



## George

Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. sits down with Hillary Milhous Nixon and walks away, his mind abundant with actresses. Very understandable, Arthur, but “unfathomable depths”? Don’t you mean unfathomable deceits?

But Mrs. Clinton, clear-eyed and purposeful, strides confidently and as an equal into the world of men. No wonder the weaker among them feel threatened by her. She is Katharine Hepburn and Lauren Bacall, crisp and masterful, determined to beat men at their own game—and quite capable of doing so.

And yet she is, like Hepburn and Bacall, intensely feminine. I remember my first meeting with her. I happened to have lunch with Jacqueline Onassis in New York and mentioned that I was bound that afternoon for dinner at the White House. I had known the President, but had never met Mrs. Clinton. I supposed that she was articulate and cerebral, but earnest and humorless—a real bluestocking. I was quite wrong, Jackie said: Hillary was full of fun, and I would like her. That evening I found myself seated next to her. Jackie was right. Mrs. Clinton was delightful, elegant, amused, easy to talk to and engagingly wry in her outlook on the world. She is, of course a cool number, more disciplined and reflective than her husband, a woman of unfathomable depths.

[SEPTEMBER 1996]

## New York Times Book Review

Alas, Dr. Tom Wicker, exemplary progressive, trapped in the paranoid style the late Richard Hofstadter warned him against:

I believe him when he denies these and other ominous aims; I believe him because he seems to be a reasonable and sincere man—but also because he has proved himself a leader too astute to pursue extremist goals, even in secret, in non-radical America. It’s Ralph Reed’s troops that make me uneasy.

[JULY 28, 1996]

## The Nation

The Higher Journalism as practiced by the celebrated Robert B. Ellis, retired Central Intelligence officer and Bronze Star winner (World War II):

Dole was promoted to first lieutenant in April 1946 and to captain in February 1947 even though he had been undergoing operations and rehabilitation in hospitals for the past two years. Hilton says that Dole referred to the second of these advancements as a “bedpan promotion.”

And so the truth about Dole’s war record is considerably less than awe-inspiring. Yet the myth endures, and with the candidate running on the contrast between his and Clinton’s military record, his campaign isn’t eager to give a more accurate account. Dole, at the behest of his handlers, is less reticent about his service than in the past, but he mainly speaks about his wound and rehabilitation. He has passed up several opportunities to correct the exaggerated versions in biographies...

[AUGUST 12/19, 1996]

## New York Observer

Midst a symposium on the “Great Stock Scare of ’96” titled “What the Hell Happened,” Sparrow, New York’s greatest downtown poet since Harry Kemp, makes his bid to replace Dr. Laura D’Andrea Tyson as our President’s chief economic adviser and spellbinder:

People are so horrified that the stock market should go down, as if it’s the law of God it should go up. I heard this Marxist economist say that America has become a gambling society. They’re willing to accept that all the companies are arbitrary and vicious in the hopes that they’ll pick the right vicious company.

I think it mostly reflects *the whimsical minds of stockbrokers*. I guess they’re like poets, but they can only write in numbers. They respond financially. These are like their poems about their state of mind, stream-of-consciousness financial minds.

[JULY 29, 1996]

## New York Times

Euphemism as we’ve never heard it before:

Mrs. Clinton’s lower public profile since the failure of the health care overhaul has made voters realize that Mr. Clinton alone is President, not his wife. At the same time, voters see in the Clintons’ confessed marital complexities echoes of their own.

[AUGUST 25, 1996]

## The Charlie Rose Show

Charlie Rose interviews vampire novelist Anne Rice on PBS, the TV network for intellectuals, and evokes genius:

ROSE: No. No.

RICE: But, I mean, nobody knows the answer, Charlie. Nobody knows the tax law. And so I just want to say right now, please, Mr. Clinton, go for a flat tax. Go for a flat tax and go for a flat minimum income so that people can collect their Welfare and work because Americans are going to work no matter what you have to do—you know, no matter what you do to them, they’re going to work, in addition to Welfare, disability, or anything. They’re never going to lay back, Mack.

ROSE: All right, but let me ask you—you obviously voted for President Clinton, I assume.

RICE: I did, indeed.

ROSE: Okay.

RICE: I registered for—

ROSE: And you liked him.

RICE: —the first time in 15 years and I think he’s—

ROSE: In— in—

RICE: —terrific and—

ROSE: In ’92.

RICE: —I think—I think he’s had one of the most astonishing administrations I’ve ever seen. I mean, the country has had Biblical weather. I mean, foreign politics has been beyond belief.

ROSE: Yeah. That’s right.

RICE: There has been global—you know, war everywhere. I mean, has so much ever happened to one president?

[AUGUST 5, 1996]

## New York Times Magazine

Jimmy Houston, the Molly Ivins-type outdoors commentator on the ESPN show, "Jimmy Houston Outdoors," tells all:

**Q:** You strongly believe that fishermen should practice catch-and-release, and your trademark gesture is to kiss every fish that you let go. But do you ever kiss a fish and then, you know, kill it, fry it up and eat it?

**A:** I do eat fish, but I don't kiss any of the ones I keep. If you was to kiss a fish, put it in the live well and take it home and eat it—well, that would be like cheating on your wife.

**Q:** Fish have teeth. Have you ever suffered a memorable love bite?

**A:** Just recently I had a little accident kissing a walleye. A walleye's got a *lot* of teeth, and this one bit my upper lip pretty severely and my lower lip fairly severely—enough to bring up a pretty good bunch of blood. I really don't know why that fish did that. In that case, I probably shouldn't have tried the French-kiss deal.

[JULY 28, 1996]

## The Great Books Series

Our Exemplary President again trapped in an autistic episode before his word processor, late at night, while Hillary mends Chelsea's socks in the other room, and the rest of the White House staff is attending chapel in the recently converted Oval Office:

We cannot end the related cycles of welfare dependency and teen pregnancy unless we confront the issue of responsibility—the responsibility of young women not to get pregnant, the responsibility of men not to get them pregnant, the responsibility of fathers to support their children, the responsibility of parents to provide their children a safe home and teach them responsible sexual behavior and encourage abstinence, the responsibility of churches to support those teachings, the responsibility of community organizations to develop programs to help teen mothers and their children get a start in life, and the responsibility of public officials to understand that teen pregnancy is part of a complex web of social issues.

[from *Between Hope and History: Meeting America's Challenges for the 21st Century*, by Bill Clinton. Times Books, \$16.95—price negotiable]

## America

In the correspondence page of some sort of superpatriot's magazine, a Miss Rose Mary Meyer offers encouragement for all Americans of robust good humor to resort ceaselessly to sexist language and perhaps even to whistling at pretty women in public:

I am writing in response to the article "The Intersalt Study Reveals Some Unexpected Connections" (5/4). This article revealed an unexpected connection, it is true, namely that your magazine is still firmly mired in sexist language and thinking.

The references to "no man is an island" (p. 16) and "our brothers' keepers" (p. 16) reveal an insensitivity to women and an appalling disregard for journalistic excellence. It is shameful that a magazine as prominent as **AMERICA** is using sexist language; it is basic courtesy to use inclusive language in public discourse. Sexism in any form is sinful and does violence to the human family, and must be named as such wherever it is found.

I hope that future issues of **AMERICA** will use inclusive language and lead the way in demonstrating respect for all people, women and men alike. Then the connections you make with your readers will be life-affirming instead of death-dealing.

Rose Mary Meyer  
The Women's Office  
Sisters of Charity, B.V.M.  
Chicago, Ill.

[MAY 25, 1996]

## outline

### (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan)

In the fabulous alumni newsletter mailed to all alumni of the Cranbrook Academy of Art of fixed address, the access to which remains unimpeded by SWAT teams, correspondent Paul Castaldo (Sculpture, '96) relates the elements and neuroses that have contributed to the veritable renaissance now afflicting progressive Bloomfield Hills:

The genius of the 95/96 Sculpture department brings forth crickets, guinea pigs, cow guts, cake icing, Jello, potatoes, asphalt, honey dipped babies, liquid nitrogen, and a giant tampon box to the apex of the amalgamated mountain of material possibilities. Busy hands are rolling these materials into

a visual vocabulary which speaks of issues such as gender positions, cultural sarcasm, the body, and the beautiful. Amy O'Neill physically shoved a full-size wrecked car into the sculpture courtyard, combining the physical material possibilities of the car with computer generated postcards. Mark Rowland sweetens and brings life to minimalism by encasing work boots in a cube of jello. The cube's boundaries are being broken apart even further by the newly acquired video projector, allowing a multitude of projection sizes, surfaces, and most importantly the ability for video to encompass or interact with a three dimensional space.

Ann Messner, Daniel Oates, Matthew McLaslin and Rirkrit Tiranvanija are a few of the visiting artists who are helping to define individual art practices. Personal, public, and cultural boundaries are being questioned in lively visual and verbal languages which this year's sculpture department takes on fervently.

[SPRING 1996]

## Detroit Free Press

Two demented passages parading as memorable quotes in "Bob Talbert's Quote Bag":

**JANEANE GAROFALO**, actress/comedian in *Playboy's* "20 Questions" on women who degrade themselves: "When Pat Buchanan came out against the Beijing Women's Conference and there were women standing next to him, smiling and laughing when he was making fun of it, I was so embarrassed. I don't mind when the more liberal and moderate Republican women talk about smaller government or money issues and things of that nature. But when I see a conservative Republican woman in line with the Christian right or coming out against abortion and day-care issues, I see a self-hating, unenlightened woman, like a self-hating Jew. That blows my mind. I don't get it at all."

**MEG RYAN**, who plays a tough-as-nails pilot killed in Gulf War action in "Courage Under Fire," quoted in the *New York Daily News*: "I watched the Gulf War on TV like everybody else, and it seemed sort of like a Nintendo game. It didn't seem real. When I was on the battlefield in the movie, I suddenly realized the enormity of people dying—the senselessness of killing each other."

[AUGUST 11, 1996]



by Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

# Nice Going

IT GETS SO HOT AND DRY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA in August that even the morning fog hovers along the coast like ugly brownish smoke. On top of that, it gets sickly sticky, especially in the desert swamp known as San Diego. Republican convention crasher George Stephanopoulos called it the most beautiful city in the world, proving once again that beauty is in the eye of the beholder—assuming he could see through the glare that left me looking for another pair of sunglasses to put over the ones I was wearing. For all the humidity, this year the GOP might as well have met in Washington, where shady green predominates and afternoons are drenched by life-renewing storms. Besides, in Washington you wouldn't have run into so many Washington types congregating in the lobby of a single hotel.

MY FIRST THIRTY SECONDS INSIDE THE MARRIOTT convention central's ground floor I saw, in not so rough order, a frantic-looking David Gergen, and loud-talking Nina Totenberg, Gloria Borger, and Ken Bode, minor players all but very big in their own minds. The trauma was eased when I came across Bob Tyrrell and half the crew of the *Daily Standard*. Back in the lobby after lunch the first face I saw was David Gergen's, looking even more frantic than two hours before. A beaming Tony Blankley strolled out of a shoppe. I peeked into a spacious bar, which was eerily empty, which could only mean Christopher Hitchens hadn't yet arrived. I spotted a well-known journalist who used to make fun of colleagues engaged in cell-phone journalism talking on one himself. He left his number. This being Tuesday, the main complaint was that there was nothing to write about—other than the Marriott lobby.

LUCKILY, THE CONVENTION FLOOR WASN'T in the Marriott. Plenty of stories there: a few thousand delegates sitting quietly, politely, taking in the various early speeches, chatting in small groups, or milling about their favorite pols for photo, handshake, or small-talk ops. While reporters near the entrance flocked around Christian Coalition boychik Ralph Reed, a more endearing sight deeper in were the enthusiastic crowds surrounding the perfectly handsome George W. Bush, governor of Texas and a charmer who puts his father to shame, posing for photograph after photograph with young women bearing single yellow roses. (Brother Jeb, by contrast, stood practically ignored among the Florida delegates, a cruel reminder that winning is everything.) It would require a Ben Stein to describe how nice everyone was, including the put-upon Buchanan delegates. Even John McLaughlin turned

venerable, posing in the aisle with young and old alike. The only discord I came across was between two cameramen jockeying for a better shot of Jack Kemp. "Be nice," a delegate quietly told them. And naturally they obeyed.

YOU HAVE TO BE NICE TO ALLOW AN EVENT like this to come off. The press squawked about orchestration—but it was brilliantly organized, involving a huge cast of volunteers, ushers, pass inspectors, youth corps leaders, and other players freely committed and cooperating (and making their "Dole-Kemp" cheers sound like "Go Kemp"). I had joked that I was going to San Diego to listen to Susan Molinari, but she was a doll, inserting extra adjectives, prepositions, and interjections into her prepared text to reflect her natural warmth. (Now if only we could have been reminded that her famous baby is partly owned by its father—Rep. Bill Paxon, a major factor in whether the House will remain GOP or not. Fathers, needless to say, were everywhere, feeding babies and pushing strollers throughout the convention center.) At times the niceness went beyond the call of duty. Around seven the aisles near the podium were crowded with television heavies, about to go live. I came across Peter Jennings, dressed in a pricey dark suit. He just stood there, mike in hand, the bald spot on the back of his head covered, staring at his cameraman—and not a soul was heckling him. Aside from the instant response team at the Media Research Center, no one had heard him earlier that evening call Mrs. Paxon "a single, white professional woman" who is "going to look out of place in some respects at this convention."

THE CROWNING INSULT WAS THE MAJOR media's treatment of J.C. Watts's stunning prime-time performance—an unexpected and thus genuine moment that will become the stuff of legend, even if it has to be passed along by word of mouth. The Big Three didn't show it; the major papers didn't report it. (Only the Kemp-loving Al Hunt would later praise it.) The next day's *Los Angeles Times* did, however, feature an op-ed by a Donna Mungen lamenting that "far too many Republican ideas, appointees and aims threaten the basic survival instincts of African Americans." Would it have been genocidal to cite Watts's definition of character—"simply doing what's right when nobody is watching"? Of course, media character is a whole different matter. San Diego revealed it in kneejerk hostility to all things conservative and Republican. It's a problem we all can live with, so long as Main Street doesn't run through the Marriott lobby. Still, wouldn't it be grand to watch a Democratic convention covered by Republican journalists? ❀