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## Portrait of an Election: The 1980 Presidential Campaign

by Elizabeth Drew  
Simon & Schuster, 356 pp., \$14.95

ELIZABETH DREW'S play-by-play recap of the 1980 presidential race is gathered from a series of *New Yorker* articles. Her on-the-scene reportage begins with the contenders' announcements of their candidacy and ends with Ronald Reagan's first press conference as President-elect. In between is a detailed account of the country's most elaborate political game told from dozens of different viewpoints—occasionally even Drew's. From her countless inside, anonymous sources, we learn that Nancy Reagan is considered smarter and tougher than her husband, that as early as January 1980 the Kennedy campaign was on the verge of financial collapse, etc.

Yet reading this chronicle is like perusing old news. We hear too many times that Ted Kennedy shouts his speeches, that the Carter people are better at campaigning than at governing, and that Reagan has managed to create a "nice man" image of himself. In weekly magazine articles, these reminders lend coherence; back-to-back in a book they become irritatingly repetitive.

—KAREN TENNEY

## King of the Confessors

by Thomas Hoving  
Simon & Schuster, 288 pp., \$16.95

THIS IS THOMAS HOVING'S story of how he pursued an intricately carved 12th-century ivory known as the Bury St. Edmunds Cross, which he acquired for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Cloisters Collection in 1963. Hoving,

former director of the Met and the author of the best-selling *Tutankhamun* (1978), was a young curator at the Cloisters when he first heard of this elusively documented artwork and its cagey owner, a Yugoslav who kept his art collection in a Zurich bank vault. The cross, bearing the unusual inscription from which the book's title comes, was sought by four or five of the world's largest museums, even though some experts thought it was an elaborate forgery. It was Hoving's self-appointed task to out-sleuth and out-bid the competition.

Hoving might have subtitled this book "How I Began My Brilliant Career," for his self-satisfaction and egocentric enthusiasm create the momentum that makes the account read like a suspense story rather than a research diary. The story is interesting, revealing much about the work of an art historian and the world of museum curators. And Hoving is a facile writer. But finally, there is something extremely objectionable in the self-aggrandizement Hoving felt the need to include in this academic true story.

—ELIZABETH GROSSMAN

## Fonda: My Life

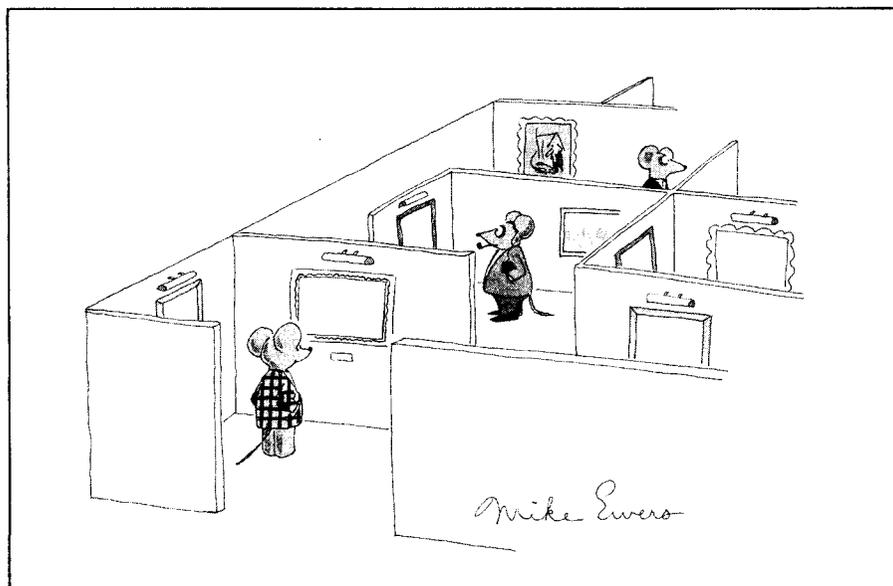
by Henry Fonda as told to Howard Teichmann  
New American Library, 384 pp., \$15.95

## Elvis

by Albert Goldman  
McGraw-Hill, 590 pp., \$14.95

PUBLISHERS' ROW has recently laid out big bucks for these two show-biz bios.

Howard Teichmann approaches his



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