

EYEWITNESS RWANDA:

“WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE...”

Idoubt if there is any other place in the world where so many people who write for a living have used the phrase, “Words cannot describe ...” You can describe how 15 women were forced to lie down in a circle outside a maternity clinic and then bludgeoned with cudgels. You can report precisely and evocatively how families hugged each other in terrified resignation as they were sliced with machetes between the pews of a Roman Catholic church. (TURN TO PAGE 2)

B Y M A R K F R I T Z

Eyewitness Rwanda

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

You can try to evoke the eerie unreality of seeing a single arm poking out from the packed dirt of a mass grave containing hundreds of bodies. Or walking through a city in which every occupant is a corpse.

But no medium can capture the confluence of sense at riot. You can't describe each expression of shock and pain on each decaying face.

You can't begin to convey the thick, dense lingering odor of human decay that clings to the clothes and seems to have its own taste. You can't replay for the reader the soundtrack of a hundred thousand flies so bloated from feeding that they can barely stay aloft. You can't count every orphan wandering the roads alone.

I took three trips to Rwanda between early May and mid-August last year. Each was a study in the ways a human being can die. There was the mass starvation, dehydration and disease at the Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Zaire — the type of death that was common in Somalia.

There were the shrapnel-torn bodies of uniformed soldiers killed in battle, the type of death common to any guerrilla war fought in the bush.

Then there were the robotic massacres in the towns and villages, the thousands of moments when one group of villagers suddenly rose up and killed another group with every device at its disposal: clubs with wooden studs, machetes, guns, grenades, spears. Even a sharpened umbrella.

This was a special type of killing, among neighbors, up close and personal. The scope and scale and swiftness of such remorseless cruelty gave Rwanda its standing among history's truly horrible moments.

One day last May, AP photographer Jean-Marc Bouju and I went to a village where everybody was dead. Perhaps 5,000 bodies lay in the streets, in the schoolrooms, in the church, in the hospital, outside the maternity clinic. We wrapped T-shirts over our mouths and noses and forced ourselves to look inside every building, examine every scene. We wanted to try to understand.

Families embraced each other in church. A teacher lay beneath a schoolroom blackboard. A couple clung to each other beneath a picture of Jesus Christ. A schoolboy, who looked as if he'd been frozen in terrified motion, lay sprawled amid overturned desks.

We found some survivors in a refugee camp in a nearby town. They told us the victims far outnumbered the killers. Yet most people went to their deaths on their knees, in terrified obedience. A few days later, we found some people who confessed to being killers being held by the anti-government rebels. We asked them the obvious question. Why?

What is strange after spending too much time in Rwanda is that seemingly incomprehensible events begin to take on a perverse logic.

Many of the people who killed were illiterate peasants. They were told that a rebel army was coming to butcher them. They were told that there were supporters of this army in their midst. They were told they had to kill these people before this army arrived or they, and their children, would soon die horribly.

Many of these people truly believed they were doing their patriotic duty. Old people dutifully compiled death lists that showed who had ancestors from the rival ethnic group. Children listened to the conversations of their playmates' parents, trying to detect whether they said anything negative about the government.

When the radio said it was time to kill the people



ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW PENCZIA

While the men dealt with the adults, the women in her town gathered up the children of the families deemed to be enemies. They put them in a circle and began pounding their heads with bulbous clubs designed for this unfathomable task

opposed to the government, the masses slid off a dark edge into insanity.

Women were raped before and during their deaths. Eyes were gouged out, testicles cut off, babies decapitated, pregnant women speared through the womb.

One mother of five told me how she killed two of her neighbor's children. While the men dealt with the adults, the women in her town gathered up the children of the families deemed to be enemies. They put them in a circle and began pounding their heads with bulbous clubs designed for this unfathomable task. "They didn't have time to scream," the woman told me. "They just made big eyes."

A man told me how he killed two of his old schoolmates, who screamed that they were his friends as he slashed them with his machete.

In much of Africa, women grind a root called cassava into a paste by using what are essentially huge mortars and pestles. The pestles are like clubs and the mortars are about the size of a bassinet. A young student I spoke with said he saw babies being placed in these mortars and ground to a bloody pulp.

Almost overlooked amid the death in Rwanda is the large number of people permanently maimed.

I met an Italian doctor who spent his entire day ampu-

tating gangrenous limbs, some of them crawling with maggots. At one point in his tour, after he felt he'd seen everything, a man staggered into the clinic with his brain clearly visible through a deep machete gash in his head. "I couldn't save him," the doctor said.

The civil war and the massacres, of course, triggered one of the worst refugee crises of the post-World War II era. There were great crosscurrents of people who seemed to alight en masse virtually overnight.

I don't know how many times I would travel down a road that I'd traveled a day or two before and see 50,000 or 100,000 people setting up camp, seemingly appearing out of nowhere.

Amid the sickness and death, a simple, mundane sign of normalcy, even happiness, was a jolt. Early one morning in the southern town of Cabbing, I was awakened by the sound of children singing.

On an otherwise empty street, a dozen youngsters from a refugee camp down the road were walking to a new well on the other side of town, carrying and clanking together a motley collection of scavenged water containers.

They had passed a mass grave. They had passed destroyed homes of murdered people. They even had passed men who harassed them because some of the children were members of the Tutsi minority. Eight of the 12 had lost parents in the massacres.

One 10-year-old girl had watched men drown her father in a cattle dip. She had watched them take her mother away to what was likely an even more prolonged and tormented fate. All these kids had seen the most horrible things a human being can experience. And yet, on a sunny day in the company of themselves, these children found a reason to sing.

Toward the end of my first tour, after I'd grown accustomed to seeing hundreds of bodies in every possible configuration of death, I reached a small moment of personal truth. I was traveling from the capital Kigali, when we passed what appeared to be a boy no more than 15 years old who had been dead for a few weeks on the shoulder of the highway. I gave the corpse such a passing, casual glance that moments later I was rattled by my own reaction. I'd lost the ability to be appalled, and it was time to move on to another assignment.

Human cruelty is not infinite in degree, I believe. It has a ceiling, a wall, a point at which violence and horror reach a saturation point, where pain and death reach the apex of pointlessness and any further depravity becomes redundant.

That level, that ceiling, that ultimate degree of cold inhumanity, I think, was reached in Rwanda. ■

Mark Fritz won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting for Associated Press West African during the Rwanda ethnic massacres. His reporting from that conflict also earned him an ASNE deadline award. Fritz is now a national writer for AP, based in New York. This article, reprinted from the magazine IPI Report, was originally given as a speech to an AP Managing Editors conference.



ILLUSTRATION: DEAN STANTON

COLUMBUS GUARDIAN

Dear Jimmy

Prison etiquette according to Hoffa

By IRV OSLIN

Alas, poor Jimmy, I knew him well. Well, let's say I knew him. A memorial service was held in Detroit recently honoring Jimmy Hoffa, the former Teamsters honcho who disappeared 20 years ago. I'd like to offer my own tribute to Hoffa, whom I met while we were inmates at the Federal Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Hoffa was assigned to the A&O detail — known formally as "Admission and Orientation." Essentially, this was the prison welcome wagon. When new inmates came through the door, they were greeted by fellow cons wielding scissors and shaving razors. No, this wasn't part of a sadistic initiation ritual: All new inmates got a haircut and shave. The haircuts were administered by fellow convicts. To prevent "accidents," the authorities allowed the inmates to shave themselves.

New arrivals also got a couple of dozen sets of fingerprints taken and a fresh set of mug shots. Thanks to Hoffa, I received something usually not included with the A&O package — fatherly advice.

Having been raised on Cleveland's West Side, I was already street smart. But this was prison: the rules were different here. Although I had learned some of them during short stints at various local jails, there were still a few things I didn't know about prison "etiquette." Hoffa's advice probably spared me a lot of misery. If not worse.

Generally speaking, prison celebrities are arrogant and obnoxious. They expect — and usually receive — special treatment from both the authorities and inmates. (*Eros* publisher Ralph Ginsberg, whom I later met at Allenwood Federal Prison Camp, comes to mind.) Hoffa wasn't like that. He introduced himself as though he were just another guy on the assembly line. And, in a way, that's what he was.

Hoffa came over to me while I was sitting on a wooden bench waiting to get my mug shots taken. (Instead of the usual method, Lewisburg had one of those four-for-a-quarter booths — the kind you used to see in Woolworth stores. Of course, the coin mechanisms had been removed and you weren't allowed to make silly faces.) "Welcome to Lewisburg," he said. "You can come in here straight as an arrow, but — if you don't watch your ass — you might not walk out that way. If you walk out at all."

I nodded in acknowledgment. "You look like a good,

clean-cut kid," he said. I was 19 then. And, yes, I was whole-some looking. A fellow inmate once commented that I looked like someone who had walked out of a Norman Rockwell painting.

"I'm straight, if that's what you mean," I responded.

Then Hoffa explained some of the finer points of the inmates' code of conduct.

Rule number one: Never accept anything from another inmate. I had been aware of this rule, but I hadn't yet grasped its subtleties. Hoffa spelled it out. If another inmate gives you, say, a cigarette, he is entitled to ask for it back at any time. But there's a catch: you have to give him the same cigarette — a substitute won't do. If you can't produce the same cigarette you have been given, the other inmate is justified in beating you up, raping you or killing you. (For the latter, he could face state or federal charges, but would be considered blameless among fellow inmates.)

Hoffa also explained that asking other convicts what they were in for was considered impolite. By the same token it wasn't a good idea to let others know why you were there. According to Hoffa, it was best to keep your fellow inmates guessing. "Let 'em think you're the kind of guy who would kill his own mother for a pack of cigarettes," he told me.

The most important advice Hoffa had to offer was about self-defense. Just as there are no atheists in foxholes, there are no pacifists in prison. He explained that the chief difference between the street and prison is that in jail there is nowhere to run. Hoffa told me that if anyone even looked as though he intended to confront me I should go ballistic immediately. "Pick up the nearest piece of furniture and whale on him," he said.

As it was, I never had to go off on anyone while I was in prison. The other inmates knew I would, and that was enough. Hoffa's advice had served me well.

I was later transferred to Allenwood and never got a chance to thank Hoffa. I remember feeling a twinge of sadness when I learned of his disappearance 20 years ago. I'm sure few people shed a tear over his assumed demise. After all, people involved in organized crime thrive on mayhem and corruption, and not many of us feel sorry for them when they get their comeuppance.

But then half the creeps running this country have more skeletons in their closets and blood on their hands than most underworld goons. And none of them ever did anything for me. ■

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Fax: (416) 594-6567 or (905) 275-9659

Editor: Tony Sutton
Associate Editors: Earle B. Gill, Ed Cassavoy

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

Mark Fritz, *Associated Press, New York* ♦ Irv Oslin, *Columbus Guardian, Ohio* ♦ Dave Marsh, *MetroTimes, Detroit, Michigan* ♦ James Ponti, *Orlando Weekly, Florida* ♦ Robert Fisk, *The Independent, London* ♦ Andrew O'Hagan, *London* ♦ Gerald Flood, Wayne Glowacki, *Winnipeg Free Press, Manitoba* ♦ Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The Independent, London* ♦ Alan Jackson, *The Scotsman, Edinburgh* ♦ Mike Ulmer, *The Globe and Mail, Toronto, Ontario* ♦ Mark Stahl, *Middleton Journal, Ohio* ♦ Brian Gable, *The Globe and Mail, Toronto, Ontario*

ILLUSTRATIONS:

David Anderson ♦ Brian Strassburg, ♦ Andrew Psychia
♦ Emmanuel Lopez ♦ Anthony Vander Schaaf ♦ Joe Morse
♦ Brian Gable ♦ Dean Stanton

EDITOR'S NOTES

No apologies for revisiting the horrors of the genocidal war in Rwanda for this issue's cover story. Mark Fritz's essay is one of the finest pieces of writing to come out of that madness. Fritz, who won a Pulitzer Prize this year for his work in Africa, goes further and deeper than most journalists in describing the sheer horror of that dreadful conflict. But neither he nor anyone else has yet come up with a logical explanation for the sequence of events that turned sullen anger into blind, explosive anarchy. Perhaps there is no explanation.

We're also proud to publish an extract from *The Missing*, a remarkable first book by London writer Andrew O'Hagan, which describes a different type of horror, one that is far too frequent these days. *Lost Boys*, which begins on page 9, is an evocative account of one of the thousands of children who disappear every year in Britain.

Regular contributor Robert Fisk, another award-winning journalist from *The Independent*, writes an eye-witness account of being caught up in a bomb blast in yet another civil war, this time in Algeria, on page 8.

Closer to home, Gerald Flood tells a heart-wrenching story of a Canadian family who met hell head on when a mother and her two young children were trapped by a blaze inside the cab of a tractor. Flood's evocative story of the fire and its painful aftermath — with photographs by Wayne Glowacki — begins on the center pages.

However, all's not doom and gloom in this issue. Rock author Dave Marsh checks out the opening of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, James Ponti looks critically at circus life, Ruth Dudley Edwards discusses the eating habits of young America, Alan Jackson goes to a tennis tournament, Mike Ulmer wonders what makes women tick, Mark Stahl takes his camera to a Marine boot camp, Irv Oslin meets Jimmy Hoffa, and we meet cartoonist Brian Gable. Enjoy!

TONY SUTTON

Postscript: As the last issue went to press, we were told that we had been nominated for a National Magazine award for Russell Monk's photo essay from Rwanda published in the first issue of ColdType. Did we win? Hell, no — but we partied just the same. Some of the gang, as usual, celebrated more than others. In fact, if the award had been for hangover of the year, we'd have won — heads down!

Building a home for rock 'n' roll

Badly lit, claustrophobic, and — for my taste — the greatest museum in the world

By DAVE MARSH

Standing by the side of Cleveland's brand-new Rock and Roll Hall of Fame stage, Soul Asylum's Dave Pirner held a card instructing him to introduce Robbie Robertson. (Hometown ID being the order of the evening, I suggested, "Hey, hosers! Hold on to your toques — from Toronto, here's Robbie Robertson!") Pirner had bigger things on his mind. "This is all kinda sentimental," he complained. "You've gotta draw that line. I mean, I know I step over it all the time, and I'll probably keep doing it, but all this ..."

"Nah," I said. "Your job isn't to draw lines. It's to dance all over the line." Pirner laughed. "Yeah, I guess... But don't you think this is all gettin' pretty institutionalized?"

"Hey, you were just on stage with Iggy. Ask him. We fought that battle 25 years ago, and we lost a lotta parts of it. The question now isn't whether rock 'n' roll is gonna be institutionalized. It's whether we're going to have good institutions or bad ones."

As always, Pirner was asking the right questions — the ones that made the night and the existence (at long last) of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum, exciting. Could we get it right? Was it worth the bother? I had the right answers, at least for that moment, but only because I'd actually been through the museum. Seeing the place had forcibly reminded me why this night was no ordinary HBO extravaganza. As if a show that featured Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard, and used Booker T. and the MGs and the E Street Band as its main backing bands, could have had anything ordinary about it.

Soul Asylum had just played its heart out behind Iggy's *Back Door Man* and Lou Reed's *Sweet Jane*. Earlier, Al Green shocked even his biggest fans with a set that climaxed with a rendition of Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come* that proved the concert's supreme highlight. Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band backed Chuck Berry on a flawless *Johnny B. Goode* to open the show. Then, of all the damn things, Bon Jovi lent powerful support to Eric Burdon on a set of Animals songs that climaxed with *We've Gotta Get Outta This Place*.

At that point, I had to laugh. For Chrissie Hynde — who shortly thereafter battered her way through *My City Was*

Gone and a beautiful version of *The Needle and the Damage Done*, that served as tribute to both Neil Young and her own lost bandmates, *We've Gotta Get Outta This Place* must have once bespoken her determination to leave Cleveland's environs. Now, the song paid the best sort of irony symbolized by the I.M. Pei building next door. That's why we had come: Rock's multigenerational rebellion had landed it in a \$92-million palace of swank.

Well, pardon me, but I'm a rock 'n' roll fan; I have been to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and swank ain't the half of it. For my taste, it is (give or take the Prado), the greatest museum in the world, and not only because it celebrates my culture. No, what's great about this museum is that it celebrates that culture properly (confession of moderate self-interest: I sit on the Hall's nominating committee). Like the

The question now isn't whether rock 'n' roll is gonna be institutionalized. It's whether we're gonna have good institutions or bad ones

concert and its list of inductees, the Hall isn't perfect — it's too human and vital for that. The Hendrix and Motown displays are weak (although the Temptations' costumes brought me back to my 15-year-old envy), Don Everly probably did give his dad that guitar but certainly not after writing *Bye Bye Love*, given that he didn't write it; and no matter what the curators think, there is no memorabilia from Bruce Springsteen's 1979 tour because he didn't tour that year. The Hall of Fame itself is housed in an ill-lit, claustrophobic mausoleum stuck at the top of a virtually inaccessible staircase.

So what? The triumphs and treasures within rock 'n' roll's new palace far outweigh its inevitable flaws. You walk

straight down the Ahmet N. Ertegun Exhibition Hall into the center of controversy, an exhibit of the history of attempts to censor and repress rock, featuring '50s fanatics, Frank Zappa and Tipper Gore. ("Well, they made this just for you," said a friend. "Nah, Dennis Barrie made this for himself," I said. Barrie, the museum's director, came to Cleveland from Cincinnati, where he had been busted — but ultimately prevailed — for displaying Robert Mapplethorpe photographs. Hopefully, his presence in the music world will stiffen the spines of his employers on such issues — maybe he'll even be able to get Michael White, the mayor of Cleveland, to stop harassing rock clubs in his town.)

Turn the corner and you're into a series of displays focusing attention on regional and stylistic groupings: early rock (including a fabulous if hilarious Billy Lee Riley mannequin), grunge and punk, hip-hop and, on one wall, blues and R&B featuring everything from the handmade square-shaped guitar Bo Diddley made in high school 50 years ago to the battered black "money box" Howlin' Wolf always kept right by his knee onstage to the torn-up fuselage of a small airplane bearing the words "Otis" and "Redding" in green paint on white metal.

The hall's movie theaters play Time-Life's history of rock 'n' roll and more obscure films. In private carrels, you can hear late lamented deejays, discover the "best" 500 rock songs (pretty good selection) and learn how particular records were created. The display cases offer tributes to individual labels so good that Sam Phillips stood as if mesmerized at the Sun exhibit. All in all, it's the most useful deployment of cybertechnology I've ever seen. The museum makes no false generic distinctions: P-Funk costumes and memorabilia stand next to smashed-up Who guitars and Keith Moon drumheads. And this goes on for three floors, including, among many many other things, an exhibit of rock magazines that includes the first issue of *Creem* with my byline in it, which made me proud as well as pleased. Just about every musician who saw the place felt the same way as ol' Sam and me, too.

The difference between the Hall of Fame Museum and its most obvious analog, your average Hard Rock Café, doesn't come from what's on display. The Hard Rocks definitely have more gold records and framed electric guitars and maybe even a better selection of any given artist's costumery. But the Hard Rock presents rock 'n' roll as a jumble. The

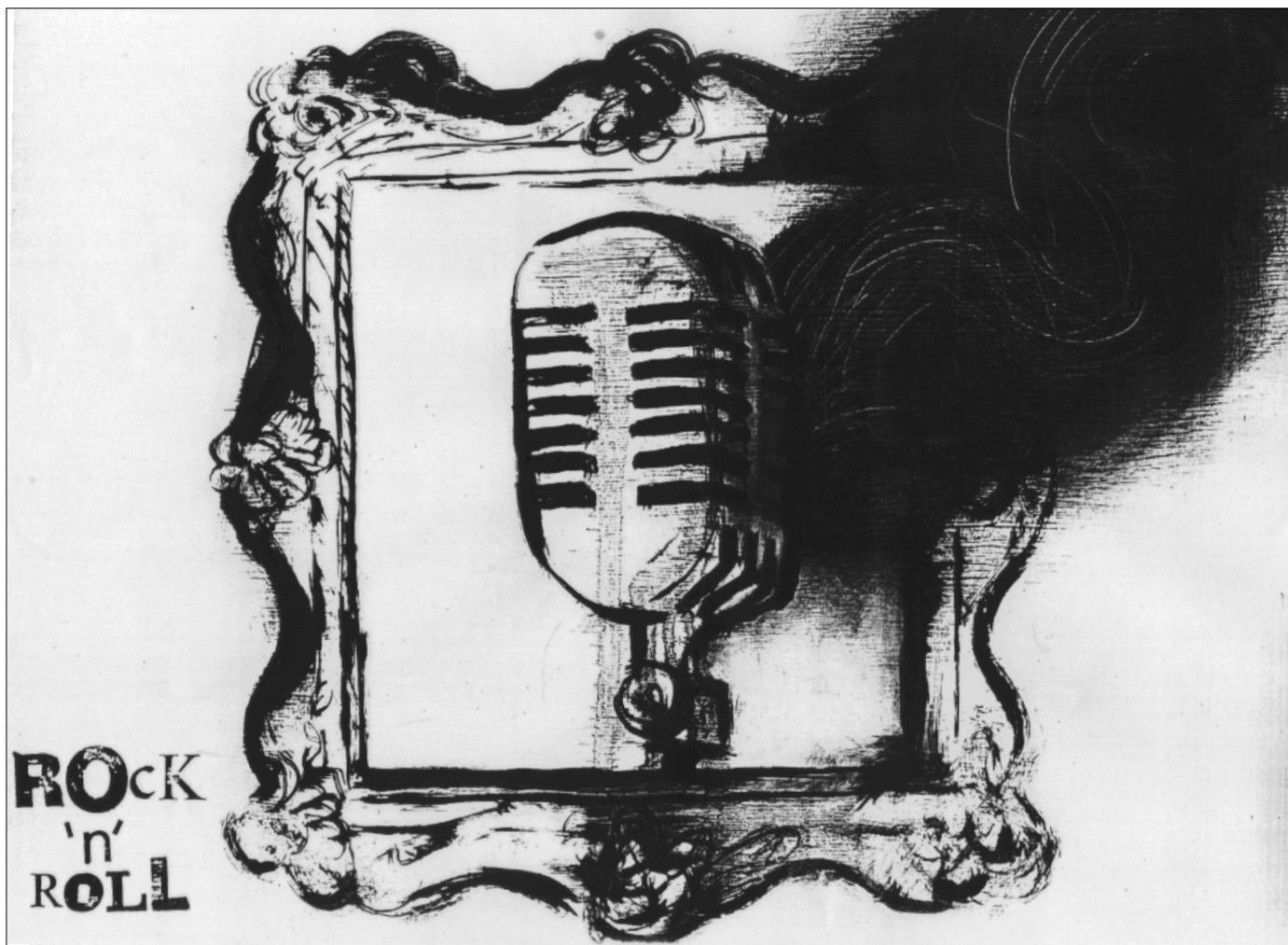


ILLUSTRATION: JOE MORSE

museum helps you make sense of the music and where it came from — at best, I can imagine a kid leaving with a better sense of how to disrupt everything, just because the flow of the place is so conducive to seeing the music and culture as something with a line of continuity that extends straight into the future. The 14-year-old who accompanied me seemed most impressed by how the curators had made everything fit together. I felt most amazed by how shrewdly they'd gotten out of the way and let the music and its relevant artifacts tell their own story; and those are just different versions of the same experience.

The concert at Cleveland Stadium had different problems. The absence of many British stars — among the vets, only the Kinks and Burdon showed and, of course, since U2 there haven't been any big stars from the Isles — forced the Gin Blossoms to sing the Beatles, Jon Bon Jovi to stand in for John Lennon and Sheryl Crow to represent the Rolling Stones. All were overmatched. The program didn't feature a single Elvis song, which John Fogerty or some-damn-body, probably should have rectified. Other stars seemed defeated

by the context: If the audience and reviewers didn't understand the beauty of Jackson Browne's *The Tracks of My Tears*, the saucy audacity of Natalie Merchant's Dinah Washington tribute (well, Ahmet Ertegun liked it, and that's a tribute by itself) or the spectacular power of James Brown's revue (of course it was too big and busy; that's sorta the point), that's their problem.

But again ... so what? Shows like this are about what's possible, not what's most desirable, and chances are none of the above volunteered for their impossible tasks. Having James Brown and Aretha Franklin aboard and allowing them to do their version of what was appropriate is more historically appropriate — and respectful — than forcing them into a version of their ancient selves. Would I rather have seen the Stones, some version of The Who and Wilson Pickett? Sure, but I'd also rather have seen Elvis, Marvin Gaye and Bob Marley.

The meaning of the show came more out of Rolling Stone magazine publisher Jann Wenner's wonderful speech (and Jann is not generally a wonderful speaker), in which he pledged the hall would be a place to heal generational and racial divisions. Watching Natalie dance with Booker T, hearing Dylan and Springsteen on their gorgeous *Forever Young*, looking at the young rockist audience get it when

Sam Moore sang the definitive soul ballad, *When Something Is Wrong with My Baby*, that promise felt confirmed.

As such tele-spectacles go, this Hall of Fame gave the best I've ever seen. Long after midnight, when Little Richard hit the stage and proved that he remains the greatest pure singer of the '50s, when Moore and Fogerty did a drop-dead, unrehearsed *Midnight Hour*, when Martha Reeves proved her Motown aplomb by getting away with stopping *Dancing in the Street* and starting over because of equipment failure, the Hall of Fame concert transcended — as music — any such show I've ever attended. It made me recall once again what it was that drove people like me and Iggy and Pirner and Springsteen and Moore and Fogerty and Hynde and Merchant "out of our minds and into our bodies" through the medium of sound. It promised that this will continue to happen. It told me that having created an institution and waxed sentimental was living proof not of the failure of rock 'n' roll but of its endurance and power. Hail! Hail! We have, at long last, been delivered from the days of old, and our delivery came the only way possible, by honoring and loving the past for the present it gave us. ■

Dave Marsh is the author of more than a dozen books on popular music, culture and politics.

ORLANDO WEEKLY

Carny knowledge

*Deceit, depravity and delirium
in a season with the
Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus*

By JAMES PONTI

One night a group of performers from the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus went to a Red Lobster restaurant in Princeton, N.J. There they met a circus groupie who accompanied them back to the big top. After a failed attempt to have sex with the Human Cannonball inside his cannon ("Calling Dr. Freud. Will Dr. Sigmund Freud please report to the center ring?"), the woman raised the tent with six different performers, who videotaped the action.

The evening came to a halt only when one of the men noticed an upside-down cross on the back of her neck. She then admitted that she was, in fact, a devil worshipper. Maybe they were thinking she was a girl scout. Ah, but for the wholesome traditional entertainment that is the circus.

Let's just get this out of the way: I HATE THE CIRCUS. It's not a my-mom-never-took-me-so-I'm-jealous kind of hatred. Rather, it's an it-falls-somewhere-in-there-with-the-NRA-and-Melanie-Griffith kind of hatred. Dante may have devised a hell with nine rings, but mine has only three, and in the middle is Gunther Gable Williams. Bruce Feiler loves the circus. The above incident is recorded in his new book, *Under The Big Top* (Scribner, \$23), which chronicles the year he spent traveling with the Deland-based circus as a clown.

On first blush, I leapt to the conclusion that, despite Feiler's degrees from Yale and Cambridge, anyone willing to spend a year with a freak show must be an idiot. Still, journalistic ethics required that I read the book and interview Feiler with an

open mind. The book did change my opinion. I now think he is a flatulent idiot. But more on that later.

Feiler's book actually is quite good. It is thoughtful and observant. Misguided, but thoughtful and observant. Like many great books, it begins in Deland, Florida, winter home of the circus that bills itself as the largest of the remaining tent shows. But reading the book and talking to Feiler was not unlike my experiences with Mormon missionaries — high marks for dedication but the message never quite connects.

Why would anyone with a good background and two well-received books to his credit spend a year as a clown? The inside jacket blurb offers this view: "Since childhood, Bruce Feiler dreamed of running away to join the circus ..." He says that after five years spent living in England and Japan (the latter of which was the backdrop for his adventures teaching English and working as a reporter and which produced his first book, *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan*), he felt the urge to see America: "What better way to explore America than from the back lot of a circus?" he says. Apparently, logic is no longer part of the Yale curriculum.

"Throughout American history, this idea of being on a road is a great myth," says Feiler, who cites examples such as Huck Finn and John Updike's Rabbit books. And he was

*With foul-mouthed
outbursts, it's easy to see why
the clowns are made to be
silent in front of an audience*



attracted to the idea of being part of a traveling community. Ultimately, though, he melts in the face of an old faithful — seeing dreams come true. "For two shows a day, seven shows a week, you are making people happy."

Sweet as cotton candy, that view reflects just one side of Feiler's book. The other reads like a personal injury attorney's wet dream.

Here, for example, is the account of human cannonball Elvin Bale, known as the "Great Melvor" and "Daredevil of the Century." In a 1987 show in Hong Kong, his cannon shot him beyond the net, and he ruptured his spinal cord. After the injury, Bale convinced his pool man to take over the act. Then the pool man shoots across an arena and rips a 12-foot gash in the air bag before crashing to the ground. (Despite the extent of his injuries, only Feiler realizes that the man needs to go to the hospital.)

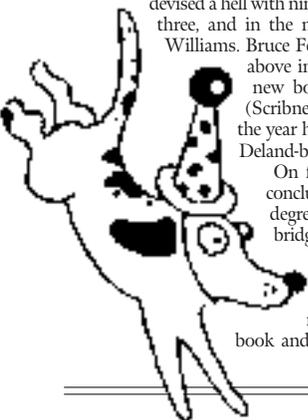
Feiler himself gets into the act when he accidentally knocks over a stilt performer and sends him crashing to the asphalt pavement of a shopping mall parking lot. And there is the harrowing tale of the great Russian trapeze artists who are, in fact, Mexicans in turbans: One falls from the trapeze, lands on his neck and miraculously breaks only his collarbone.

Animal lovers will be drawn to a story from Reading, Penn., where two tigers escape during a show and venture into the audience. Likewise they will be riveted as a drunken fan sneaks into the animal pen late one night and is killed by Petunia the elephant.

One circus veteran estimates that in his 30 years with the show, he has counted 25 elephant-related deaths, 10 truck-driving fatalities and a half-dozen electrocutions.

This is not to suggest that the circus is just a bunch of really nice people who have the occasional accident. During his year under the big top, Feiler came into contact with enough wrongdoing that he was able to classify these seven circus sins: murder, rape, arson, bigamy, bestiality, group sex and organized crime.

But despite all this, something somehow still speaks to



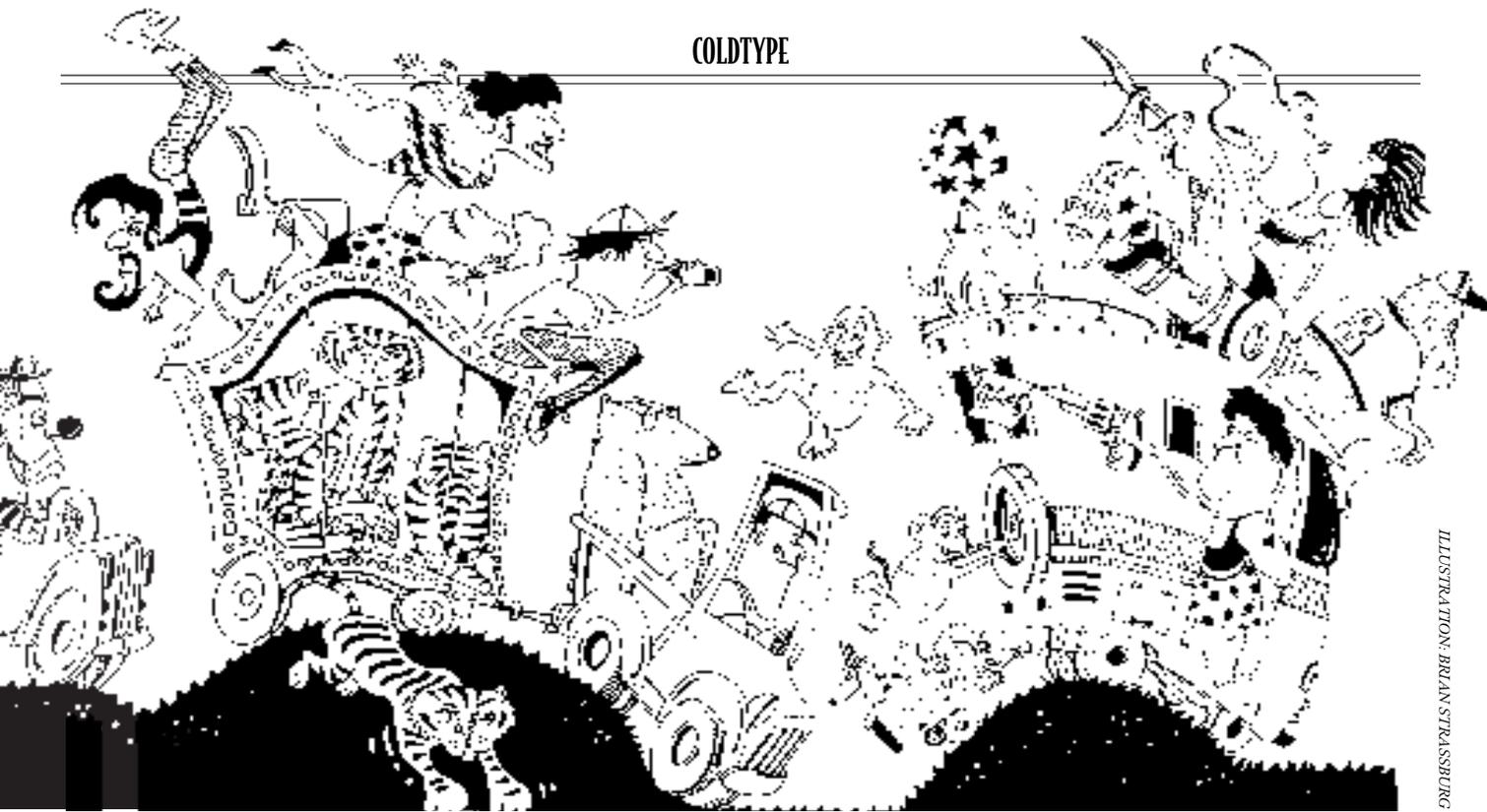


ILLUSTRATION: BRIAN STRASSBURG

the audience. "Circus at its heart is this tension between the skill of the animals and the bumbling of the clowns," Feiler says. In his book, he cites the circus axiom that the two biggest attractions are the clowns and the elephants. (Well, maybe except for those 25 people.) Apparently there is also tension between circus employees. A caste system separates everybody into neat occupational sects. Privacy is such a rare commodity that one day Feiler was accosted by someone from the next trailer for being too flutulent the previous night. (Although he confesses that he did let rip one so big that it set off the propane detector in his Winnabago.)

Under The Big Top is at its best when it re-creates the unusual world in which the performers and workers live — an entire functioning community that travels, unchanged, from city to city through a frenzy of long days. Feiler gives us portraits of performers who, despite awful pay, are almost religious in their devotion to the work and lifestyle. Indeed, they never sit with their backs to the ring; likewise, it is bad luck for them to walk directly across the ring.

"The only thing that keeps them doing it," he says, "is this higher love for the circus."

At the center of the world, of course, are the clowns, who were slow to receive Feiler into their ranks. (Renee Storey, vice president for administration with the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, recalled that Feiler made his writing intentions clear from the start but still was made to audition for the salaried clown position; by season's end, she says, he had worked his way up to emcee The Great Stomach Pump Gag.) With foul-mouthed outbursts reminiscent of Andrew Dice Clay, it's easy to understand why the clowns are made to be silent in front of the audience.

"The appeal of the clowns has little to do with danger and has all to do with forbidden desire," Feiler says. "I view clowns, and maybe the whole circus, as representing our id — this idea that these are things we've always wanted to do but would get in trouble if we did them."

"You look at clown acts, drag clowns, slapstick, kick in the pants. They're breaking the rules, doing things that are forbidden. I think it's the same with the rest of the circus."

Whenever possible, Feiler offers historic perspective on the role of the circus in America. "There is a real difference in the appeal of the circus in 1995 and the appeal in 1895," he says. "A hundred years ago, when the circus came to town, it was the only game in town."

For them, the circus was this window to the world. Exotic animals, foreign people, strange customs brought to life. There is the origin of its appeal. It was a living *National Geographic*.

"The difference is that a hundred years ago, the circus did these things that were very, very modern. The circus no longer has this monopoly on modern. So the circus presents itself not as cutting edge, but as old-fashioned. The essence of the appeal today is that the circus is real."

In all this warm nostalgia, it's worth noting that one of those old-fashioned appeals is that the circus is a money machine. Feiler reveals that the same souvenir costs more in Reading, Penn., than it does in Wilmington, N.C. And it costs even more in New York City than in Reading.

But this type of price gouging isn't reserved for patrons. Circus employees practice every form of racketeering imaginable against one another to augment their meager pay. Feiler says this extends to everything from the delivery of mail to the delivery of fresh water for the rumbling RVs.

He also sees a strong sexual current running through the big top. "The circus is incredibly erotic. One of the curses of

Barnum is that he perpetuated the fact that the circus is for kids. Think about the skimpy costumes and bulging muscles. There's this incredible sex appeal to seeing a circus," he says, adding, "The word 'trick' is reserved for streetwalkers and wire walkers."

Still, he sees a genuine loss in the fact that audiences today are not literate in the history of the acts and performers. A traditionalist down the line, he is dead set against the Cirque du Soleil approach, which adds theater and illusion with a thematic musical score. "I don't consider it a circus," he says. And he does not concede fading interest. "They said that movies were going to kill the circus, that television, video games [would kill it off]. In 1995, 20 million people will see a circus in America, which is the highest number in history. The reason they're coming is because the circus at its heart is real people doing real things."

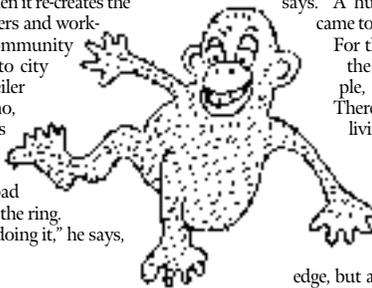
"Look at the things people are doing in the circus. They're stepping into a cage with wild animals. They're keeping 10 objects in the air at once. At its root it is escape, and it is reminding us of these dreams that we had as a kid — these dreams we cannot afford to let get by."

He has been surprised to find that, despite giving away so many secrets, his book has been well received by its subjects. The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus is even selling copies on its current tour. Apparently the feeling is that audience members won't have read enough to demand their money back until after the big top is packed and off to another town.

Still, Bruce Feiler did all right by the circus. He showed us the wizard behind the curtain, but as he did so he sang his praises. There is no denying that he loves the circus as much now as when he was a child.

In fact, he has a game that he likes to play with his friends. He tells them to close their eyes and imagine being at a circus, to visualize a triple somersault on the trapeze, taste the cotton candy on their lips, even smell the elephant dung. And he claims that 100 out of 100 times, the person smiles.

One hundred out of 100 times, I just want to cry. ■



BOOK EXTRACT

Lost Boys

Each year, thousands of young people simply disappear from the face of the earth. Andrew O'Hagan tells the story of one of them, Daniel Handley, who was later found murdered. This is an extract from O'Hagan's highly acclaimed first book, The Missing, recently published by Picador

It was a Sunday morning, and a minister strode past me with a Labrador. "That looks like a contented spot," he said, dog and dog collar glistening. I sat in the middle of a little wood, just to the side of Kenilworth Chapel in East London, on October 9, 1994. The church looked closed and unattended. All around me, in tangles of ivy and nettles and scrub, lay hundreds of dilapidated gravestones. They sloped every which way and off into the distance, across a wide open ground beneath the Beckton flyover. The graveyards in English cities, especially in the east of those cities, are nearly always wasted and terrible. In Scotland, the tombstones are made to stand up and the grass is most often cut and weeded. I was fairly shocked the first time I saw a London graveyard — in Walthamstow, I remember. It had nothing to do with the decorous, landscaped dead-parks of recent memory: It was a place where riot and decay ruled. It looked like a spot where time was having its way.

I sat on a stone, bent over a piece of paper. I was copying down the inscriptions on some of the gravestones. As I was doing so, two boys — around 10 — nipped between the graves just a little off to the right. One of them wore a West Ham soccer jersey; the other was a flash of yellow. Their missiles (clods of dirt and pebble-dash) would come from nowhere and bounce off the tomb still standing. You'd hear giggles and see some yellow, then a stripe of claret; they'd peep for a second and disappear. The more I ignored them, the braver they got. They started letting out little hollers, rinky-dink battle charges, but I sat still. I was laughing a bit by this time, and they obviously knew I knew about them. Eventually, they got within one or two tombstones, and I looked up from the page. "What is it?" I said. "C***," they said, running away, tumbling through a wall of ivy as if the whole world was after them.

The stone to my right was Africa-shaped and fringed with damp moss. Most of the writing was gone now. "Also Rebecca Askham, mother of the above," I could make out.

And then: "who died October 1st 1903. Aged 50 years." The nettles around the bottom were at the top of their power. They stood for pain. The stone on my other side was in memory of "Frank Cyril Nicholson, who died January 13th 1897, aged 14 year."

It was a cool day, very quiet at times, then some horn or deep engine on the dual carriageway would break in. Frank Cyril died after 14 years; died, it seems, of natural causes. His death must have been very sad, but was probably not mysterious. His was a named loss. The cause was known; the end was marked, his spot was here and was in a manner of speaking sacred. I sat thinking about all this, feeling the breeze well enough and considering the script carved below Frank Cyril's dates: "In the midst of life," it said, "we are in death."

I had a stick, and with other people, later that day, I searched the long field of stones around the Chapel for traces of a missing boy. Daniel Handley, aged nine, had been missing from his home on the Windsor Park Estate since the previous Sunday. As I made my way down the field, losing sight

of other people, I grew more and more uneasy. This was the largest patch of scrub near to Daniel's home. I turned over in my head the various things that could have happened. I looked through the undergrowth, poking with the stick, and I reached a place almost under the flyover itself. The traffic noise was now thunderous, and the grass seemed longer than at any other point. My breath was quite short. It felt wrong to walk in this deep grass. Not just unsafe. Wrong. As I made my way through the field, looking into the grass and under bushes for signs of the boy — hoping there would be nothing — I found it hard to keep my footing.

The light at the top of Canary Wharf blinked just over the other side of the carriageway and the sun was high up. The tower looked broad and massive, and its windows gleamed like the vicar's collar. Daniel Handley was missing, and we were there trying to find him. We were there, walking on graves, trying to find the missing boy.

The previous day I'd gone to Daniel's house. The Windsor Park Estate sits very near the Royal Albert Dock, just on the north bank of the Thames beside East Ham and Barkingside. It's an area made up of newish housing schemes, heavy roads, flyovers, industrial parks, expansive malls and playing fields. At the beginning of the estate, on the corner of Windsor Terrace and Woolwich Manor Way, about five minutes from Daniel's house, there's a giant building site. There are mounds of rubble and dirt, roving dumpers, stacks of brick, packs of cement and pyramids of cellphoney-wrapped pipe. There's a giant sign at the edge of the rubble: "Another prestigious hotel development for Whitbread Medway Inns, constructed by Dean & Bowles Ltd., Huntingdon." The site was fenced off, though I managed to have a look around without much trouble. It was mostly empty, with hard-hatted workmen doing their thing in this or that corner. The ground was uneven, it was full of holes, but I guessed the police had already considered that.

A large Asda superstore stands across the road, with bus stops planted outside. Daniel worked here as a bag filler — you know, putting people's shopping into bags at the till. This was how he earned pocket money, and he was a well-

He was yet another missing child, and most people had given up hope of ever finding him or ever finding him well. They weren't to be proved wrong on the last bit.

known face around the area. He was out playing on his BMX bike the day he disappeared. It was silver and had no saddle. Like many kids his age, he would use the kerbs and ramps around the scheme, and the empty industrial estates just beyond it, to practice stunts on his bike. He was out doing that sort of thing on Sunday, October 2, and he played for some time at the house of a friend, but he failed to return home afterward. He set out late in the afternoon but had somehow not made it. That evening, two boys found an abandoned silver BMX on Eisenhower Drive, round the corner from Daniel's house. The boys took it back to their home in Clapton, where they wiped it down and thought to keep it. When they heard of the missing boy, though, they gave the bike to the police, who found that it was Daniel's.

Daniel was the fourth of Maxine William's five boys. In April 1994, Maxine had left the family home she shared with her husband, David Handley, in Newark Knok and taken the kids to live at the house of her boyfriend, Alex Joseph, at Lobelia Close in Beckton. Daniel went to Beckton Cross primary school and was one of those kids who'd talk to anyone. He already had girlfriends and was one of the daredevils at school, one of the live wires, one of the minor pushers-and-shovers. He had, in the usual manner for the younger of several boys, a fair amount of brotherly reputation to live up to or to live down. Some of his brothers were thought to be quite flash and to be fairly unshy when it came to the business of standing up for things. His schoolmates talked to me of the Handleys as of one of those families who can easily absorb trouble and who could dish it out just as easily. The mother's boyfriend, Alex, is black, and even in an area as multi-racial as East London can be, there was a certain amount of prejudice in the local area about the fact of his living in Lobelia Close with a white woman and her children. People talked about them, and they did so, it seems, even before Daniel disappeared.

Daniel had been wearing a red boiler suit that day, which had the word "Racing" stitched onto the left pocket. Underneath he had a green jumper. He also wore brown boots. The lake at the top of Beckton District Park had been dredged with special equipment; the gashworks and sewage treatment plant to the east had been searched repeatedly; warehouses and parks had been gone into; and door-to-door calls were under way all week. I turned into the Close the day they were due to start digging in the garden. There were television vans parked along the sides, and journalists were lining up behind the police tape, anxious for photos and news. At first, there was only a solitary female police officer guarding the house. The tape stretched across the road in such a way that people who lived on either side of the Handley's house had to run underneath it. Most of those going by were kids, and they zoomed right under the tape on their BMXs and racers; they did it repeatedly. They were showing off for the journalists and clearly trying to wind up the lady officer.

A man from the *Mail on Sunday* walked round and round the Close, chatting at all the doors, getting himself steamed up. Every time he heard something interesting — and often when he heard something not — he'd draw out his mobile phone and call his news desk. He'd repeat it to them hastily, clearly experiencing some sort of deadline fever. The policewoman told me she thought he was "facetious," and sort of rolled her eyes when the *Daily Star* walked up. Even amid the solemnity and dead seriousness of this stake out, there was something very funny about the man from the *Star*. Everyone looked at him. He stalked up and down the

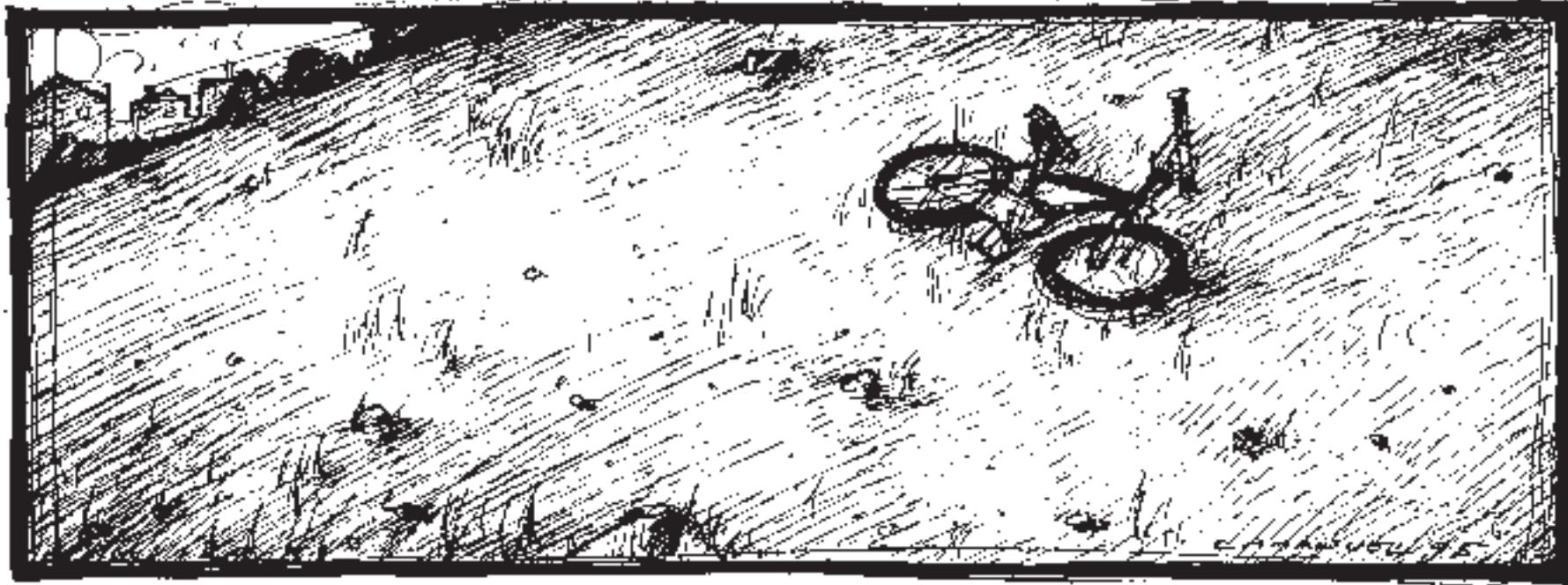


ILLUSTRATION: EMANUVAL LOPEZ (CRAQUEEN'S WORLD)

pavement, sucking one cigarette after another down to nothing, his head bowed with the weight of two or three cameras. His hair was very short at the front, very long at the back and greasy all over, his suit was shiny, and the trousers flapped at half-mast. He had a thin mustache and he walked up and down like a loopy pigeon.

He pointed to a little Asian boy who played just in front of the tape: "Is your mom in, sonny?" The boy nodded. "Can you ask her to come out here a minute?" The boy ran inside. A few seconds later an adult arm appeared at the door, but only for long enough to pull the thing shut and turn the key in the lock. "That," said *The Star*, "is a definite no."

"Why don't you stand on the back wall?" said a blond woman in shades.

"Tried that."

"Eight of them, there's eight of them digging in the garden," said an older guy, a producer-type, who had just stepped out of a red Volvo. "I think one of the snappers has got them at it."

Maxine Williams and Alex Joseph, Daniel's mother and her boyfriend, were in a DSS safe-house during the search. One of the neighbors, a middle-aged white man, backed up by his jittering wife, takes the opportunity to speak with the assembled press. He has the air of someone familiar with the plot. He emphasizes certain things, he makes a few tough points about how one should live in a community, and then he hammers home a series of assertions that you wouldn't care to hear. I couldn't print them, and the TV journalists knew — as he spoke — that they wouldn't be able to broadcast them either. Halfway through his spiel, I saw the guy from *Newsroom South-East* switch off his camera.

I stayed by the fence for a while after the other people had

gone. I wanted to talk with the kids. The Asian woman from next door eventually turned the key. She came over and asked if there had been any more news. I gave her what I had. She offered me coffee and told me I could look out of her bedroom window if I wanted. It was right over the spot where they were digging. I didn't go in. The police were coming in and out from the yard, wearing blue jumpers and white gloves. CID were doing the rounds of the houses, dressed in gray suits and carrying clipboards. A crowd of small boys had gathered around the tape.

"Give us a cigarette," said one.

"You're too young," says I.

"Am I f... I've smoked for ages."

"Age are you?"

"Nine," he says, pulling a 10-pack from his pocket and lighting one up behind a tiny cupped hand.

"Same age as Daniel," I said.

"He smoked as well. He used to go out with my big sister. What do you think has happened to him?"

"I don't know. What do you think?" At this point the others butt in. Two of them are 13, one other is nine. They give me their theories, tell me all about their parents' suspicions and reel out the local gossip. The little one is still swaggering about with his fag, downing and blowing excellent smoke-rings.

They talked about Alex, about how good a fighter he was. "He's a bodybuilder," said one of the thirteens.

"Brilliant muscles like that," said another, pulling up a sleeve of his T-shirt.

"Can we talk into your tape recorder?" shouted Jason, the miniature smoker. I gave it to them, and they started barking into it — sentences and short stories all to do with such and

such, among them being "dickless" or "a virgin" or "pricks" and "bastards."

"Daniel is just like any other kid," said the neighbor with the jittering wife. "These children were often kept away from school. I'd see it, and I'd want to complain. I knew something wasn't right. One of the kids told me that Alex's mom was the funniest person alive. She gave them money; you'd see her staggering across Lobelia Close with a can of Superlager, her dog Lady limping at her back."

"She's brilliant," said Jason, handing back my recorder. Just then, an ice-cream van — Tony's Super Whip — came jangling down the street, and they all went after it.

Several months later, Daniel Handley was still missing. There was no sign of him; nothing had turned up from the searches or from the digging. Police were going over the same ground again and again. Mr. Joseph, the boyfriend, was in the psychiatric wing of Pentonville Prison, having been charged with offences committed against some other children. Daniel's mother was on remand, charged with similar offences under the Children Act. For six months or so, Daniel Handley's whereabouts were unknown.

He was yet another missing child, and most people had given up hope of ever finding him or of ever finding him well. They weren't to be proved wrong on the last bit. The boy's body, still clad in his red boiler suit, was found in a wooded area outside Bristol in April. He'd been murdered and placed in a rough grave, covered in leaves and dirt. That's where he'd lain all those months.

The police spoke of a pedophile ring and revealed details of Operation Oyster, an attempt by officers to close in on an East London gang. Witnesses came forward. A woman in Bristol recalled seeing someone just like Daniel, a little boy in red, in the company of three men in a cafe. The boy seemed quite happy, quite cheerful, and the men were friendly enough too. But, for whatever reason, a clear picture of the group remained in her head. A boy like Daniel was spotted again in Bristol one Sunday in November. Two men were holding his hands tight, walking him down the street. The boy seemed a bit distressed.

The child who rode down Eisenhower Drive on his saddleless bike that bright afternoon in October had encountered something dreadful on his way. The police have issued photo-fits and descriptions and called for every sort of assistance. They are waiting for more responses and, in the meantime, have brought down the files on missing local children.

There are thousands of missing persons in Britain whose disappearance, unlike Daniel's, is never reported. They fall out of troubled homes, Special Care and approved schools every other day. Under new regulations, many people with mental health trouble are decanted out of hospitals and into the streets and night shelters that now act as a sort of security net for them. Such people — often voluntarily at first — lose sight of all that they have been before. Many you talk to can't remember much or anything about who they used to be. Runaways, amnesiacs, schizophrenics, victims of abuse.

Every year, thousands burst — or are thrust — out of what community they have known; they take up their lives anonymously, often on the streets of Britain's bigger cities. Most of them lose touch; benefits are often unclaimed; relatives are gladly left behind or were never there in the first place. Such missing persons you might call the unmissed, and it is possible that more than 200,000 people at any given time in Britain can be described this way.

Whether missed or not, the common condition of all the missing (apart from their being out of sight) is that their documentary lives stop at the point they disappear. This termination, in fact, explains what it means to be a missing person in a country such as Britain. From birth, something like a small maelstrom of official paper swirls round your body, defining your human relations (birth and marriage certificates); outlining your religious life (baptisms, Holy Communion, Confirmations); describing your physical progression (medical records); the history of your teeth (dental records); your education (report cards, school files); giving evidence of your social life (club minutes, membership cards); your professional life (employment records, application forms, job appraisal reports); your mental or custodial history (psychiatric reports, social work papers, prison records); your domestic routines (phone records, gas bills, newspapers delivered); and hundreds of extant documents relating to the conduct or the business of your life. These are bits of paper long forgotten by you and by most people. These official records (to say nothing of private documents, letters and diaries) give a very full account of who you are and what your movements have been over the course of your life.

Ours is a very written-down sort of life; it can't easily be erased, nor can the binding power of ongoing records be easily snapped. Many of these records follow you wherever you go, and in the normal run of things, they can cause you to be traced very quickly. Missing people have — for one of a variety of reasons I'm turning over — severed, or been severed from, their written life.

They are not cashing checks in their own name, they are not drawing benefits or earning money through their National Insurance number, they are not paying tax, they are not visiting a doctor or a dentist in possession of their files, and, as police investigators quickly find out during a search, they are not regularly matching the pattern of what is known about them.

You can change your identity, but it is not just a matter of going to another town and calling yourself Jeremy. It is a gigantic undertaking: a trail of subterfuge and avoidance of past documents leads away from the who-you-were to the who-you-are-now.

This scenario mostly applies to the non-vulnerable missing — that's to say, people who may deliberately go missing for reasons of their own. It applies less to the unmissed or to vulnerables whose disappearance is much more sinister. There is no big deal, for them, in turning away from the documents of the past. For runaways and abuse victims and schizophrenics, those documents are not binding in the way they are for your average mortgage holder in Northampton. They are unmissed, and nobody is making the connections: They never had checkbooks, they never had work, and they will have all sort of names to offer to hostel workers and doctors if they ever see them.

Children who disappear, the most vulnerable category of all, have no big documentary lives anyway, they just have lives. When they go missing, there can only be the possibility of foul play, a strange accident or strangers. The police call them mispers. They're everywhere and nowhere, in the world and out of it, each of them different and each the same.

Mispers. ■

THE INDEPENDENT, LONDON

I hate the young, I hate the food

*A Brit travels to Boston
and discovers
a lite new world*

By RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS

Here I am in Boston, fighting a losing battle not to hate the young. In the immediate vicinity of the university library where I am working, there are about 32,000 of them. It's not that they are badly behaved. They haven't an assault weapon between them, as far as I can see. It's not their clothes — if they want to wear loose prison gear, ragged shorts, fatigues, rings through their noses, those strangely irritating knapsacks, trainers so heavy they can hardly walk and, of course, baseball caps worn backward, I can avert my eyes. It's not the fact that they appear to have a concentration span of about 10 minutes. I, too, was once an easily distracted undergraduate.

It's not even their use of language. I have tried hard and no longer grind my teeth every time I overhear "neat" or "cute." Even the word "program," which has become American for "thingummy" or "what'sit," elicits from me only the merest wince. No, what drives me crazy is their attitude to food and drink.

I can't cope with the fact that American college kids appear to be unable to walk down the sidewalk — nay, even rollerskate — without clutching an open container of some disgusting soft drink. I can't stand their addiction to brownies and muffins and doughnuts and chips and danishes and tasteless rubbish of every description. And I can't bear the sheer grossness of their appetites.

The student cafeteria is a microcosm of the American devotion to infinite choice, having no fewer than 12 specialist food outlets, including some exclusively devoted to burgers, tacos, cookies, ice cream 'n' frozen yogurt and sandwiches — a euphemism for huge rolls stuffed with a dozen or so ingredients. Yesterday, I wandered helplessly around looking for something I wouldn't hate and finally purchased a chicken stir-fry sandwich, with a view to eating the contents only. Unfortunately, the complete absence of any flavor in any of the components prevented me from making any headway at all.

Today, despite the cold, I opted for salad from the Kitchen Garden section, which was dominated by a long buffet offering almost everything I hate in salads: raw broccoli, carrots, beanshoots, unripe melon and worse. Each virtuous dish is accompanied by a little card listing its calories, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium content: "Treat yourself right" is the injunction at the base of the card. At the end of the display were five varieties of thick dressing, a spoonful of any of which would run to hundreds of calories;



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID ANDERSON

*Behind me at the deli counter the
other day were two Greek gods
— slim, athletic, spot free,
pictures of youth and vigor.
Were they discussing sex, politics
or even their programs?*

tactfully, there was no little card bearing such unwelcome information here.

I cannot lunch off lettuce alone, so I chose the smallest made-up salad available. After removing from it several vast chunks of entirely flavor-free cucumber and tomato, one hard-boiled egg, several large pieces of cheese and about half a pound of alleged turkey, I settled into the ham and lettuce and almost got through it. Mind you, I can't say that I enjoyed it as much as my neighbor did her pasta in cream sauce with french fries, walnut cookie and a pint of something pink.

What is even worse than having to look at them eat is listening to them talk about their health, for they have been brought up to crave everything that is bad for them while being told they should look after their bodies: They are a generation of greedy health freaks. Behind me at the deli counter the other day were two Greek gods — slim, athletic, spot free, pictures of youth and vigor. Were they discussing sex, politics or even their programs? Were they hell?

"I need to ease off the fat," said one. "I'll skip the cheese." So he ordered himself only two plain Jumbo-burgers and a

large Diet Coke. Yesterday, in the students' cafeteria, the lad at the next table consumed a pizza the size of Big Ben and washed it down with a low-fat chocolate milk. He made me think of the old story of the woman who failed to lose weight because, having eaten her diet food, she then tucked into her normal rations.

I want to scream when I see or hear the ubiquitous "lo" word, but worse is the wretched "lite." Written in neon, it blinks from bars and delis and supermarkets — pretending that you can assuage your craving for fattening food, and lots of it, without paying the price in poundage. And the adults are as self-deceiving as the kids. They drink lite beer, but they eat like lumberjacks.

Looking for a restaurant, I wandered down the main drag in search of dinner. Just reading most of the menus was almost enough to destroy my modest appetite. Finally, having discarded everywhere promising large/extra-large / super / jumbo/giant portions, I fell thankfully into a sushi restaurant. I ordered something with noodles. My Japanese waitress arrived with a platter as long as she was tall, piled high with protein. She looked horrified when she saw how much I had left, and I felt vaguely guilty.

The following night, wanting privacy, I bought a bottle of decent wine and a take-away Chinese. I had cleverly remembered to obtain both a corkscrew and chopsticks, but I hadn't thought through the logistics. The food containers were, of course, bursting at the seams, making mixing their contents impossible, but I solved that problem with the ice bucket. When I finished, this was still half-full and, not wanting the room to be forever imbued with the smell of sizzling beef, I put the lid on tightly and left it overnight. Disposing of the remains in the morning, I discovered that the ice bucket now ponged; three days later, it still smells of soy sauce.

To avoid future embarrassments, I'm thinking of hiring a cute student to eat my leftovers. ■

THE SCOTSMAN, EDINBURGH

Gilt by association

Tennis used to be a genteel sport, played out in front of genuine enthusiasts. No more. Big budget corporate entertainment means there's gold for those old professionals willing to sell their remaining skills to the highest bidder and for the selected rich and famous, there by special invite, to be fawned upon by the social-climbing masses. Alan Jackson mingled, circulated and was snubbed with the best of them

Early summer in England finds the more aspirant of its natives distinctly restless. Glyndebourne, Henley, Wimbledon fortnight and a brace of other top-rated artistic and sporting fixtures ... at any moment, invitations to these key events in the haute bourgeoisie's calendar will be issued or withheld, causing a nation's legions of social wannabes to sift daily through their mail with trembling fingers.

The really rich, the less in-bred members of the aristocracy and the obviously media-sexy have already heard the call: after all, a light sprinkling of the loaded, the land-owning and the Lacroix-wearing confers status and attracts column inches. Yet increasingly, the brains behind such events observe a new bottom line: Corporate bums on corporate seats.

For, with up to 80 percent of revenue at some major league events generated by the business world, the warm-weather haunts of the high-living have been overrun by the professional middle classes. "Ross, darling, you're friends with so many important people," cooed one woman to another in the queue for Pimms at London's leafy Hurlingham Club.

Her chum-for-the-day had been whining away the waiting moments by dropping names as if they were napalm bombs, and this dreamy riposte carried within it an essential truth about the hierarchy of such occasions. Effectively, "you scratch my back and I'll massage yours." For a posh day out in the sun is all about gilt by association: I may not know the Frightfully Big and Important, but I know a man or woman who does.

By no means was this seniors' tennis championship the day's hottest ticket. You might have expected England's most coveted to be the 25 guests invited in to Richmond register office to witness cricketer Imran Khan and millionaire's daughter Jemima Goldsmith take their wedding vows. But everyone on this circuit loves a party and sustained eavesdropping revealed that the truly envied were the 100 or so allowed entry to the reception that followed at father-of-the-bride Sir James Goldsmith's mansion, Ormley Lodge. And, of course, there was the opening day of Royal Ascot, this year with the added frisson of an appearance by Princess Margaret on the very day former suitor Group Captain Peter Townsend's death was announced.

Yet with individual attendance costing a rumored £20 per head (this may be the New Vulgarity, but who is sufficiently vulgarian to ask a host the price of their away day?), this was something more than just a picnic in the park. And even amid the relatively egalitarian atmosphere of the Hurlingham's corporate dining room, certain invisible lines proved to have been drawn. In between the Melon Charentais au Pineau des Charentes and the Saumon l'Anoth au Beurru Blanc, a formidable PR lady with a tanned and freckled décolletage ("I'm a hideous person at heart, believe me") ventured a few introductions. TV personality Michael Parkinson didn't need one. The exiled Australian representing *The Observer* and I did, however, so duly prepared our best smiles.

All went well for me until urged to meet a man with big glasses from the city pages of a middle-market tabloid. On hearing the name of the paper I represented, he withdrew his proffered hand pre-shake and turned away with a bored look, engaging in conversation instead a gentleman in a lemon linen jacket who photographed food and old houses for *Harpers & Queen*. "May you choke on your *Arlequin aux Deux Chocolats*," I thought, though realizing I was childish to do so. But there was little time to brood. Within minutes the *Truffalines et Muscadines* had been and gone (little chocolates to you and moi, but this is a world where they like to call a spade *une pelle*) and we were being urged outside to take our places for the afternoon's play.

"There is a huge market for the style of tennis we were all

*May you choke on your
Arlequin aux Deux Chocolats,
I thought, though realizing
I was childish to do so*



watching 10 years ago" began the press pack soundbite of Patrick Carr, tournament director and the man responsible for launching last summer's inaugural event. "Audiences miss the more outrageous and eccentric brilliance of players such as Ilie Nastase and Roscoe Tanner. Not surprisingly, the Hurlingham Seniors is proving most popular with "seniors" in the City, with them taking 75 percent of all available tickets. Hurlingham may be exclusive, but nostalgia certainly isn't. Oh, what a smoothie you are, Mr. Carr. But who would we find among the 14 other former champs competing on grass for a combined prize money of \$116,000 in this five-day UK leg of an international Association of Tennis Professionals tour?

Well, just as one-time hitmakers head off to Las Vegas or the cabaret rooms of cruise liners, old sportsmen hit the sunset trail. There in the brochure, amid a montage of mug shots similar to those meant to familiarize the public with the staff of leisure centers and fast-food franchises, were the grinning likes of Over-35s Tim Mayotte and Peter McNamara and Over-45s Mark Cox and Ken Rosewall (birth date a humbling November 2, 1934). And just to add to the neuroses of those who find that policemen are beginning to look younger, other old crocks like Mats Wilander, 31, Pat Cash, 30, and the soon-to-collect-his-pension David Wheaton (a Zimmer-defying 26) had been drafted in for a little exhibition play.

Anyone expecting this to be a world of varicose veins and surgical supports was in for a rude awakening, however. "I've forgotten to put on any underwear," said a clean-limbed if

*Will the Queen one day
ride down The Mall
toward the opening
of Parliament with
a 'Sponsored by Kwikfit'
sash across
her regalia?*

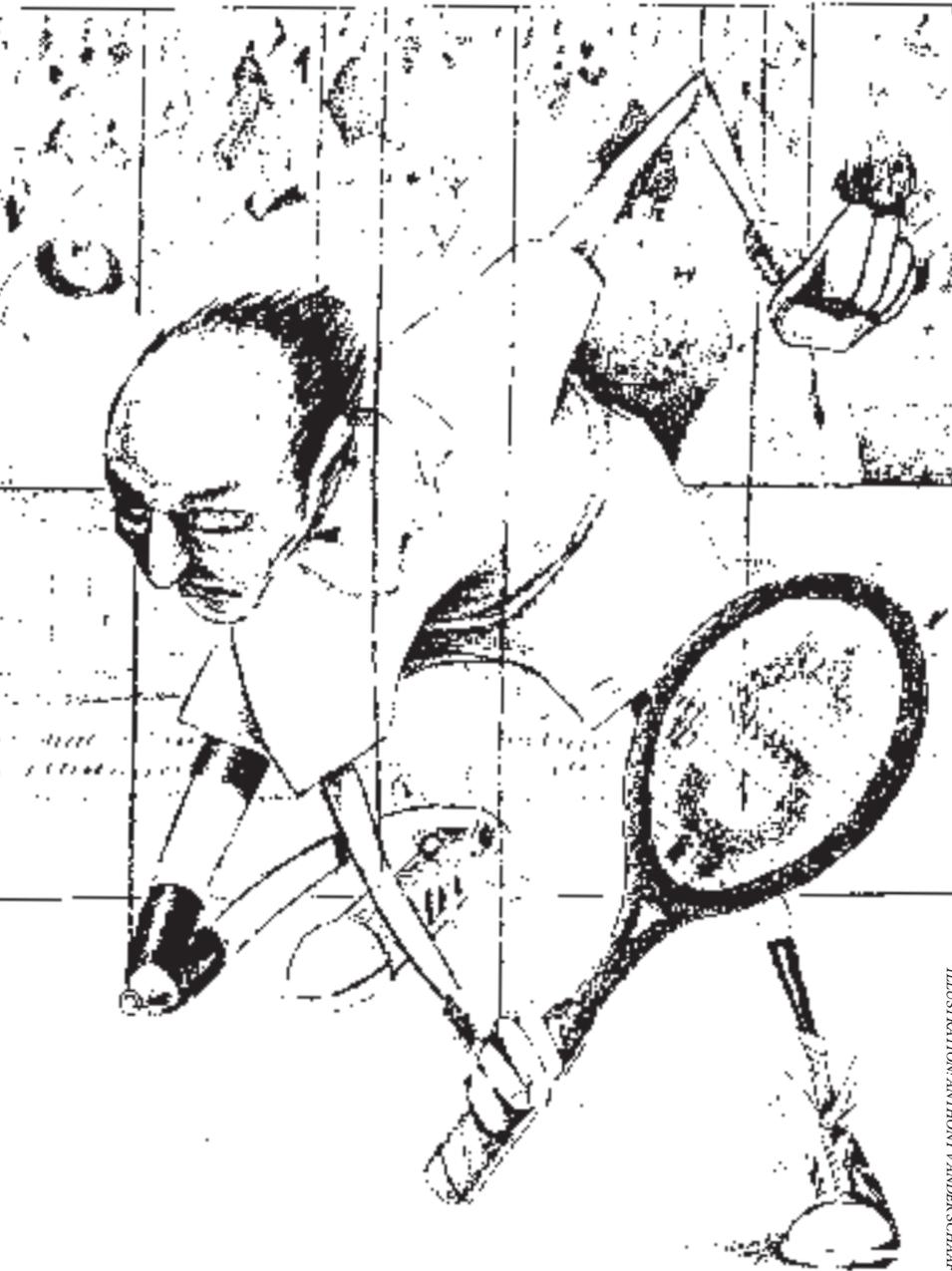


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY VANDER SCHAAF

chubby-faced Nastase to no one in particular as our photographer lobbied off court to take his portrait. Then, on meeting no response, he repeated this non sequitur: "Really, I'm standing here without any underwear." We smiled blankly, not knowing what else to do. "Someone run and tell the groupies in the front row," was the whispered suggestion of a man nursing a glass of warm white wine, but none of us moved. And by the time Ilie had emerged alongside Tanner to battle Fred Stolle and Peter Fleming in the opening round of the Doubles, one presumed that his balls were held firm-

ly in place by the black Lycra cycling shorts newly visible beneath his whites.

Mr. Carr was right, meanwhile. For the fans of tennis, this was an ideal way to watch the game; these vets may move around a whole lot quicker than could the lunch-bloated execs 15 years their junior who had escaped the office for a day to watch them, but still it is at a sufficiently leisured and crowd-pleasing pace to allow close scrutiny of the game. Being more of a people than a tennis watcher, though, I

found my attention wandering. And two boxes along, Michael Parkinson's presence continued to cause silent waves of tension to ebb and flow between a couple who earlier had been seated near him at lunch. The ready flow of anecdotes had so visibly entranced her that her beau turned sulky and, in a significant gesture, wrested off a gray suit jacket. Now, out in the open air but still with them, Parkie had slipped off his tie. How would Mr. Threatened respond? By baring his chest and producing a two-week Wimbledon pass? I never got to find out.

The call of nature led me back inside the Hurlingham's cool, labyrinthine corridors in search of the gents, after which a wrong turn on exiting found me out on the terrace, where a glitzy, petrol-blue-metallic Rover 400 emblazoned with promotional stickers proved to be the only reminder that commerce had entered this former sanctum of the privileged classes.

Through French windows, I could see waiters and waitresses polishing glasses, positioning plates, smoothing down the white table linen, preparing for the onslaught of tea time. Outside, beneath button-down shirt collars, men were talking into mobile phones — not security staff alert for intruders but businessmen fretting that the corporate world might collapse without them. Between them, the occasional club member snoozed in a deck chair, copies of *The Daily Telegraph* or *The Times* spread out across elderly limbs, the sun beating down.

Exactly where lies the future of the English social calendar then? Will the Queen one day drive down The Mall toward the opening of Parliament with a "Sponsored by Kwik-Fit" sash across her regalia? Will the guests of Coopers & Lybrand, Schroders Investment Management and the Swiss Bank bag all the best seats at the Boat Race? Will the movers and shakers hurrying in to sandwiches and scones from Wheaton vs. Cash one day inherit if not the Earth at least the marketable remains of a once green and pleasant land? On Tuesday evening, as the sun died down and young mamas wearing velvet Alice bands and driving Range Rovers cruised in to pick up Chablis-sodden spouses, the questions went unanswered.

Certainly Class War T-shirts and Big Issue vendors were nowhere to be seen — but sometimes subversion can prove more effective than direct action. On returning from my walkabout, I had gone in search of Parkie & Co. How would the rivalry have resolved itself? Would Mr. Threatened have wooed back his partner, or would the Barnsley Boy's store of stories have driven a rift of permanent dissatisfaction between them? All three had gone, so I couldn't know. That night, though, I turned on News at 10, and there was Parkie and his wife, Mary, emerging smiling from a cab outside the Goldsmith mansion, two of the chosen oh-so-few. If only he'd been carrying a banner advertising his next engagement, all at the Hurlingham might have bowed down humbly and signalled their envious respect. ■

A few questions (20 actually) for the ladies

What's this thing about shoes, Fabio and herbal tea?



ILLUSTRATION: BRIAN GABLE

By MICHAEL ULMER

I like to think I know a little something about women. My mom is a woman, always has been. I grew up in a female-driven house with three sisters and a dad who thought Hai Karate smelled good; women were obviously the primary influences in my life. I married a woman, and we had two children. Naturally, they are girls. I understand fate: If I had seven more children, I'd have a great girls' baseball team.

It's fitting then, that since I have started to write my weekly *Globe* column for men most of the feedback has come from women. Please don't take this the wrong way, but what the heck are you doing in our column? I mean, do we read Margaret Wente? Is there something in the spelling of the word M-E-N that can be misconstrued into meaning W-O-M-E-N.

Okay, for those women who are still with me, here are some questions (20, actually) about the things men want to know about women. In 35 years, I have never gleaned a worthwhile answer to any of these questions. All of these subjects, it seems to me, should have been covered in *Cubs*, because, with very few exceptions, most of us live with women and not wolves.

Admittedly, these questions are based on rancid generalizations. Of late, generalizations have become unfashionable, which I think is a shame, because generally held truths are truths nonetheless. Furthermore, there's something open and democratic about airing an idea, no matter how ludicrous, that a large number of people happen to believe. I like

to think the full examination of half-baked thoughts is what this column has always been all about.

If you are a woman, answer some of these questions for your spouse, son, dad or male friend. Don't answer all of them; the man may explode.

Try one a day.

If you are a man, tear out this column and present it to your wife, mom, girlfriend, sister, friend or significant other. Maybe you'll have more luck getting the answers than I have.

20 Questions for Women

1. What is this thing with shoes?
2. Why do you hate pumping gas so much?
3. Do you really expect us to believe you find Woody Allen attractive? Would you believe us if we told you we yearn for Roseanne because she, too, has a great sense of humor?
4. How do you know what matches?
5. Why is the central mechanism to your most frequently worn piece of apparel, the bra strap, more difficult to change than a timing belt, and how can you fasten and unfasten it backward?
6. If your appearance is so important, why do you dress Brownies like Fudgesicles?
7. Why would any of you have a second child after what you had to go through for the first? How can you forget the details of childbirth but remember my mother's birthday?
8. If we are so much bigger and stronger, why do you live an average of six years longer than we do?

9. How can you pluck your own eyebrows? We would prefer to fill our own teeth.

10. Why do you always ask us what's going on in a movie when we both have been watching the exact same film for the exact same length of time?

11. Why do you use those tiny little deodorant sticks? Are your armpits that much smaller than ours?

12. Fabio? Come on.

13. Why do you choose such a prominent place for those pictures of your great grandparents. Do you really think we care how they looked?

14. Why do you insist that we always start the barbecue? Should we take any message from the fact that it's always our job to activate the home appliance most likely to be engulfed in flames?

15. Do you prefer a garden to a lawn?

16. Do you really like the taste of herbal tea?

17. Picture this: A woman is looking out the window. Her eyes are narrowed, her lips are pursed, she is counting with her fingers. A man asks her what she is thinking about. Why does she always say: "Nothing"?

18. Why would anyone have her breasts augmented or her face lifted? Is this somehow linked to playing with Mr. Potatohead as a child?

19. If women on average have a higher rate of insulating body fat, why are you always so cold?

20. Since both sex and sperm are now widely available for you, why do you keep us around anyway? ■

Michael Ulmer's first book, Captains: Nine Great Toronto Maple Leafs, was recently published by MacMillan.



When it comes to abuse, men and women are all created equal. "Did I tell you to move?" Drill instructor Staff Sgt. Shelley Sergeant politely asks a recruit during basic training at Parris Island.

BOOT **MARINE** CAMP

*So you want to join the finest military force in the world? Well, you won't find anything any tougher than Uncle Sam's Marine Corps. And their initiation camp is probably the roughest place to learn the ropes, as Middletown Journal photographer **Mark Stahl** discovered when he visited Parris Island, in South Carolina, to get a taste of real action*

This is where Uncle Sam's finest get their first taste of tough love



Arms folded, ready to pounce, DI Sgt. Dennis Harrison casts an eagle eye over his new charges "They are scared and terrified of our approach. But we are not here to play games. They must understand right away that we are not here to be their friends."



Staff Sgt. Eric Petis (left) tries a little marine-style encouragement on a recruit who doesn't want to climb a rope. But he will.



A recruit learns the finer points of the belly crawl. The 12 weeks of training help build the mental and physical toughness that a marine needs if he is to be one of Uncle Sam's finest. His life — and those of his colleagues — may depend on his resilience in the face of appalling adversity.

The finest tongue-lashing money can buy. That's a promise Uncle Sam plans to keep with every new recruit to the Marine Corps. For two and a half months, at Parris Island, South Carolina, the toughest drill instructors you never want to meet promise to pound on you as if you are just so much clay. They'll eyeball you, tear a strip off you, they'll berate, bluster and bellow. All for the good of the Corps. But things have changed since the days of old. Modern DIs, wary of bad public relations, never get closer than arm's length to their trembling recruits. Even swearing at the grunts is a no-no in the new army. And physical contact is restricted to weapons training. But, although the most macho of the traditions have been toned down, there's still nothing sissy about the marines — the instructors can still YELL at you so loudly that the local residents can hear on faraway shores in north Africa.

Cringing into this high octane assault on their senses, young men and women — another sign of the changing times — will tell you that basic training is a life-altering experience they'll never forget. And that's music to the ears of every drill instructor who ever walked the face of this earth. Their mission is, was and always will be to sear basic lessons in rifle marksmanship, combat skills, leadership and blind devotion to getting the job done — no matter what that that job is — into every recruit's thick cranium.

Call it tough love in khaki. Call it any damn thing you want. But, when the instructor says jump, don't ask him — or her — how high. Just do it!



No task is too difficult for a marine. A trainee learns the fine points of another necessary skill, swabbing the parade ground.



When the instructor says, "JUMP," that's exactly what he expects you to do. Respect is the name of the game.



Don't phone your mother, soldier. She can't help you. Most recruits are on the verge of tears during their first few days at boot camp — those who can't adapt to the discipline usually drop out during this time.

Brian Gable: From Fine Art to fine art



Brian Gable, editorial cartoonist at *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto, was born in Saskatchewan in 1949. After studying fine art at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Toronto, he taught art for nine years at Brockville, Ontario. Gable eased into editorial cartooning in 1977 by freelancing one cartoon a week to the *Brockville Recorder and Times* and, in 1980, was hired full time by the *Regina Leader Post*.



In 1987, he moved to *The Globe and Mail*, where he shares cartooning duties with Anthony Jenkins.

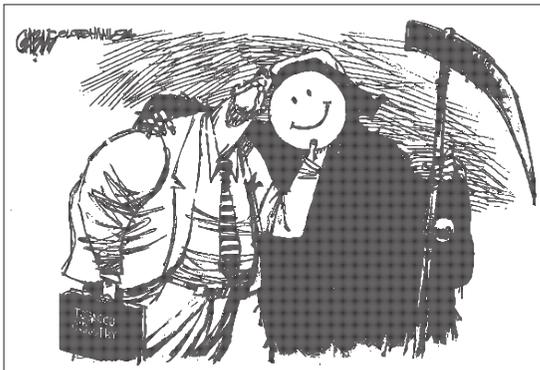
As well as winning the "Most Improved Math Student Award" in Miss Service's Grade 7 class, he has won Canada's National Newspaper Award for Cartooning.

Brian Gable's new book, *Another Day, Another Doom*, a collection of his cartoons for *The Globe*, has been published by Douglas & McIntyre, of Vancouver. It costs \$14.95.

Good news, bad news. A seemingly-interminable election battle can have an entirely unexpected benefit.

Right: The old farts return in slightly-less-than triumph for a new Woodstock.

Far right: Our politicians tell us the economy is rising out of the doldrums, but most of us can't feel the difference.



Left: The great conference on population control has the same performers, singing the same old songs.

Far left: The tobacco industry puts a happy face on a product that promises a good life but often delivers an early death.