

## commentary and analysis

# Reporter suffers from disturbed home life

By William Durham

I've often wondered about the home lives of such dynamic, hard-hitting reporters as Mike Wallace and Dan Rather. How do they relate to their wives and children? Do they relax on Sunday afternoons and mow the lawn or do they stalk their suburban split-levels, looking for inequity and half-truths?

I was fortunate enough to be able to join Lance Toughtone, a newshound for the top-rated investigative show *Up Periscope*, for a leisurely weekend at his home.

The first clue that all was not normal came Friday afternoon when his son asked to borrow the car Saturday night for a date. Lance suddenly swelled larger than life, straightened his necktie, and cocked his head in that now-famous manner. "Son, is it not true that you were caught driving in excess of the speed limit last weekend? And is it not true that you were given a warning?"

His son looked grim; he obviously had dealt with this before. "Dad, I was only—"

"I have it on the authority of a respected and honorable defender of the peace that you were traveling 27 miles per hour in a 25 mile-per-hour zone. What do you say to that?"

"Actually, Dad, I wasn't going very fast. I was just—"

"Are you impugning the word of this noble police officer, who is a member of the Elks club and plays shortstop for the police team on the weekends? Are you?"

"No Dad, I'm not. I told you about this last week, but you were busy wiretapping someone's phone line. May I please have the car for tonight?"

"In the interest of your conscience, Son, do you think you should be allowed on the same roads as your mother and sister? You, who are a proven menace to society? Can you in all honesty ask me to let you have the

car this weekend?"

"Yes, Dad. I have a date. I'll be back by midnight."

Lance shook his solemnly. "All right, then. Let it be on your head."

After his son walked out, I asked Lance if he thought he had been perhaps a bit harsh. "No, not at all. You have to be strict with the little buggers or they lose all respect for the virtues that make America great: law, order and five-year television contracts with benefits."

The next night at dinner there was a similar scene. Lance's wife Joan, a small, pleasant-looking woman, presented us with roast beef and baked potatoes. Halfway through the meal, which was deliciously prepared and tastefully served, Lance put down his fork with a clash. His wife went ashen under her tan. "Joan, this meat is overcooked. Furthermore, the potatoes are doughy and the iced tea is from a mix. How do you answer these charges?"

Joan took a deep breath. "Lance, I've cooked this meal the same way since we were married."

"Joan, I have a signed statement from the local butcher that you bought this meat on sale, indicating that it is of inferior quality." Lance's eyes glazed over as he swung into the rhythm of his harangue. "By doing so, you have undermined the moral and spiritual fabric of this great country of ours. There is no doubt that you have connived and conspired with your local flunky, the butcher, to pave the way for communism and other radical elements which are contriving to eliminate life in America as we know it. Are you not ashamed of yourself? Don't you think it would be wise to cease your odious correspondence with this fiend, who is not only a butcher of meat but a butcher of integrity?"

Lance was by this time swaying in time to his speech. He was posed as if in front of a television camera, and had the self-righteous condemnatory glare common to

the practiced advocate of the ignorant masses. His wife was shaking under the scrutiny. "No, Lance, the meat is fine. I get a discount because I buy it every week. You must have misunderstood the butcher."

Lance suddenly settled back in his chair and gave a deprecatory little laugh. "Are you implying that this signed statement—he waved it under her nose—"is in error? That the butcher does not know the exact terms of your little deal?"

"Lance, please just eat your dinner," wailed Joan.

"Never! Never will I be party to any attempt, however succulent, to undermine the American way of life!" Lance slammed the signed statement into his potato and stalked away, pushing a stray wisp of hair from his tanned forehead.

I asked Joan if Lance was often this vehement. "Only on weekends," she replied. "That's when he seems to have a craving for a cause. And vacations!" She closed her eyes and shuddered. "You should have seen him when we went to France last summer. He officially ended French-American relations because the bell boys made no attempt to speak English in the hotel."

I could see the making of a neurosis. Obviously Lance was unable to keep his keen-edged, white-hot investigative drive from manifesting itself in his everyday life. "How can you live with it?" I asked Joan, full of admiration for this small yet sturdy woman who had so much to deal with.

"We love him," she said simply. "And he's home only three days a month," she continued. "And he clears \$340,000 a year."

Just then a commotion broke out in the den. Joan and I dashed in to find Lance in an accusative stance vis-a-vis his 17-year-old daughter Linda.

"There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that you have attempted to calumniate the name of your family. What, if anything, have you to say for yourself?" Linda was close to tears. "Daddy, I was

just talking to Rebecca on the telephone. We're going to drive out to the lake next weekend for a picnic with some other kids from school. What's wrong with that? Mom said we could."

Lance spun and wilted Joan with his steely gaze. "Is this true?" he rapped out. "Do you admit to joining your misguided daughter in her odyssey of ignorance?"

"Lance, she's just going on a picnic."

"It may look like a picnic to you, but I have it on irreproachable authority that this young woman has a major test the Tuesday after the established date of this event. In fact, there is little doubt that if she stayed home and studied, her grade would be at least 4.7 points higher, thereby increasing her chances of attending the college of her choice."

"Daddy, I was just trying to set it up. It's not final. And I can study this week for the test."

Lance shook his head and smiled grimly. He had her on the run. He reached into his coat pocket and removed a small cassette. "This is a recording of a telephone conversation. Will you listen to it and tell me what it means to you?"

"No, I will not," screamed his daughter, who burst into tears and fled to her bedroom.

Lance turned and centered his gaze between us. "It is obvious that this unfortunate young woman was about to jeopardize her academic career and her future by taking part in this so-called picnic." He sighed and shook his head. "An ironic term for such a potentially dangerous activity. A new hedonism has infected the youth of America, and it is up to us, the parent generation, to nip this germ in the bud and reinstate the traditional values of decency to which we have always subscribed." Amen.

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## the week at a glance

by Elliott Warnock

### Carter closes in

Almost a year has passed since Jimmy Carter promised, when asked what would happen if Ted Kennedy ran for president, "I'll whip his ass."

Carter is days away from keeping his promise.

The president took enough delegates in Tuesday's primaries to close within 90 votes of the Democratic nomination. He can count on 1,568 delegates of the 1,666 needed.

Carter is almost certain to lock up the nomination June 3, when the eight-state finale is held, with 696 delegates at stake. Kennedy holds only 849 and his vague hope that he can demolish Carter in next Tuesday's primaries and pull out the nomination from a deadlocked convention.

### Reagan rolls

Ronald Reagan will spend next Tuesday just trying to keep from being embarrassed. When George Bush decided Monday to drop out of the Republican race for president, Reagan's count of delegates already had gone over the top.

Bush conceded that Reagan was going to be the Republican nominee, and Reagan wants the June 3 primaries to be a clean sweep, boosting the image of GOP unity.

Former President Gerald Ford did his part to help Tuesday by endorsing Reagan's candidacy. Ford, who squeaked past Reagan in 1976 for the Republican nomination, said, "I have always supported the Republican nominee."

### Anderson worries

The third major candidate for the presidency, John Anderson, called President Carter's decision not to debate him "contempt . . . for the political process."

Carter said recently that he would debate Reagan after the Republican and Democratic conventions, but declined

to include Anderson. The White House press secretary said, "As far as I know, it's a firm decision. Once you start opening up the debate process, then it's hard to decide where you can draw the line."

The possibility of including third party or independent candidates in national debates often has been a thorny problem for past organizers. Mere participation in televised debates lends credibility to an independent's campaign, and Anderson dearly needs the possible credibility, as well as the public exposure.

### Sadat President for life

Egypt's Anwar Sadat may have been in his last election last week. A proposal to make Sadat president for life, and prime minister of Egypt easily passed in a national referendum.

Egyptians are hoping the consolidation of Sadat's power will help the country conquer economic, civil and diplomatic problems. Palestinian autonomy talks with Israel have bogged down, and Egypt's inflation problems are in about as much trouble as the talks. Making matters worse, Egyptian Coptic Christians have clashed with Moslem groups this year, and Islamic fundamentalists have been protesting everything from Sadat's agreements with Israel to his support for the Shah of Iran.

### Jamscam

A few weeks ago, it appeared J. Harold Herring would be elected national Jaycee president as easily as Anwar Sadat won his race. Herring was running for the office unopposed.

The former N.C. Jaycee president, Herring was caught in the middle of allegations concerning \$142,249 of funds designated for the Jaycee Burn Center at N.C. Memorial Hospital. Herring and the state organization have been criticized for diverting the money to pay national

membership dues.

Other Jaycee leaders have charged that the money, mostly raised by local chapters of the Jaycees all over the state by selling jars of grape jelly, was used in some cases to pay for fictitious chapters. The bogus chapters swelled the Jaycee ranks, and Herring's bid for the national Jaycee presidency rose from 11,500 in 1975 to 23,000 now.

Complicating the Jaycees' problems is the bitterness of many North Carolinians about the money, which they thought was going to the burn center. Some of that bitterness has been directed toward the local chapters, which had no control over the dispersion of funds.

Local chapter leaders are just as bitter as other North Carolinians. Chapel Hill-Carrboro Jaycee President Charles Harrison said Tuesday he had sent letters to the state organization calling on Jaycees to pay the money back out of their own pockets, plus calling for withdrawal of support for Herring's candidacy.

Herring's bid is running into trouble. A Wisconsin Jaycee, Jim Nehrbass, the former national Jaycee vice president who withdrew from the race to make way for Herring, said Wednesday that he is back in the race.

### A lower prime interest rate

Raging inflation in the U.S. got a dampening Tuesday as Morgan Guaranty Trust Co., the nation's fifth-largest bank, lowered its prime interest rate two percentage points to 14 percent. Chase Manhattan, Bankers Trust and First National Bank of Chicago all followed suit and lowered their rate to 14 percent, a seven-month low.

The lower rate won't do much to help most consumers just yet; the prime interest rate is given only to the best loan customers; but it does indicate a slowdown of inflation.

### Hostages

And in Iran Wednesday, the 53 American hostages suffered through Day 207 of their captivity.