

forget that.

REFLECTIONS ON POSTWAR AMERICAN PRESIDENTS  
 Truman became President by accident, which probably explains why, on the whole, he did a good job. Eisenhower, deprecated as an inveterate bungler, a shilly-shallying, grinning incompetent, is now beginning to emerge as one of the greats of his century, a genius who kept 'm guessing, a Brutus-like sly dumb guy, always three moves ahead, his inane image proving a perfect camouflage in the inanest, insanest, of all necessary games with its shameful shams and rituals, the pretence you can please all of the people all of the time, the big lie that makes one man to be a god having all the answers and a tucked-away fifth ace. Kennedy played a straight hand, almost parading integrity with a Gracchian touch, which, come to think of it, explains a lot (for "forum" read "open motorcade in Dallas"). On the other hand, images tarnish with exposure and those who die in their prime never age. Once again a Johnson put on dead men's boots and had to assume, then pay, the mortgage on Vietnam. Funny how it's the liberals who get so entangled in foreign broils. Nixon's waterfall was caused as much by neurosis as by the exposure of deceit. Actually, Machiavelli prescribed dirty tricks only in the case of need. Why lie, when you can make an inoperative statement or two? Ford gave the impression of being a decent non-intellectual, the kindava guy who lacked the nerve to push his luck. The key to explaining Jimmy's rise and fall is appreciating America's occasional need to find a clean Eugene, but not too clean, which is probably why he lasted out for just one term.. You can win one election, but evidently not two, by promising to deliver, like you might a peanut order. Reagan outdid even Eisenhower in looking like a goof, and likewise turned up trumps - thanks largely to Gorby, or was it massive deficit spending, Maggy and good luck? George W. Bush Senior, being no fool, kept his cool, and was much kinder to Germany than ever old Europe was. Bill ensured economic stability, but Starr-crossed like Romeo, he let sexual proclivities distract him from his political portfolio. So now we come to George W. Bush Junior. He's sure fixin' to finish the job, so let's pray it sure is the right one. Archie Bunker for President!