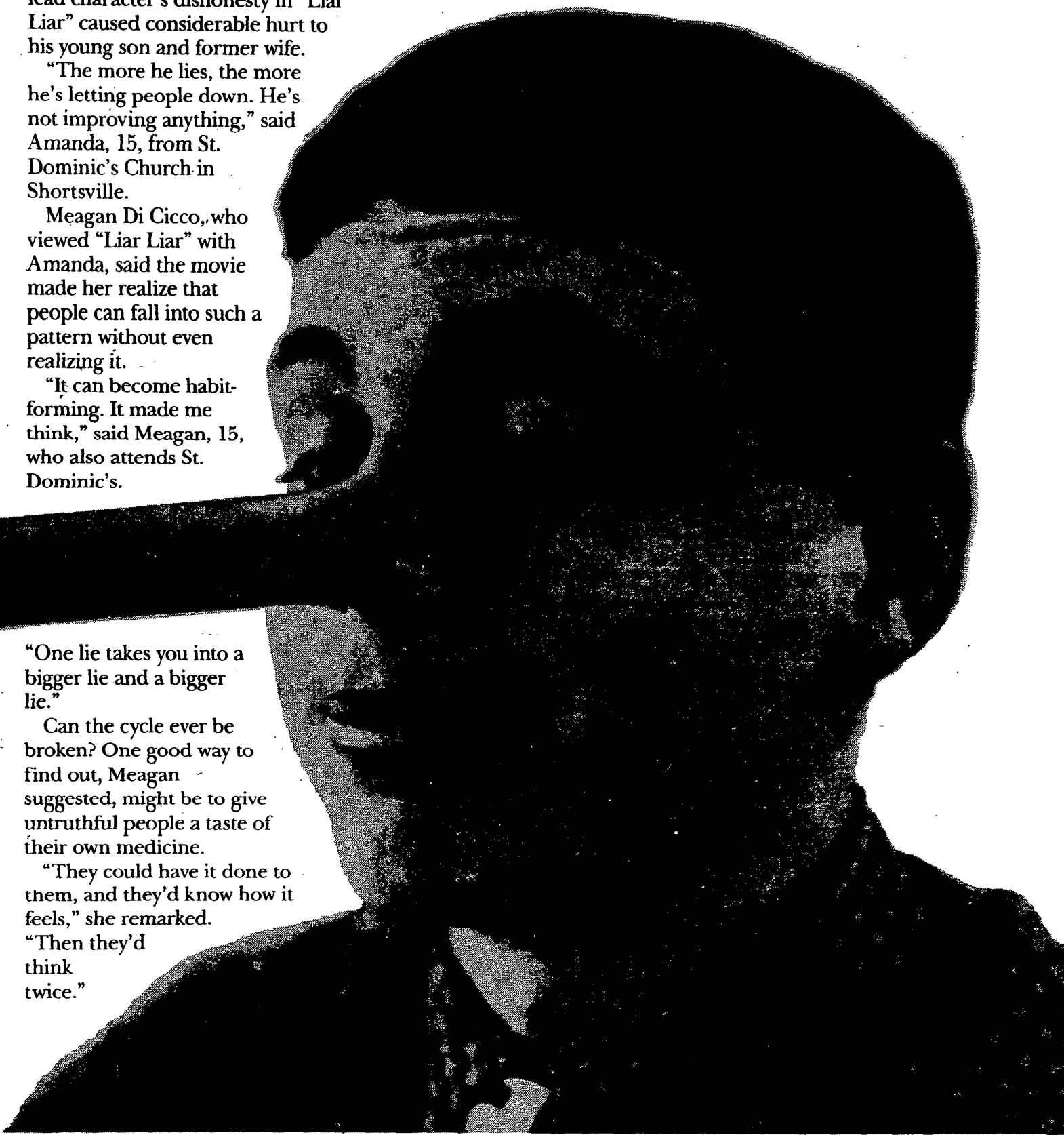


LIAR

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW SCOTT



Pat Freytag

you manipulate someone."

Pat and Mike noted that many historical figures have become notorious for their "lies," among them Benedict Arnold and Richard Nixon. If even the president of the United States could lie to the public, Pat and Mike said it's hard to know whom to trust and not to trust.

"You have to say, 'Why am I believing this, and is there anything to back it up?'" Mike stated.

On the other hand, Joelan Axx maintains that there are times when falsehoods are more appropriate than the truth. For example, she said she might compliment someone's hairstyle even if she doesn't like it that much.

lead character's dishonesty in "Liar Liar" caused considerable hurt to his young son and former wife.

"The more he lies, the more he's letting people down. He's not improving anything," said Amanda, 15, from St. Dominic's Church in Shortsville.

Meagan Di Cicco, who viewed "Liar Liar" with Amanda, said the movie made her realize that people can fall into such a pattern without even realizing it.

"It can become habit-forming. It made me think," said Meagan, 15, who also attends St. Dominic's.

"One lie takes you into a bigger lie and a bigger lie."

Can the cycle ever be broken? One good way to find out, Meagan suggested, might be to give untruthful people a taste of their own medicine.

"They could have it done to them, and they'd know how it feels," she remarked.

"Then they'd think twice."

"I'd say, 'Oh, it looks beautiful.' I'm not going to hurt somebody's feelings," said Joelan, 15, from St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. "It would probably lift somebody's self-esteem. You want to make someone feel wanted."

Marissa notices herself telling similar lies. "If someone comes up to me and says, 'Do you like my shirt?' I'll say, 'Yeah'; or 'Do you think I'm fat?' I'll say 'No,'" Marissa said. "I do that a lot, I admit."

Joelan, also, finds that little lies can become commonplace in her life.

"If I'm having a bad day, I might say anything just to get people out of my way. If they say, 'Are you okay?' I might just say that I feel fine," she said.

However, Joelan said she is concerned about going overboard with such habits.

"The more you do it, it would become an addiction — just like smoking," Joelan stated.

Brian Lewis, who recently saw the movie "Liar Liar," agreed that lying can indeed be addictive. The comedy, starring Jim Carrey, depicts a man who is a compulsive liar but is then forced to go 24 hours without telling so much as a little fib.

"It made me wonder, do people really lie that much during the day? They probably do," said Brian, 15, from St. Anne's and St. Gregory's churches in Palmyra and Marion.

Amanda Record noted that the

Marissa has considered this possibility, saying that she wonders if people lie to her as much as she lies to them.

"That's what scares me," she remarked.

Why do people lie in the first place, if the aftereffects can be so damaging? Mike suggested that lying is often a selfish act, used "for getting out of a situation or for your own good."

"Some people might lie and start bragging to become popular, to become known," Pat observed. "But you really don't have to do that."

In fact, Meagan and Joelan pointed out, quite the opposite seems to occur.

"If they have that reputation (of lying), people may not trust them or talk to them," Meagan said.

"A lot of trust would be lost, and the relationships that person would be forming with people wouldn't be as strong," Joelan pointed out.

Lying, Marissa concluded, simply isn't worth the short-term benefits.

"You don't want to get in trouble. But then you end up getting in trouble anyway," Marissa said.

"Eventually, the truth comes out," Meagan added.

Brian noted that his parents have raised him to tell the truth because he "won't get in as much trouble as when you tell a lie."

Mike added that his mother would be more upset about lying than any other displeasing act he might commit.

"That's the one thing above all. I can always tell the truth, and she

will not get mad at me," Mike remarked.

Pat emphasized that honesty is crucial in all relationships.

"Trust takes a long time to build up, and little things like lies can break it down really easily," Pat commented. "Because if somebody lies once, what prevents them from doing it again?"

COMING NEXT WEEK:
TEENS WHO ARE ADOPTED



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