

LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT

That Raleigh Newspaper

The holier-than-thou Raleigh News and Observer has done it again. The newspaper's pious editorial writer has performed another of his many Houdini tricks. Sitting thirty miles away in his comfortable swivel chair, he has appointed himself prosecutor, judge and jury in another Franklin County case.

The self-anointed crucifix of Franklin County has jumped wholehog into the case involving six county teenagers convicted on charges of shooting at the home of a Negro school teacher. He says the charges were "surprisingly gentle". He calls the Sheriff of the county a liar - although not in these words - and he implies that there is much to be desired in our county prosecutor. He says that the only reason these youngsters were arrested and tried at all is due to the State Bureau of Investigation. This is strange because this represents another contortionistic feat in that the Old Reliable has not been numbered among the SBI's most ardent fans for some time now.

Then, in one of journalism's greatest statements of reason, the Raleigh writer says: "Of course racial overtones exist and are almost too easy to find hovering over such a case. The boys are white, the victim of their shooting is black..." By this reasoning racial overtones exist every time any white man and his Negro neighbor meet. According to the News and Observer, just as long as one is white and the other black, a racial situation prevails.

The Raleigh editor has a right to his opinion and he has a right to express it, however biased it might be. We have the same right here.

His newspaper first reported that there was no one in the house at the time of the incident. There was. It reported that the youths were from Louisburg. They are not. They live in the Gold Sand community and, we suspect, are proud of it. As to the SBI being responsible for the arrests, this is ridiculous. Certainly their investigation helped, but charges - as the Raleigh writer well knows - have to be made locally. The SBI was called in on the case by the very same Sheriff, the N & O seeks to discredit. Had they not been called, they wouldn't have been here. He knows that, too.

He refers to these boys as "six young toughs". These young men undoubtedly made a terrible mistake and must face life with this mark on them. Certainly they are not being excused by officials nor are they being excused by their parents. Each of them come from a good family and as so often happens to our young people, they made a mistake. The court, in its wisdom, has shown compassion.

Hanging these boys at sunrise might appeal to the News and Observer, but not to those who live in Franklin County. And this is in no way excusing the seriousness of their crime. Their punishment was legally and morally left to the courts - and to their parents - and not to

the News and Observer. For this we are thankful.

What Sheriff Dement said from the beginning is that the incident was not racial in the same context as the incidents which have been reported at or near the home of a Negro minister in the Justice community. According to our information, these boys were mad at their teacher and in all probability, a similar incident might have taken place had the teacher been of the white race. The teacher, has otherwise, gotten along very well in the Gold Sand school as have the other Negro teachers in white schools in the county and white teachers serving in Negro schools.

In his closing comments in the editorial, the Raleigh writer says "But even the SBI's efforts to enforce the law are mocked and will be misunderstood..." Indeed, this and many other things are already misunderstood by readers of this one-sided Raleigh newspaper.

They have succeeded in tagging Franklin County as a place of violence, when indeed we don't stand in the light of Raleigh. When any incident takes place in Franklin County it is automatically front page for the News and Observer. If the same thing happens in other counties, it gets lost on page seventeen. Franklin appreciates the preferential treatment but would like to have some of the good things played in the same manner.

One spokesman, connected with the newspaper, said this week that the reason for the front paging of Franklin stories is that the newspaper has more circulation in Louisburg than in other towns it serves. Glory be and this is what we get for such loyalty.

Franklin is a good place to live and to work. Not perfect, but good. We will stand in comparison with any and all other areas of North Carolina and we will continue to resent and to resist the smear campaign being launched against us by our neighboring newspaper. And the invitation is out to one and all to come see for themselves.

Time To Register

The time has come for Franklin citizens to register to vote. The books open throughout the county Saturday. Little has been heard, except in political circles, about the new registration.

Most of what has been heard indicates some confusion about registering. The simplest way to put it is that everyone just forget that they have ever been registered to vote. Forget where one has been registered and start anew.

The procedures are simple. To register all that is necessary is that an eligible voter go to his polling place on any of the next four Saturdays or catch the registrar at home. A minimum of information is needed to fill out the form, which the registrar does. The applicant needs only to sign his or her name.

This is a very small thing to do for one to become eligible to vote. Needless to say, voting is not only a privilege of citizenship but a responsibility. Don't let the time slip by. Plan to register this Saturday. Get it behind you. And then, you can spend your time reminding your friends and neighbors to go and register.

"Ask Not What I Can Do For McCarthy - Ask What McCarthy Can Do For Bobby..."



Another Franklin Incident

A two-year-old Negro boy disappeared from his home in the western section of the county Tuesday afternoon. Four hours after the child was discovered missing, his absence was reported to authorities.

By that time, it was dark and it was cold. Help was needed, so the call went out. Among those notified were about forty members of the American Legion holding an important meeting in Franklinton. Almost to a man, these men, all white, left their steaks untouched, canceled their meeting and joined in the search. Only a few of the World War I vets were unable to go plowing through the woods.

These men were joined by many others and forming a circle around the youth's home began a frustrating search through the woods. According to reliable reports, about fifty Negroes stood in the yard. Only one joined in the nighttime search,

although several aided in the continued hunt on Wednesday morning.

This did not deter the whites however, nor did the fact the lost child was a Negro. The search was successful when on Wednesday morning, a white man found the child unharmed and safe.

Of course, this kind of thing is not strange to those of us here in Franklin County. There is nothing unusual about neighbors helping each other or people of both races rising to the challenge in time of need.

The Franklinton area of the county has gained widespread adverse publicity as has the entire county in past months due to misreported and sometimes misleading accounts of race relations. Those who live here know better.

Those who don't live here, need to take note of this newest Franklin incident.



"Operator, get me Washington, D.C. Yes, that's in the United States".

"Hello. Is this Washington, D.C. How do I get in touch with the President?"

"What's an unlisted number? I don't care if it is unlisted. Plug me in or whatever it is that you do. I want to talk to the head man."

"How do I know his name. I've been away for quite a few years. I guess he still lives in the same old White House. Don't they have a telephone there?"

"Well... yes, mam. I guess you could say this is sort of an emergency. See if you can get me the number. I'd appreciate it."

"That's Pennsylvania... what? Yes, mam. Just dial it please. I don't have a pencil handy. No mam, I didn't get the number. I don't need it. No, mam, I won't be calling again."

"Hello. Is this the President? Who... I didn't ask for any aide... I want to speak to the President. Yes, son, I'm afraid it is kind of urgent... and son... I'd appreciate it if you'd hurry. I don't have much time."

"Well... bless my boots... man... are you the President? You ain't, huh? You're what? What's a personal secretary? Yes, mam, I see. You do things personal like. Yes, mam. Let me speak to his highness... if he ain't too busy."

"Mr. President? Well, sir... have I ever had a time getting to talk to you. In my day... all a fellow had to do was just walk up and say his piece. Yes, sir, I'm coming to that, I know you're busy. By the way... what's keeping you so busy you can't answer the phone and need all that help?"

"Viet... what. Is that a place... or a thing... or is that your secretary?"

"Yes sir. I heard that it's election year. You gonna run again, huh? Well I'm not allow to express myself on that subject."

"Yes, sir, I'll try to speak louder. You see... I'm getting a little old and I'm calling from a far piece away."

"Well to get to the point, Mr. President. Lately, we've been getting a powerful lot of young men up here and they tell me that you sent most of them. Not directly, of course... but some of them are quite bitter about being sent so soon. They seem to think I could help you some if I'd call."

"Yes, sir. I know you don't need any advice. Yes, sir. I know you already know everything. Yes, sir. I have had a little experience in saving liberty and freedom and things like that."

"Yes, sir. We lost some mighty fine boys in my day, too. Oh, not as many as you... mind you... but far too many. But, you see we had a reason... and that's what these young men up here want to find out. They want to know your reason."

"No, sir. You don't have to have one. After all, you are the President. But don't you think you owe them some explanation? After all, they gave a heap to help you carry out your policy in Viet... whatever it is."

"Yes, sir. I know you're busy and I know you got to get on with your campaigning. But, it seems you ought to be able to give a little time to the people... They're the ones that's suffering... and they're good folks... the folks were in my day... They'd back you all the way... if you'll let them... but you got to give a reason... they won't follow like a blind mule."

"What say? Oh, Yes sir. I'll keep my advice to myself. I was just trying to help. You see... I sort of got an interest in the United States. Yes, you might say I got folks in your country."

"Sir, may I ask one final question before you hang up? Are you... by any chance any kin to Andrew?... Yes, sir. I thought that was unlikely."

"Good luck, Sir. You're surely going to need it."

"What's that operator? Yes, I placed the call. My number? Let's see... it's Heaven 1787... I believe that's right. I so seldom use the phone... Oh, my name. Yes, mam. It's George. That's right. Yes, mam, George (No-Middle Initial) Washington. No mam, I wouldn't kid you. Thank you, mam."

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