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News men who handle coverages in their area for the larger State dailies make countless long distance calls. In our case, during a span of 40 years, we've found that almost without exception telephone operators are courteous, speedy and efficient.

Occasionally, there have been humorous slips and unexplained crossing of wires. Once, for example, we heard an operator turn to a fellow operator and say, "I just had THAT WOMAN on the line again, and she burped like she always does."

For the heck of it, we interrupted and expressed sympathy. One of the operators—probably the young lady who made the remark—gaped audibly and both of them snickered. If their supervisor was nearby, she may have snickered too.

Then there was the time when this writer was in the midst of dictating an important story to a desk man at the Raleigh News and Observer. All of a sudden, a woman's voice broke in. "Spot has had puppies," she proclaimed excitedly to another woman at the other end of the line.

For several minutes the conversation was in detail. Although we didn't know Spot, the course of the conversation revealed that there were seven puppies in all—five girls and two boys—and every single one of them looked just like Spot.

The voices finally faded, and we continued dictating our own grim news about an automobile accident that had snuffed out three lives. Not however before the desk man in Raleigh asked, "Who in the hell was that on the line?" To which we replied, "A couple of folks who love Spot."

Back in Coastal Plain League days, when we served as station of the loop, we had a plug-in telephone in the pressbox at Kafer Park. It had an unlisted number to keep a constant stream of calls from coming in to ask what the score was at that point in the game. As a courtesy, for emergency reasons, the number was furnished hospitals, physicians and law enforcement personnel.

One night the phone rang during a rally by the New Bern Bears in a red hot game with Kinston. Picking up the receiver, we immediately became the target of a torrent of bitter words from a very angry woman.

"I wish you would hang up," she screamed. "Every time I try to use the phone you're always listening in. I can't open my mouth without having you eavesdrop. You make me sick, you old snooper. Just you wait, I'm going to report you to the company."

Very foolishly, we hung on until the woman ran out of breath. By that time the New Bern rally had been nipped in the bud, and the Kinston Eagles went on to win the ball game. As things turned out, a lot of fans at Kafer Park were just as unhappy as the woman who spared no words in giving us

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Euclid Duval Armstrong, III, Awaits His First Christmas.  
—Photo by Wray Studio.