

## Periscope



**AUTHOR:** Traveler in America

### FAST CHAT

## Road Trip

**I**N HIS LATEST BOOK, "American Vertigo," French author Bernard-Henri Lévy retraces Alexis de Tocqueville's journey through America. He spoke with Elise Soukup.

**You were struck by American obesity—and not just with respect to waist size.**

The obesity of the body is a metaphor of another obesity. There is a tendency in America to believe that the bigger the better for everything—for churches, cities, malls, companies and campaign budgets. There's an idolatry of bigness.

**How do race relations in the States compare with France, where we saw riots last year?**

We have, both of us, a real problem. But the balance between the national creed and the ancient identity is far better in your country than in ours. An American does not believe that you resign your previous being. In France, we have the illusion that one can—and has to—get rid of the ancient man in order to become a French man.

**You're a self-titled "anti-anti-American." Is that still true?**

What I was before, I am still. It is like in life when you know someone better: you know his dark side and his bad habits, but it doesn't mean that you like him less.