

THE LIFE OF CARDELL SPAULDING

EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

"We cannot know where we are going if we do not know where we have been."



As I See It

by Bruce Barton



...ABOUT RALPH HUNT

I am distressed, sad, disillusioned, upset, and more about the predicament Ralph Hunt finds himself in. Not just Ralph Hunt but his business associate, Howard Oxendine, and his brother, Charles too. All have been found guilty (see front page story). It's sad, indeed!

But, listen, Ralph Hunt... and all of those who think darkness has enveloped you. Look up! Blessings are really problems, predicaments, obstacles in disguise.

I am an ex-convict. I do not glory in that fact but neither do I avoid the revelation when it is part of the story of my life. It happened. I pulled time in Central Prison in the early 60s for breaking into another person's house in a drunken stupor. I did it; and I am truly sorry. But I am not going to spend the rest of my life worrying about it; I am going to share it with my readers myself so that my enemies will not be able to harm me with "telling it" at a later date when I am least prepared to have it found out. I pulled 7-10 years and I was paroled in August of 1968, after pulling some three or four years (counting jail time, of course). I have also been in jail a number of times for sundry misdemeanors like public drunkenness, resisting arrest and the like. I used to like to "attack" authority figures like policemen when I was drinking.

But don't get alarmed! All this happened a long time ago. I am also an admitted alcoholic; I learned how to live without drinking alcohol in alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Come this November 15, 1980 I will have lived ten years without drinking any alcohol or throwing down any mind bending pills. I get high naturally, the very best way. And, of course, I have accepted Christ Jesus as my personal Saviour. That's the smartest move I have ever made: life without Christ is meaningless.

I say the above to be able to say that my past (including my stint in prison and my extended bout with the bottle) is the greatest asset I have. I learned how to live with other people in Central Prison; and I learned how to live with myself in AA. And Christ has given me peace and eternal assurance that my life does, indeed, have meaning beyond this pale forerunner here on earth. I long for heaven and the mind freeing realities there.

Ralph Hunt is one of my heroes; I have long admired him. I remember those exciting days when he was the coach and later principal at Fairgrove School. He took the young men at Fairgrove and taught them how to win. His teams were mentally tough; he imbued them with the notion

that they were somebody. And his players learned to fight and scrap until victory was won.

Now it is his turn to put into practice the traits he taught his players. It is time to reach deep down and gut it out. It is time to turn the seeming despair of the endless media coverage into an asset. He and his associates are on center stage; we can observe them under the glare of the media attention. They can teach us how to bear up under scrutiny; how to withstand the wiles of those who would destroy us. They can teach us how to be tough in a tough world.

I for one cannot applaud and say Ralph Hunt got what was coming to him. The system which destroyed him seemingly is in need of being improved too. For instance, Earl Britt, the judge who sentenced them, is a federal judge because of politics pure and simple. He is not, as I see it, a brilliant legal mind. But, according to information I have gathered he was a classmate of Senator Robert Morgan in Wake Forest Law School. Britt made the original motion to tear down Old Main when he was chairman of the PSU Board of Trustees in the early '70s; he also attempted to keep double voting (that evil system) in place as a lawyer representing Robeson County. Thank God he lost both cases! So, is he worthy to sentence Ralph Hunt or Howard Oxendine or anyone else for that matter? The highway patrol? Their game plan seems to be "arrest Ralph Hunt every time you see him". The highway patrol, as I see it, has treated Indian people shoddily in Robeson County. Are they fair in their seeming persecution of Ralph Hunt? Is there any politics in any of this horrible stuff? If Ralph Hunt were a farmer or carpenter or candle stick maker...would he have been pursued so relentlessly?

And the lives destroyed. The young men. The families. Who will put them back together again?

I see sociological, nightmares; psychological shortcomings; racial nuances every where. Maybe Ralph Hunt cries out for all of us who have trod down the sociological path in Robeson County. "Punish me" we cry out; punish us because we do not deserve to be one of the power boys. Our fathers and mothers and their fathers and mothers cry out to us as we reach out for our rightful share in Robeson County. We remember those dark days when we could not attend schools because of the color of our skins; we remember those sad days when we were spoon fed condescension

and treated less than our white brothers. We remember all the sad days. And we cannot reconcile ourselves to the opportunities now before us because of victories won. A man can now hold elective office in Robeson County even if he is darkly hued; a man can be whatever he wants to be in Robeson County...if he is willing to pay the price in dedication to hard work.

But are we ready for equality? Are we ready to hold up our end of the bargain? Are we ready to be the best that is in us?

I say yes. We just need time to sort things out for ourselves.

And I say to Ralph Hunt: hold your head erect! We need you to help us through this troubled time. We will become the best that is in us; I am only sure of that.

AMA READER OF 'CARL WEST OPINIONS'...AND J.M. BROWN

Two of my favorite political pundits are Carl West and J.M. Brown; both write columns for the Robesonian. I like to read both of them.

J.M. Brown, a Black minister from the Red Springs area, writes well; he is controlled and sparse in what he has to say. He is erudite and bright.

Most of the time I agree with what he says although I have to weigh him out sometimes on the societal scales for myself. He seems a bit too polished for my tastes sometimes; too quick to accommodate the power structure. But his column is the best one in the area; even better than "As I See It." I am mostly hot and cold. I write with passion and I never forget where I came from. I write always with an occasional glance behind me. I know that I cannot know where I am going if I do not know where I have been. I keep racism out in the open; I never pretend that things are better than they are.

The other interesting columnist is Carl West, a white political observer. He writes "Carl West Opinions." And they are just that...opinions of Carl West. I hardly agree with anything he says. Even when he says something that makes sense to me he seems to say it for the wrong reason.

He invokes the name of God when in doubt, as I see it. He probably likes Jerry Falwell. Jesse Helm's amendment to put prayer back into the schools, increasing military spending, and stuff like that. But, as I see it, mostly for the

wrong reason.

It's America. Just don't attempt to stop either of us from expressing ourselves. We probably would team up against anyone or any institution that attempted to shut us up.

So, I say...keep writing Carl West...keep writing J.M. Brown...keep writing Bruce Barton. We're better folk for having had our say.

"In language, clarity is everything." Confucius

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EDITOR'S NOTE: I recently received a letter from James Brantley Oxendine, a Robeson County native now serving a life sentence in Central Prison. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Newman Oxendine. He attended the local schools, graduating from Pembroke High School in 1966; he has also attended Pembroke State University, Southeastern Community College and Gaston College in Gastonia.

He is the father of one son, is now divorced, and is engaged to a local Pembroke lady.

He was tried for murder in March of 1980 and received a mandatory life sentence.

He says, "It was here (Central Prison) on May 19, 1980 that I re-dedicated my life to Christ." He met Cardell Spaulding, another Robeson County native, through correspondence, although both are incarcerated in Central Prison. Spaulding is still locked up on the notorious I & J Block although his death sentence was overturned last year and he was re-sentenced to life in prison.

Oxendine and Spaulding write back and forth. Oxendine said, "Through faith in Jesus we (Oxendine and Spaulding) met and have become good Christian friends and I feel it is my Christian duty to help him all I can..."

He has submitted a short story about Cardell Spaulding and an excerpt of some testimony which was given out of hearing of the jury in Cardell Spaulding's last trial. The testimony is by Dr. John Gregory Peck, a sociologist at North Carolina State University in Raleigh who has done some significant work in exploring the Lumbee psyche and sociological motivations.

wrong reason.

Recently he said something that I cannot let go unannounced. After I fell off the chair laughing, I decided that I should respond...just for posterity's sake.

Carl West said in reference to some of the Robesonian staff writers... "I have also noted that they're very objective. I have seen no evidence that any writer on this staff (the Robesonian) ever attempts to slant an article on anything they cover..." Can you believe that? His column this date was entitled "Many of the nation's newspapers (are) slanted!" But not the Robesonian! I laughed and laughed and laughed.

But Mr. West seems a good and courtly man; he cares about his community. And he expresses himself well. He noted that he is not an educated man; neither am I. I enjoy reading his opinions but I reserve the right not to agree with them if I do not want to. And I give him the same right to agree or disagree with mine.

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The writing is good. And Peck's testimony is significant and of interest to all of us. We submit it to you in the hope that it will help us understand ourselves better.

An Old Adage Proven True

David Green is an articulate man; he is also a successful businessman. He is also a Black man, one of two presently serving on the Robeson County Board of Education. ON Tuesday night he was elected to serve as chairman of the Robeson County Board of Education. Also serving on the 11 member board are seven Indians and two whites.

Ralph Hunt, who was chairman of the board, resigned his chairmanship under fire after being convicted on federal charges of illegally identifying and marketing tobacco. The following day Hunt was stopped twice and charged with driving under the influence. He will face those charges September 23; he is expected to face state charges in the tobacco caper in the next few days.

The Superintendent of the Robeson County School System is Purnell Swett, an Indian. Sixty percent of the students enrolled in the system are Indians.

But, surprises of surprises, David Green was elected chairman to replace Hunt. It seems that none of the Indians could put together a voting majority. Said a political pundit, "put a bunch of Indians in the same room and they'll wind up fighting each other before the day is through." After reviewing the vote Tuesday night there might be some sociological logic to that political adage.

Said an observer when asked to explain the election of Green, "You know how it is; Indians love to fight...each other!"

Anyway, we wish David Green well as he faces the educational challenge before him; he deserves our support as he leads the Robeson County Board of Education in the months ahead. He is capable and has the temperament to articulate the educational needs of the children. We editorially call on all citizens of the Robeson County School System to support him as he faces up to the educational tasks before him.

For Bill this is all very vivid, having been there twice. The first because of a technical error in paperwork - a failure to seek a stay of his sentence from the N.C. Supreme Court - he came within hours of execution in 1975. A reprieve was granted when the error came to light. He was eventually given life when the death penalty was abolished. Since that time he has been confined maximum security.

Maximum Security: Maximum security is sitting alone in a cell every day, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, except for one hour of recreation a day. It is a stark and lonely existence.

In February 1978 Bill killed again, but this time to save his own life. In Maximum Security, when a man tells you to "get your mess," you do it. Bill found himself hearing those words from a man he didn't know. The man challenged Bill because of the reputation Bill had. Spaulding had no other choice but to defend himself.

In June 1978 Cardell Spaulding once again received the Death Penalty. Spaulding admitted he killed, but did so because of being threatened and the man advancing on him. Thus, a new trial, the death penalty was vacated as a result of the Supreme Court.

Throughout the trials, the fact that Cardell was a Lumbee Indian was never really expressed. Yet, without the jury present, they let one Dr. John G. Peck testify. He had previously done a study on Lumbee Indians and their behaviour, but his testimony was kept from the jury.

Now, most men who win a trial and get off death row join the population to begin their sentences, but not Bill Spaulding. Since having his sentence reduced to life in prison, Bill has and is on what is known as I & J Block. I & J is for men who have committed a crime while serving their sentences. It is maximum security lock-up. One hour a day recreation. So because the warden says so, Bill must sit in his cell 23 hours a day, seven days a week.

Bill and I never get to see each other, except when he goes to the hospital and we just happen to pass on the yard, but we write. Bill told me of one of his life experiences that stands out above everything else. In December of 1979, in a small one man cell on I & J Block. The visitor stayed. This visitor was Christ. Bill gave his heart to God that day and tells me it's the best move he has ever made. Christ came in and gave Bill the pardon and forgiveness that no human would. We write almost every other day and our letters are always filled with much prayer for all our Christian brothers and sisters and for those who aren't.

Bill came through childhood and youth to face what many men only hear about. Came within hours of his life, by execution. Has been stabbed here in Central Prison, almost to death. Twice on N.C. Death Row, but Christ was always there. As Bill was quoted once "I don't have much learning, but I've got common sense." So that common sense prevailed and Bill found Jesus Christ and accepted him as his personal savior. No more rebellion, no more long suffering. Jesus will supply his needs. Bill told me just a few days ago in one of his letters that Jesus had showed him how to respect people and put an endless supply of love in his heart. He had paid his debt to God, but man cannot forgive or forget like our saviour. Man isn't pleased until he totally destroys another's mind and creates a human time bomb. Bill has found that Christ is the way, the truth and the light. So why does he still have to suffer on I & J Block and can't join the population of Central Prison? That question can only be answered by one man: Mr. Samuel P. Garrison, Warden, Central Prison.

We all need your prayers as Central Prison is very demanding, very cruel, very mind boggling, very lonely and very sadistic. But that is good compared to I & J Block!



Cardell Spaulding

by James B. Oxendine

It all began years ago. The date was June 19th, the year 1938. Just another typical day in the lives of many people, but not to Mrs. Mattie Spaulding. On that day she was giving birth to a son. As always with a birth, there was joy, pain and great expectations.

The place was just outside Pembroke, known to all as Union Chapel. Typical of Robeson County, this was another farm community. It's sure people at that time of year were busy starting a new crop growing. Times were hard and survival depended largely on a good crop. Many are the ones who often stayed out of school or started later in the year, just to help with gathering the crops. This wasn't by choice, but by necessity. The crops came first and often it was November before the children were allowed to go to school.

The year of '38 was no different, in fact, more demanding because of very strenuous times. The son born on that June day of 1938 was Cardell Spaulding, better known by most as Bill Spaulding. His birth was in no way significant. Nothing different from any other except the fact that he was the sixth son in a family of ten boys and one girl. No one was aware at this time that Bill would grow up to be a symbolic figure in the prison system of North Carolina. No one could imagine the impact his life would have on his blood brothers in Robeson County. But wait, that's getting a little ahead of myself and the story.

In childhood, Bill was like most boys his age, behaviour about the same as most. His mother said he was a good boy, never gave anyone any trouble. His family never had much money and there was always lots of work to be done. His father grew both tobacco and corn with the other various crops. Bill helped when he got old enough to crop tobacco and pick corn. When he was able to go to school, he did good in his work there. But as fate would have it, he never got to finish because he had to quit in order to help on the farm.

Later his family moved from Union Chapel to Fairmont, NC. They started doing labor work there and Bill did his share also.

Bill soon married Mary Ruth Spaulding and separated some two years after, but not before one daughter was born to them.

Now Cardell's trouble started about 1956 when he was convicted of assault. For this he got his first taste of prison life, being given a three to six year sentence. In 1961 he got three to seven years for larceny. In July 1969 he was convicted of second degree murder. While serving the sentence for second degree murder, Bill was charged with the murder of another prisoner. For this he received the death penalty. Without going any further, let's look at Death Row: the rats scurry at night behind a low slung wire while a row of men use rubber bands to catapult paper clip bullets at the intruders. It's a game of makeshift diversions to pass the time. It's the tightest security area, deep within the State's maximum security prison. Where there is little hope, where convicted killers wait with different thoughts to meet their doom.

For Bill this is all very vivid, having been there twice. The first because of a technical error in paperwork - a failure to seek a stay of his sentence from the N.C. Supreme Court - he came within hours of execution in 1975. A reprieve was granted when the error came to light. He was eventually given life when the death penalty was abolished. Since that time he has been confined maximum security.

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So after you read this, feel free to write us, if you have questions, we will gladly answer.

AN EXCERPT FROM THE TRIAL TRANSCRIPT OF CARDELL SPAULDING

Dr. John Gregory Peck, first being duly sworn, testified on Direct Examination by Mr. Smith as follows:

Q. Dr. Peck, don't lean back in that chair, it will throw you back against the wall.

A. Thank you.
Q. State your name, please, sir.
A. John Gregory Peck.
Q. Dr. Peck, where do you live?
A. In Wake County.
Q. Where were you born?
A. In Michigan.
Q. What do you do?
A. I am an associate professor of anthropology at North Carolina State University.
Q. How long have you been doing that?
A. Approximately ten years.

MR. SMITH: Your Honor, let me present to the District Attorney the credential of this gentleman. If he reviews them, perhaps we could save some time by admitting that these are true.

MR. HALL: Looks like he could be an expert in a lot of things. Your Honor.

MR. SMITH: Your Honor, we tender him as an expert witness in the field of anthropology.

MR. HALL: I will so stipulate, Your Honor. I would like an objection to all of this for the record.

THE COURT: All right. Let the record show that as to the following questions and answers of the witness the State objects, and the Court hears this matter in the absence of the jury.

MR. SMITH: (Continuing)

Q. Dr. Peck, have you done specific studies regarding the Lumbee Indian culture?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know that Cardell Spaulding is a Lumbee Indian?
A. Yes, I do.

Q. When did you do your Lumbee Indian studies, and what did you do in connection with those studies?
A. I've done several studies of the Lumbee. I've studied their migration pattern between--specifically between Robeson County and Baltimore, and also Michigan, and some of the cities here internally within North Carolina. I did a study of Lumbee Indians' violence patterns. I was Eastern Director for the National Study of American Indian Education, and in conjunction with that studied very extensively the school system in Robeson County and in Baltimore, and the child rearing patterns, and social conditions of both the Baltimore Indian community and the Robeson County Indian community.

Q. How many Lumbee Indians would you say now reside in Wake County, Dr. Peck?
A. According to the 1970 census, which is the latest one we had, they had three hundred thirty one Indians in Wake County. By our estimates there are probably now in 1978 something in excess of five hundred Indians residing in Wake County.

Q. Dr. Peck, you've talked with me at various intervals about this case; haven't you?
A. Yes, I have.

Q. And in those instances have I provided you with information about Cardell Spaulding?
A. Limited amount, yes.

Q. Have you sat through some of the trial?
A. Yes, I have.

Q. Dr. Peck, based on the information that you have about this trial, could you relate to the Court any information that you have gained through your studies of Lumbee Indian culture which you think would be useful to the Wake County jury in determining what a jury should do about life or death with Cardell Spaulding in this particular case?

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