

The Slot Man What's It All About?

By Carmen Viglucci



Aug. 23, 1970

"It's only a paper moon . . ."
Spec. 4 Pondexter Eugene Williams, 20, came home today in a \$120 government issue coffin. He got himself killed in Vietnam fighting for his country. He was denied burial at an all-white cemetery.

"Floating over a cardboard sea . . ."
In eulogy, a black student said, "I am sorry that a man fought for his country then his family has to go through the extra pain of waiting for a court order to bury its son because he doesn't have six feet of U.S. ground to lay his head where his mother can go out and visit him."

"But it wouldn't be make-believe"
The mother wept, "Oh, my God . . . what was he fighting for? He died so proper . . ." Tears choked off further words.

"If you believed in me."
And we wonder what makes Black Panthers!

In a splendid column in the Sept. 9 Courier-Journal, Father John Hempel referred to this incident as part of an answer to the oft-heard question—why don't the ghettoites provide proper nourishment for their children? The same question is phrased other ways—"Why don't they lift themselves up by their bootstraps?"—"Why don't they . . .?" But I guess we've heard them all.

Father Hempel retorted that "the answer lies in an attitude that would refuse and condemn

the burial of a black American soldier within the confines of an all-white cemetery."

Eventually, by court order, Pondexter Eugene Williams was granted six feet of the dirt he died for. Even then cries of anguish were heard by those now forced to share this earth with him.

"But that was down South" doesn't apply. Bigotry grows in any climate.

A case in point: a friend described to me how an area black couple had been looking forward to their vacation at a well-known resort. The couple, respectable by any standards, had heard a lot about the particular area and looked forward to their holiday with childish anticipation.

Yet after a couple of days they were home.

They weren't refused accommodations or service (again laws had ensured them this basic right); it wasn't that anyone had said anything; it was just that they had kept noticing icy stares of those made uncomfortable by the couple's very presence. Kind of the same folks who begrudge Specialist Williams a cemetery plot.

In the meantime we fussed over whether women should wear bras or not; worried about Joe Namath's sore knees; took sides over Denny McLain's latest predicament; commiserated with Eddie Fisher's going bankrupt, and went to pay homage to the moon rock.

"It's a melody played in a penny arcade, it's a Barnum and Bailey world, just as phony as it can be."

On the Line Kelly Begins A New Life

By Bob Considine



Arlenehurst, N.J. — Now there's this granddaughter, name of Kelly Considine, starting in kindergarten. She's 5 ("Going on 6," she patiently explains). Everybody in the family is in tears about this dismal change in her life. Except Kelly.

"I'll meet some boys and marry them," she told us in a philosophical discussion of the momentous event. This brought on fresh tears from her elders particularly those at the bar. There was reckless talk of keeping her home forever, of never casting her out into the cruel world, and of hiring a private tutor for her until she is 38.

But none of that will happen because Kelly, a determined feminist, has some new clothes for her fateful matriculation and, naturally, they must be worn. Also she has a flowered bamboo purse I brought her from Hong Kong. That must be worn, too. ("This will fit sandwiches and chocolate milk," she decreed instantly when it was handed over.) I'm afraid it will leak.

There's still another reason why Kelly knows she must go. One of us asked her what she expects to learn in school during life, and she replied, with a most earnest look in her big blue eyes, "How to protect your own cat."

Makes you think.

I remember my first day at school. I blew kindergarten, alas. I didn't start school until I was nearly 8, for some never-fully-explained reason. Later there is a report that there were so many of us that I was overlooked for a couple of years, but that was not true. There was also an unkind story to the effect that on my first day of formal education my mother, who was somewhat shorter than I was by that time, dressed me, took me outside our house in the Swampoodle section of Washington, D.C., aimed me in the general direction of St. Aloysius grade school on the right side of the railroad tracks, gave me a shove and said "Git! School's down there somewhere's." She denied that she ever said "Git!"

Kelly's instructions (or, at least, those to her parents) are more clear-cut, but, somehow, more melancholy.

"Please attach the enclosed identification tag securely to your child's clothing every day until notified that it is no longer necessary," the orders read (This occasioned enough tears to fill the Bay of Fundy at low tide.)

"Sweaters, coats and other belongings should be labeled," the sensible but somehow inex-

pressibly sad instructions from Principal Palaia, a fine educator, I'm sure, read.

"A snack consisting of crackers and milk is served every day. The cost is 20 cents per week, payable on Mondays. (Send only 12 cents the first week of school.)

"Children should not arrive at school more than five minutes before the class is scheduled to begin. After the first day the children should enter the building by themselves. Caution your child about strangers. Also, explain to your child where he (he?) should go if he arrives home and you are not there. This is important because if, for any reason, school is dismissed early, he should know what to do.

"COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: Notify the school nurse immediately."

Kelly's dear grandmothers, reading her bus schedule, are convinced that it is only a matter of time before she is found, half-frozen and whimpering, in a sleet storm that is engulfing her bus stop at Joda and Monmouth.

In the meantime, as her last unemployed summer ends, Kelly's ready.

She's the only one in the house who is.

More Letters

Message True, Ad Wrong

Editor:

The Courier-Journal has always been welcome reading material in our home and with our family of seven. Today on opening the Sept. 9 issue to page 5-A I could not believe that a paper that has enjoyed such integrity could stoop to such sensational political advertising. Granted, the message is true but does a religious publication have to simulate the gory details that accompany an abortive act? My distaste for this goes much deeper than a sensitivity.

I am not only the mother of five children but a fulltime registered nurse in a busy Operating Room in a Rochester hospital. If any one of your staff or Mr. Howard McGee could spend one day seeing the anguish that personnel go through to help these "sick" women who expose themselves to this crude procedure I am sure you would use more discretion. Thank our administration that many and any who like may have immunity in assisting with the abortive procedure.

However, there is always the time when the choice cannot be made as a patient may need professional help. I personally have seen nurses cry, vomit and cringe if they had to be at the scene such as you have printed for all the world to see.

Mr. McGee may feel that he has made a sensational format for his platform. Well he has but he will not get my vote nor will we continue to subscribe to the Courier if this type of advertisement continues.

A. Jane McCuskey
Rochester

Objects to Ad

Editor:

Might I comment on what I consider to be among the most tasteless ads that I have seen? I refer to Howard McGee's "Is this right or . . . is this wrong?" close up of an aborted fetus in a pail (Sept. 9).

Supposedly an election campaign tests a candidate and enlightens the voters by demanding a clarification and explanation of the issues. Perhaps Mr. McGee has plans for restricting the present law; for eliminating the conditions that drive women to seek abortions; for manifesting his deep and genuine concern for human life in regard to education, housing, medical care, jobs, and the elderly.

I am against abortion, Mr. McGee, but I am also against having a pail of gore thrown in my face in a simplistic, gut-level appeal for the "Catholic vote." I hope that Mr. McGee has more to offer as qualifications for a public office than the bland statement that "he thinks abortion is wrong."

The ad was tasteless but predictable from a candidate. I was however shocked that the Courier's standards for advertising are so crude as to allow this ad to be printed.

Rev. Charles F. Mulligan
St. Catherine's Circle
Ithaca

Editor's Note: In addition to the above letters the Courier-Journal received five phone calls objecting to the ad. The Courier-Journal did not sponsor the ad but merely accepted it. Its content was considered and in view of the fact that abortion itself is not a pretty business, this paper decided to accept the ad.

Fight inflation.



Spend 99¢

Are you planning to buy a new car?

Are you considering investing extra dollars in stocks?

Do you know the difference between Prime and Choice meats?

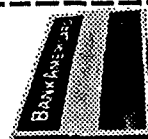
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