



ON THE AVANT GARDE

BY TANG NIVRI

You Should Have Seen Her!

When I first laid eyes on her, I thought she was as beautiful as any movie star Hollywood could ever hope to produce.

She was tall, slender, had beautiful brown hair, deep brown eyes, pecan tan complexion, sleek tender hands, and a kiss of a smile. I remember thinking as I slobbered all over myself, "Wow, look at this woman! She is definitely a knock out — a 10+! Where has she been all of my life, and why didn't somebody tell me? Who is her man anyway?"

I babbled aloud like some little fool.

She was as brilliant as she was beautiful — barely 18 years of age — having already mastered the essentials necessary to travel life's most complex journey. The woman had it all and she knew it. People used to compare her virtue to rubies, sapphires, diamonds, gold and fine wine.

One Baptist preacher, overcome by her presence, went so far as to swear on a stack of Bibles in church (of all places) that she walked like the Queen of Sheba, spoke with the wisdom of Ruth, and possessed the stature of Cleopatra. Queen, princess, Your Highness — royalty or not — there was no question this woman was somebody God made special.

When We First Met

We first met each other on a late evening in August just a few years ago. I was so exhausted from having traveled what seemed like light-years that I really didn't have the energy to say hello, much less see who she really was. It wasn't until the next morning after I had rested a bit and gotten cleaned up that I came to see her beauty.

she had the voice of an angel, so wonderful, so clear, so soft, so tender and so reassuring. It was a voice that I had known from somewhere before, having heard it intone the old hymns often sung in the black Baptist church. Now, I was actually seeing her sing those sweet melodies, as I lay in her arms, drifting in and out of sleep. It was heaven on earth.

The long journey had stripped me of much nutrients and water. I was famished and needed to regain my strength. My first meal reminded me of the food of the gods — nectar — flowing as sweet as honey. "This was going to be okay," I thought to myself. "I can live with this woman for the rest of my life."

All day long she rubbed my head, saying how much she really loved my hair. We would be great friends.

Our Relationship Blossomed!

Our relationship blossomed into something no man could have every dreamed of — certainly not me. Every day, I was the apple of her eye. Even the man who had publicly sworn his love for her on a stack of Bibles could not take my place. He was left on the outside looking in. I was the center of her attention, the axis of her universe.

Everyday, she would take me places where I had never dreamed of. She would feed me all kinds of wonderful things to eat such as mustard greens and collard greens that she would first chew, then give to me. She stuffed me with all kinds of wonderful cereals and gave me lots of fruit juices to drink — but my favorite was the nectar which she saved for late-night snacks.

She washed me whenever I got dirty. Then she'd take me outside where I could play again, get sand in my toes, and even eat spoonfuls of dirt if I wanted. For two years, life was wonderful.

Something Happened

Then something strange began to happen. There was something troubling her. It started around the month of February. There were moments when she appeared to be preoccupied with something or perhaps someone else. I wasn't sure. I guess I always suspected that there would be others who would seek her care, but as of yet, I had seen none.

Then one day, without warning, she left. It was sometime in the evening during the latter days of the month of September. There wasn't much time to say goodbye, no time for her to explain when or if she would be back. Where was she going and why didn't she take me with her? I tried not to worry but I did. I was left to the care of others.

Days later she returned. It was an evening in early October. Then I saw him. It was someone who looked just like me who had come just as I had, to be with her. I would have to move immediately and from then on, sleep in a new bed.

I was not happy, so I found my set of wooden blocks to hurl at the stranger, the intruder. It was useless. My arms were too short. But who could blame him? She was such a beautiful woman.

Two years later, in the middle of September, a new stranger moved into our lives. She, too, wanted the same thing: to be in the care of this beautiful lady.

I saw that beautiful lady the other day, and my, my, my, what a sight to see. Nothing has really changed except the brown hair now has a gorgeous streak of grey. The brown eyes still sparkle with brightness, and the smile is still as alluring as ever. The skin is ever so soft and hands ever so warm.

This same wonderful lady is now a grandmother to my three children, and for them she is just like she was for me and my brother and sister — the same.

Happy Mother's Day, mother, and to all mothers from all of us children.

Employees Air Grievances Against Local Co.

By MARK R. MOSS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Several employees of a food and cleaning service, which has a contract with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, have accused their employer of a wide range of discriminatory practices.

About a dozen employees of ARA/ESI Services, a Philadelphia-based company, held a news conference Monday morning at Emmanuel Baptist Church to air their complaints against Reynolds and their employer.

"We're prepared to boycott and do whatever has to be done . . . to ensure that their grievances are addressed," said the Rev. John Mendez, a Citizens United for Justice leader, the pastor of Emmanuel.

Mendez said the employees asked CUJ, an activist group, and the NAACP to represent them in their cause. A statement issued by the employees demands, among other things, that ARA/ESI Service "be investigated for discriminatory practices." It also claims that a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will be filed.

ARA/ESI officials in Philadelphia said they became aware of the allegations this week after being contacted by the media.

"At this point we haven't received any formal notice of any of these allegations," said David Flaherty, the company's director of public affairs. "At this particular time it is difficult for us to comment on material we have not seen. I

can tell you that ARA has an extensive set of policies that we follow to help protect our employees and promote a good working environment."

There were about a dozen current and former employees at Monday's press conference, but the initial meeting last Saturday brought out about 35 employees, Mendez said. An employee said the company employs 300 people, 98 percent of whom are African American. Most of those at the news conference were vociferous in their complaints about the company's management. They told stories about being terminated for no reason, 3-cent-an-hour raises, insurance benefits that are too costly, being overlooked for promotions, raises that are given and then taken away a week later and racist remarks made to them.

"We will not work in a place where darkness surrounds our people," Patricia Phillips, an ARA/ESI employee, said in a prepared statement, in which she cited verbal and physical abuses.

Phillips said that ARA stands for "aggravation, racism and anger." She said a few of the employees have been called "nigger," "stupid," and told that "this is a white man's world."

Phillips, who once worked in Atlanta for the same company, said everything from benefits to employee/management relations were exemplary compared to what she has found in Winston-Salem.

Most employees are afraid to speak out for fear of losing their



ARA/ESI employees at a news conference at Emmanuel Baptist Church.

jobs, Phillips said. Elderly employees are especially fearful of being fired and one was rudely told by a manager "to shut up," she said.

Valerie Miller, another employee who is a supervisor, said that during one disagreement with a manager, he caught himself in the midst of calling her "nigger" in time to stop saying the complete word. Other black employees told her he has used the racial epithet, she said.

Miller said management approached her about transferring to another office; but she said she wouldn't do it without a guarantee that she would maintain her current position and salary. She said that the source of the problem she has had with management is that she can do her supervisor's job as well as he can. She said she had filed a complaint with the EEOC.

Donald Moore, a former employee who was one of three black salaried managers, told a complicated story of being terminated. He said he tried in vain several times to contact the company's human resources department to find out why he had been fired. He had put off filing a complaint with EEOC, but he is willing to join with the others in filing a collective complaint, he said.

Marvin Pettigrew, another former employee, said that when he found out he had been fired, the company told him the reason was because "he had walked off the job."

"We're giving the company every opportunity now to address these grievances," he said.

Spry to Replace Bighouse Gaines at WSSU

By MARK R. MOSS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Ronnie O'Neil Spry, the new head basketball coach at Winston-Salem State University, said he is more concerned with what the student/athlete does off the court than on it.

"Your behavior off the court determines your behavior on the court," he said during a telephone interview from his Augusta, Ga., home.

How a person dresses and how he carries himself is a reflection of how an athlete handles himself on the court, he said. Recent fads, such as wearing pants beneath the waistline, is something he's not very tolerant of, he said.

"One of my strongest suits is that I'm very disciplined," he said. Does that mean he's a disciplinarian? "Let's just say I'm very disciplined," he said, laughing.

Spry, who has resigned as head coach and athletic director at Paine College, was named last Friday to replace Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines. Gaines will retire when he turns 70 this month. He is the coun-

try's winningest active basketball coach with 828 victories during 30-plus years as the Ram head coach.

"I think his resume really tells the story," said Gaines, when asked how he thinks his successor will do. He's been successful at Paine, there's no reason why he won't be successful here, Gaines said.

Spry said the school is one of the finer institutions of higher learning in the country and there appears to be a commitment from the administration in developing the potential of the student/athlete.

"I've accomplished all that can be accomplished at a school of this size," he said. Paine has about 700 students, he said.

During his 15-year career as head basketball coach — first at St. Catherine's Junior College then at Paine — Spry has racked up 285 victories, with a career average of 19 wins per year.

A 1975 graduate of Campbellsville College in Campbellsville, Ky., Spry earned a bachelor of science degree in social work. He received a master's degree in college teaching from Murray State University in 1977. He is currently

pursuing a doctorate from the University of South Carolina.

His first task as WSSU's newest coach — the school chose a new football coach earlier this year — is to "meet with the players so that they can get a concept of me." And it will give him the chance to see how each of them "contributes to the overall institution."

He will then, assemble a new coaching staff. He refused to say who will be part of that team.

"Until I make a decision, I'm not saying anything," he said.

He said he is "defensive oriented."

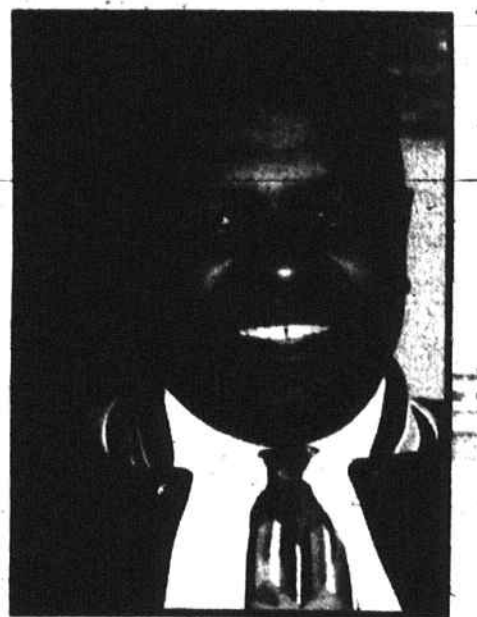
"One of the key things is being able to stop somebody," he said. "You've got to play defense."

The key to his success, however, has been his ability to "coach around your talent."

Spry, a native of Princeton, Ky., is from the same part of the state that spawned Gaines, who is from Paducah. Spry said he had heard of Gaines but didn't know him until their teams played each other.

Does he feel intimidated by the big shoes he has to fill?

"I don't feel I have any big



Ronnie O'Neil Spry

shoes to fill," he said. "Anyone with common sense knows that you don't replace someone like Gaines. The only thing a person can do is enhance and re-establish some of the things he has done."

Spry will move to Winston-Salem this summer with his wife, Audrey Frazier-Spry and their seven-year-old daughter, ShaRon Elizabeth.

Burglary Is Motive in Janitor's Killing

▲ House ransacked and items missing

By RICHARD L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Managing Editor

Winston-Salem police are looking at burglary as a motive in the gruesome neck-slashing slaying of a Winston-Salem man three weeks ago.

According to a Crime Stoppers report issued last week, there were clear signs that a burglary had taken

place in the Manchester Avenue house where 57-year-old Ulysses A. Morrison was found slain on April 13.

"The room in which the victim was found had been ransacked and several items were missing," the release stated in part.

Police Lt. Larry Reavis said: "There are some details about the investigation that would indicate a burglary. Far as I can determine there were no signs of forcible entry into the house. It's still an on-going investigation and we're still pursuing

anything we can develop in it. There's more work to be done."

Morrison, a custodian at Hanes-Lowrance Middle School, was found at 2814 Manchester Ave. with his neck slashed. It had been partly severed with a sharp instrument and he bled to death, according to Dr. Donald Jason, a forensic pathologist, who performed the autopsy.

The house belonged to Melvin Williams, who was away on National Guard duty when the killing occurred.

According to friends and family members, Williams and Morrison, who lived less than a mile away at 2315 Manchester Ave., were very good friends. Morrison was watching the house for the weekend while Williams was away. There were reports that the house had been broken into on several other occasions, but police could not confirm that.

Reavis would not reveal what items had been taken from the home.

Burke to Serve as AKA Consultant

Aldermen Vivian H. Burke, of the Northeast ward and mayor pro tempore, has been invited to serve as consultant for a workshop of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in Atlanta in July.

The workshop, Impacting the Political Process, will be presented as part of the sorority's New Dimensions in Leadership workshops scheduled for July 22-24 at the Peachtree Plaza Hotel. Extending the invitation to Burke was Soror Mary Shy Scott, supreme basileus.



Vivian Burke

CORRECTION

☐ A headline on a story and information in the story were incorrect in last week's issue.

said that an informant bought into the conspiracy of the shooting. The Chronicle regrets this error.

The information should have

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