

peared in *Mein Sieg Über Mich (Victory Over Myself)*, Schinegger's absorbing autobiography, wherein it is noted that the poor Schinegger's male paraphernalia developed inside his body and was not discovered until doctors, curious about the high level of male hormones in Schinegger's saliva, decided to investigate. In Garden Grove, California, authorities are growing alarmed by an armed bandit who since mid-August has been knocking off local beauty salons, florists, and yogurt shops, forcing women employees and customers to remove their underwear,

and then watch as the gunman masturbates. He then makes off with the women's unmentionables and their money—rending the once finely woven moral fabric of once-proud Garden Grove.

• In Albany, New York, State Banking Superintendent Jill Considine is attracting unenviable notoriety owing to a top male aide's insistence on wearing women's clothing at work; and there is the possibility that the aide will seek a \$100,000 sexual revision operation, all at state expense. The clinically insane were given firm grounds for asserting

the salubrity of their way of life when the *Guinness Book of World Records* certified Mrs. Carrie White of Palatka, Florida, as the world's oldest human being. Mrs. White has spent 79 of her 114 years in hospitals and mental institutions, and no jogger or vegetarian approaches her colossal longevity. In Dayton, Ohio, the family of Mrs. Ethel Back has called in local hazardous-materials investigators to examine how a mysterious substance is causing her furniture and clothing to decay. And in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Mr. Herb Caen has joined

Mr. Scott Smith, paramour of the late Mr. Harvey Milk, in decrying the Hostess Bakery for introducing a new Twinkie just before the tenth anniversary of Mr. Milk's murder at the hands of a Twinkie-crazed assailant. How much more proof do we need that the country is full of imbeciles, at least among the *soi-disant* educated? One can take a good cab driver and transform him through patient study into a plausible Ph.D. But could one ever take what passes for a good Ph.D. and turn him or her into a good cab driver? Come, come! —RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Virile Members

RET and Mr. Ledeen were quite right in the November issue ["The Continuing Crisis" and "Presswatch"] to direct your readers' attention to the Agence France-Presse story about the penis-shrinker of Abidjan. However, I am afraid that you—and the French press agency—have missed the point of the outbreak of penis-shrinking; fortunately, you have at least one reader (me) who has survived an epidemic of this scourge and can set you straight.

In the mid-1970s, when I was living in Accra, the capital of Ghana, which is just to the east of the Ivory Coast, there was likewise an outbreak of penis-shrinking. It resulted in the deaths of at least a dozen men in Accra.

The deaths came about as follows: someone in a crowded marketplace would scream that his penis had just been shrunk, would point out the man responsible, and the "penis-shrinker" would be set upon by the mob and beaten to death (a fate that is fairly common for thieves in Ghanaian markets).

The Ghanaian newspapers, especially in the early stages of the six-week outbreak, were lurid in their coverage of the shrinking of "virile members," as they delicately put it, and there was widespread nervousness about going out in public while the menace persisted.

The epidemic of penis-shrinking finally ended when the police (who are as superstitious as anyone else in Africa) realized that the shrinking was a ruse used by a gang of pickpockets, one of whom would identify some innocent in the street as a "shrinker." While the enraged mob was beating the "shrinker" to death, other members of the gang would busy themselves lifting what wallets they could.

The 1974 Accra epidemic of penis-shrinking ended quickly when the

government made it a capital offense—if my memory serves—to accuse anyone of "member-shrinking" in public places.

I suspect it is a safe guess that the credulous AFP reporter in Abidjan has not been long in an African post—or possibly has served in one too long.

—David Burgess
Paris, France

Kingon on Catastrophic Health Care

You can imagine my surprise, returning from a major speaking trip across the United States on "1992," as I reclined in my airplane seat to read my favorite magazine, *The American Spectator*. I came across Robert S. England's article, "The Catastrophic Health Care Blunder" (November 1988) and found that I was a key part of the story.

In the piece, I read about meetings I never attended, people I never met with, things I never said, and powers imputed to me that I never had. Perhaps more to the point, very important meetings in which I did participate and interviews I did have that were critical in the long process were omitted. Much that was attributed to the President, to former chief of staff Donald Regan, and to me was not accurate, but that is endemic in Washington.

I would only make two points: one minor and one major.

Mr. England says that I declined to be interviewed for this story. That is not so. He did call my office some months ago when I was traveling. (I do not "sit" in Brussels all the time; I believe it is part of my responsibilities to protect and enhance the interests of the U.S. government and the U.S. business community to make many and frequent trips to the member states of the European Community and to the United States.) I told my secretary to

inform Mr. England when I would be back in the office and to please call me then. I cannot vouch that she did this since a return call never came and my then-secretary is now on the other side of the world in India. But I never would refuse an interview with *The American Spectator*.

More importantly, one sentence in the article leaped out: "It is almost impossible to know how President Reagan felt about the lack of a private market initiative." No, it is not. I spoke to the President about this issue, its component parts, and all its ramifications—more than once. But I confess that even if Mr. England had reached me, I would not have disclosed what the President said. I promised myself a long time ago not to write a "kiss and tell" book or contribute to one.

Despite Mr. England's prodigious effort, alas, the definitive story of the Reagan Administration's catastrophic health program has yet to be written.

—Alfred H. Kingon
Ambassador to the
European Communities
Brussels, Belgium

Robert S. England replies:

The central question Al Kingon's letter raises is not whether my account of the bumbling way the White House handled the catastrophic health care issue is accurate or not. It is, in fact, whether or not Al Kingon is willing to add his side of the story. He was not willing to talk when I was preparing the story and, judging from his letter, he does not seem to be willing to talk now. If he is unhappy about the way others are telling the story, he has only himself to blame.

When I called Al Kingon in Brussels, his secretary did not inform me that he was out of his office, let alone out of the country. I identified myself and *The American Spectator*, and asked her to

have Mr. Kingon call me back, after carefully explaining the story I was working on. She assured me she would give him my message. No one ever returned the call, even though I was working on the story for another three weeks.

While Al Kingon disputes in a broad sweep accounts of meetings with him by various sources in my story, he does not appear to be willing to dispute anything specifically. Which meetings mentioned in the story never took place? Which sources is he accusing of lying?

Al Kingon's unwillingness to divulge conversations held in confidence with President Reagan is admirable. His unwillingness to speak could possibly reflect, however, more a concern for his own reputation than that of the President. When I said it was impossible to know how President Reagan felt about the absence of a free market initiative among the choices offered him on catastrophic health care, I was assuming two things. One is that neither Mr. Kingon nor Don Regan would be willing to say the President was unhappy, as appears likely, since it would reflect poorly on both of them. Two, even if I were able to interview the President himself about this issue, he would likely have to defend his choice. He could not afford to admit he was boxed into choosing the Bowen plan after he had chosen it.

Thus, I conclude the public will
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IN MEMORIAM WILLIAM H. BRADY

The American Spectator grieves the passing of William H. Brady, Jr., loyal friend of the United States Constitution and all of its freedoms.

EDITORIALS



THE DUKE DID HIS BEST

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

And so the Democrats have lost another presidential election, the fifth in twenty years. Jubilation prevails amongst the Republicans; and, slumped alone in the blood-streaked ring, the Democratic challenger reflects on the might-have-beens. He has my sympathy. For weeks his so-called allies have murmured against him from behind flabby hands—he isolated himself from wise counsel, they argue; he was slow to respond to Republican scurrilities; he was a pug contender. In truth, he fought hard using the only tools in his arsenal, that is to say using the prejudices and ideas of 1980s liberalism. Democrats who murmur against him today are simple cads, unworthy of his respect.

Similar recriminations were whispered about Walter Mondale four years ago. Yet both contenders are seasoned politicians who before bearing the Democrats' cross had been the repositories of praise for their intellects, their ideals, their progressive records. Pamphlets and books full of hope, bilge, and the promise of a liberal revival can be found in your local library. In their pages Mondale and Dukakis are frequently mentioned as prospective liberal messiahs.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.

What words of consolation can we offer Governor Dukakis as his former allies make him their scapegoat? I shall say: "Take heart! You did your best. And in 1992 your successor will do worse—at least if the cads in your party continue to avoid their critics and to blame the fortunes of their party on bad breaks and Republican skullduggery."

They have been blaming others for their sorry condition throughout the 1980s. Ronald Reagan's success was attributed to "teflon," to "magic," to the wizardry of PR hacks. Rarely did liberal grumblers take note of his policies' benign influence on the government, the economy, and foreign affairs. While they groused about illusory woes, real gross national product expanded by over 20 percent, inflation dropped by two-thirds, employment expanded faster than in any major industrial nation, and unemployment hit a 14-year low. The real median income dropped 7 percent under Ronald Reagan's predecessor. It has climbed 10 percent in the 1980s.

Ironically, American liberals of every variety would be in much better odor with the electorate today if they were not so dominant in the universities and the media. If, as in other Western countries the national media were not the virtual monopoly of one point of view, the liberals might have to face up to their critics. If America had a two-party

media, fatuous liberals could not indulge the luxury of dismissing conservatives as cranks for positing that the liberal coalition contains too many incompatible zealots to ingratiate itself to the American people.

With our present one-party media, the liberals can tune out their critics and politely exchange their canards untroubled by the fear that anyone will make them rethink a decaying certitude. Thus they say George Bush was a mudslinger. They also say he was a militarist, a McCarthyite, and a racist. At the Democratic convention he was portrayed as a wimp and an incompetent, and Jimmy Carter has called him "effeminate" and "silly." They say that he ran an issueless campaign, yet despite their doubts about his themes he made military spending, crime, traditional values, and the liberal political philosophy the issues of the campaign. In fact, his liberal critics can say anything they want because they do not listen to those who disagree. Now they bawl that this

country was founded on liberalism, and they pretend that the liberalism of the Founding Fathers is the same as their liberalism, which is to say that of Alan Alda and Jesse Jackson.

Of course the liberalism of the Founders was the liberalism of John Locke, Adam Smith, and English Whigs. It more closely approximates the ideas of George Bush than those of his liberal antagonists. Today's liberals have drifted into radicalism—an unpleasant fact that the American people try to point out to them at every presidential election. My guess is that in the years ahead this liberalism is going to become even more remote from that of the Founders. An axiom of ideological politics is that if indulged the extremists set the agenda, and if the liberals do not rid themselves of their radicals and revise their primary system, their agenda is going to be set by the Rev. Jackson. In fact, unless the liberals face up to their problems, their candidate in 1992 will be the Rev. Jackson. □

PARDON OLLIE

"Action this day" was a Churchillian invocation. Or as the American philosopher Satchel Paige would put it in more relaxed tones, "Don't ever look back. Something may be gaining on you." And then there was Vince Lombardi's observation that a team never stands still. It's always getting better or worse. The point is that though the scenery may look like it's standing still, nothing stands still unless it is dead, monotonous, and at room temperature.

During the recent campaign Ronald Reagan, the oldest American President by six years, demonstrated that he is very much alive by campaigning across the country for his successor, Vice President George Bush. In fact, no President in history has campaigned so selflessly and vigorously. Ike never turned out for Richard Nixon until late in the 1960 campaign and then all he did was brag about himself, discredit-

ing in the process his struggling Vice President. Now the President can make another bold stroke on behalf of his successor: pardon Ollie North and his fellow victims of masked politics.

Ronald Reagan's presidency has been the most successful in the postwar period. He has changed the economy and the way Americans view government, convincing them that individual effort and not government creates wealth and that onerous taxation cripples growth. He has dampened the ardor of terrorists and of the Soviet Bloc for mischief. He has revived the economy and was well on his way to reviving the presidency until the Iran-contra hullabaloo.

That unexpected deviation and the natural wear and tear that his vigorous presidency has sustained have weakened the office. He can revitalize it by issuing pardons for Ollie North, Albert Hakim, John Poindexter, and Richard

