

THE ACHING MOMENT

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There were few lonelier places in the world during the last fortnight than the red brick-dust Olympic track at Melbourne. The athletes who started up its empty lanes from the starting blocks had come not only to race others but to engage in an ultimate act of self-exploration; in the aching moments before the gun sent them on their way each relied on his own strength, his own courage, and his own speed. Few had more grounds for dismay—and few knelt at the starting line with more resolution—than Lee Quincy Calhoun, the tall (6 feet, 1 inch), slim (165 pounds) Negro youth from Gary, Ind., who won the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles.

A high hurdle stands 3 feet 6 inches tall. There are 10 of them to be surmounted in the 110-meter race and a man, to win in modern competition, must run over them and through the tape in less than 14 seconds—at almost a sprinter's speed. His timing must be exquisite and he cannot allow a change in footing or a gust of wind to alter the rhythm of the three driving steps he takes between hurdles. Neither can he allow the fierce pressure of competition to alter his composure—or his form. As he stands at the start, the 10 hurdles can seem like 10 traps, each waiting to trip him—he must clear each, but only by a fraction of an inch.

Every athlete has his own devil to fight, his own cross to bear. Calhoun's was the last 50 yards of the race. He is a quiet, polite, soft-spoken youth with none of the love of show which often seems to accompany spectacular athletic talent, but even in high school he had little difficulty with the basic posture of the hurdler—the loose—hipped leg split, the instantaneous forward adjustment of weight, the precise handling of shoulders and arms which allow a man to step rather than jump the wooden barrier. At little North Carolina College, in Durham, his talent bloomed amazingly under the direction of his track coach Leroy Walker. As a sophomore he was timed in 14.3 for the 120-yard high hurdles. He was drafted in 1952 and was attached to the Eighth Army's 111th Evacuation Hospital in Korea. Last winter, a civilian again, he became one of the sensations of the Eastern indoor track seasons—he set or equaled world records in 50-60—and 70-yards races and beat all the leading hurdlers in the United States.

But last spring, outside again to run 120 yards, he made a disconcerting discovery: he could not maintain his blazing speed for the full race. He entered the Marine Corps Relays at Quantico, and USC's one-time star, Navy Lieutenant Jack Davis, simply ran away from him in the last 50 yards. Afterward Davis told a newsman, "Calhoun doesn't have the stamina to go the distance. He'll never be a good hurdler." Davis—who had lost the 1952 Olympic hurdles race to Harrison Dillard by an eyelash and was passionately bent on winning in 1956—might better have kept silent. From that day on Calhoun, too, burned to win at Melbourne. He drove himself through fast quarter miles to gain strength, and his hurdling times were dramatically lowered: 14 flat, 13.9, 13.7. Davis broke the world record with a dazzling 13.4 in one of the preliminaries of the AAU meet, but Calhoun beat him in the finals with a 13.6. They ran a dead heat in Olympic trials.

For all this, a few days before the games themselves, Calhoun had reason to feel that fate was turning against him.—Davis, running on an uneven grass track at Bendigo, Australia, broke his own world record with a fantastic 13.3-second race and spoke confidently of lowering this to 13 flat. Calhoun hardly slept at all the night before the Olympic final. He went out to the track taut with nervousness. But he found himself curiously confident of victory. He burst off the blocks and led Davis through the first five hurdles by two feet. The pair was even on the eighth, on the ninth, even as they crossed the 10th hurdle. But somewhere Calhoun found the power he needed. He won by inches in 13.5 seconds. "He shouldn't have said it," he said almost gratefully, of Davis afterward. "I just had to win."



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

At certain times during *The Best in Steinbeck*, some members of the audience laughed, during obviously serious scenes, and attempted to heckle the performers. This kind of conduct is deplorable. If one is too stupid to understand and appreciate what a thing actually is and what it means, he can not help that—no one can; but, on the other hand, if one who knows better but deliberately heckles performers by jeering them, then that is indicative of the fact that he needs to check his manners.

A person who KNOWS better can be corrected, but a person who is too stupid to understand what a thing such as *The Best in Steinbeck* is, and what it means, is incorrigible; it must be confessed that the only thing that we can do to help him is to keep him away from such affairs.

After the performance, it was discovered that the untimely laughter was not only offensive to those in the audience who observed the program in the serious vein in which, it was given, but to the performers as well. Robert Strauss commented, "What's the matter with the audience; they laughed. Don't they appreciate drama?" Although this statement embarrassed the students who heard it, Mr. Strauss was completely justified in making this statement, after having given a magnificent performance.

Notwithstanding the fact that all of the students were not guilty of offending the performers, I fear that the school will have to bear the brunt of the offense, for Mr. Strauss is likely to say that the students of NCC do not appreciate drama—not some of the students of NCC do not appreciate drama.

Oscar Wilde once said, "They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty." I do not contend that we of NCC should learn to appreciate beautiful things for the sole purpose of becoming "the elect," but I do contend that we should at least learn to appreciate beautiful things enough to become respectable and intelligent men and women of the future.

Respectfully,
Gerald C. Simmons

Dear Editor:

As chairman of the Committee on Concerts, I should like to extend an apology to the student body for the late starts of two of our concerts. The students accepted the explanations for the delays with commendable patience and consideration, and I hasten to assure them that there has been no attempt on our part to sabotage a long standing tradition of punctuality here at North Carolina College.

Detailed information as to the location of the school was given to the booking agents, but, alas, reference was made to the B.N. Duke Auditorium, (as was proper, but not necessarily effective) and we fear that in making inquiries, the performers were not sufficiently explicit. We shall, in the future, warn them of those pitfalls which have sent these all over the locale in their quest for North Carolina College.

Very sincerely,
Ruth H. Gillum.

Dear Editor:

Intelligent theatre-goers were shocked—not to mention the words "embarrassed to tears"—at the behavior of some of the student body at the performance of "The Best of Steinbeck" Thursday, November 29, 1956. Granted, there were humorous scenes in which laughter was expected, but how the students could laugh at the killing of Curley's wife and at the shooting of Lennie by George in the scene adapted from Steinbeck's "Of Men and Mice" is beyond me!!!! I would like very much to have the answers to many questions that are now troubling my mind.

First I would like very much for some of those base, uncouth, "Cheshire cats" to give me the names of any reputable plays or novels in which the death scenes are funny? And too, why is it that we as a race seem to possess a character trait in which we laugh at things we do not understand? If those ignoble characters did not understand what was happening they should have left the auditorium or they should have kept their mouths shut! Why did they have to show how ignorance and stupidity gripped their souls when it came to appreciating the cultural aspects of life.

There were present at the performance students who realized that they were witnessing one of the best actresses of today (Miss Bennett has been widely acclaimed for years). However, I fear that if the drama critic from *The Durham Morning Herald* had stayed for the excerpt from "Of Mice and Men", he would have made a comment on our behavior. We all know what impression this would have made on the community, and especially among pro-segregationists.

However, don't think for a second that this type of behavior doesn't exist at white schools. The same calibre of students who "performed" on Thursday night are also present at white schools because they behave in such a fashion doesn't deem the behavior correct, however.

Sincerely yours,
Richard E. Harris

Dear Editor:

In regards to morale, the virtual blow perhaps came when it was announced that Vesper was no longer mandatory. I do not hold that Vesper should be mandatory. I am merely saying this: because Vesper isn't mandatory, many students do not deem it necessary to attend Vesper, be the speaker dull or interesting. (One should attend Church Services on Sunday if only for the purpose of fulfilling the commandment "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy"). Thus the moral standard of the students who leave religion out of their life is lowered and the students' ideas become corrupted.

I believe that if there were an all out campaign on the part of all responsible persons to enter the student body into as many situations and activities as possible concerning the College, that this act would arouse more interest on the part of the students. For example, there are few times when visiting students who come to our college (Continued on Page 12)

Dear Editor:

You should be delighted at the action of the Student Congress which cut the pitifully small *Campus Echo* budget from \$1500 to \$1200. This seems to indicate that the students do not care to have a first-rate school paper. You no doubt still have some old-fashioned ideas about making "All-American" again this year, but the students don't care to have that kind of school paper: after all this is a Negro college and the *ECHO* has no business attempting to rank with the student-papers of Harvard, Yale and the other big universities—our yearbook does not.

If you stop and look at the situation, Mr. Editor, you'll soon realize how fortunate you are. The Student Congress took \$300 of the *Echo's* already small appropriations and all but told you to "go to Hell" when you asked them to reconsider, so it must logically follow that they don't expect you to give them a good paper; look at the work they have relieved you of. Besides, the *Eagle*, which is to receive the \$300, is going to be better than ever this year. It's design is revolutionary, they say. And it will be a third larger than last year's yearbook. Just think what a colossal publication the *Eagle* is going to be this year!

Your must admire the foresight of our well-dressed President of the Student Government, Charles "Hamlet" Holland, who first came up with the "brilliant" idea of taking \$300 from the *Echo's* appropriations and giving it to the *Eagle* so that we may have a super-duper yearbook. I am sure that Al "McCarthy" Richardson, editor of the yearbook, can give us one. I can hardly wait to see it.

Mr. Holland's courage in this matter was really terrifying. When the Student Congress passed a bill to restore the *Echo's* \$300, in spite of his recommendation to the contrary, he vetoed it and steadfastly insisted that the cut be carried out; it was.

And so you see, dear Editor, it simply is not in the cards that the *Echo* should be a first rate publication: we like second rate things around here. As a true democrat I'm forced to admit that it is high time for the *Echo* to become second rate; the *Eagle* has been that for years, and we must have consistency.

This being the case, Mr. Editor, I can only pass along to you Omar Khayyam's advice; "...take the cash and let the credit go"...

Yours truly,
Jerome W. Dudley

On Stark Reality

By BENJAMIN S. PAGE

Perhaps
If I'd forget you
For just one moment's span
And just pretend there was no
you
Perhaps
I'd be a man.

But
If I try to forget you
(I do not think that I can)
And convince myself there is no
you
There is this I could not stand—
There isn't.