant. Fewer reports of the saying's incidence burst onto the front page in the second decade of the century. It is possible to view a correlation of the saying's circulation in popular culture with public attitudes toward the decline of the male provider role as a symbol of authority.

In folk practice, the symbolism and the social frame in which "Who's your daddy?" is communicated are enigmatic. In sporting events and weightlifting gyms, "Who's your daddy?" epitomizes a potentially offensive expression enabled by a play frame but in so doing draws out the paradoxes of its variable message in and out of the frame. Critics are left to wonder as in the exchange between Bob Knight and Kevin O'Neill whether it is meant literally or playfully to comment on a person or if it refers more abstractly to an innuendo projecting social biases and conflicts. Extending the idea of a play frame in which folkloric expressions, often with offensive connotations, can be expressed, frame theory developed by sociologically oriented scholars such as Roger Abrahams, Gregory Bateson, Erving Goffman, and Jay Mechling, explores the process by which the enactment of folklore in modern society erects boundaries between play and reality and the tensions that exist between them (Abrahams 2005; Bateson 2000; Bronner 2010; Goffman 1974; Mechling 1983). Presumably participants in a cultural scene understand these socially constructed boundaries as protective frames for their actions even if the frames are not physical barriers. More than constituting a zone for saying or doing things that would not be deemed appropriate outside the frame, the cultural scene signals communication that is paradoxical, symbolic, and often objectionable. When the playfulness of the expression is challenged, however, attention shifts from the communication to the legitimacy of the frame. In the case of "Who's your daddy?," for instance, the discourse about the ambiguous content of the chant moved to the appropriateness of allowable spectator behavior in college sports arenas.

Because of its ambiguity or liminality, communication of expressions within a play frame is usually perceived to be separate from the ordinariness of conversation or the purposefulness of festival. It is protected to an extent by social agreement of its appropriateness to a situation, and even with that, risks opprobrium for creating a setting for contentious material. For those witnessing or participating in the communication, the meaning might be unconscious or disguised, which raises the possibility of projecting internalized anxieties onto folklore as an external object and rendering it symbolic or ameliorated as collectively enacted "fun" often with youthful participants. In a dictionary of college student slang at the University of Georgia, for example,

compiler Don R. McCreary defined "Who's your daddy?" as an aggressive statement tempered by an air of play: "When someone says 'who's your daddy?,' they are asking who is in charge here? Said when poking *fun* at someone. Mark said 'who's your daddy' while I washed his car after losing the bet to him" (2001, 70; emphasis added). The phrase was reprinted in the 2003 edition but disappeared in the 2005 edition, presumably "on account of a perceived lack of currency," according to University of Georgia professor Charles Clay Doyle.[2]

One reason for situating folklore as an instrumental speech act in a social scene such as a sports arena is that it contains the paradox that structures the frame itself, or at least the tense borders between play and reality. The sport has a mixed message of "playing" a game that is taken seriously and is covered as national "news." The enactment or emergence of folklore signals that the scene is playful even as it also raises references that are serious or not in the realm of play. The identification of folklore used in this way locates situations that point to fundamental tensions and conflicts in a culture, and these problems are ones that individuals cannot resolve by themselves. Psychologically, analysts can look for the sources of projection and inquire as folklorist Alan Dundes suggested in calls for psychological analyses of speech, "how and why "the symbol employed in any one given folkloristic (con)text may be related to a general system of symbols" (1980, 37; see also Bronner 2007; Mieder 2006).

Especially with the interest by frame analysts in the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* applied to the relationship of a speech act to a general folkloric code as a metaphor for cultural process, it is not surprising that folk sayings as a form of *parole* drawing attention to themselves in language by first, their variable or ritualized repetition, second, their artistry or enactment, and third, their social significance, typically in a contested "framed" exchange should become centers of inquiry about meaning or *langue* arising at the borders of play and reality. I have avoided categorization of "Who's Your Daddy?" because its ambiguity is part of its allure and instrumentality. Journalists variously call it a "slang expression," "rhetorical question," and "popular saying." It can seem comical, encouraging, or insulting depending on its use in the basketball arena or on the street. The master paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder has suggested to me the possibility of classify-

ing it structurally as a "catch phrase" or "proverbial interrogative" and these labels raise the analytical issue of how ritual and setting turns an ordinary sounding question into a connotative act with what could be called "proverbial meaning" in the sense that it conveys a traditional, collectively shared idea (see Haas 2013; Mieder 2004, xii; Partridge 1977). As Heather Haas points out in her survey of proverbial interrogatives, the form often has a humorous aspect that refers in the form of the query or the implied answer to something else listeners know. In her words, "the humor is not humor for its own sake, but rather humor in service of wisdom" (Haas 2013, 39). In the social and physical setting of the sports arena it can be construed as a prankish, localized taunt or boast that in the American context implicitly refers to sociocultural conditions outside the field of play. My premise is that the playfulness for this form and the involvement of an implied respondent suggests conflicts or anxieties to be collectively resolved. Asking the question suggests an uncertainty that needs social affirmation to dissolve. The play frame often accompanying it as a *proverbial* interrogative betokens a difficult query to broach but is allowable by the setting. Perhaps this difficulty, or a questioning rather than an affirmation of wisdom in the "standard proverb," is why as Mieder has pointed out, proverbial interrogatives are a minor part of paremiological minima; in his survey for the *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (2012) he quantifies the form as one percent of texts he collected (Mieder 2012, 147; see also Doyle, Mieder, and Shapiro 2012). Yet the proverbial interrogatives often point to, or invite, commentary as a "rhetorical question" on a reigning social issue, as in the ones he cites of "Who cares if a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice?" (on race), "Who ever said life is fair?" (on justice), and "Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?" (on public violence) (Mieder 2012, 147-48). Both "catch phrase" in the sense of an expression that idiomatically draws social attention to its repeated content and "proverbial interrogative" that refers often jocularly to a proverbial or commonplace statement or requests an answer from a listener imply a construction that in a sense gives the communication extra attention or a socially framed context. In the case of "Who's your daddy?," for example, the possibility exists of its patriarchal reference to "daddy of them all" (related to the male social dominance connoted by "king of the hill," which also has the interrogative form

of "Who's the king of the hill?"[3]) as the ultimate statement of progenitor dominance.

Documented occurrences of the chant are almost universally from the United States, although occasional Canadian examples can be identified such as the "Who's Your Daddy?" Beer Festival held annually on Father's Day weekend in Vancouver since 2009. Perhaps because of the ambiguity of the phrase as an idiom or catchphrase, slang dictionaries have barely noticed "Who's your daddy?" and when they do usually cite the earliest examples in the early twenty-first century (Green 2010, 1498). Another claim is that it was in vogue even before then among homosexuals and bondage/sado-masochist fetish culture or African American urban sexual trade. Jonathan Green's multivolume *Dictionary of Slang* (2010) cites the earliest use in 2000 with the definition "a mocking statement of the speaker's domination/humiliation of their target" (2010, 1498). Green indicates that it can be used to refer to an older male homosexual or a pimp and assigns it to "US Black" origin.

My finding is that as an Americanism it has a wider folk cultural origin that goes back to the nineteenth century in relation to its pronouncement of patriarchal social dominance, often of vernacular culture over elites signified as brainy rather than brawny. In its present iteration with a motifemic slot of daddy with boss and man, it has a related but distinct reference, and indeed psychological projection, by signifying social changes engendered by a modern egalitarian and cooperative ethic. Use of "daddy/boss/man" in the slot indicates insecurity about masculine hierarchical status and suggests compensation in a protected social frame for the decline of the male provider family model since the late twentieth century (Dalzell 2009, 468). Often this male role is expressed sexually as well as economically dominant. For example, media sexual adviser Brian Alexander replied to a questioner as to why he likes being "daddy" during sex, "There was a time (*somewhere, long ago*), when daddys were considered powerful, respected, competent. Hearing "daddy" during sex is like receiving this old time admiration in surround sound" (Alexander 2005; emphasis added). The connotation of the "daddy" being a provider also is conspicuous in a discussion thread regarding "Who's your daddy?" on *Wordreference.com* in 2007. When a post asked whether "daddy" in the phrase meant "boss," an obviously male

"languageGuy" from Missouri chimed in that it was "not so much a boss, but more a provider, someone who is earning the money to support you, in return for your love." JamesM from California answered, "I agree. To me, it's more like 'who's taking care of you?' or 'who can you count on to take care of you?'" Timpeac identified more aggression in the interrogative pronouncement of "Who's your daddy?" as if the speaker was saying "bite me" or "kiss my ass" and the female Joelline from Pennsylvania editorialized that it had a "sinister connotation." Thinking about the question of paternity in the phrase, Glinda from Alabama added that "'Who's your daddy?' also implies that you don't know who your father is. A bastard. It is more common that it implies 'I'm your daddy' or 'I own you'" ("Who's Your Daddy?" 2007).

Patriarchal power is symbolized with reference to the "giver" daddy role in a sexual relationship, suggesting elevation over a feminized or infantilized subordinate or adversary. I argue that "Who's Your Daddy?" is significant in American culture as a prominent form of what I call patriarchal speech that sublimates feelings of emasculation and inverts it externally to a hypermasculine statement by intersecting paternity, homoeroticism, and race, particularly in the play frames of sports that paradoxically juxtaposes intense competition eliminating an opponent inside the frame with an egalitarian, cooperative ethic outside the frame. The interrogative form provides the speaker reassurance of total domination by soliciting an implied emphatic (and submissive) response of "you" or "we" are. It is a statement to be made from a superior vantage (for example, when one's team is winning) and forcing the adversary to admit the speaker's superiority.

Despite modern claims for its recent origin, the phrase shows up in American frontier rhetoric contrasting the dominant, elitist East with poor outliers. Setting the paternity metaphor with the statement "Uncle Sam has got a way of his own in managing his family affairs," the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* in April 1851 complained that the governmental father in Washington, D.C., was too authoritarian in its land dealings with his farmer "b'hoys." The populist tract stated that the character of Uncle Sam could be heard exclaiming, "Did'nt I give you every foot of land you own, you rebellious rascals? –answer me that—who's your daddy, hey?" (p. 300). Invoking "daddy" suggested a colloquialism recognized as American and especially

centered in vernacularized southern and frontier lands in a male-centered, hardscrabble environment (Cassidy 1991, 2). "Daddy" here is a symbolic equivalent of "boss" and the phrase "Who's your daddy?" suggests that the superior is forcing the infantilized subordinate to submit to his will. This is also the sense that lexicographer John Russell Bartlett in 1877 emphasized when he contrasted the imposing "daddy" to the subordinate "buster." His example of the meaning of buster was to have the speaker say "'Come here, *buster*,' in the sense of 'sonny,' 'who's your daddy?'" (1877, 87; the 1849 edition did not have this example). Even before these two texts apparently drawing on oral tradition were published, Southwest humorist Alexander G. McNutt (1802-48) in *The Big Bear of Arkansas* (1845) conspicuously used the phrase in his dialect stories. His hero Chunkey is a tough backwoods folktype who boasts "Did you ever hearn tell of the man they calls 'Chunkey'? born in Kaintuck and raised in Mississippi? …If you diddent, look, for *I'm he!* I kills bar, whips panters in a fair fight; I walks the water, I out-bellars the thunder, and when I gets hot, the Mississippi hides itself!...Now, Capting, we will have a deer movin' afore you can tell who's your daddy" (McNutt 1994 [1845], 92). This idea of a ring-tailed roarer is implied in legends about the origin of the rustic folktype "Hoosier." Ronald Baker in *Hoosier Folk Legends* (1984) reports an oral textfr om a student in 1972 under the heading of "Who's Your Daddy?" stating that the nickname came from migrants from Kentucky asking "Who's Your Daddy?" (Baker 1984, 172). Baker comments that this is a common story used to show the tough frontier roots of Midwesterners who often feel debased by the cosmopolitanism of the east and west coasts. The pronunciation of "Who's your" or "Who's yo" daddy in the story identifies the Hoosier as a manly ruffian, probably from the South, who is uncouth and uncivilized (Baker 1995, 21-22). The vernacular pronunciation of "Who is" is part of the figure's frontier rube image in stories of the term's origin in early Indiana settlers who answered "Who's here?" when someone rapped upon their cabin door (Graf 2013, 24). A variant that brings up the sexual appetite of these folktypes is related by columnist Mike Royko from 1982: "The early settlers of southern Indiana were mainly unwashed, uncouth mountain folk from Kentucky. They were usually referred to as 'a hoojee' or a 'hoojin' As in: 'Quick lock

up the girls and the livestock—there some of them hoojees and hoojins comin'" (Graf 2013, 24). Humorist Dave Barry in 2003 combined senses of "Who's your daddy?" and "Hoosier" in his column titled "Hey! Hoosier daddy, Indiana?" Tongue in cheek, Barry followed up his claim that Hoosier could be a Native American word meaning "has sex with a caribou" with this statement: "So from now on, when you hear people proudly refer to themselves as 'Hoosiers' you will know exactly what they are referring to: an inquisitive, one-eared, hill-dwelling Ohio River contractor, large for his kind, who has a lot of trouble with pronunciation but does NOT have sex with caribou. Who WOULDN'T be proud?" (Barry 2003, 2D).

Rural African Americans shared the southern folk term "daddy" with whites, and reference to "daddy" as a sexually potent figure is evident in early twentieth-century country blues. When men sang about women, they typically referred to themselves as "papa" (e.g., "Hot Papa Blues" by Papa Charlie Jackson, 1929) and their women as "babies." Yet Stephen Calt in *Barrelhouse Words: A Blues Dialect Dictionary* (2009) notes that unlike the frontier term, "daddy" in black lingo was most commonly used by females , sometimes with adjectives such as "sugar," "sweet," and "pretty" to indicate that they are providers and often older than boyfriends or husbands. In 1923 bluesinger Sara Martin, for example, recorded "Leave My Sweet Daddy Alone" and "Longing for Daddy Blues," in which she fears being left alone by her jailed boyfriend: "I turned to the cell, looked at my daddy in the face, 'I'm sorry, pretty daddy, but I just can't take your place'" (Oliver 1990, 205). "Daddy" also commonly meant someone who was a casual polygamous lover rather than in a steady committed relationship, and this might explain the transition from country blues to urban use of the term for a street pimp. African-American blues more so than other musical forms featured the "rattlesnakin' daddy," for example. Invoking phallic symbolism of the snake, singers such as Blind Boy Fuller boasted, "I can rattle to the left, rattle to the right, My woman said I believe my rattlesnake daddy can rattle all night" (1935 ARC Records ARC-6-01-56 17862-2).

The male "daddy" can also be sexually potent with other men. A popular song describing ritual insults called "Dirty Dozens" included the lines "I met your daddy on the corner the other

day, You know about that, he was funny that way" (Oliver 1990, 115). In uses such as "jailhouse daddy," "daddy-o," and "sweet daddy," often associated with prison slang, there is an implication that the daddy is the dominant, larger, or aggressive masculine "giver" role in a homosexual relationship (Lighter 1994, 552). Being a daddy was preferable and showed one's might by forcing the submission, diminution, or feminization of the "taker" (also recorded in prison slang as "jailhouse pussy" coupled with the "jailhouse daddy" giver). This usage is also apparent in weightlifting lore where the daddy is physically large and powerful, as Arnold Schwarzenegger made famous with his boast that he is the daddy of his male competitors in the documentary *Pumping Iron* (1977).[4] He implied that more than being declared the winner, he dominated the competition. Related to this view is his eroticism as he expanded his naked muscles to the awe of onlookers. He boasted that display of his strength got him sexually aroused to the point of ejaculation. Adding to the sexual connotation of "daddy" is slang reported in the twentieth century for "daddy-bag" and "daddy package" as the testes and scrotum. Vash Designs produced a birthday card in the early twenty-first century showing a man in the back of a pickup truck taking the top position in intercourse with a woman. The comic call-out has the lines "Who's Your Daddy? Who's Your Daddy?" while the woman is shown to be saying "You are Daddy." The message inside the card is "Happiness is relative." Papa" had similar connotations as in the blues song "come to papa" meaning that the father figure could command or compel the woman to come to him (Weathersby 2000). In modern popular culture, t-shirts showing an image of Papa Smurf, village elder and leader of the cartoon Smurfs, sported the saying "Who's Your Papa?" and "Call Me Big Papa." ("Smurfs T-Shirsts" 2013).

One possibility for how the terminology of "daddy" entered college slang is through the popularity of jazz during the Beat generation which referred to a daddy as a male friend. The *New Yorker* in its July 3, 1948 issue reported that "The bepop people…call each other Pops, Daddy, and Dick." Boyer 1948, 28). Daddio also entered jazz and other college lingo, as made widely known on the popular television show *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1959-1963) in which teen character Maynard G. Krebs and his beatnik college friends constantly uttered the word

"daddio."[5] Music might have also been a conduit for "Who's your daddy?" when shock jock Doug "Greaseman" Tracht (born 1950), in the 1980s spiced up his syndicated radio program out of Washington, D.C., aimed at young adults with repeated references to "Who's Your Daddy?" apparently influenced by his bodybuilder news director as something his male characters said while having sex (Farhi 2005). His comedy drew protestors who complained that he was belittling women. Shock jocks and big-time sports coaches often thumbed their noses at growing egalitarianism, particularly between men and women. There is a sense that Freud's symbolic interpretation of patriarchal sexual fantasies as desires for social dominance can be invoked but by stating paternity as a question "Who's Your Daddy?" the speaker forces the other person to acknowledge submission as someone who is feminized, particularly in male contests of strength (Bocock 1979; Dundes 1997, 25-45). Daddy is not only the giver but he is also large and able to provide for others implied by the patriarchal character "Big Daddy," who figured prominently in the renowned play and movie *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) written by Tennessee Williams through to the present in *Django Unchained* (2012) written by Quentin Tarantino.

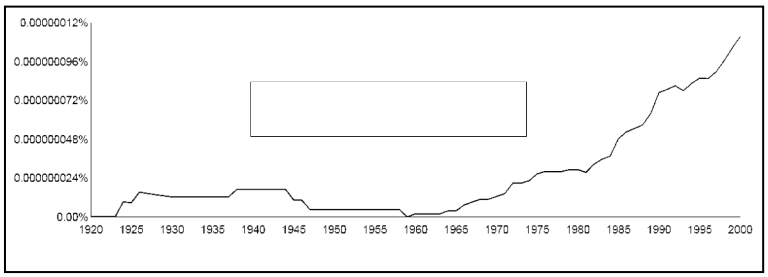
The boastful exaggeration of the patriarchal figure is significant because unlike maternity, paternity is ambiguous because the father does not give birth. The father has to prove himself as the progenitor often with phallocentric displays imitating sexual potency. The child cannot be certain of his or her paternal partner as one can of the mother. This predicament is well expressed in the common blues lyric, "The woman rocks the cradle, I declare she rules the home, Married man rocks some other man's babe, fool thinks he's rockin' his own" (Oliver 1990, 280). A traditional insult is for a man to claim to have fathered a male peer, as in the cartoon character Superfly: "You know who your daddy is? It's me yeah! I'm your daddy! Do you know how come I'm your daddy? 'Cuz I did this to your momma! Yeah, Your momma!" (Aldan 2003). The possibility that the person designated as father did not provide the sperm raises questions of whether the child is illegitimate, the father is impotent, or the father is a cuckold. In short, the ability to impregnate, and more dramatically to sodomize another male, is interpreted as a proof of patriarchal manliness and superiority. Influenced by the egali-

tarian and anti-authoritarian ethic of civil rights, the decentering of patriarchy became a goal of the women's movement beginning in the 1960s. The rise in mothers as primary household earners, who in increasing numbers led the family alone, took a sharp upward trajectory in the 1990s (Wang, Parker, and Taylor 2013). Historian Gary Cross in *Boys to Men* (2010) further reflects that one response to the emasculation of the male provider/progenitor in the wake of the women's movement is the immaturity, and consequently parental irrelevance, of the man in the family system. In this view, "daddy" is put into the position of being a pal or buddy rather than "father figure" to his sons (Cross 2010, 122-23).

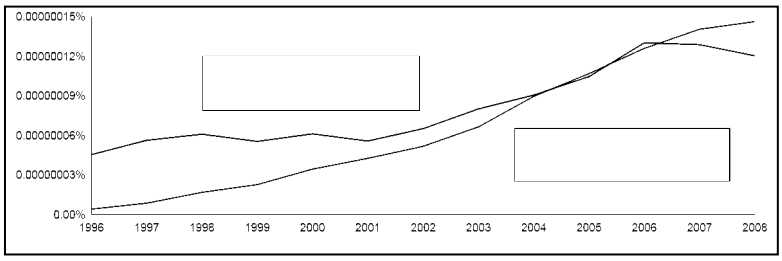
The online site *Urban Dictionary* that encourages users to post examples of contemporary slang gives some indication of the ways that the interrogative phrase "Who's your daddy?" is proverbially framed. Fourteen posts, mostly by persons with male first names (about half used "handles" in place of their names) were made for the phrase between 2003 and 2012. Only one each could be found for "Who's your father?" and "Who's yer pappy?" (set in a "backwoods family situation"). All but four of the posts were made between 2003 and 2006, and the largest number of posts was in 2003. Of social significance as settings for performance of "Who's your daddy" is that six of the posts (43 percent) gave examples of its usage in sports, mostly in basketball and baseball. In these cases, a speaker directed the question as an insult to his opponent, such as Drake Aldan's exclamation: "Oh yeah! I just scored 15 3-pointers on your punk ass! Who's your daddy?!" (Aldan 2003). It not only meant that the victor won, but with the win, crushed or "owned" the opponent. Four of the posts explicitly described usage of the phrase in sex, most frequently as a boast by the sexually potent speaker. In two of these posts, the sex is with a prostitute: "when ur about to pick up some slut in a club but b4 u bang her u wanna make sure ur not gonna get shot (by her pimp OR is shes in the mafia, actually her daddy); "something to tell a hooker in the throes of passion while slapping her ass." One combined sexual and sports metaphors in describing a boast in a basketball contest: "'Ooh, you see that shot? Who's your daddy?' 'Yeah suck it bitch, Who's your daddy?'" (Tkieron 2006). Two posts more generally referred to the phrase as a pronouncement of superiority, such as

"An expression of power and domination from one individual to another" (Edgar 2003) and two referred to the question of uncertain paternity as in the example, "To point [to] someone as dubious offspring. If you don't know who your daddy is you'r [sic] probably a sonofa..' You bastard!,' 'Oh, yeah? Who's YOUR daddy?'" (Monitor 2003). Another post refers to paternity in terms of having an income to provide for the family as well as having genetic connection. The post states, "Often, it is a lotto trying to figure out who the real Daddy is, and is discovered once the child has developed strong physical characteristics. The most vulnerable target to be initially labeled 'Daddy' will earn a higher gross income and an ability to be extremely gullible. The poor lad has no idea he's a sucker of the game 'Who's Your Daddy?' and no one has the heart to tell him" (everyoneshouldhaveadumbass2pay). Although a relatively small sample or oral sources, the posts indicate a pattern of young men using the phrase in play frames of sports and expressing sexual dominance.

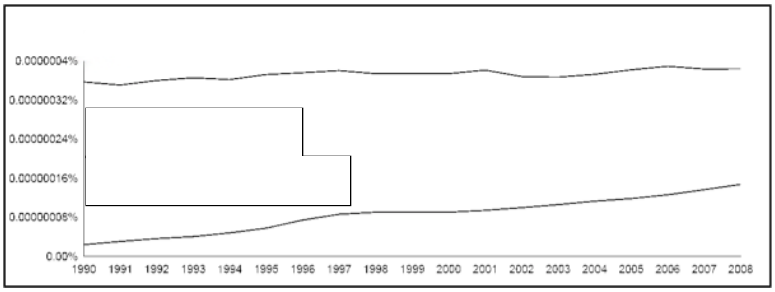
Google provides a large sample of print sources that can be graphed to see appearances of "Who's your daddy?" in its "Ngram" database of over five million scanned books. Results from searches of phrases are normalized to account for the increase in the number of books in later years. If publication is a function of entrance into popular culture, the first chart confirms the rise, and mainstreaming, of the phrase reported by the *Washington Post* to the end of the twentieth century. As a sign of the Americanness of "Who's your daddy," the charts below represent the sample of "American English" because the "British English" sample returned insignificant number of results.



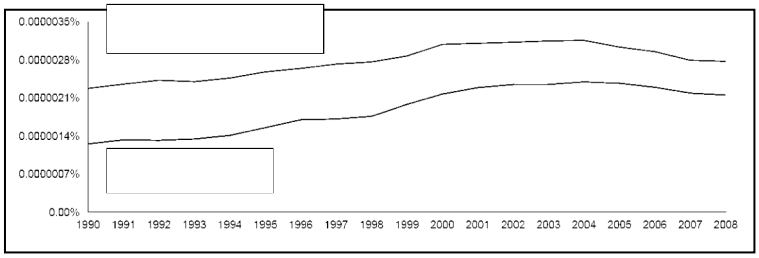
Another statistical inquiry is the potential relation of other proverbial interrogatives as patriarchal speech at a time when patriarchal masculinity was challenged in American society. This pattern is borne out by a comparison of "Who's the man?" with "Who's your daddy?" between 1996 and 2008. By the end of the period "Who's your daddy?" overtakes "Who's the man?" in popularity in print, but both as expressions of masculine domination in the form of a question have similar frequencies from 2001 to the end of the period.



Previously, I raised the possibility of the relation of "Who's Your Daddy?" to the proverbial "daddy of them all." The following chart shows a parallel pattern in the phrases between 1990 and 2008 with an indication of convergence toward the end of the period.



A parallel pattern in patriarchal speech also is indicated by a comparison of "king of the hill" and "big daddy," although these terms went into some decline in print while "Who's your daddy?" increased.



A limitation of these data is a lack of context for the phrases or knowledge of individual titles but as the *Urban Dictionary* evidence indicates, speakers, usually American, often connect patriarchal speech to sports and sexual prowess. "Arizona Sports 620," a sports radio station out of Phoenix, for example, launched "Who's Your Daddy Week" in 2013 asking guests two related questions: "What is the most important life lesson your dad passed down to you?" and "What is the most memorable sports experience you remember sharing with your dad?" ("Who's Your Daddy Week" 2013). A Kansas City sports fan site posted "Who's Your Daddy?" as an abusive chant hurled at "the officials with tendencies of screwing us over": "Who's your daddy/ Who's your daddy/Who's your daddy, referee?/ Don't got one, Never had one, You're a b*stard referee" (mrrayshirley 2013). Meanwhile, manufacturer Who's Your Daddy, Inc., marketed a "sport energy shot" beverage for consumers that it called the "King of Energy," aligning "king" and "daddy" as symbolic equivalents in a what the company called a "highly marketable name" (Who's Your Daddy Energy Drink 2013).

The "Who's your daddy?" chant probably lodged in male bastions of sports because these settings emerged by the end of the twentieth century as a prime location for a social hierarchy of male dominance, outbursts of male bravado as well as female adoration, and as Alan Dundes points out, the feminization of other men by symbolic sodomy (Dundes 1997). Basketball has been attached more so than other major sports in the American context as a frame for outbursts of "Who's your daddy" perhaps because women have made more inroads into the sport than in baseball or football. Moreover, the larger-than-life bodies who usually play the sport and prominent metaphors of "charging," "taking charges," driving," "going to the hole," "dunking," and

"slamming" in the rhetoric of the game proclaim the significance of asserting power on the court. In addition, basketball players in skimpy uniforms make skin-to-skin contact, especially "in the post" or "down low" where the largest players vie for position "on top" or "over" the opponent, and this action can raise images of masculine, or dominating, sexual aggression. As the earlier mentioned case of Milwaukee King High School basketball players indicated, there can also be a racial innuendo in "Who's Your Daddy?" not only because of some references to "daddy" in prison and pimp argot, but also because of the perception of basketball as a "black game" and its sexualized players arising out of ghetto street life with the association of absent or deadbeat fathers (as well as a stronger than culturally normative bond with their mothers).

The taunts of "Who's Your Daddy?" might appear disguised in the revved-up arena setting, but when mass media outlets report enactments of the taunt outside of its sporting context as news because they appear out of step with society, journalists raise images of patriarchal abuse and bullying rather than male compensation for social inadequacy and disempowerment. In the digital age, the joking relationship among participants in a folk cultural scene breaks down and no longer is able to internalize or frame the paradoxes of patriarchal hyperbolization surrounded by an egalitarian exterior. The proverbiality of "Who's your daddy?" is diminished and it fades in public use. Having been previously framed in the nineteenth-century frontier, the twentieth-century blues joint, the urban ghetto street, and the post-war jazz scene, the interrogative saying found its way among young men on campus whose ability to provide economically, and consequently their political authority and sexual dominance, appeared in doubt. In one such very public setting, Bob Knight, an icon of patriarchal, even military, authority, took offense because he thought his manliness, his command, was being undermined by symbolically being sodomized. The irony is that the enactment of the chant showed that his patriarchy still mattered, at least in the arena. The crowd played to his strengths.

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California. I appreciate suggestions and materials contributed by colleagues on the panel titled "Talking Folklore: New Studies of Old Sayings": Patricia Turner, Wolfgang Mieder, and Charles Clay Doyle.

Notes

[1]Knight's outburst inspired an oral and online joke imagining Bob Knight committed to a mental hospital:

[2]Bobby Knight: "Hoosier daddy!"

[3]Mental Ward Orderly: "Alright Mr. Knight, here's your medication. I need your outbursts under control. Now, let's all have a good Knight." (under breath:)

[4]I'M Y'DADDY, and don't you forget it!" (posted by Chango Bolamongo, October 7, 2006, http:www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Hoosier daddy!).

[5]In the text, Knight's patriarchal aggressiveness associated with his embodiment of sports competition is shown to be non-normative but he resists change or sublimation of his feelings.

[6]Email correspondence from Charles Clay Doyle, April 8, 2013.

[7]An example is in the popular song "King of the Hill" released by the American heavy metal rock band Quiet Riot in 1977: Hold your head up high, Look 'em in the eye, No need to compromise, It's time you realize, Can you tell me, Who's king of the hill? Can you tell me, yeah, Who's king of the hill?...I am king, uh ah uh ah, I am king of the hill, yeah, Out of my way punk, Yeah, your ass is mine.

[8]"Say Uncle" or "Cry Uncle" admits defeat or submission, especially in a fight, but according to slang dictionaries is derived from the Irish *anacol* for "mercy" rather than the male family member. Nonetheless, although "uncle" is a male familial figure, he is symbolically perceived as weaker than the father. Moreover, the association of "Uncle Tom" implies someone, especially African-American, who is obedient and subservient. Another racially tinged patriarchal reference relative to the southern "daddy" is the appellation of the African American male as "boy." This naming pattern suggested the authority of the white man over the infantilized, submissive black man. See Dalzell and Victor 2006, 2034-35.

[9]"Daddio" was prominently featured as the title of a later television show. In 2000, NBC broadcast the show with a weak stay-at-home father as "daddio." His lawyer wife was the breadwinner of the four-child family. A leitmotif of the show was his defense of his new role (he had been a restaurant supply salesman) to his best friend and "macho" or hypermasculine neighbor who had formerly been a marine.

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