



Brighter shades of pale; throw-weights; Mobutu to you

May was way cool, depriving the northern reaches of any semblance of spring while giving Washington a deluxe taste of California's fresh clime. It was so cool, Mr. Antoine Carr of the NBA's aptly named Utah Jazz never once took off his shades, whether on the court or bench, in the show-ers or during interviews with NBC Sports. To protect against pneumonia, Mr. Marv Albert, the leading yess-man of basketball announcers, was allowed to keep his rug on during a publicity mug shoot at the Arlington (Va.) County Court House, just an outlet pass away from this magazine's central offices. He is being charged with the sort of crime that comes from watching Dennis Rodman once too often.

True sportsmen like it hot, of course. Much to the displeasure of his spouse Ms. Kathy Lee Gifford, the cheerleader and labor activist, Mr. Frank Gifford, another of those famous USC halfbacks, showed he still had some rushing yards left in him. The performance was filmed before a live audience of one, a woman named Suzen, and turned out to be the property of the *Globe*, another of those mainstream conservative journals that are making life for the hoity-toity in these United States so cruel and unusual. *Star* star Dick Morris worked new magic with Sen. Trent Lott, who like the Scud he's become flew to the defense of B-52 stewardess Kelly Flinn, just before it was revealed that Ms. Flinn seems to have much in common with Moll Flanders. By month's end Our President was sweating the biggest bullets of all, learning in Paris that the Supreme Court had dropped the big one back home, 9-0. (Or 9-zipper, as one disrespectful wag put it.)

Never fear: Mr. Clinton was not about to be distracted by right wing-financed petty partisan extremism. He'd gone to Paris to bring to fruition Alger Hiss's vision of giving Moscow last call on such matters as NATO. In response, a grateful Boris Yeltsin — Brezhnev-like in his unsteadiness, Bob Bennett-like in his pastiness — promised to dismantle all Russian nuclear warheads pointed in our direction. No one appeared to recall that in his 1996 State of the Union address Mr. Clinton had bragged that "for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age there is not a single Russian missile pointed at America's children." Was this what political operatives these days would call a throwaway line? Already one can imagine Lanny Davis or Ann Lewis defending their man by



A bad case of
playoff fever



Spanning the
Globe

claiming that in fact the president was not incorrect in what he said: All those missiles happen to be pointed at America's *adults*. Incidentally, the White House has denied it was behind the May 30 release of a videotape depicting Paula Jones's lawyer Gilbert Davis in his cups at a 1994 social gathering, and suggesting to a co-reveler that she's the sort who should be appearing in *Playboy*. Mr. Davis, a candidate for Virginia attorney general, now emerges as the logical choice to replace the Hon. Janet Reno (assuming career officials at the Justice Department recommend she resign). Otherwise, the job will go to Mr. Clinton's private attorney David Kendall, who, it's been learned, moonlights as the *National Enquirer's* lead lawyer. Right on: a tabloid lawyer for a tabloid presidency.

On May 1 the United Kingdom was sentenced to many years of hard Labour, and Mr. Tony Blair, the kid PM, quickly found his Arthur Schlesinger. His name is James Wood, best known to American readers for words he spills in the *New Republic*. "We all know Tony Blair, and he likes us," Mr. Wood wrote on behalf of the Harold Pinter crowd. "His very heart is a democratic chamber." That's a mighty enlarged ticker: in the U.S. we generally apply the term to the House of Representatives.

In other foreign news, Poland's free-market Communist president Aleksander Kwasniewski was greeted in Paris with a barrage of eggs from four fellow countrymen, who weren't there to celebrate Easter. Socialists, Communists, and Ultra-Nationalists scored big in French elections, which, considering the populace in question, meant everybody won. In an effort to win back the trust of its former American friends, Nigeria bestowed the country's highest award — Grand Commander of the Federal Republic of Nigeria — on Libya's benevolent Muammar al-Qaddafi. One-time Che Guevara sidekick Laurent Kabila took supreme power in Zaire, now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo, leaving the ousted shah Joseph Mobutu with no place to go except Disneyland or the nearest graveyard.

In a publishing scandal that would do Ralph Nader proud, *Newsweek* recalled its special child-rearing issue, which on page 58 listed raw carrot chunks and zwieback crackers as suitable fare for toothless five-month-olds. That same issue contains a memorable essay from First Nanny Hillary Rodham Clin-

ton, who too may find herself subject to recall. Even though her husband's White House days have yet to run their course, the Times-Mirror company has honored longtime *L.A. Times* Washington bureau chief Jack Nelson with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Does T-M know something we don't? Someday this magazine will honor Mr. Nelson with a far more prestigious award for his historic role in keeping his paper from breaking the Troopergate story. Times-Mirror also decided that Mr. Murray Kempton merits a Special Distinction Award, though not because he was the last practicing Episcopalian in American journalism, but merely because he passed away on May 5. Ms. Joanie Weston, 62, a Roller Derby all-star nineteen consecutive times in the 1950's and 60's, died in Hayward, California. In her prime she was known as the "Blonde Bomber," without once ever having set foot on an Air Force plane. The dolphin/actor Bebe, 40, died in his tub in Miami, Florida. He played Flipper in the famous television series, and was believed to have been named after longtime Nixon friend Bebe Rebozo of nearby Key Biscayne. Millie, author of the only important book on the Bush presidency, died aged 11, in Kennebunkport, Maine.

In other cosmic news, the perennial question, "Paper or plastic?" has been settled forever, at least in Kabul, Afghanistan.



Roger's version:
Reach your children

The winner is... plastic. The ruling Taliban fundamentalists fear that paper bags may be made of recycled copies of the Koran. Why not recycled copies of Salman Rushdie's fiction? The late Pamela Harriman, who probably wishes she'd been at that party with Gilbert Davis, found new ways to attract large sums. A Sotheby's auction of her intimate possessions raised nearly \$7 million. The Mattel company has introduced a wheelchair-bound Barbie doll—just the sort of contraption sure to be stolen by little brothers nationwide in search of a new set of wheels to play with. Some women still don't get it. "I saw 'him' shave every day and I saw him fix my car. He just did masculine things, so it never entered my mind that he could be a woman,"

said Miss Margaret Anne Hunter about Thorne Wesley James Groves, the person she married last year. Though not a Kerry or a Kennedy, she too is seeking an annulment. The English have a term for it: gender identity disorder. We have Roger Clinton, who saves on rent by living at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and pays the difference in monthly support checks to Ms. Martha Spivey of Gainesboro, Tennessee, with whom "in all likelihood" (that's his lawyer speaking) he has a 6-year-old daughter. By the way, all that talk about group-leader John McLaughlin being twice as old as his new fiancée is simply not true. He's 70, she's 36.

—WP

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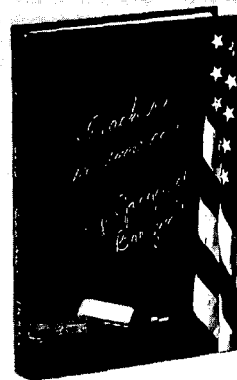
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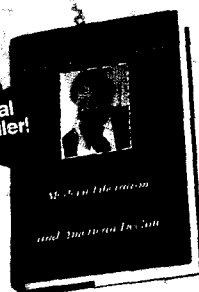
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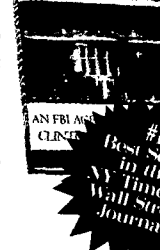


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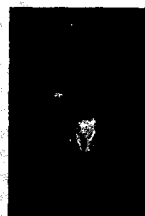
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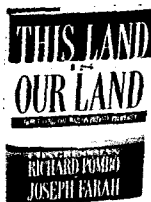
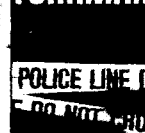


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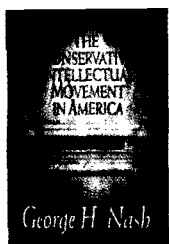
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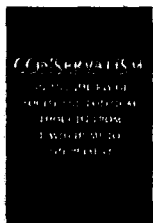
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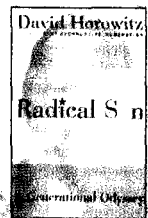
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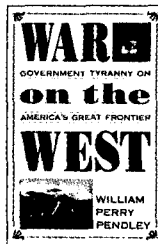
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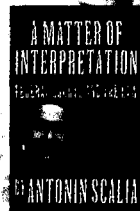
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Success Story

I have subscribed to *The American Spectator* for many years and have always enjoyed it. But lately it seems as though the magazine is providing even more useful information.

The May issue, which I have just read, contains several unusual and valuable articles. "Going for the Gold" by Matthew Stevenson is the first article I've seen that brings some common sense to the issue of Switzerland and the World War II accounts. Jeremy Rabkin's discussion of the federal government's unconstitutional takeover of crime prosecution was long over due. (I only wish he'd pointed out how crime has been expanded by the federal government's War on Drugs.)

And James Bovard's "Carville's List" was typical of Bovard's ability to debunk even the most sacred government programs. James Carville and Bill Clinton (and most Republican politicians) may believe that government really works, but the truth is that no government "success story" can survive any careful scrutiny.

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Thanks for all the good reading. My research file overflows with photocopies of *American Spectator* articles.

—HARRY BROWNE
Franklin, Tennessee

A Case of the Shakes

I don't see how I can trust anything in *The American Spectator* again, after reading that foolish farrago on Shakespeare with which you led the May issue ("Outing Shakespeare," by Tom Bethell, TAS, May 1997).

I won't take the time to demolish it (since it has already been done countless times in the last sixty years and I have a plane to catch), but merely point out the most glaring inaccuracy: "...no source material in the plays is indubitable post 1603." Good God! Leave aside *Macbeth* (1604), obviously written to please King James (Shakespeare was of course a member of the King's Men), and stick to *The Tempest* (first recorded performance November 1, 1611), based upon—even using some language from—a book about a 1609 shipwreck in the Bermudas, and published in 1610.

But enough. I enclose my address label which indicates that my subscription runs through August 1997. Stop it now, please, and keep the change.

—JIM BECKER
Honolulu, Hawaii

The last time that I read anything by Joseph Sobran, he was touting Gary Sick's "October Surprise" smear, so it's not too surprising to find him now enrolled in the (admittedly less harmful) legion of Shakespearian cranks. As a connoisseur of that subculture, I am grateful to Tom Bethell for drawing my attention to Mr. Sobran's effort, which has the merit of being only about one-third the length of the average somebody-else-wrote-Shakespeare-tome.

No doubt Mr. Bethell's friendship with Mr. Sobran led him to forgo rigorous fact checking, so I won't belabor what any reader of *TAS* can discover for himself by casual resort to such works as Samuel Schoenbaum's *William Shakespeare: A*

Compact Documentary Life; to wit, that the caricature of William Shakespeare of Stratford as a semi-literate booby is utterly incongruous with the documented record of a middle class tradesman's son who, by age 28, was a sufficient power in the London theatrical world to be attacked by an embittered playwright (and apologized to by the attacker's literary executor), who managed the country's foremost theatrical troupe in his thirties, and who unmysteriously retired, having become a wealthy man, in his late forties. If the works now ascribed to him had appeared anonymously, Shakespeare of Stratford is exactly the sort of figure whom scholars would suspect of having written them.

Instead, let me note two flaws not of fact but of logic.

First, if the Stratford Shakespeare had really dribbled at the mouth in the way that Mr. Bethell supposes, how would contemporaries have been so easily fooled into believing that he had produced the Shakespearian canon? There are numerous references, during Shakespeare's and the Earl of Oxford's joint lifetimes, to the former as the author of the plays, and there are no attributions to anyone else. Some of these witnesses—Francis Beaumont and Ben Jonson, for instance—moved in the same theatrical circles as Shakespeare (who acted leading roles in at least two of Jonson's dramas) and might have noticed any inability to cope with the English language. Perhaps the Earl of Oxford paid them to be silent, but Oxford died in 1604, and the loyal retainers were keeping up the pretense in private correspondence years later.

Second, Mr. Bethell tries to turn against the "Stratfordians" the superficially inconvenient fact that the Earl of Oxford was dead before the first attestations to the existence of ten Shakespearian plays. His argument, put succinctly, is that a number of people acted, between 1604 and 1616 (the date of the Stratford Shakespeare's death), as if the Shakespeare who wrote the plays were already dead.

I waive disputing whether Mr. Bethell's evidence truly points to anybody's belief in the playwright's prior death, though it is