

"Hair of the Dog" Offers Lesson

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Special Contributor

The summer following my freshman year in college brought me a work experience that I will not soon forget. I was just emerging into adulthood after a lengthy, happy childhood and a brief, awkward adolescence. I was sheltered and a bit arrogant, sure that someone would hire me for a well paying summer job. No one did. As the weeks of summer wore on, I finally took the only job offered to me. I became a dog census taker.

I endured countless jokes about "going to the dogs." That is exactly what I did. Each morning I joined a partner to work assigned neighborhoods, knocking on doors to ask questions about dog ownership. My partner was a chubby cellist. He was a childhood friend who had frequently needed my protection from bullies. Now he was supposed to be the masculine presence that would protect me from danger in the down-and-out areas to which we were assigned.

One thing was soon apparent. Nobody welcomed nosy collegians asking questions about their dogs. Owners rightly assumed that there was some connection between our questions and fines for unlicensed dogs. Owners identified with their dogs. Our questions about age, sex, and breed of dog were as much an affront as if we had questioned personal pedigree. We learned to ask the questions obliquely, to savor the replies. Pride spoke, "Well, she's almost a Collie, but a little bit Spitz." Honestly might be mixed with defensiveness, "Best damned mutt in this county."

We were paid at the rate of ten cents per recorded dog. When owners told us they had "just one old hound," and we could see an entire pack in the backyard kennel, it was tempting to list them all and collect the dimes. My partner and I had been taught to be honest. We scrupulously recorded only the number claimed, but we made a note of "possibly more" in case the dog

officer wanted to check it out for himself. Honesty like that meant that it took alot of walking and door pounding to make a dollar.

I did not earn much money that summer, but I did learn a number of things that have stayed with me. I learned to conquer my fear of the poor, of people who had usually been some distance from me. I saw things that before had been only abstract "problems" in a sociology text - patterns of slum ownership in an industrial community, hunger, alcoholism, inadequate education, and racial injustice. I could no longer ignore these issues or the people I had once feared. For the next decade I searched for solutions to the inequalities I saw. I found no easy

solutions, but I continued to work in classrooms, work camps, civil rights activities, and politics, hoping for change.

I learned to persevere - a Victorian concept - but one that has helped me in other situations less pleasant than the dog census. Most of the work we do, whether we are students, parents, or faculty is unglamorous. It is the ability to find meaning behind the drudgery that carries us through to accomplishment and satisfaction in our work.

I learned not to judge people too quickly through my own view of the world. The first surprise that summer was the chubby cellist. I had looked down on him because of his social inadequacies, his inability to meet my teen aged view of manliness. I found he was kinder and funnier than any of the rest of my friends. In decaying neighborhoods, we discovered people who would welcome us, share a glass of iced tea on a hot day, and laugh with us at our ridiculous assignment. Children accompanied us on our

rounds, friendly and eager to talk. We were even protected from the anger that our questions could generate. ("I'll take you next door to see Jim. He can be real mean if he's been drinking.") It has continued to be my pleasure to find surprises, mostly pleasant, in the people I meet.

All of this personal reminiscence is to urge you to look for chances to learn outside of the classroom during your college years. You will find the chance in foreign study, internships, volunteer work, and in unlikely jobs. Many Guilford students have told me that one of the most valuable parts of their college life has been an internship (see Jim Keith) or foreign study (see Bill Schmickle). Lowly jobs, on campus or off, can be more than dollars toward tuition if you use them to discover new things about yourself and the world around you. And if any of you should find that is lowlier than taking the dog census, I would like to be informed of your experiences.



Letters to the Editor

"Welcome" to the South

Dear Editor,

My grandmother's reply to my announcement that I would be attending school in the South was that I should let no one know that I was a Catholic. This reaction puzzled me; at first I took it as a joke and laughed.

"Right Grandmom, if I see any men in white sheets I'll come home."

"Janice, just watch you tongue and behave."

I haven't given much thought to telling people I'm a Catholic and I haven't been very cautious. I hold

hands with my black boyfriend in public and kiss a black girlfriend when we meet. I haven't been sufficiently worried.

My mother did not want me to live with my friend this summer; her reasoning is not what you would hear from you mother in this situation. She was afraid that a Klansman or "some lunatic" would attack us. She warned me to lock all doors and to enter the apartment with discretion. She too was quite serious in her fears and would not allow me to brush them aside. All summer, as I lay in bed, the creaks of the house terrified me.

So now finally these fears are coming to be a reality. A few weeks ago, Marcian was wakened by a phone call and a threat, "Don't f--with Janice Lynch." A friend of Marcian's brother finds notes under her door: "Nigger lover." "Poor white trash nigger lover." "Poor, poor white trash."

These two incidents may not frighten you. I am surprised to find my own reaction is one of anger. I am furious and not sure how to deal with this. Shall I stand on campus and curse this unknown person? Shall I call my grandmother and tell her that I'm coming home? Shall I chain

the door and not go out alone?

I am distressed by these incidents. The very personal nature of them makes it inevitable that these threats come from a student at Guilford. I cannot and do not try to guess who is responsible for these incidents. Perhaps it was only in jest: but no one is really laughing.

Does it sound trivial to you? Imagine that you receive notes under your door: "Quaker lover" of "Honky lover." Imagine someone calls your boyfriend and threatens him not to "f-- with" you. Imagine passing strangers and friends on campus and wondering whether their thoughts are so malicious

Does it seem absurd that I should worry about these two incidents? Of course--and it is equally absurd to chain my door at night, to tremble at the thought of being alone in an apartment, to stay inside after dark. It is absurd at my age to be afraid of the dark.

Perhaps someone was only kidding. But this racism is not a joke, nor can I make it one. I am angry and I am frightened but I am not going home.

Jancie Lynch

Who is Responsible for "David Nash?"

Dear Editor,

A writer's life is not an easy one, just ask anyone on the Guilfordian staff. As writers, we diligently search out the truth and the real story no matter to what depth we have to "sink" to produce a quality publication. We have to maintain an objective viewpoint no matter how repulsive we find the subject.

Despite all this, it's not the world-shaking occurrences but the little things that upset a writer the most. We sweat, toil and labor over an article only to have some jackass jump up and down claiming that he wrote it. This really bugs a honest-to-goodness writer. We all feel these psuedo-writer

are grass stains on the cosmic fabric of life.

The astute reader will have figured out by now that I'm ticked off about something. I personally don't think ticked off conveys the true intensity of my righteous wrath. Homicidal rage is closer to the truth. If I were to see David Nash right now I'd strangle that pencil-necked geek.

Where does he come off claiming that he was the author of "Where's Your David Nash?" Some gall this kid has! Just because he steals the unicorn story from a starving, young aspiring writer, he, the diabolical David Nash, feels that he can steal my article, too.

David, you're lower than a flea suffering from leprosy. I know you suffer from an unhappy childhood but that doesn't give you the right to steal other people's articles. Your just going to have to stop living in this fantasy world of your and recognize that your writing will never approach the mental level of comic book readers, much less the caliber of my poetic prose.

I want you and every student to know, Dave, that I don't intend to rest until this gross miscarriage of justice has been rectified. I'll sue you down to your knivvies. I want all the book and movie rights and I plan to get them one way or another. (Anyone who is a good sharpshooter - leave a note in Box #17621 -- Good Pay.)

Dave, you have one last chance and that's it. If you don't come across to my point of view, my next article will focus on the weird habits of the (soon to be) late David Nash. Dig?

Signed
Henry A. (Rick) Watson
Alias Rodney Dangerfield

Ed. First it was "Where's Your Unicorn?" then "Where's Your David Nash?" and now this. Maybe next is "Who is Responsible for Rick Watson?" Is there no end in sight?

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Freeze cont'd. from page 4
today on the US and destroy all of our ICBM's, bombers, and submarines in port, we would still have 2400 nuclear warheads at sea, completely protected from attack. With those missiles we could destroy several times over the 300 biggest Russian cities in which are contained 1/2 of their population and 3/4 of their industry effectively shoving the Russians back into the Stone Age. If that is not enough, consider this: the use of less than 1% of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals would blast both nations beyond recovery as industrial societies. When we possess that kind of overkill capacity, what is the point of building more bombs?

The claim that a freeze would be unverifiable is simply an untruth. We do not have to "trust" the Russians, for we have adequate physical means of verification. It would be dangerous for us to place our fate in their hands, just as it would be for them blindly to trust us, for the dirty game of power politics is played the same cynical way in both Washington and Moscow. Reagan's START proposal calls for a 1/3 reduction of numbers of certain warheads, with no limit on technology or production. The freeze calls for a general ban on the production, testing, and deployment of all warheads and delivery systems. START would be much harder to verify than a total freeze, for under START both nations could update existing systems and continue to expand submarine and bomber forces. With our satellites, whose vision so accurate that they can read license plates in Moscow, we can monitor closely all activity at Russian nuclear facilities. Any clandestinely-produced would be so few in number and so unusable in form that the risk of being caught violating the treaty would far outweigh their military benefit.

If the US freeze movement is "red", then so are Pope John Paul II, the Catholic Bishops, the American Friends Service Committee, and the majority of voter in 6 US states and in hundreds of U.S. cities. And let us not forget to consider the millions of other concerned citizens around the nation and the 202-plus House members of the House of Representatives who support the freeze. Even though government intelligence reports indicate there is no Communist manipulation of the movement, freeze opponents continued to use witch-hunt tactics to try to stop the inevitable.

The freeze movement is a grassroots reaction to blatant and lifethreatening government irresponsibility. The pressure, born of fear and of hope, is mounting; as Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "the people want peace so much that one of these days government had better get out of their way and let them have it."

Nuclear weapons are not the problem; rather they are only the worst and most recent symptom of man's ageless incapacity to deal peacefully with his fellows. The Soviet Union and the US feel threatened and are searching for security; and as long as they feel denied in their quest they will be in constant conflict. Until we begin using pacific means of relation, our conflicts will take military form. The nuclear form will not produce harmony among nations but it is a first step to assuring that we do not obliterate ourselves entirely.

A freeze by itself will not save the world from doom. After a halt to the arms race must come a reversal to it, a reduction of existing nuclear stockpiles. But most importantly, with the cooperation necessary to institute a freeze will come a new Soviet and American willingness to talk rather than posture and to fight. Through his willingness we can begin emphasizing peaceful rather than violent means of international conflict resolution.