

Casey.' I played dumb with Ben.'"

"He had misled us but not lied. It seemed too subtle a distinction." Later in the section we learn that Goldwater actually wanted the facts of the operation out but didn't want to be blamed for leaking them.

What a marvelous vignette of institutional Washington: the pseudo-chummy contacts between players who would seem to be enemies; the little office details that tell you Goldwater is eccentric; the ritual blame-shifting; and, above all, the pretending not to know what's going on.

Even if you've already read the excerpts and reviews, seen the "Nightline" episodes, and bought the lunchboxes and the Woodward and Casey action figures (Realistic! Comes with its own shredder and five miniature documents!), *Veil* is still rewarding reading.

—Gregg Easterbrook

If You Can't Say Something Nice. Calvin Trillin. *Ticknor Fields, \$16.95.* Who buys collections of newspaper columns? It was not too long ago that a writer had to die before his collected journalism appeared between two hard covers; today, the genre seems to be catching up in sales to self-help manuals and diet books. (This is Trillin's third anthology, which ties him with George Will and Ellen Goodman—not bad for someone writing once a week.) Most collections are dreadful. Last year's punditry and wit yellows faster than newsprint, and these books must, like *Reader's Digest* condensed novels, wind up as wall covering in bathrooms and summer cottages.

That prefatory grumble aside, it has to be said that Calvin Trillin deserves a special exemption from the rule that one should be decrepit or deceased before republishing—the man is undeniably funny. If Mark Twain and S.J. Perelman could have married, Trillin might have been their issue. With his folksy deadpan, his carping, and his more-of-a-schlemiel-than-thou shtick, Trillin has backed his way to the front of the line of newspaper humorists. Only Russell Baker, who deploys his tricks, unbelievably, thrice weekly, merits comparison.

Baker probably has the broader repertoire of amusements, but Trillin has a lock on the one-liner crown. And nothing elicits his gift as much as the current administration. Michael Deaver "is so close to Ronald and Nancy Reagan that he is often described as being like a son to them—something that has never been said of their own children."

—Daniel Benjamin

Shattered Dreams. Charlotte Fedders, Laura Elliott. *Harper & Row, \$17.95.* This sorry tale of wife abuse in the high reaches of the Reagan administration is written less for watchers of that administration and this city than for Everywoman.

Its straightforward prose seems aimed at women who may find themselves facing similar abuse and seeming helplessness; Charlotte Fedders, on her publicity tour, has been plugging the national hot lines

and support networks for battered women. Sadly, her story makes her the ideal figure to call attention to the fact that, according to some figures, a woman is beaten every 18 seconds and four women are killed by a violent spouse every day.

John Fedders, chief of enforcement at the Securities and Exchange Commission until 1985, first hit Charlotte early in their 17-year marriage and continued to do so as the years went on and they had five children. When Charlotte insisted he move out, and she sued for divorce, he contested, refusing to settle. That was how the case got to court, where Charlotte testified to the beatings and *The Wall Street Journal* broke the story, forcing John to resign and effectively ending his career.

It seemed a just punishment to many. In the book, Charlotte traces her marriage to John Fedders at 22. She considered herself unattractive, believing self-worth would come only with a man and marriage, and could never quite believe she had landed this tall, attractive, ambitious lawyer. Viewing it as her fault if the marriage failed, she didn't leave him—though her father, a doctor, told her to—after John slapped her during an argument and broke her eardrum. Over the years, despite violence and psychological abuse which reduced her to insecurity and self-hatred, she stayed. It was only when the children began to grow up, and she saw the abuse starting to affect them the same way, that she found the courage to end the marriage. One of the more useful psychological insights she repeats is that it was only after she got out of the marriage, and away from the pressures, did she realize that it wasn't only her sons who deserved better but herself as well.

Everything in this tale is distressingly typical. Only John Fedders' prominence in Washington made it unusual—and this, correctly, is downplayed in *Shattered Dreams*, though the authors do try, rather unsuccessfully, to work up a secondary moral of Washington power-hunger and its effect on home life. True or not, this comes

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across as a bit of a red herring: the more compelling theme of the book for its intended audience will be the degree to which it can reinforce the sense that "it happens in the best of families," and also the worst.

The other singularity of *Shattered Dreams* is sociological: it may serve as a milestone in the book industry, the point at which the word "by" lost all meaning and came to function as just one more decoration on the cover. The names "Charlotte Fedders and Laura Elliott" on the book spine and the fact that Fedders is doing the book tour would seem to suggest that the book is ghosted. It isn't. Elliott, a writer for *Washingtonian* magazine, simply interviewed Fedders at length (obviously very great length) and wrote the book about her in the third person, supplementing it with other research and interviews. Nobody involved with the book or the contract seems to find anything in the least odd about this, so who is the reader to quibble?

—Amy E. Schwartz

Levine & Co. Douglas Frantz. *Henry Holt*, \$19.95. He who writes first does not necessarily write best. Consider Douglas Frantz. The "Levine" in the title, in case you've forgotten, is Dennis Levine, the Wall Street investment banker who masterminded the insider-trading scandal that brought down the whole house of cards. It's odd: Levine's fall was such a big deal when he was first caught, and now the particulars of his case seem almost boring as so many bigger fish have followed, their own particulars vastly more lurid than his. And that was even before Black Monday, which has made the whole insider-trading scandal seem, somehow, far less interesting.

Frantz's goal was not so much to have the most complete book, or the most interesting book, or the best reported book on the scandal—only the first one. The question is: is that a goal that makes sense when a scandal is still breaking? *Levine & Co.* would suggest that the answer is no. What we get here is nearly 400 pages of Dennis Levine and his associates (sure-

ly you remember Ira Sokolow?)—and then, at the end, a few pages about Ivan Boesky and Martin Seigel, clearly pasted on as the book was being rushed to press. That's all he had time for.

Levine comes across as a creepy enough character, but neither he nor his compatriots are ever brought to life. Levine's lure, for instance, is still a mystery to me. Why were people willing to commit crimes for him when even they didn't like him very much? In addition, the book reads like a long newspaper story (Frantz works for the *Los Angeles Times*) and the reporting does not go much beyond what was published in newspapers as the scandal was breaking. Oh, well, at least it was first.

—Joseph Nocera

Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz. *Knopf*, \$24.95. Who's to blame for our zombie youth? Nope, not conservative demons like rock-and-roll or

"relativism" or casual sex. Not liberal scapegoats like Ronald Reagan, though his brand of politics is quickly filed away in the category "fraternities, anti-Semites, and conservatives." Here the usual suspect cultural phenomena go free.

In their place Horowitz gives us a strange and intractable enemy: "students in the past," who created "undergraduate subcultures" that still rule our campuses. First, there were College Men, who have long lived a life of fraternities and secret societies, rumbles, ritual alcoholism, cheating, and sports. Through their antics, fun-loving "clubmen" or "Greeks" institutionalized their hostility to authority. In the early 1800s, for example, students horse-whipped the president of the University of North Carolina and stoned two professors. Yale men bombed a residence hall in the 1820s and murdered a tutor who tried to intervene in the melee. Boola boola.

Then there are Outsiders, grimly hard-working students who view higher education as nothing more

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