



The Rag and Bone Shop

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from the **Editor**

Dear Readers,

Coming to you from the elegant and impressive office of The Rag and Bone Shop high atop Lipinsky Towers, I would like to take this opportunity to give you an idea of the genesis of a typical issue. Those of you who may have been deliberating over the choice of a career may, with the help of this letter, find that journalism suits your particular psychic mutations to a T. On the other hand, you might very wisely head for the hills of a major in business administration.

We take about twenty-two days to create a twenty page issue. The initial planning meetings usually involve a high level of lucidity and enthusiasm. Staff and contributors sign up for fantastic articles. The editors become self-congratulatory and ambitious. "God, we're hot," any one of us can be heard to say, "This is going to be the best issue ever." We dream up things like telephone interviews with Muhammed Ali, and initiate what turn out to be retarded measures to track him down. "Well, we could call The Tonight Show and see if they have his address." "No, I have a friend in Philadelphia who boxes at the local YMCA and I'll bet he knows how to find him." Etc., etc. As it turned out, at the height of our search the Monday

Asheville Citizen's first page included an article about Ali's visit to Billy Graham's house in Montreal the previous day. By God, there was even a picture of him. Worse than that, one of our editors had been at the Asheville Airport within an hour of the champion boxer's arrival, with no idea that the object of our consuming search was due to fly in at any moment.

Sabotaged by the cosmos, we persevere. Does that sound paranoid? No, no, paranoia is a psychotic state wherein an individual has the illusion that something is out to get her. If you read on you will discover that there is a plot and it is no illusion. It involves a Communist Revolutionary newspaper published in Chicago called Revolutionary Worker.

As deadline draws nearer, morale becomes considerably deflated. Like money, assignments are taken more readily than they are returned. We run the gamut of "Why I don't have my article" routines. Faculty members will take some delight in knowing that it's similar to the "Why I don't have my term-paper" routine. All of us learned how to do this at an early age. Sometimes the excuses were true.

I remember an arithmetic assignment in the third grade which literally sent me into paroxysms of

terror. It contained twenty or so problems that looked like this:

25,604)382,988,786,310,437

Even with the rational distance of fifteen years I think that assignment rivals the Spanish Inquisition for sadism. At any rate, it was clear to my parents that I was genetically incapable of completing the homework on my own. Vain attempts were made in the spirit of teaching to show me how to do the problems by myself, but since I had started throwing up and it was about 10:30 at night my father gave up and worked the problems for me. He sat at my little desk and swore. I sat on my bed looking fondly at my dolls.

The next morning I waited at the bus stop with my beautiful homework. My nine-year-old brow was unfurrowed for the first time since the introduction of long division. My books sat on the curb by my feet, the arithmetic paper bound to the top of them by a big green rubber band with a clasp. Nearer my God to Thee. And then a dog came and peed a gallon's worth all over my books.

I had occasion to encounter an equally effective excuse just this past week. One of our new staff members met her deadline last Tuesday clutching the aforementioned Chicago-based publication, Revolutionary Worker.

Emblazoned in huge red print on the front of the tabloid were the words "WOLF CRIES 'WOLF.'" The article concerned Soviet troops in Cuba. Ingeniously, the newspaper bore the same headline on the back page in Spanish. "LOBO GRITA 'ILOBO!'" it read. This is the real stuff, I thought. My small-town brain reeled. I said, "...the day-care article---um, do you have it, too?"

"No, man, I'm really sorry but the pigs arrested me in Greensboro for selling this paper and my trial was this week."

"That's dreadful. Were you found guilty?"

"Yeah, I'm out on appeal."

Well, now I think this is a blue-ribbon excuse. No holes, absolutely fool-proof. So you see, **THERE IS A PLOT--A COMMUNIST PLOT!** In fact, if this publication ever gets into print I would suggest that you exercise extreme caution in being seen with it.

Seriously though, I would like to thank everyone who helped publish this issue. And since it's the eleventh hour, I'd like to give a special thanks to my good friend and our witty and savagely efficient typesetter, Carol Emmet of The Arts Journal.

Deirdre Morro