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The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

Thomas Wolfe's Carolina days remembered

By GEORGE SHADROU

"Eugene's first year at the University was filled for him with loneliness, pain and failure. Within three weeks of his matriculation, he had been made the dupe of a half dozen classic jokes... And these buffooneries—a little cruel, but only with the cruelty of vacant laughter, and a part of the schedule of rough humor in an American college—opened deep wounds in him, which his companions hardly suspected. There was no one to whom he could turn: he had no friends."

This is the way Thomas Clayton Wolfe described his first year at the University of North Carolina in his classic novel, *Look Homeward, Angel*. Wolfe came here in 1916, when he was only 16 years old. Carolina was by no means his preference, for he would rather have gone to Princeton or Virginia, but his father, who wanted Wolfe to become a lawyer and a politician, insisted that he come to Chapel Hill. And so in the fall of 1916, with the world at war, Wolfe left his home in Asheville for the state university.

Today marks the 80th anniversary of Wolfe's birthday. As one of the University's most distinguished graduates, and as one of America's most talented novelists, it is not unusual that so much of Wolfe's life and so much of what he wrote take on a special significance for many students at Carolina.

Despite a frustrating freshman year, Wolfe went on to distinguish himself at Carolina. While he was not a grade-maker, he showed a rare energy and genius that set him apart from classmates. A tall gangly boy, Wolfe reached 6-4 while in college and students joked that he should be on the football team because "he could fall down with the ball and make a touchdown every time."

Wolfe was editor of *The Daily Tar Heel* (then, *The Tar Heel*) and associate editor and assistant editor for the *Carolina Magazine*. He wrote numerous plays for the Playmakers' Theatre and engaged regularly in late night discussions on philosophy, politics and school. But his energy, his sense of humor and his eccentricities contributed to his uniqueness. Wolfe called being editor of *The Tar Heel*, the "highest honor in college," and he wrote his mother that with this responsibility on top of his other activities, "I'm busy not part of the time, but all of it—sleeping five hours is essential but I can't spare any more."

Wolfe had habits that disturbed some friends. "Tom seemed to buy his clothes from the skin out. He apparently bought an entire outfit and wore it until it

had to be removed," one said. And another said, "It is true that most of the time Tom was absolutely dirty. No one seemed to know when he took a bath and apparently he never changed a shirt. Very seldom did he get a haircut, and I don't think he ever pressed his trousers."

Wolfe joined the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity his sophomore year but his description of fraternities in *Look Homeward, Angel*, seems the antithesis of Wolfe.

"The fraternity men...—those merry and extravagant snobs of whom he had never known, but who now represented for him the highest reach of urbane and aristocratic life. He had seen them, happy and idle, on the wide verandas of their chapter houses—those temples where the last and awful rites of initiation are administered."

Wolfe's imaginative sense of humor made him that much more a campus figure. Stories about his classroom witticisms were promulgated around campus and he once read for a class an essay he had written on toilet paper. Most professors found Wolfe intelligent if unorganized. But Wolfe developed a special affection for Frederick H. "Proff" Koch and Horace Williams. He would later write about Williams, "But what was most important was the man himself; he was a great teacher, and...he supplied the many of us, for the first time in our lives, the inspiration of a questioning intelligence. He taught us not to be afraid to think, to question; to examine critically the most venerable of our native superstitions, our local prejudices, to look hidebound conventions in the eye and challenge them...And the seed he planted grew."

Locally

Indeed, for Wolfe it did grow, as his various novels demonstrate. In *Look Homeward, Angel*, which is based to a large degree on Wolfe's life, he describes in detail his experiences at college. Among his other books are *Of Time and the River*, *The Web and the Rock* and *You Can't Go Home Again*. The questions that Williams prompted, Wolfe studies and tries to answer in his books.

Wolfe's growing success and popularity did not lessen the impact of several tragedies he witnessed while in college. The deaths of a roommate and President Edward Kidder Graham left him emotionally scarred and troubled to the point that he went days without talking to people. But nothing touched him like the death of his brother Ben, who died of pneumonia. In *Look Homeward, Angel* he described that death in detail and probed the mysticism that surrounded it.

Ben's death only reaffirmed in Wolfe that he must leave North Carolina, leave his family and, of course, leave the University, which for four years helped him to expand his mind and develop his talents. Wolfe describes his last day here in *Look Homeward, Angel*.

"He went to Pulpit Hill for two or three days of delightful loneliness in the deserted college. He prowled through the empty campus at midnight under the great moons of the late rich Spring; he breathed the thousand rich odors of tree and grass and flower, of the opulent and seductive South; and he felt a delicious sadness when he thought of his departure, and saw there in the moon the thousand phantom shapes of the boys he had known who would come no more."

"Then, even while Eugene stood looking back upon



Author of *Look Homeward Angel*...Wolfe described his years in Chapel Hill

the street, the car roared up across the lip of the hill, and drove steeply down into the hot parched countryside below. But as the lost world faded from his sight, Eugene gave a great cry of pain and sadness, for he knew the elfin door had closed behind him, and he would never come back again."

This, then, was the way Wolfe left Chapel Hill. Sad no doubt as we all will be, but looking forward to the greater things that awaited him. He wrote to his fellow classmates in *The Tar Heel* in his final editorial that the senior "is usually appalled at his own colossal ignorance and knows that he has just started his education."

"The greatness of the University is of the spirit and that spirit continually moves to a more unassailable position. The student body of 1919-20 have been the guardians and warriors for that spirit. Now may they look back and see the eminence they have gained. Now may they pass the torch of the great tradition forward to their successors, viewing their own work and knowing that it has been good."

The spirit and tradition Wolfe left Carolina can be found in many places: at the monument between Davie Hall and New East where the Class of 1966 recognized his contributions to the University and the world, at the Carolina Collection where a section has been dedicated to him, in the books he wrote and the reputation he left. But perhaps most importantly Wolfe showed all students the beauty of relentless striving and the pursuit of understanding and knowledge.

On Wolfe's monument are the words, "O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again." But on this, the 80th anniversary of his birth, Wolfe's ghost need not come back again. It seems clear that it has never left, that it walks among the thousands who have followed him and will follow him for decades.

George Shadrou, a senior journalism and history major from Salisbury, is editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*. Books used for background information and quotes were Elizabeth Nowell's biography of Thomas Wolfe and Richard Walser's, *Thomas Wolfe Undergraduate*.

The reality of law

Say what you will about G. Gordon Liddy. He's tough, he's honest (in a strange kind of way) and he's mean. He's everything you would want in a bodyguard, and, in fact, that's just about what he was back about eight years ago when he had the misfortune to organize and partake in the break-in of the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate hotel in Washington D.C. It's too bad. He could have been a great man. But he isn't. And the reason he isn't and the reason he never will be is rather simple. He talks too much.

A lot of students who watched Liddy perform Wednesday night—and it was a fine performance—probably got upset. They might have wanted to stand up and leave when Liddy said Americans are deluding themselves. But they didn't. And they may have wanted to leave when he said, "What about Vietnam?" and then added that if the United States goes to war as a last resort, it should go to win it and then get out as fast as possible.

The reason people sat in their seats—some entranced, others disgusted and still others laughing, yelling and cheering—is because, whatever else, Liddy is interesting, funny and educating.

Agreeing or disagreeing with Liddy is each individual's prerogative. He talked about some big issues—about God, about national defense, about killing, environment and espionage. Contrary to the view apparently held by some people in the Memorial Hall audience Wednesday, Liddy is not and never will be an expert on all of these issues.

Liddy had a message or two to deliver. First, he said Americans are living in a world of delusion, that the world is a dark alley and you've got to be tough to survive. A lot of people enjoy hearing people like Liddy talk about toughness, just as they derive satisfaction from watching a Clint Eastwood movie. People who won't take risks always envy someone who will. The second message, and perhaps the most insightful as far as understanding Liddy, is that man by nature is evil, that dark alleys are not only dangerous but also permanent. Liddy does not believe man will evolve morally or spiritually and his approach to life verifies this position. Liddy would act in accordance with the worst behavior in the alley, never mind that five people there might simply be taking a short cut. Liddy's pragmatism, to be sure a necessary quality, has blinded him totally to idealism—not delusion—but idealism. This, perhaps, is the tragedy of Liddy and people like him. While he may be governed by a particular law because he considers a certain crime inherently evil, another man might not find the crime evil at all. That is the reason for a society of law and order. Society determines what is and is not a crime and while it may not always be right, it is far superior to anarchy.

Liddy said, in front of the packed Memorial Hall, that John Dean wasn't worth the price of a round of ammunition, that he would have blown away Jack Anderson a few years back, that he would kill anyone who endangered national security.

Indeed, the realities of life may dictate that such actions occur, but to flaunt a murderous attitude carelessly and jokingly does not seem compatible with what this country is all about today. It is a nation that strives for peaceful compromise, law and order. Liddy scoffs at such "delusions" when he preaches recklessly and thoughtlessly. He denigrates the very system he would defend by deeming its laws trivial and its attempts to raise men's respect for one another out of touch with reality.

The Liddys in the world do have their place. And, much as all of us might hate to admit it, some of their arguments are both real and practical. At the same time, listening to Liddy was educational in more ways than one. He made us realize how lucky we are that he's on the lecture circuit instead of in a position of political power.



A student known for his energy...Wolfe edited various campus publications

Lake still trails with a month to go in race

By BRAD KUTROW

There's a little more than a month left in the North Carolina gubernatorial race, and I. Beverly Lake is still plodding along.

Republican Lake has tried repeatedly in the last month or so to catch some kind of second wind, but he is still running far behind incumbent Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. A *Charlotte Observer* poll taken in early September showed Hunt leading by a 3-1 ratio, and Lake has not been able to gain in the waning weeks of the campaign.

Lake's campaign, along with those of fellow Republicans John East for the Senate and William Coby for lieutenant governor, is being run by the N.C. Congressional Club political action committee as part of a conservative "New Team" package. Although Lake claims he is running his own campaign, he is unfamiliar with trifling details like the size of his television budget and his several planks of his platform, in an effort to mount a more positive and to soil Hunt's progressive image.

This week, however, Lake released standing in the Congressional Club's polls.

The tactics suggested by Lake's Congressional Club advisors have been uniformly unsuccessful and have made his campaign seem entirely negative. Lake has repeatedly criticized the Hunt administration for mishandling federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act funds, and he has characterized Hunt's organization as a "machine" fueled by patronage in state government.

During a Sept. 8 debate between Hunt and Lake, the Republican tried to exhibit diagrams of "Hunt's political machine" with photographs of the governor, state AFL-CIO President Wilbur Hobby, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Howard N. Lee and his assistant, Eva Clayton. He was forced to remove the diagram by the debate moderator, and the incident cast Lake as a mudslinger trying desperately to soil Hunt's progressive image.

This week, Lake released several

planks of his platform, in an effort to mount a more positive and constructive campaign. His proposals are a mixture of substance and silliness, but they are unlikely to attract much support.

The State

Lake's education plank, for instance, contained a condemnation of "cross town busing to achieve racial balance," a stand that links him with I. Beverly Lake Sr.'s segregationist campaigns for governor in 1960 and 1964. The younger Lake has attempted to play down his father's old stands throughout the campaign, but the planks can only bring them up.

The statute Lake outlined to end busing would require that students be assigned to the school closest to their homes. However, Deputy Attorney General Andrew Vanore said that a similar law was declared unconstitutional in 1970.

The rest of the education platform calls for better standards and working conditions for teachers, stricter discipline rules and less educational paperwork—positions that could improve state schools. They have been obscured, however, by Lake's controversial busing stand, just as his stands on the issues have been obscured by the vigor of his anti-Hunt campaign.

Moreover, Lake has raised some questions about his commitment to the office. "I don't have to be governor of North Carolina to be happy," Lake said. "I'm basically a private person. In fact, I would be happier if I didn't have to serve as governor."

Even with the help of his new platform, Lake may be a happy man when he wakes up Nov. 5 and the race is over.

Brad Kutrow, a senior political science and journalism major from Wilmington, is associate editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

Fred Philosopher (not his real name) is one of the most level-headed, clear-thinking individuals I know. And yet for the past three weeks he has been troubled by a terrible dream. It all happened on the afternoon of Sept. 20, when Fred lay down for an afternoon nap. Later, he was awakened by a strange telephone call. What follows is the true story of his dream, with insightful analysis interspersed. Remember, this dream was so lifelike that Fred saw it all through the rims of his glasses. And keep in mind with the analysis that psychology is merely a social science, and, thus your guess is as good as mine.

I found myself in his hotel room. There was a party going on. This hotel was totally new, somewhere between Phillips Hall and Memorial Hall. Ronald Reagan was there, sitting on a pumpkin-yellow couch and wearing a big white cowboy hat. He was talking and ranting about all sorts of things. Then, all of a sudden everyone in the party was gone, and I was watching him from somewhere else in the suite, maybe. He stood up, walked behind the couch and lay down. The next thing I knew he raised his feet and his boots were showing above the couch. His bluejeans slid down some on his leg, and I saw that he had incredibly well-developed calves for a man that old.



Fred's dream—a look at our future?

By THOMAS JESSIMAN

A couple of images need to be discussed in just that brief passage. First of all, the fact that the hotel was a new one seems to indicate Fred's response to the well-known fact that the Reagan people have the money. Jesse Helms and John East and their whole team have not been discreet about the vast stockpiles of gold at their disposal; it would be well within their power to build a new hotel beside Phillips Hall if they thought it might help the Reagan ticket.

The second image warranting comment is Reagan's calves and their obvious strength. Clearly, what Fred was reacting to here was the propaganda blitz by the Reagan people to portray their candidate as a strapping young man. Remember the picture released two months ago of Reagan sitting in a tree and picking fruit? He was not wearing a shirt, and his pectorals did not look at all bad there. Obviously, the strong calves were only another indication that the Reaganites have waged a successful campaign on the age issue of their candidate.

Reagan changed into a dark business suit and headed out across Polk Place from the area of the Y to the Pit. He was surrounded by hundreds of people. What was really strange was that the newspeople did not speak into normal microphones. They had special ones attached by suction cups to their noses and bent around to their mouths. And the mikes they held out at the leg end of bamboo poles to Reagan were the size of watermelons. Reagan kept pushing these watermelons aside.

Somehow he managed to duck the crowd and I followed. He walked past the Pit and entered the Union where a conference was in progress. The conference was on abortion, birth control and sex-change operations, and

10 or 12 doctors were in the room. I remembered that Reagan was attending the conference secretly.

This dream sequence poses some intriguing riddles, not the least of which are the watermelon microphones Reagan had to keep batting away. The symbolism involved with those mikes and the strange microphones on the reporters is completely beyond me, unless, of course, it reflects Fred's impression of Reagan in press conferences—that maybe Reagan is just as bizarre and weird as those uncanny inventions.

At Large

Although the final explanation of the microphones might be better left to the followers of Jung or Freud, the meaning of Reagan attending the secret meeting is not so abstruse. Clearly, Fred was attempting to balance in his consciousness the void Reagan has left on many moral issues. Apparently Fred was not convinced by the way Reagan handled the question about abortion in the televised debate. Fred must not have been won over by the candidate's impassioned plea for apple pie and good old-fashioned Americanism.

Reagan began shouting how bad abortions and sex-change operations are, and then gradually the conference turned into a party. Suddenly I turned to my right and saw my mother. She was sitting with a sizzling skillet of hush puppies and barbecue. She was eating hush puppies with her hands and staring at me. She was much fatter than in real life and wore

an old, dark dress of cheap material, like she would wear on a farm.

Then I was talking to this girl from high school who asked me why I was there. Out of the corner of my eye I saw that Reagan was listening to us, but I pretended not to know. I told her I followed Reagan there secretly. Reagan walked into my field of vision and I acted startled that perhaps he had overheard me. He looked me right in the eye and said, "I want you to choose me." He repeated that two more times and I kept asking him what he meant, what was he saying, but he just kept repeating that line. "I want you to choose me."

At that point, the phone rang, and Fred was startled out of his sleep. His first thought as he crossed the room was how funny it would be if Ronald Reagan was on the line. He picked up the phone and the caller asked for Fred's roommate. Fred said his roommate was not in, but he would take a message. That was when the caller identified himself as a worker for the Young Republicans for Ronald Reagan. And that was when Fred began his tireless quest to discover the meaning of his visions.

In a later interview, Fred confided that perhaps the reason his mother was so fat and was consuming the hush puppies so ravenously was that she was trying to make him feel guilty. Fred said his mother came from a poor background and had worked to put him through college. Her staring at him was only an attempt on her part to chastise him for wasting his time in secret meetings with Reagan. Even though we really should never trust the dreamer's own interpretations, this explanation might have some validity.

But the most puzzling image in the last



dream sequence is that of Reagan repeating those words, "I want you to choose me." He seemed to be implying that he wanted Fred to choose him instead of vice versa. Perhaps what we have here is Fred's fear that if Reagan is elected, despite Fred's opposition, Reagan will indeed choose Fred—for war, that is. Maybe Reagan wanted Fred to choose him so that when the roles were reversed there would be no hard feelings.

In the final analysis the dream could mean two things. First, it could be a sign from God—a signal to Fred that yes, Reagan is real and might even get elected. Second—and this is Fred's theory—it shows that the Reagan people have initiated laser brainwashing techniques and are tampering with our subconscious. Fred is convinced that the phone call was no coincidence.

No doubt, for years to come, psychologists and doctors will debate endlessly the meaning of Fred's dream; but, for Fred, once an ambitious philosopher (if ever there was one), there is only the pain of the present—a pain that could well become unbearable if Ronald Reagan is elected in November and Fred has to endure four years of nightmares.

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