

The Daily Tar Heel

77 Years of Editorial Freedom



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Story Of Biafra Horrifies Children Of All Ages

Remember when Mom used to tuck you in at night and tell you some nonsense about Goldilocks and Little Red Riding Hood and beanstalks up to the sky? Yea, sure you remember. Kids always get a big kick out of such things.

Well here's a new bedtime story that you probably haven't heard before, since the ending was written only a few weeks ago. You may want to save it to read to your own kids someday. Or maybe you'd like to read it to yourself before you turn out the lights at night.

"Once upon a time, far away in a distant land, a small country was born and named Biafra. But Biafra did not like to be very old. Its mother country, Nigeria, was mean to her baby and would often beat it and refuse to feed it. The baby nation would cry out loudly for help but, though there were plenty of bigger nations around who were much wiser and stronger than Nigeria, they refused to help the infant. Finally, it died, still crying for a chance to live."

Not a very pleasant story to tell a kid, is it? Not the sort of thing you run across in Mother Goose's book of fairytales. Because all those stories turn out all right in the end and make you want to laugh and besides, somebody just made them up anyway.

Well unfortunately, the Biafran story is all too true. If you don't believe it, just ask the four million black Ibo tribesmen who worked and sweated under a hot African sun for 32 months to get Biafra on its feet, only to be beaten back down by Nigerian Federalists. And there are a few Biafrans who aren't around anymore that could attest to the accuracy of the story. About three million of them.

Surely, you must remember the people I'm talking about. You used to see their pictures in Life and on Huntley-Brinkley. They were the black, skinny people who used to it round looking hungry, with all their ribs showing and their eyes bulging out. They were the people who used to die at the rate of 6,000 daily in 1968 and 750,000 a month in 1969 while we ate our lunches and observed our days of protest for the war in Vietnam and sent our men to the moon.

And while they died, Americans shook their heads and said it was a shame and sometimes gave a nickel or a dime to a "Save the Biafran Children" worker who assured them that it would go a long way in helping to buy a box of powdered milk and a bag of flour. Then, having done their part for humanity, they went home for dinner.

Robert Frost once said something about way leading on to way and

Rick Allen

"Don't Retreat Behind 'Disguises'"

If you want to make a long-haired kid really happy, tell him he needs a haircut and that he's probably some kind of fag. He will run over and tell his friends what you said and they will all have a good laugh at the superficiality of your remark.

The point is, you will not offend or hurt the kid because all you are attacking is his appearance; you are merely scratching his surface.

For many of the young today, "outlandish" dress and long hair are disguises for a deeper insecurity. They feel that, for some reason, people will laugh at them as they really are, and they avoid this by providing an outward cover.

Of course, this is an over-simplified observation, but I have noticed it in myself as well as others.

For instance, I was at a bar the other night and a man with a crew cut said, "Why don't you get a haircut, creep?"

I thought to myself what a fool the man was to be concerned with the length of my hair. His remark had made him sound ridiculous, because it was so obviously superficial. My own insecurities had not even been touched.

Another time I was sitting in a restaurant with some people I had just met. They were fully decked out in

shoulder-length hair and leather bell-bottoms. The waitress was taking a long time to get around to us and one of them said, "This is great, man, we look so freaky she doesn't want to serve us."

But that was not the case at all. The waitress was merely slow, as many of them are, for no other reason than that it was late and she was probably tired. I am sure that she could not possibly have cared less about the appearance of my friends.

But my friends wanted to think that something was slowing her down. They refused to admit that we were nothing special, that we were getting the same slow service as everyone else.

The same point can be made about the slang that we young use. We say things like, "Wow, this is really heavy man, outasight." Or, "What a bummer, this guy is plastic."

It is not at all that we are seeking more colorful language. We are disguising what we really have to say, inwardly hoping that no one will know what we are talking about.

We are afraid that we are inarticulate, or that people will laugh at what we think. We disguise our actual thoughts by making them incomprehensible. We allow other people to mock our appearance or our language, because that protects our hidden weak spots.

What is the point of all this? I think the young have a great deal to say to their elders and to their friends. I think many of our ideas are the only hope for salvation in a world that is creaking and rotting beneath our very feet.

I think our idealism, our enlightenment, our desire to change things, our concern for betterment are desperately necessary.

We must not be afraid to speak out, articulately, and to take a firm stand. From this, it follows that we must not be afraid to take a few on the chin.

When someone attacks our long hair or our language, we must not laugh smugly at them, we must explain what it means, what it represents.

For the last several months, in this column, I have attacked this country's leaders for their failure to justify their policies. I have said that our hope lies in the openness and honesty of the young. It is imperative that our criticisms and refutations be understood by those to whom they are directed.

apparently it does, for the people eventually stopped giving their nickels and dimes and you didn't even see the pictures of the dehydrated black kids on television anymore. It got to be too dangerous for the cameramen and reporters to take their pictures or parents started writing in saying they were raising their kids to be Christians and didn't want them watching such violence or something like that. When it became convenient for Americans to forget about Biafra, Americans calmly rose to the challenge and forgot about Biafra.

But Biafra is dead now. And it really doesn't matter whether you remember your international trivia or not. Because neither your sympathy nor your nickels and dimes for powdered milk nor your editorial writers nor your congressmen nor anything else can ever bring Biafra back again. And perhaps it's just as well. They never really had much of a chance during the fighting you know. Nigeria simply had too many modern weapons. Of course, some people argue there never was much of a fight. Just a lot of starving. Kids starving.

In a real fairy tale, of course, a hero on

Ken Ripley

The Hunger For Appreciation

Have you ever had one of those weeks where nothing seems to go right? The kind of week where no matter what color you try to inject in it, everything comes out grey?

I was in the middle of one of those weeks a little while ago. No matter what class I was in, I managed all week to mess up assignments. I couldn't help but say the wrong thing at the wrong times. Projects soured.

The worst part of it, I think, was the feelings of loneliness and unworthiness that clung to me like early morning fog. No matter what the crowd I was in, I still felt alone. And I felt it wouldn't matter anyway if I had never shown up at all.

Lost in this mist of despair, I was sitting alone in the Union snack bar when a stranger came up.

She didn't introduce herself. "I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate you," she said. "I've liked your columns a lot." Then she left.

It's amazing what power those three little words, "I appreciate you," have. In one short encounter, this girl had wiped

away most of the bad experiences of the week. Loneliness evaporated, and I began to feel as if I was worth something to someone, at least.

And yet, what is appreciation? It's a hard word to describe in precise terms, although most people know what it means to "show appreciation." It probably means something different to each person, and even then, the word appreciation is often unexpressable.

Several words and ideas crop up in pinning down appreciation. "It's a form of thanks," one boy said. Some said it was a recognition of someone else's worth. One girl, struggling to find the correct words, said, "to appreciate something is to place a high personal value on it."

Probably no one definition fits exactly, and yet how much poorer would interpersonal relationships be if people failed to appreciate each other?

It's always a great thing, to me, to see a couple who appreciate each other. Something rubs off and is contagiously wonderful about two people who enjoy and delight in each other's being—where one is thankful for the other person, recognizes his uniqueness and value as an

individual, and places high personal value on those qualities. It seems to me that most of the truly loving people I've known have been those who appreciate others.

Appreciation shows itself in many ways. Sometimes it takes the form of a quick pat on the shoulder, a hand squeeze, a compliment. Little things like that can mean so much. An appreciative smile warms a cold morning. A word of honest praise makes the struggle of going to class worthwhile.

What disturbs me, though, is that our relationships can be so cool, and that in all the back-biting, personal comparisons we make, and competition, appreciation seems to come with large gaps of silence in between—or worse, expresses itself as a "I praise you—you praise me" type of philosophy. The dishonesty of that personal politics is incredible, but sometimes too disgustingly evident.

I really don't think we've lost the feelings of appreciation as much as we've lost the ability and the inclination to show appreciation.

It's sad. People need appreciation, are starving for honest appreciation, and yet those who can give it remain silent.

I don't know exactly why we clam up. Probably, it's because most of us are self-centered, which makes us thoughtless of others. We take other people for granted, or we try to "be better" than others. We are unable to accept and be thankful for people as individuals in their own right.

The beauties of appreciation, however, can have considerable effect. We show by our appreciation of others that they do have value to us as individuals, that we do care for them. There is nothing so easy to give honestly as appreciation, and its power to soothe the hurt and neglected ego, to spur and support a person, is fantastic.

It doesn't take a lot to be appreciative. Little things say a lot. Quick gestures go noticed and remembered.

For instance, when someone smiles at you... Try smiling back.

a white horse would have appeared at the last minute to save Biafra from the dragon. Many people thought the role was perfect for America but, for some strange reason, she declined the part. It is a bit perplexing, don't you think, that a nation like the United States, who takes so much pride in being the watchdog of the world, should passively look the other way while people's rights are being trampled on? That's precisely why we're in Vietnam—isn't it?

But then the Biafran conflict doesn't directly involve that action-inciter "communism." It's merely a case of one democracy beating up another. Any good American knows it's allright for people to solve their own problems in their own way—at least as long as there are no dirty commies involved.

Besides, President Nixon has promised to send in food and medical supplies to help the Biafran refugees or, as he calls them, "victims of the savage civil war." Isn't it wonderful to have leaders so capable of distinguishing between civil wars and acts of aggression—when and when not to meddle? And after all, Nigerian officials have been quoted as

saying that "rehabilitation and reconciliation plans are underway to end the Biafran suffering." For all you people who are so concerned with the fate of the South Vietnamese leaders should American forces pull out, let your imaginations go and imagine how the Biafran suffering will be terminated.

Still, it will be good now that the war is finally over. No more people stopping you on the street, asking for your change to help Biafrans eat. No more color pictures of skinny little black dead kids on the six o'clock news for your seven-year-old daughter to see. No more incomprehensible figures like "750,000 dead this month" for you to have to think about.

I guess the Biafran tragedy could never have made a good bedtime story anyway. Because there's some unwritten rule that says all fairy tales have to end in the same last line. And that line just doesn't fit in this story. You know the one—"and they all lived happily ever after."

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It's only a pipe dream. No. 4



ROTC Report: The Old Lie

The ROTC Report, released Jan. 14, although it claimed to shy away from taking a moral position in the ROTC controversy, did take such a stand.

What the ROTC Committee in effect said in its report was that the ends justify the means—the means being the use of violence to keep the domestic and international peace.

"We must be prepared to accept lesser evils in order to avoid greater ones," the committee explained. (We do, of course, use the word "explained" cautiously. The whole point is that the committee took it upon itself with the above statement, and with the report in general, to come to terms with the most highly controversial issue, namely, just what the hell kind of a society are we living in?)

The statement we have cited rings out that old lie (which Adolph Hitler bellowed forth so proudly and assuredly in 1932):

"The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are full of students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threatening us with her might and the republic is in danger. And yes, danger from within and from without. We need law and order. Without law and order our nation cannot survive... Without law and order, our republic will fall."

Hitler took that stand in the 30's, and we're getting the same kind of thing from some of our political leaders today. Richard Nixon and John Mitchell and George Wallace talk about law and order. They talk about clamping down on the evil people in our society.

And the means which those present-day leaders talk about are such things as the "no-knock" laws which would eliminate the requirement that law enforcement officials knock before entering citizens' home. "Before entering," if it is believed the citizen will destroy the drugs it is believed he has in his home and thus destroy the evidence it is believed could be used against him.

These political leaders do not talk about the ways in which such a

The Tragedy of Chicago

One of the most shameful episodes in American legal history may be near its end this week as the jury gets the task of deliberating the case of the "Chicago Seven."

After nearly five months of "testimony," the ten women and two men—who have been whisked in and out of the courtroom so often that they probably really know very little about the trial—will decide whether seven men conspired to create a riot at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

The trial has been marked by almost daily pitched battles between the defense and Judge Julius Hoffman. In his adamant refusal to allow the defense to effectively construct its case, Hoffman should be remembered by posterity as one of the greatest buffoons ever to hold the seat of Federal Judge.

Hoffman made the case so one-sided in favor of the prosecution that it is literally amazing the United States has no more of a conclusive case today than it did when the trial began in

law could be used against political criminals, who might have political material, rather than drugs, in their possession, which might be destroyed if law-enforcement officials could be required to knock before entering.

And it would, of course, be up to the government to decide just what a political criminal was. Why, it might be a member of a radical student organization, or of any other radical organization.

Another law would eliminate the right of the accused to be released on bail if was considered a dangerous criminal. But what is a dangerous criminal? That's for the judge, or whoever, to decide, of course.

Of course.

So the ends justify the means. The ends, of course, are obvious to anyone who knows anything. The problem, we suggest, is that the ends are not so obvious. And because the ends are unclear, the Nixons and the Mitchells and the Wallaces and the committees which write ROTC reports and talk about "ends" and "means" are talking in circles, using assumptions which they employ when they need them to justify their own sense of what the ends are.

The following statement is from the ROTC Report:

"It is assumed that where there is no system of shared values to support a set of decision-procedures for dealing with conflicting interests and common concerns so that all will accept the decisions reached through the decision-process, there has to be a system of coercive measures in support of such decisions if there is to be any peace and order in a complex world. The orientation is that of keeping the peace rather than making war. Nevertheless, we must be prepared to accept lesser evils in order to avoid greater ones."

Maybe the ROTC Committee should have tried to decide the question of what our "shared values" are rather than avoiding it. Therein lies the way of reason, not the tragedy of a Hitler-type emotion.

October. The government, of course, is trying to put Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman, etc.—allegedly leaders of a radical conspiracy bent on violent overthrow of the U.S.—out of commission so they can't cause any more "trouble."

This may be done either by conviction which sends the radicals to jail, or simply by tying up their case in appeals courts for as long as possible.

A conviction seems almost a foregone conclusion, and there is no chance that Judge Hoffman will grant appeal bond. So the seven will sit in jail while their case is appealed to higher—and hopefully, more sane—courts of "justice."

We cling to the hope that the jury may be human enough to see that the government has no case and that the trial itself—particularly the actions of Judge Hoffman—has been a travesty of justice.

Should the jury find for the defense, the word "justice" may recover some of the sheen it has lost in Julius Hoffman's physical and moral torture chamber.

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