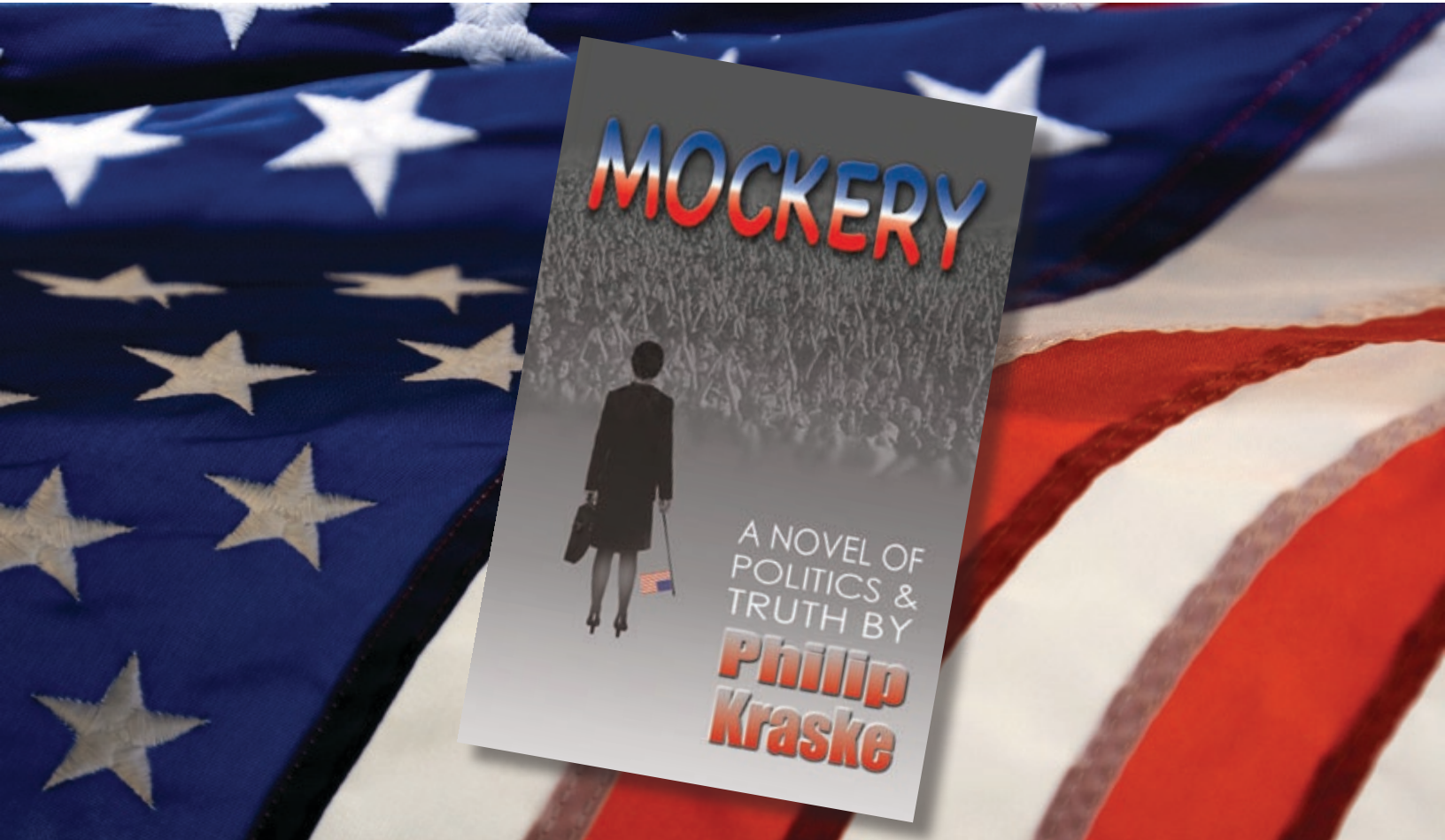


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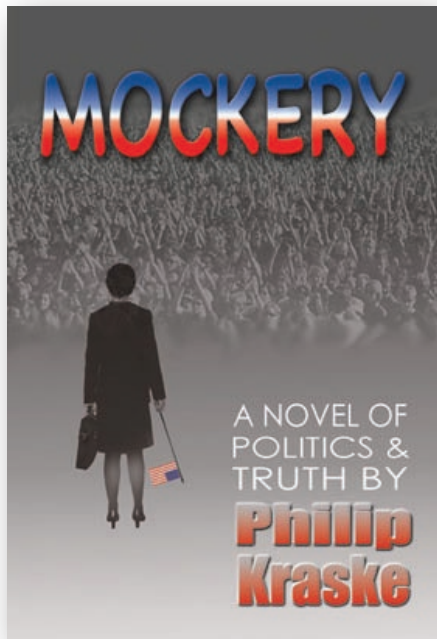
MOCKERY

A NOVEL OF
POLITICS & TRUTH



By **PHILIP KRASKE**

ColdType



Philip Kraske's latest book is **Flight In February** which, with **Mockery**, is published by Eyestorm Books, of Kingston, Canada. Both are available from <http://encompasseditons.com>

Mr Kraske has lived and worked in Quito, Ecuador, and travelled throughout South America and western Europe. He is currently at work on a novel set in Quito, untrod ground for English-language writers. He also teaches English and translates works by Spanish authors.

This excerpt consists of Chapter 1 of **Mockery** and is published with the author's permission

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AN EXCERPT FROM

MOCKERY

A Novel of Politics & Truth

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CHAPTER ONE

The crucial clue that got me off the dime – an insultingly small object to describe five foodless months of research -- took place on a gray, unassuming March day in Saint Paul, back when Rolf Obermeyer was still bravely introducing himself as “a former Gotchell-campaign official.” He and his ever-shrinking crew down the hall were still wrestling with – or paying off, or burying -- the odds and ends, the IOUs and ASAPs, of their losing campaign. As you remember, Senator Alan Gotchell – and Governor Worthington Frakes, his opponent -- had seen victory snatched from their dropped jaws by Independent Mitchell Taylor, both campaigns derailed by scandals just weeks before the general election. My interview with Obermeyer was the first foothold up the cliff; and the rest, as we historians love to say when we actually publish a book that someone



His stink of sweat and Lucky Stripes wrapped me in its gauze and ushered me in along with his wagging hand

buys not at 50 percent off, was history.

What we don't love to say is that the book was all wrong.

That's my story.

I found Rolf's fluid, roving bulk slouched behind his ancient desk as he worked the phone, his white business shirt a choppy sea of wrinkles, sleeves rolled past the elbows, one doughy arm flung up behind his bald head in order to flaunt the yellowish, perfectly oval wet spot at his armpit. His stink of sweat and Lucky Stripes wrapped me in its gauze and ushered me in along with his wagging hand. With resignation, I looked at the shut window – Rolf hated a draught -- through which I could see the hopeful, white dome of the Minnesota State Capitol Building.

I sat down in front of his desk, a lovely oak piece that had nothing to do with the rest of the functional office. Way back when his candidate was ahead EIGHT points in the race for the presidency, he had planned to take it to

the White House: “My grandma’s, Sam – full of curlicue carving and old as the hills. Brought it up the Mississippi with her, all the way from Czechoslovakia. And now – just think – it’s going to the White House. The old gal would just cry!” Back then he had been head of logistics for the Gotchell campaign; now he was head of its sand-and-shovel brigade.

“Yeah, well, that’s sorta the problem, Sol,” he was saying. “We’ve sorta got our available funds, ah, pretty much slotted for right this minute. Which is why I was thinking that, ah, going forward, a little ongoing patience would really constitute the most, ah, pro-active stance on this count. And the senator – who still has plenty of say in the Senate, remember – he won’t forget someone who, ah, had the courage and see-it-through to move together with us to a sort of, of long-term ongoing closure on this thing, if you see where I’m drifting here. . . . No, Sol, no! Where do people get that stuff? Strum and Dirge, pure Strum and Dirge...Oh, eighteen months, twenty-four on a good day, Sol – just till we get some traction under our belts, from a financial point of view. . . .Yeah, absolutely. . . .Oh, you betcha. . . .And believe you me, Sol, I feel that deep – way down here in my Czech soul – really I do.”

Spoken like a true ex-director of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Obermeyer drummed patient fingers on his blubber, shivers rippling through half his torso. Finally:

“Really? Hey, Sol, hey. And I mean that from the bottom, huh? That’d be great. No kidding: the kind of thing that makes my job a real aspiration to human nature. . . . Right. Right. Hey, you listen to your Uncle Rolf here, Sol, we’re gonna keep you posted straight through till payback.



Hey, you listen to your Uncle Rolf here, Sol, we’re gonna keep you posted straight through till payback

We’re all of us here a really far cry from the sort of attitude that says. . . . Absolutely, Sol, absolutely. The senator’s a player, Sol, always will be. He’s gonna be writing a book, he’s got an article coming out next week in *Newsweek*, he’s, ah, he’s gonna be making grand-a-plate speeches – gots one coming up just next month, in point of fact. So don’t you worry. Anybody who gets behind us going forward, hell, we’re gonna get right behind them back, and I say that without the kind of qualification you’re always hearing nowadays from everybody and his brother. . . . Okay, Sol. . . . Hey, and I appreciate it, that’d be great. . . . Okay, okay. . . . Hey, I’m gonna be on your phone so often you’re going to think of me as your mother-in-law! . . . Right. Right. Bye.

Rolf hung up, huffed, and unstapled the smile from his open, bread-loaf face. “So if two of your millions go AWOL for a while, Sol, just relax and enjoy the other ninety, okay? Greedy son-of-a-bitch.” Beneath the blubber, Obermeyer had steel, too.

He looked at me, making his lardy neck squish a new way over his too-tight collar. “Know what the problem with money is, Sam?”

“Let’s see. You can never find a shirt that goes with it?”

“It won’t give you an orgasm. You’d think that when a guy made twenty or thirty mill, he’d just die with pleasure at all the stuff he could buy. Head for Miami and burn ten grand a day. But does he? Does he my Czech grandma. Guy gets his first twenty and the only thing he can think about is his next twenty.”

“Ah, the greed of man,” I lamented. I took my leap into the dark. “So: were you there when Terry Letizzle brought in the Frakes video?” I was referring to the outtakes of Governor Frakes’ curs-

MOCKERY

ing senior citizens, a major political base. Gotchell's people – a.k.a. Rolf's people -- had slipped it to CBS News, and sunk Frakes.

Obermeyer took this question on the chin, and his eyes glazed over. After a long moment, he decided that a new cigarette was the better part of valor. He tapped one out of a pack of Luckies, visibly apologizing to a picture duct-taped to the wall beside the window. It showed a crayoned house, flower garden, three dogs, three kids, and a sky filled with admonition: "Daddy, don't smoke!" The ashtray was full. He lit up.

After two puffs:

"Ah, that, that is a very information-rich subject, ah, Sam, that, ah, I'm not really all that permitted to go out and comment on at this point in time. Why don't you, ah, take it up with Michael or Jan or Milt? Or heck, go to the senator himself? He was there. I mean, given the outcome of the election and the, ah, sudden flip-flop reversal of fortune that we've all suffered, I just can't go around, ah, taking liberties – at least not on any kind of, of, you know, just-like-that basis." Words were buckshot to Obermeyer; he sprayed them into the air till they hit his idea.

"So it was Terry who brought it in?" Terry Letizzle was the candidate's bodyman.

Obermeyer waved the fleshy palps of his fingers, defending himself as if I were an onrushing bull. "Now I didn't say that, Sam. That's, ah, that would constitute a total twisting out of my words. I mean, c'mon: that's pretty high-octane stuff – what you're asking there is. I'd just be going straight out of my league, y'know, going out and making comments on it." He puffed his cigarette more and, I thought, guiltily.

"C'mon, Rolf – the election's long over,"



His eyes bugged out, and he launched himself forward across the desk, blubber catching up with him later

I said. "Off the record. My publisher said that anything I could dig up about the two scandals would sell my book."

Obermeyer shook his head in broad, gusting swings, the fat sloshing back and forth over his collar. "Zip, Sam. That's zipped lips from the word go."

I performed an amiable shrug and took Obermeyer into organization for the party convention. There was a lot of talk about bad blood between Gotchell's people and the party -- seating of delegates, platform planks, invited speakers. Could he give me any background for that chapter of my book?

This for twenty minutes.

Then, with a glum scowl, I said: "But just on this video thing: it was Terry Letizzle who brought it in, wasn't it? Off the record? Please? I had to track down three-quarters of the Baton Rouge Palace night staff till I got a lead on him."

One of Obermeyer's charms was his childish sense of wonder. His eyes bugged out, and he launched himself forward across the desk, blubber catching up with him later. "You tracked down three-quarters of the night staff of the Baton Rouge Palace Hotel?" he gasped.

"Damn right. It finally hit me late last month: whoever brought it to you guys surely looked at it first. But let's say that he received it just before bringing it to you. Like from someone inside the Frakes campaign. Like after meeting this person at the Frakes-Gotchell debate -- say, backstage or something. Always a possibility. And further suppose that he's one of your campaign staff -- not unlikely. Now, since the Gotchell campaign was bunked at the Palace, and the Palace's only mobile TV-and-VCR stand was already in Milt's room recording the last debate, where else could the guy get hold of a VCR? I checked around and found

one: in the conference room down in the hotel sub-level. The big TV down there has a built-in VCR. So I tracked down the staff working there on the night of the debate.”

“Jesus – three-quarters,” Rolf murmured in admiration. “That must fifty people minimum.”

“Sixty-two, ‘cause management wouldn’t name names for me. I had to stand out in the employee parking lot at the end of each shift and nab people coming out. Anyways, I finally got hold of this nice old cleaning lady from Cape Verde. She was the one: she let him in and stayed at the door while he checked out what was on the vid. She said he was tall and skinny, under thirty, and had bright-red hair.”

Rolf rolled his eyes dismally. “Yeah, that’s Terry, all right.”

“And here we are. See, Rolf? I have a description and a name. I just need someone’s nod on it.”

A careful drag on the weed. A squeamish scowl. “Ahhh, all right, Sam. I’ll give you, ah, yeah, I’ll give you that little morsel. Now it’s off the record, it’s total mum, it’s something you picked up as per the wall of the men’s john, got it? Milt was pretty damn heads-will-rolly about talking vids and stuff. But I mean, if it’s just confirming, okay.”

“There in the hotel after the last debate, right?”

“Ah, after, yes, just after the third debate that would be. Now, really, Sam, I’ve really gone the distance for ya here, young guy on your way up, let you have pretty much carte-blanche free run around here for your book, but there are just some things in this old world that have to go top level for anyone to go delving around in. Every campaign generates a little caca, you know. We’re not perfect here or anywhere else for that matter.”



Now you’re gonna go around thinking we’re the White House Plumbers running smash-and-grab on the opposition, aren’t you?

I nodded with sage reassurance, though I was nearly jumping out of my seat with joy. Finally: a name, a solid lead! “Great, Rolf, I sure appreciate the help. Maybe when I have more of it, you can give me a thumbs-up on...”

I stopped because Obermeyer wasn’t listening. He had twisted his head low and to the side, a kid looking at his ice cream that had fallen off the cone. I could see the fringe of sweat on his too-tight collar. A sigh. “Oh, hell, you’ve got it. Now you’re gonna go around thinking we’re the White House Plumbers running smash-and-grab on the opposition, aren’t you?”

Actually, I would have suspected that more of the Frakes campaign and its posh director, Phyllis Kirk, than of Rolf’s gang; but I said nothing.

Silence crowded into the little office along with the cigarette smoke. “We’re still off-record,” Rolf groused.

“We sure are.”

“Okay. Look, it. . .fuck.” Obermeyer regarded his cigarette and sighed. “Look, it just fell into our hands, Sam,” he blurted unhappily. “Okay? Straight stuff now. Nobody paid for it, nobody stole it. All right, after Jover’s antics in Frakes HQ you might not believe that, but I swear on my Czech grandma’s grave it’s true.” More tobacco. “After the third debate, we’re all sitting around trying to make happy to the senator, and Terry – god knows where he came from – is suddenly over by the VCR coughing and waving and trying to get attention, and finally we look up and there’s Frakes on the screen cussing out his constituency and flushing his presidency down the toilet. It was our last chance, last hurrah, seventh-inning charge up the hill, all that. We had to go with it.”

Not taking my eyes off him, I jotted a

MOCKERY

few notes on my notepad in my lap. “He didn’t mention where it came from?”

“Nope. Nothing. Got all mysterious and said he’d bargained for it, but not even his mother would’ve believed him and neither did we.” A huff. “Not that anybody pressed him all that hard,” he added sarcastically.

“We. As in...?”

He scowled at the table. “Jan, Milt, the usual band of mariachis. I never touch the hardball stuff, Sam -- you know that. I’m nuts and bolts. Give me the parts, I’ll build your car. Besides, we were pretty worried that Frakes’ people were going to release something on the senator – especially now that he’d beaten the hell out of Frakes in that last debate. We wanted to strike the first blow.”

“You were worried about Frakes’ people releasing what, exactly?” I asked.

As I said, deep down Obermeyer had steel. Now it came out.

His finger leapt and stabbed. “Don’t play the fucking Virgin Mary with me, Mr. Walker. You know what just as well as I do. Frakes’ people had footage of the senator pulling some sweetie-pie into his dressing room after a speech. Every reporter covering the campaign knew it. You did too.”

“Yeah,” I admitted.

Obermeyer stoked himself with more tobacco.

“In that way, I’m glad Mitch Taylor won. At least he did it fair and square.” A righteous drag. “Fool, though. See that fresh-water bill he sent to Congress last week? Could’ve been a draft for one of his stand-up routines.”

“You’re saying, then, the dressing-room tape might have been true. I mean, despite denials and religion and all the rest of it, Gotchell was still grabbing asses.”

“Of course he was!” Another drag.



Don’t play the fucking Virgin Mary with me, Mr. Walker. You know what just as well as I do. Frakes’ people had footage of the senator pulling some sweetie-pie into his dressing room after a speech

“Tell ya one, Sam. Got a cousin out in Minnetonka. His kid’s studying advertising, leaned on me to get her on the campaign. Smart girl, speaks Spanish ‘cause her mom’s – what is it? – Nicaraguan or something south-of-the-bordery. Just the kid you want to send down to Chicago, ball the Latino vote, right? But I couldn’t put her on, I just couldn’t fucking take the chance. She’s twenty-two – got an ass you’d light up Broadway for. If that bastard’d caught her alone, he’d’ve bent her over the nearest armchair, no questions asked.”

“I see what you mean.”

“Motherfucker. Know what his pick-up line was?” He imitated Gotchell’s nasal tenor: “‘Oh, I’m just a poor, tired presidential candidate and my wife’s so far from home. Every day it’s people, people, people. I need intimacy. I need release from all this tension. Please, just a few minutes, honey. I know it’s above-and-beyond the call of duty, but this is a presidential campaign. People make sacrifices in a campaign.’ That was the bullshit he gave his girls – and don’t ask who told me very much in the first-hand vernacular, sitting right where you are. Just after we’d won Texas and I’m seriously starting to think about public or private for my kids. Fuck. And then I get a lesson in the good senator’s ‘religion.’ Too nice a kid to ask for damages, thank god. Stuffed twenty grandful of slush in her hand and cashed a favor to get her a job on The Hill. And don’t think it was hush money, Sam; it was an apology.” Another puff. “Fucker. Try breaking your back on a campaign knowing that your opponent has a vid that can torpedo you any time he wants.”

This, too, I would attribute to a “senior Gotchell campaign official” in my future book *The Saddest Election*, but the story

summed up the dark side of the Gotchell campaign that I did my best to bring out: everyone knew that Gotchell's hands were as hot as ever and that Frakes's people had a video to prove it.

We listened to the smoke for a while. Obermeyer propped his big head on the heel of one hand, elbow on the desk.

I said, "Still, funny thing is that even in the wake of the Frakes outtakes, his people –"

"Never released their tape of Gotchell and the babe. Yeah. Yeah. Go figure." Obermeyer shook his head. "Sudden remorse? Forget it – that was Phyllis Kirk in charge of the Frakes campaign; remorse is for the little people. That leaves a gesture of fair play. But that's out too, see: 'cause then they would've dropped the charges against Jover instead of banging the drum with them till they sunk us. Nope. I've thought about it up, down, over and out, Sam. No answer. Maybe they figured it was no use, anyways. Hell, what was Mitch Taylor's jump first week post-OutFrakes – twenty points?"

"Twenty-eight."

Obermeyer puffed more. "Nope – I draw a complete blank on it. But I'll tell you something: if I ever come across Phyllis Kirk in a dark Motel Six, I swear to Christ I'll hang her up by her thongstraps till she spills it – just to have it all straight in my head." He stubbed out his cigarette with one, vindictive thump. "If you want to do us all a favor in your book, Sam, get to the bottom line of that one."

++++

Four years have passed since the Miracle Election, so before I go on, it's probably a good idea to refresh your memory.

It was the weirdest finish since War-



It was a perfect forgery, with the exception of its fat, red stripe: it should have been fat and blue

ren Harding's electoral tie was broken in a smoke-filled room. Briefly:

The general election was close, if not boring, into the first ten days of October. Taylor, like past Independent candidates, was making a showing strong enough to win federal election funds, but little else. His voter base consisted of defections from the major parties in roughly equal amounts. His Democrats disliked their candidate's reluctance to improve the social safety net, and his plastic personality. His Republicans disliked their candidate's idea of subsidizing "essential American industries," and his flat personality. Mitchell Taylor had ambiguous policies ("We need strong cities!") but expressed them with wit and warmth.

Electoral Dullsville. As one *Boston Globe* columnist wrote, "Here we are, less than two months from a presidential election, and the weather report is the most exciting part of the news."

And then the scandals broke, and nobody gave a damn about the weather.

To wit:

Five weeks before the election, the chief of security for Senator Alan Gotchell's campaign was caught trying to enter Frakes campaign headquarters with a false security pass. It was a perfect forgery, with the exception of its fat, red stripe: it should have been fat and blue. The rest you surely saw on the famous security-camera footage. The duty guard stopped Arnold Jover as he walked through the metal detector, and Jover got huffy. The guard, a five-foot-two-inch bodybuilder who soon parlayed his fame into a role on a beach-police TV series, took offense at Jover's brush-off, seized him in an arm lock with one brick-like hand and lazily radioed his partner with the other. The partner came, the police came, and the next night all America watched the

MOCKERY

video of Gotchell security chief Arnold Jover being led away in handcuffs. Senator Gotchell's fustian denials only made matters worse: if he couldn't control his organization, what did that say about his future White House? Nobody wanted another Watergate; the senator's candidacy was finished.

Not to be outdone, the Frakes campaign was rocked three weeks later by embarrassing outtakes leaked to CBS News. That's the tape, brought in by Terry Letizzle, that Rolf Obermeyer was referring to. Wasn't that a shocker? Frakes, the Ohio apple farmer with his toothache pallor, stands holding a red-white-and-blue candle (symbolic of the "melting down of the American economy"). He flubs a line and breaks into a rictal scowl:

FRAKES: "Why the hell do I have to mention this junk about Medicare? It's pure bullshit, y'know, besides bein' –"

MALE VOICE OFF CAMERA (dryly): "Because we need Florida, Governor. Gotta have it."

FRAKES: "Yeah, well..." A pause. "Blood-sucking leeches – every one of those toothless farts! The country can go to hell, can't it? -- long as they get their orange juice and bran for breakfast!"

An indecorous thing to say about one's most important constituency, which showed its appreciation by dropping his polls off a cliff.

An early post-campaign writer located the CBS producer who had received the Frakes outtakes (fate's prescient rhyme; the scandal soon became "OutFrakes"). He admitted only that the tape had come from the Gotchell campaign. "Don't ask me who or how. All I know is that I took one look at it, recognized the spot that was eventually made from it, and knew I had the hit of the campaign."



Blood-sucking leeches – every one of those toothless farts! The country can go to hell, can't it? -- long as they get their orange juice and bran for breakfast!

A hit it was. Frakes' polls plummeted to Gotchell's level, and in a throw-the-rascals-out surge, the nation turned to Mitch Taylor, the suave late-night-talk-show-host-turned-mayor -- mayor of Albuquerque, that is. He surged ahead in the last weeks of the campaign on the strength of his agile sense of humor, passable Spanish, and legendary 25-year marriage to actress Mary Ann Stall. He slid across the finish line with just the required number of electoral votes and 40.5 percent of the vote. To his and the planet's amazement, he had won the White House.

The Miracle Election thus centered on two mysteries. First, how had the Frakes outtakes got into the hands of the Gotchell campaign? (As you've just seen, I now had a lead and a name – Terry Letizzle – to check out.) And second, why had Arnold Jover, ex-Navy SEAL, ex-FBI, ex-spotless citizen, tried to enter Frakes' campaign headquarters? What on earth had been worth the risk? The tape of Gotchell is a possibility, but hardly a sure one; for, assuming that Jover wasn't going to rifle the campaign's huge video files amidst a dozen staffers burning the midnight oil, how would he have known where to find it? Had someone in Frakes' campaign told him? A good soldier, he has never said. Investigators could not pry a word from his set SEAL lips. Jover did six months in minimum-security, walked out past three hundred screaming journalists, and disappeared into a private Arizona military academy, where he personally instructs ten-year-olds in the proper making of beds, and bounces an Eisenhower dollar the regulation 18 inches off each one each morning.

And as long as we're on the subject of a video of Senator Gotchell's philandering technique, let's hover for a paragraph

to remember just why such a sequence was absolutely deadly to his candidacy.

Alan Gotchell was a handsome and twice- (now thrice-) married man, then 50, who had plied the halls of Congress for eleven years. Only women had he plied even more. With zeal and industry, he had become one of the greatest of congressional womanizers and earned the nickname “Gotcha” Gotchell. He managed to dampen this tag in the year prior to the campaign, however, invoking a religious conversion. He joined a church and started a congressional Bible-study group. He even trotted out his “personal spiritual advisor,” a fire-breathing evangelist of unimpeachably dark skin who proclaimed Gotchell’s new godliness. It was a moral Brooklyn Bridge, but the public bought it.

And Gotchell’s organization intended to protect it. Any video of sexual shenanigans was a fake, they told pining reporters. And none of Gotchell’s people broke ranks. Three young female aides on the campaign flatly denied any improper advances. Zero. The Secret Service people, with their bureaucrat’s feel for the side of the bread that holds the butter, stiff-armed all inquiries. On Governor Frakes’ side, though, things were less clear. Did they have such a tape? What was on it? The answers I got ran from just-about-really-categorical denial (Phyllis Kirk, Frakes’ cagey campaign director) to yes-I-saw-it-or-something-like-it, this from Laura Prestini, an advance woman for Frakes. I had interviewed her a few weeks before my talk with Rolf. Her version was this:

“The ‘Gotcha Gotchell’ film? Yeah, I saw it,” she told me with her now-famous little-girl giggle. “About five of us did – though don’t ask me to tell you much. I was pretty ripped. In this hu-



the Secret Service guy – I think he was Afro – closes the door and kind of grins to the other guy who comes into the picture. They’re standing in front of the door with their hands folded. You know – one of these sleazy grins that guys always have when stuff is going on?

mungous L.A. hotel suite on the night the convention closed. Whole hotel was like one big party. We were just so to-taled out by the primaries and then the late campaigning for superdelegates. It was the first breathing-space we’d had since New Hampshire. We were in there partying and putting on vids – some of them these disgusting porn things. Somebody – I think Phyllis Kirk, yeah – put on something, ‘from headquarters files,’ she said. And she had this cheesy look on her face. Anyways, suddenly there I am at like four in the morning watching Alan Gotchell holding open a dressing-room door – he’s got his suit jacket and his tie off, and you can make her out in the back of the room; shot’s taken from way down a hallway, looking in. And he’s laughing with a Secret Service guy and sort of, like, escorting him out, you know? And they both have these juicy, good-old-boy grins on their faces, and then he goes back in – Gotchell does – and you can kind of see her there in the back. And the Secret Service guy – I think he was Afro – closes the door and kind of grins to the other guy who comes into the picture. They’re standing in front of the door with their hands folded. You know – one of these sleazy grins that guys always have when stuff is going on? I mean, you don’t see anything, but it’s perfectly obvious what’s going on.”

That was the best description that I found, though it was no scoop. Laura had told other people, too, during and after the campaign; that was one reason I interviewed her. Another Frakes campaigner at the same party told me he might have seen it, but wasn’t sure. Another mentioned watching the vids and hearing Gotchell’s name mentioned, but again, nothing concrete. The media people at Frakes campaign headquar-

MOCKERY

ters swore they had no record or recollection of such footage in their archives. Mentioned by every post-election book, the “Gotcha Gotchell” video lodged ultimately in the stratosphere of Hints and Allegation. There it stayed.

Stayed, that is, until well into the first year of the Taylor Administration, when yours quite truly, Sam Walker, then 31, a penniless and widely unknown writer of history books, pushed into doing a how-it-was-won election book by his lubricious editors, took an anonymous tip and turned it into the biggest political scandal since Watergate.

And how I regret it. For my book, *The Saddest Election*, eight million copies sold in nineteen languages, was flat wrong.

Which is why I’m writing this adden-



I’ll take you through how I wrote *The Saddest Election* and how I later discovered that it was a sham with my name on the jacket

dum to my book, and publishing it on the Internet, free of copyright, complete with video clips: to be sure the truth finally gets out. I also wish to thwart any accusation that I’m going to make (more) money out of the story. Not that it matters; the lawsuit resulting from this addendum will likely shred the fortune I earned from *The Saddest Election*.

So up with the curtain. The Taylor presidency is history, Rolf Obermeyer and a few others have now agreed to let me use their names, and the air is clear for me to publish the full story. I’ll take you through how I wrote *The Saddest Election* and how I later discovered that it was a sham with my name on the jacket. If this account shatters a few pretty truths and sugary icons, so much the better.

PHILIP KRASKE



Amy wanted
to protect
Cynthia's
photos from
seizure since
they provided
the context
that could
explain and
normalize the
prints already
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**WRITING WORTH
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