

Confessions of a Consistent Liar 73



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Ned Brooks ct me: I believe that the shot the guy with the three pairs of pants survived was a glancing blow.

ct Janice: There are many paired proverbs, in the Bible and elsewhere, that contradict each other. (Absence makes the heart grow fonder/Out of sight out of mind.) That's probably one of the things proverbs are for.

ct Dengrove: I like your reference to dead mice on the hard drive.

ct Jeff: Headline from *The Onion*: Scientists Say Universe Is Older Than Strom Thurmond.

GHLIII *Challenger* is excellent, as usual. I have locced.

ct Dave: You want to get back to FAPA or LASFAPA? I'm sure either would welcome you. I gave up on my latest effort to return to LASFAPA; doing a monthly zine for a small apa bore an ugly resemblance to work.

ct Sheila: Indeed we teach our spellcheckers. I teach mine fannish terms and names, and the words you can't say on (free) TV, and feel a bit unclean afterwards.

ct Jeff: Excellent refusal to concede to the Theft of Florida. W is, as he himself might say, illegitimate.

ct Janice: I'm not so sure the Electoral College is part of the problem. I agree with Jon Carroll that if we switch to majority vote for the presidency, then the next

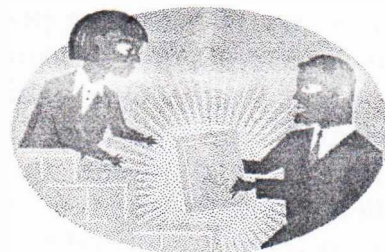
time there is a close election, there'll be 50 Floridas, complete with dimpled chads, hanging chads, pregnant chads, chads belonging to the emperor, chads that resemble flies from a distance—sorry, got carried away.

ct me: I thought the movie Ty Cobb was sufficiently portrayed as violent, mean, and crazy.

Randy Cleary ct me: In "A Boy Named Sue," written by Shel Silverstein and recorded by Johnny Cash, the protagonist encounters the father who abandoned him with that terrible name and says, "My name is Sue. How do you do? Now you gonna die," whereupon they start "kicking and gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer." When the son wins, the father says he gave him the name so he'd have to fight and become tough, and the son forgives him.

Gary Brown As ever, thanx for the Barry Year in Review.

ct Janice: I'm glad that the PO didn't institute that idiotic and paranoid rule about bringing packages weighing more than a pound to the counter until after I had stopped being an OE.



Janice Gelb ct me: Some people get all self-righteous if a campaign to get people to read works, but attracts them to insufficiently serious literature, whether it's Harry Potter or the *condescending sniff* Women's Lit Oprah is foisting off on people. I'm not that kind of elitist; even if the stuff were as bad as the snobs say it is, I'd rather people read that than nothing.

TKF Welsskopf Choosing Tammy Faye Bakker as her cosmetics advisor is the least of my complaints about Katherine Harris.



Don Markstein The whole "liberal media" thing is looking particularly ridiculous in the face of the shitstorm over Clinton's pardons, which don't seem a whole lot different from Bush Sr.'s except for the absence of people like Casper Weinberger who could get him in trouble if not pardoned.

Jeff Copeland ct Steve: Now that the football season's over, I don't watch any TV with live people, just *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*.

ct Toni: One thing that Giuliani's program of enforcing minor laws did was to give the police more chance to stop and search those it wanted to. This was

a short-term gain, as people adjusted to the new approach.

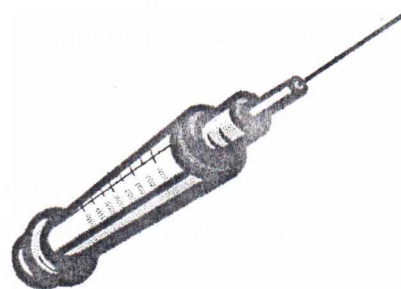
ct Liz: Maybe it is a guy thing. To me, recreational shopping sounds like recreational hanging by your thumbs.

ct Gary B: I like your Punk Paper Clip, but prefer Mr. Clippit's advice on a suicide note, which I imagine you've seen.

ct Irv: I had the same prophetic genius: I bought a Selectric in 1981.

ct Guy: Frederic Brown's sf novels are great, particularly *Martians*, *Go Home* and *What Mad Universe?* For good psychological mysteries, I'd recommend *Night of the Jabberwock*, *The Far Cry*, and *His Name Was Death*. The NESFA collection of his short fiction is finally out; I'm reviewing it for *NYRSF*.

GHLIII One of the new law writers at my company was on the other side. She has a plaque on her wall commemorating her service as a Special Narcotics Prosecutor. I never got any special narcotics; I had to make do with regular ones. But then maybe special narcotics are like special children: "Hey, man, this shit's as weak as aspirin." "Well, you know, they try their best, but they're just *special* narcotics."



The Giants went to the Super Bowl! *make small circles with index finger* I have been a Giants fan for approximately 50 years, because I was told or deduced when I first noticed football that they were the football analog of the Yankees. So I cheered for Y.A. Tittle and suffered with Tom Kennedy. Of course, I've often been ambivalent about them. The Giants have traditionally been a boring, pass-only-if-desperate trench warfare team, and I've always liked aerial warfare teams. This came to a head in the 1991 Super Bowl, when the Bills played the no-huddle game, with lots of long passes to James Lofton, and were fun to watch, while the Giants played the ball-control game, with lots of three-yard runs by Ottis Anderson, and were tedious to watch. The Giants won on a missed field goal, thus proving the superiority of real, he-man, smash-mouth football, or so I am told.

Last year as I watched the draft, when the Giants' turn came, I screamed, "Don't do it!" Needless to say, they did it: They drafted Ron Dayne because—well, he's so darned *big*. I will grudgingly concede that Dayne contributed early in the year, largely by wearing defenses down so they were too tired to chase Tiki Barber. Late in the season, he had worn himself down, and in the postseason, he was the proverbial tits on a boar hog.

And the Ravens won it all. Their star was Ray Lewis, a fact that created problems for sportswriters, most of whom had decided that he was a criminal. Apparently, they were not bright enough to look at the trial reports and notice that the DA had not presented sufficient indications of any criminal acts on Lewis's part to be worth wasting a jury's time on (and in fact allowed Lewis to get off with no further punishment, rather than allow the judge to make such a statement in open court), or else they did not wish to be distracted from what Philip Roth has called the ecstasy of sanctimony. It is at times like these that I am reminded of the saying that if a sportswriter were any good at what he does, he'd be a novelist.

So the reporters turned their attention to Trent Dilfer, whom they described as the worst quarterback ever to win the Super Bowl. How soon we forget Mark Rypien! What was undermentioned was that I can't remember when any team won the Super Bowl with as little wide receiver talent. Once Travis Taylor broke his collarbone, the Ravens were down to the erratic Qadry Ismael; Brandon Stokely, a Chrebet type who's still learning; and Patrick Johnson, a sprinter who has never mastered the nonrunning

parts of football and probably never will. Shannon Sharpe *carried* the passing game. Anyway, they upgraded by signing Elvis Grbac, but getting Taylor back may be more relevant.

The Chiefs, having lost Grbac by refusing to take their own offer to him seriously, at this point have neither a quarterback nor a running back. They might lowball the former problem by trying to get another year out of Steve Beuerlein (and might even get away with it), or they might be willing to make a decent offer to the Rams for Trent Green. They could do worse than to sign Dilfer, and I wouldn't be surprised if Sylvester Morris, the only player named after two cats, stays healthy and develops route-running skills to go with the awesome size and speed. They still need a running back, something they have failed to notice for many years now, but Dick Vermeil may pay attention to that.

The trouble with the Super Bowl was that the two fun teams, the Rams and the Vikings, did not have defenses. The Rams couldn't overcome year-long sulks by Todd Lyght and Kevin Carter, as well as possibly terminal injury to D'Marco Farr. The Vikings have had defensive backfield troubles for years, perhaps traceable to position coach Richard Solomon. Solomon's unit, in another sense of the word, got the team in trouble a few years ago in an ugly sexual harassment case. I've always assumed that he has a photo of Denny Green in a compromising position with a chicken. Anyway, the team finally has a new defensive backfield coach. And Green will survive; last year at this time, there was general merriment because he had reduced himself to the desperate position of relying on Daunte Culpepper. Randy Moss remains wonderful. Against the Saints, he caught two passes, both in the vicinity of the line of scrimmage. He turned that into 120 yards and two touchdowns.

On the other hand, the Tampa Bay Bucs didn't have an offense, as usual. They traded for Keyshawn, and then didn't give him the damn ball. They may have learned their lesson. They fired offensive coordinator Les Steckel, a leading exponent of the Real Men Gain All Their Yardage on the Ground approach. They decided Shaun King had motivational problems, so they picked up Brad Johnson and Ryan Leaf, which, if nothing else, should give them the most psychologically interesting quarterback corps in the league. I wouldn't be surprised if they finally make the big one.

The NFL actually managed something it hasn't in the last few years: hiring a new African-American

head coach. (I do not count interim scapegoat Terry Robiskie. As he himself said, "They made me captain of the *Titanic* after it hit the iceberg.") I wouldn't be at all surprised if Herman Edwards pulls off another Miracle of the Meadowlands. He's bright, and what he's done for the Jets looks good. I had some hope for Maurice Carthon, but then I remembered that he's the fourth coach Bill Parcells considered a worthy successor, and the first three were Ray Handley, Bill Belichick, and Al Groh. For some unfathomable reason, the Buffalo Bills decided not to promote Ted Cottrell, who was responsible for the only part of the team that worked last year. Marvin Lewis fell victim to the quaint NFL rule that says that the farther an assistant coach helps his team get in the playoffs, the less chance he has to get a head coaching job.

But the Bills may have done right in the quarterback mess, keeping Rob Johnson. It is alleged that Doug Flutie cannot sit on the bench without fomenting rebellion (unlike Jeff George, who waited patiently as understudy in Minnesota and Washington, and apparently doesn't actualize his Asshole Potential until he becomes the starter.) Of course, if I wanted to create chaos at the most essential position, I would pull the guy who got me into the playoffs once the team got there, as coach Phillips did a year ago.

The Bills' offensive and defensive MVPs, Flutie and Marcellus Wiley, wound up with the Chargers, who may actually be moving out of their recent wretchedness. My crystal ball is strangely silent on whether Michael Vick is the new Donovan McNabb or the new Andre Ware, but if the former, and if they can find someone besides him to run with the ball, the team could prosper fairly quickly.

The Jets were surprisingly good last year, almost getting to the playoffs in a rebuilding year. It looks very much as if all four of their first-round picks will be worth it. (And they got one of those for escaping from Belichick.) Laveranues Coles looks promising, too.

But the Broncos look like the Super Bowl candidates at this point. They've finally bulked up their defense, they may well trade Mike Anderson for a first-round choice and still have two first-rate runners, and if Brian Griese stays healthy, he could be one of the best QBs in the league.

It has become more and more obvious that the Cincinnati Bengals and the Arizona Cardinals are not franchises, but toxic waste dumps. Good players who go to either sicken and die. Two years ago, in the third Great Quarterback Draft,

the one who needed the most help, Akili Smith, went to the Bengals, and one's heart sank because of course he wouldn't get it. Now we wonder if Peter Warrick will survive. The year before, the Cards forwent the chance to draft Ryan Leaf, surely not a great loss, and were greatly rewarded, whereupon they drafted Andre Wadsworth to complete what seemed to be one of the best defensive lines in NFL history. Now they have essentially reneged on their contract with Wadsworth, and may well get away with it because no one else wants him, and — oh, yes, they are desperate for defensive linemen. They have also blighted the once-promising career of Jake Plummer.

The year's big *Schadenfreude* story was the Redskins. Dan Snyder wanted to grow up to be George Steinbrenner (which is a contradiction in terms) and set out to buy a Super Bowl. But Deion Sanders has finally proven himself superannuated, the WR corps fell apart, and there was that pesky business about having to have a placekicker. We all eagerly await the battle of egos between Snyder and Marty Schottenheimer.

But for all the fun of watching Snyder's embarrassment, I find myself rejoicing less than I expected at the long-awaited Fall of the House of Jethro. The Cowboys are almost guaranteed to stink, with so much of their cap space going to the departed, notably Troy Aikman. One is tempted to say that Aikman's eagerness to further risk his brain is irrefutable evidence of how damaged it is.

Speaking of brain damage, the Xcremental Football League tanked. Robert Heinlein once said that some of the "predictions" he was credited with were no more remarkable than seeing two trains speeding towards each other on the same track and foreseeing a collision. I take no more credit for prophesying the XFL train wreck. The XFL was a minor-league operation in a situation where the talent in the major league is seriously diluted. The league could not change the rules enough to make that worth watching without going to jail.

The draft's coming up. The crazy voice in my right brain, which told me in 1990 that the Broncos had done a good thing by using their seventh-round pick on Sterling Sharpe's little brother (I refrain from reminding you of any of its other prophecies) says to watch Richmond Flowers and Cleo Lemon.