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<154/c>	presumably they drum into them at medical school: 'I will certainly convey your request to the Prime Minister for a comment on these polls, but I think you will find him taking the view that after April 9 you will all be writing about him winning the only poll that matters.' In what I hope was a rare lapse into intolerance, I asked the reporter next to me: 'Does that little sod always talk like that?' The reporter replied: 'That's one of his more informal sentences.' But the little sod was right - or at least, his side won. This has enraged and dismayed most communicators. But the communicators can take heart. The election was won despite the spin doctors. For months, the spin doctors relied on the training imparted at such teaching hospitals as the Downing Street Policy Unit. Throughout his premiership the diagnosis from such authorities was that Mr Major should not place too much emphasis on low taxes, and should 'distance himself' from Thatcherism. Voters were now said to be more worried about 'poor public services' than they were about high taxes. So, the Conservative response to Mr Smith's Budget was at first feeble. They simply appeared to be defending high earners. They did not convey the threat which Mr Smith posed to average earners trying to become higher earners, and to low earners who relied on higher earners for work. But, two weeks into the campaign, Mr Major seems to have stopped taking the quacks' advice. The patient started treating himself. He talked about taxes all the time, rather as the last unexpected Tory winner, Mr Heath in 1970, talked all the time about prices. By last Thursday, Mrs Thatcher may still have been unpopular but Thatcherism was not. It was Thatcherism's fourth election victory. In the campaign's second half, Mr Major (apparently without being told to do so by any important surgeon from a teaching hospital) came out against proportional representation, and Mr Kinnock (apparently incited by Labour's teaching hospitals) as good as came out for it. In the last week, Italian politics became even more chaotic than usual, and Germany went in for some 'neo-Nazism'. Even then, Central Office did not immediately establish the link between those two developments and PR. That was done by the Tory press. In the end, victory was given to Mr Major by disgruntled Italians, disgruntled Germans, the tabloids, his own inner resources, the C2s, and God - in reverse order. Election Comment: One for the record book By CHRISTOPHER BOOKER I SHALL treasure
 <p>Key:</p> <p>Footprint</p> <p>ConEn1</p> <p>Footprint</p> <p>ConEn2</p> <p>Footprint</p> <p>ConEn3</p> <p>New topic</p>	<p>my copy of Friday morning's Times carrying the front-page headline 'Exit polls point to certainty of a hung parliament'</p> <p>. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Thursday's extraordinary election result was one of the finest jokes played on almost everyone in sight for years. Is there honestly a single person in the country, the Prime Minister included, who could have dared to predict that the Conservatives would end up with the largest number of votes ever recorded in a British election? I am not sure even Mrs Thatcher will have appreciated the joke of her modest young protege surpassing her own record Conservative vote of 1987. It has long been one of the curiosities of our political history that the previous all-time record was set by a party that actually lost the election, Clement Attlee's Labour Party in 1951. But at least on that occasion the pollsters did manage to predict correctly</p>

	<p><u>which party would form the Government. On this occasion Mr David Butler will have an even finer collection of predictions to record in his book about the election than he did in 1970, when almost every distinguished political correspondent of the time echoed Peter Jenkins of the Guardian in asking ‘Why is Labour winning with such apparent ease?’, just before Ted Heath won by a majority of 43. IN THE run-up to last Thursday I found my thoughts turning to a story Alistair Cooke once told to explain the most notorious of all opinion poll upsets, Truman’s victory over Dewey in 1948. Cooke recalled how, like everyone else, he was utterly baffled as to how the pollsters could have got it all so wrong - until, a few days later, he found himself in a train sitting opposite a Republican county chairman. At first the Republican claimed to share the general bafflement, until finally, rather shamefacedly, he confessed to Cooke: ‘I don’t know about anyone else, but I know what happened in my case. I had been campaigning for Dewey night and day for six months. I arrived in that polling booth all ready to vote the straight Republican ticket. At that moment there came into my mind the image of that little guy with a moustache and I thought, dammit. I just don’t want a little guy with a moustache in the White House. I voted for Truman.’ I suspect something not dissimilar may have happened on Thursday. Whatever they may have told the pollsters, there must have been countless voters who, as they finally confronted their choice, saw in their mind’s eye the image of a beaming Neil and Glenys standing at the door of Number 10, and thought, dammit - prompting them to switch back to that decent, straightforward</u></p>
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