

Private Musings Reveal Mysteries of Male Culture

One travels life's chaotic road in a search intended for clarity of mind. Often, society questions much of what the sexes contribute to one another.

Collective collaboration on such a topic has propelled me to comment on the existence and purpose of the "guy." Because I have humbly been granted guy status by the powers that be (don't ask who they are), attempts will be made in efforts to seep through the endless mounds of a man's psyche.

Because I'm a guy, I wonder often and ask myself critical delving questions pertaining to the mystery of women, such as: Would the main cause of men's lying be the fact that women insist on asking too many questions? Is the reason God created man before woman was simply because you always create a draft before the final masterpiece? Why is it that most of women's problems start with men?

(MENstruation, MENopause, MENtal anguish, etc.)

Because I'm a guy, there will be

instances where I look forward to me and my Maxim in the apartment "office" and be left to my salubrious and bodacious thoughts.

There, the atmosphere encourages grand thought and personal evaluation. There, I aim to better myself. Thus, think of personal time in my "quarters" as a selfless act, working diligently to give you the man you truly deserve.

Because I'm a guy, I inevitably will love my mother unconditionally. Ladies, you will have to share me with the first woman in my life. Sorry, but Mom still has my nursery school art on the wall - now if that's not love, tell me what is.

Because I'm a guy, when a cold consumes my being, I need someone, preferably someone with a supple complexion and a comfortable smile, to bring me soup and warm my heart while I lie in grief and physical misery. Rub my back, soothe my tummy and love me in my weak state.

I don't need diamonds, I don't need chocolate. Receiving love when most

vulnerable is the way to my heart.

Because I'm a guy, I am capable of announcing, "One more round," and not mean it every single time I say it. There's a perfectly good reason why I started the night socially verbose, and ended the evening (morning) using a bar stool as a futon and covering Billy Idol.

Because I'm a guy, you don't have to ask me if I liked the movie. Chances are if you're crying at the end of it, I didn't. (Except for "Good Will Hunting" and "Braveheart" - those are two givens.) It's not like guys don't have emotions. It's just, well, an unknown fact is that all young boys are sat down by their fathers and told explicitly, "I had a son, thus you will be a son. Therefore, you should roll in



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the mud, break Mom's china and wrestle on the furniture, and I won't yell at you. But in return, you must not cry." This speech comes right after don't pee in the bed and right before the importance and necessity of broccoli.

Because I'm a guy, yes, I have to turn up the radio when Billy Joel or The Doors come on, and then point out that Billy is from the North and Jim Morrison is buried in Paris and everyone visits his grave. Please do not behave as if you do not find this fascinating because I know you do.

N*SYNC (and the Mets) sank to the abysmal pit of society when they appeared on the Shea Stadium stage during the World Series. As does crying, boy bands do not belong in base-

ball.

I contemplate daily where boy bands actually do belong. (The true New York team finished atop the world once again in 2000. The Tomahawk-waving fans who consume the Carolina campus have to realize that the North has risen once again against the noble forces of Dixie land.)

Because I'm a guy, I think what you're wearing is fine. I thought what you were wearing five minutes ago was fine, too. Either pair of shoes is fine. With the belt or without it looks fine. Your hair is fine. You look fine. Can we just go now?

Because I'm a guy, I still hopelessly wish my parents found family ties to Gotti or Vito Corleone. I, and most of my peers, are convinced there are mob links somewhere along my heritage. Attribute it to a mild dosage of testosterone or a constant fascination with organized crime, but Hoffa and most men covet chrome suits and white-on-white ensembles.

Because I'm a guy, the female per-

suasion seems to occupy much of personal intellectual creativity.

As many of my cronies have pointed out numerous times (Smouse), I have a tendency to dominate bi-gender conversations with shallow lines and hackneyed phrases.

Well, consider me born again, and to all the hopeless guys out there, stay away from the blistering gibberish. Even if you are genuinely curious about a girl's appearance, don't bother commenting because, inevitably, you'll get the red flags of denial. Create an aura that attracts as well as appeals. Drop the lines and enjoy the euphoric perfume.

Sipping on some Sizzurp and stay in school and don't do drugs. Rock the vote 2000: Lieberman for Pres.

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Labor Unions Help Defend The American Way of Life

The history of the changes in how well or poorly most Americans live is largely the history of the rise and decline of labor unions.

What would America be like if there were no minimum wage and no weekends? What if your boss required you to work seven days a week, 14 hours a day, in dangerous conditions? What if there were no health and safety regulations, no child labor laws, no protection for whistle-blowers, no recourse at all for mistreated, underpaid employees but to find another job? And what if every job you might find meant the same long hours, low pay and dehumanizing work?

Thanks to the long, bitter struggle of American labor organizers, most of us never will face such conditions.

But such conditions were common in this country at the turn of century, and workers in much of the "global economy" face similar conditions today. Without labor unions, employees who comprise the vast majority of Americans and other human beings - find themselves isolated and overpowered, facing managers, owners and corporations that are extremely well-organized, well-financed and quite skilled at protecting their interests.

When workers get together to protect their interests, free-market purists cry "foul!"

Yet corporations are created by groups of stockholders who have come together for the same purpose. There is nothing about labor unions that is incompatible with a free market.

Among the forces that operate in a free market are the demands of employees. Just as companies may set any price the market can bear, and consumers choose to buy what they please, employees may refuse to work for a certain salary, and they may organize to increase their power.

Of course, in North Carolina, unions are about as powerful as the Carolina football team. It's technically legal to form a union, but collective bargaining, mandatory membership



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and strikes by public employees are all prohibited.

Forming a union without these tools is like playing baseball without a bat or ball. North Carolina is widely recognized as a vehemently anti-union state. Organizers in the textile industry were frequently fired, set up on false criminal charges and sometimes killed in cold blood.

Any threat to the ability of owners to enrich themselves at workers' expense was met with manipulation, legal tricks or brute force.

The housekeepers that keep this university's campuses livable have met with similar if less brutal obstacles. At UNC-Greensboro, housekeepers were prohibited from talking about union activities at work, even on their lunch break! Organizers were barred from all but the most remote locations on the Greensboro campus of the "people's university."

The housekeepers were being asked to perform impossible tasks, sometimes cleaning 20 floors a shift in buildings without air conditions during the dog days of summer.

And while the cleaning crews remained understaffed, new managers were hired straight out of business school to find more ways of cutting costs.

I don't mean to idealize unions or federal labor laws. The programs of the New Deal took a lot of steam out of the labor movement. Once the government mandated a minimum wage and maximum work week, many Americans felt that unions were no

longer needed.

Striking - that is, refusing to work until demands are met - might seem noble and brave, but asking government to enforce demands with red tape and litigation smacks of Stalinism.

Meanwhile union leadership is often as corrupt and bureaucratic as any corporation, even cutting deals with bosses that help union executives but hurt workers. The big unions have come a long way from the days of Joe Hill and Mother Jones.

But UE-150, the union to which many UNC housekeepers belong, is still a true grass roots organization. In my many conversations with its members and leaders, it has become clear that these folks are angry about the way they are treated, that they simply want an honest deal and a living wage, that they care tremendously about their jobs and this school, and that they are certain organizing is the only way to maintain their dignity and a decent livelihood.

The housekeepers are mostly African-American women, a group of Americans whose voices have been silenced for half a millennium. They have tried to reason with our administrators, they have asked for student support, they have written letters and taken legal actions, all to no avail.

They are stonewalled, they are ignored and they are intimidated.

When the housekeepers finally spoke loudly enough to be heard, they were reprimanded and accused of rudeness. Rudeness is too polite a word for the attitude of university administrators toward their loyal employees.

We all owe these hard-working men and women our support as they carry on the battle to create a nation that meets the needs of all its citizens.

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Nader Not Ideal Candidate For U.S. Progressive Voters

Last Friday, an article in The Daily Tar Heel reported the alarming fact that Ralph Nader might draw enough votes from Al Gore to elect George W. Bush as our next president.

Nader's press secretary claimed that "the notion that Nader votes could cost Gore the election was a campaign trick put out by Gore's campaign." If this is true, why is the Republican Leadership Council running pro-Nader TV ads in battleground states? Why are pro-choice groups running ads against Nader?

The right wing is cheering Nader's success and progressives are fighting it, because Ralph Nader's most enduring legacy could become the election of George W. Bush. Unfortunately, Nader's appeal to many citizens is based on distorted facts and unsound logic.

Nader has gained much of his support by asserting that there is no difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. He even has said that if forced to choose, he would vote for Bush. The claim that there is no difference between Gore and Bush would be laughable if it were not so dangerous.

Al Gore supports a woman's right to choose, an increase in the minimum wage, hate crimes legislation, universal health care, meaningful campaign finance reform and a \$10,000 tax credit for college tuition.

A Bush presidency would look much differently, with Supreme Court nominees who would overturn Roe v. Wade and civil rights legislation, private school vouchers, a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent, National Rifle Association-sponsored gun bills, discrimination against gays and lesbians and "voluntary" environmental regulations.

Nader either is uninformed about the facts or deliberately misleading voters.

Even one of Ralph Nader's own chief lieutenants who later served with Al Gore in Congress admitted: "Sitting next to Al Gore on that House committee, I was constantly struck by not only his intellect but also his passionate advocacy as he took on powerful interests over toxic waste, air pollution, consumer rip-offs and other important issues. That's one of the things that is so stunning about the Nader candidacy - that he chooses to ignore the many

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positions he and Gore have shared over the years, the many fights they have waged together."

On the issues where Nader has simply spoken, Al Gore has crafted concrete solutions.

To remove corporate influence from government, Gore has supported public financing of campaigns since entering Congress in 1974.

To protect the environment, Gore fought global warming before it was fashionable and negotiated the Kyoto Protocol.

To protect average working people, Gore has supported organized labor, earning an 88 percent lifetime rating from the AFL-CIO.

Many upper-class white liberals have invested their hopes and dreams in Ralph Nader without examining his positions, blindly endorsing him as the "alternative" candidate. In 1996, when Nader was asked to take a stand on issues important to women, gays and lesbians, he said he was not interested in "gonadal politics." For this reason, Gloria Steinem and the National Organization for Women have urged women not to support Nader. Leading minority groups have attacked Nader for being "oblivious" to issues of race.

While railing against corporate unaccountability, Nader amassed a personal fortune playing the stock market with tens of millions of dollars. His secretive organizations have repeatedly hidden the sources of their funding by breaking laws and using the same sneaky tricks as the corporations he attacks. While proclaiming the rights of labor, he allegedly busted a union in his own company by firing workers that attempted to organize against the cruel working conditions he imposed.

Ralph Nader, while admirable for his previous work on behalf of consumers, is not the perfect champion of ordinary citizens that he pretends to be.

In a letter to Ralph Nader, many of

"Nader's Raiders," idealistic young people who worked with him in the 1960s and '70s, urged him to drop out of the race for the sake of our country. They write, "It would be a cruel irony indeed if your major legacy were to erase the victory from the candidate who most embodies your philosophy, Al Gore, and to give the executive branch to the party which has consistently resisted your progressive ideals."

While the irony might be cruel, only crueler is the effect that Nader could have on the lives of those he heralds in his speeches.

For children without health insurance, seniors who rely on Social Security, minorities who depend on enforcement of civil rights laws, women who treasure their right to choose and families fighting HMOs for decent health care, this is no time to make a meaningless statement.

Ralph Nader acknowledged as much, saying in August he would not campaign in states where he would jeopardize Gore's victory. It now appears that he has broken that promise, threatening a progressive victory and the lives of millions of Americans in the process. Nader's former colleagues close their letter to Ralph Nader with the same appeal I make of you, "to honor your ideas and to vote for the man who is most likely to put them into action - Al Gore."

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Society's Privileged Responsible For Aiding World's 'Have Nots'

If you open any newspaper or magazine, you can find a tragic tale of poverty or what I refer to as the "have nots."

We read this tragic tale, feel a moment of sorrow and move onto the stock quotes, comics or Arts & Leisure section forgetting this glimpse into the alien community of the "have nots."

We have myriad social programs and caring people in this world who spend countless dollars and hours with the end result of greater poverty and no end to it in sight.

I would not even consider offering some type of public policy that could solve this problem, for thousands of people more intelligent than I have tried this route and failed. I speak to the issue of poverty from my role as one of the "haves."

I am someone who has the resources and basic comforts to address this social plague. As a member of the "haves," I can only offer advice in the one arena that I truly know, that as one of the over consumers of the world.

As a society, we blame the impoverished for their own scarcity in basic needs and fault the unemployed as lazy. However, we are also to blame for the lack of basic goods available to them.

As a student of city and regional planning, I am attempting to become educated in a variety of issues that affect our society. One of the recurring themes in my studies is that of creating sustainable solutions to our societies' ills. If "have nots" continue to be left behind, we are not creating sustainable solutions. Social equality is the only answer for sustain-

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ability and for a future at all. As the "haves" we have the resources and power for social change. The "haves" in this world, which represent 20 percent of the world's population, consume 86

percent of the world's resources.

The three richest people in the world own assets in excess of the GDP of the world's poorest 48 countries put together. (In essence they could buy these countries.)

So we "haves" have a social obligation to bring about equality not merely by giving some of our excess to the "have nots," but by using our resources more efficiently and only taking what we need. It can be as simple as walking or biking to work one day a week or changing your lifestyle to minimize possessions and use fewer resources.

We can also preserve resources by following the suggestions of a recent health study that found that Americans would live longer, healthier lives by eating a diet that contains 30 percent less calories.

If we continue to ignore the increasing income inequality in this world, our society will not be sustainable and social revolution will be inevitable.

However, if we accept this responsibility to preserve resources and promote equality, the only thing left will be the "haves."

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