A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

It's there!
There before you, Fool!
Can't you see
What I show?
Can't you find
What I know?
Are you blind?
There it runs--
As plain as night
As clear as day
Life, friend, life... 

LSC
LIFE IS . . .

Herein lies the tragedy of the age: not that men are poor—all men know something of poverty: not that men are wicked—who is good? Not that men are ignorant—what is truth? Nay, but that men know so little of men.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois
One dull and uninspiring morning—those days when all
life seems to hide behind locked doors from the threatening
Muncie monsoon—I noticed a phrase etched in the desk of a
sociology classroom. "Life is...", it began, "Getting drunk
Friday and laid Saturday." What a stimulating thought! How
enlivening to ponder those scratchings on the desk... tiny
lines drawn to tell, how ever humorously, what this person
believed life to be at that very moment and in the very place.
Questions surface in one's mind when suddenly spurred by a
fresh reflection. What does that fellow next to me think life
to be? And the lecturer before a class of 300? And my room-
mate? Do I even know how my own parents would finish the
phrase, "Life is..." The only answer is in the asking, I
decided, and from that perhaps I could learn more about my
fellow humans—more of myself. As Scout's father tells his
daughter in the novel, To Kill A Mockingbird, "You never really
understand a person until you consider things from his point of
view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."
INTRODUCTION

As a student trained in the great American way, one almost naturally tends to don track shoes and race to the nearest library to satisfy a need for knowledge. As human beings it would perhaps be more profitable to dust off that discarded thinking cap and begin the quest for wisdom on a new level. Beyond long forgotten records buried in the archives of history there lies a vast land of individual experience awaiting even the most inept of researchers: the college scholar embarking on his fifty-fifth term project has a wealth of fact lurking behind the eyes and smile of his brother.

It is my purpose to deal with my subject--the men, women, and children who may complete the phrase "Life is . . ." with totally different conclusions--in a manner that escapes the traditional dipping into encyclopedias and texts and rephrasing endless copy in order to fulfill an academic requirement. I draw my facts from personal encounters with my sources, confrontation with one who views life from the only true angle--as an individual human being born with distinctive physical characteristics and molded by the influences of his culture and society. This effort is written somewhere in the galaxies as my foremost (to date) contribution to the era of New Journalism. It is only by this method of meeting reality that one is able to gain an accurate insight into what makes each person as unique and significant as the pebbles of an ocean beach.

And the sands of the tides
Ebb and flow,
Always touching, Forever reaching
To the shores
Where they wash to seem
But grains alike . . .
. . . Such Foolish eyes are those
Who fail to see
A thousand faces
On one long beach of sand.

LSC
FORWARD

When one goes about the task of interviewing, he does so with a certain preconceived image preparing him for what he is to meet. The fledgling reporter cautiously tiptoes off to speak with the bold and tyrannical statesman whom he has heard so much about. Ideally, it should not be so. The journalist and his neighbor, whether he be poet or pauper, should judge not by what has been stereotyped for him but rather by what he has molded into truth from actual encounters with the subject. With my own ideals ringing patriotically in my ears, I set out to confront four unique persons who, may I now submit to generalizations, are peoples persecuted and misunderstood by modern society because their skin is of a different color, their noses are a bit too large and crooked, or their strict religious adherence does not fit the regulation mold. My work also includes brief sketches of several people I happened upon in the course of daily living. These characters so impressed me that I felt compelled to write about them, to mention their names as a tribute to a perhaps short but very special relationship. It is satisfying to give credit to one who has enriched a life by just being there, arriving uninvited at a point that becomes the time of your life.
LUCY BILLIE
AND
THE SEMINOLE ISTACHATTA*

INDIAN PRAYER: Great Spirit Grant that I may not criticize my neighbor until I have walked a mile in his moccasins.

*Unconquered red man
LUCY BILLIE

June. 1970. A bright ball of crimson dances on the rim of the new dawn as the clouds yawn and separate, letting the light of early morning tickle the tiny pebbles on the beach. Several paces before me strolls a tall, dark-skinned form framed in the shimmering carousel of colors. As the figure nears me, the raven hair, the deep black eyes, and distinctive features of a uniquely beautiful woman come into view. My young companion, a curious boy only four fingers old, cannot fully understand the characteristics of an American unlike those from the Hoosier land.

"Linda, what is she?"

"Why Todd," I reply. "She is an Indian, I think. You've heard of Indians, haven't you?"

"Yeh, they're the ones who wears the feathers and gets killed by white mens on telebision, huh?"

Todd may plead the ignorance of youth. But millions of adult Americans have only years of television, movies, and fictional novels on which to blame their disillusionment; the vulnerable citizens who stereotype the American Indian as a primitive heathen dressed in hides, bones, beads, and eagle feathers are but peoples disinherit ing fathers who long before embedded their footprints on ground we now tread.

The wisdom of a youngster's naivety on a sparkling new morning brought archaic notions from the darkened corners of my own mind into fresh light. From that very moment I was stricken with an insatiable appetite for knowing not just guessing about the American Indian.
Through a long series of events, that raven-haired miss on the beach introduced me to a unique experience. My friendship with 28-year-old Lucy Billie, a Cow Creek Seminole, led me to lasting relationships with many Indians inhabiting the Brighton Reservation of Florida.

I now cherish my moments with the Indians of Brighton. I feel I must not limit my experience to my own recordings and notes. It is to the very special people of the Seminole tribes that I devote my eternal interest, attention, and this brief recreation of my encounters. While American and Asian lives are being gambled on foreign soils, may at least one man never lose sight of a patch of Indian blood spotting our own country's soil; may he understand the still waters flowing deep in his brother's veins.
Lucy Billie is a bright and amiable Muskogee (another name for Cow Creek) Seminole whose fondest wishes are made of the delicate dreams of her Indian brothers. She is extremely articulate and knowledgeable and commands a striking passion for life—the pulsating, breathing, quivering existence that escapes the American dream of power or possession. Lucy frequently leaves the Brighton Reservation, located a few miles northwest of Lake Okeechobee in Highland and Glades counties, to enter a world that employs strobes and high fidelity to create the vibrations she feels trembling deep within her people, men, women, and children who have no desire to be stimulated by the artificial devices of civilization. Lucy has given much in her short life to teaching the Seminoles the ways of the white man, although she makes a constant effort to keep alive their unique culture and crafts.

Lucy Billie was a vital tool in reshaping my own antiquated theories of the Indian. Never in my decade and . . . years of formal education had I been subjected to such an overflowing treasury of facts and understanding. I came to learn not only of the Brighton Reservation but I uncovered an epic of American Indian history, a chapter in Florida history once considered closed.

July 21. 1970. Lucy Billie, my Sarasota beach buddy, has invited me to visit the Brighton Reservation. I have accepted and am traveling throughout the southern expanses of Florida with my Seminole companion. As we move along the Tamiami Trail, Lucy speaks of her family and friends, occasionally opening her somber, expressive eyes wide as she waves a hand toward a distant
region in the interior of the state. She proceeds to expound upon the deepest mysteries of the place, smiling now and then like a child divulging a secret to his best friend. I nod in approval like the chum who is confident with the story-teller for I understand that she is much too genuine to entertain me with anything less than truth. We move across the southwestern portion of the Peace River and then further south to the Caloosahatchee River. We pass numerous Indian abodes along the Tamiami Trail: many concessions advertise souvenirs and handicrafts for sale to curious tourists. Examples of primitive housing constructions are also plentiful along the route. Many of the villages are open for inspection by visitors. They remain in the same condition as they were one hundred years ago, with the exception of iron pots and the sewing machine which are the only white man's mechanical devices the Seminolés have adopted. We must turn north at the "large lake" to meet our destination. (There are shorter, less scenic routes to Brighton but Lucy insists on staying close to the Trail, assuring me that there is much to see and learn along the coast of "great waters and large lakes" and on the banks of the rivers).

It is nearly dusk when I spot the first Seminole chickee—the Indian refuge built of poles cut from small trees. Overlapping palmetto palm fronds provide a roof similar to modern shingle roofs. I am soon to discover that these chickees are always located on high ground, or hammocks, in the swamp. Thus, they are protected somewhat from the dampness of the region and their open-sided houses are able to withstand onslaughts of hurricanes.
Lucy explains that the Seminoles still prefer this thatched roof shelter to frame dwellings. Seminole forefathers devised the thatched model more than a century ago when they came to the Everglades to escape the white man's injustices.

July 22, 1970. After only a few hours in the Seminole village, I begin to accept the fact that Indians remain aloof from visitors. Reserved and quiet, they speak only when directly addressed. Lucy soothes my injured ego by explaining that it takes many visits for a white man to be accepted by the Indian. I receive the remark as an invitation to return to the reservation again.

Lucy directs me through the peaceful landscape of Brighton. We pause for a moment to watch a group of seven girls playing "Button, button, who's got the button?" on the grasslands. Lucy collapses cross-legged on the moist soil not far from the girls and motions me to follow. As before, she points out over the grounds, voicing a continuing commentary as she does. To the left, beyond the palms and vines, there stands the Brighton school building now being used as headquarters for the Seminole Crafts Guild. She details how her people bring their handicrafts consisting of dresses, jackets, blankets, dolls, and toys to this craft center where they are placed on sale to the public. She points out a young Indian man calmly walking the west grounds. The young men have adopted the ways of the traditional cowboy. This is quite an irony to me. The fellow is dressed in blue jeans, a broadrimmed felt hat, and polished leather boots. Lucy says that the men take great pride in their cowponies, grooming and tending them with meticulous care. She tells me that a large number of the young men are now employed on nearby vegetable farms, in logging camps, on cattle ranches,
on road maintenance, or with surveying crews. My young Indian friend pauses for a moment, rubbing ash from her eye, then continues. The women stay in the village, busy with their craft of dressmaking, disposing of their wares through established traders and store owners in the area. Younger Seminole boys earn money hunting frogs which are in demand at the larger markets of Miami.

"About the white man." I begin almost too suddenly for my own ears, "Do the Seminoles really know or care of the years of harsh mistreatment by . . ." I stop. Lucy's midnight eyes widen, allowing the sun rays to jump on and off as though they were being spilled on a hot stove.

"Our people cannot forget the white man's invasion and trickery. It is as though each Seminole baby is born feeling and knowing what the soldier has done to a hundred fathers before." Lucy looks to the ground, snatching one of the coarse grasses. "Eli Morgan, a Seminole gone nearly three years now, would tell me as a child of the great battles and massacres. The name of the Muskogee leader Asi-Yaholo still tingles in my ears. The white man called the warrior "Osceola". I will say Eli loved the man." Lucy rises, brushing off her multicolored costume as she starts to walk away. I assume the subject to be closed and follow in her ascent. At her side I find she is still talking.

"During the first half of the war, I understand that it was Osceola who led the Seminoles. Shortly after open hostilities began, he dictated a letter of defiance to General Clinch. February 2, 1836 sticks in my mind. Almost any Seminole can recite at least some of what he said."
I am soon to learn exactly what the Seminole's great leader, Osceola, told the military power of the United States:

You have guns, so have we--You have powder and lead, so have we--Your men will fight, and so will ours--till the last drop of Seminole blood has moistened the dust of his hunting ground.

Florida Seminoles, perhaps more than any living American Indian tribe, have nurtured the bitter memories of war through the generations. At that moment, I remember someone once saying, "Old feuds die slowly and seldom fade into oblivion."

July 23, 1970. The last day of my visit. Unbeknownst to me, Lucy has not dismissed our discussion of the day before. Without prompting she begins, "This community of Seminoles is taking readily to the white man's way of life; children are being educated in the public schools, riding the modern school bus to and from the reservation to nearby Okeechobee."

As we tour the immediate village, Lucy and a new companion, young Russel Osceola, take turns explaining the sights. An old woman, Mary Jones, cooks and cares for her grandson, Mush Jones. We pause for a moment while Russel speaks, "Families live partially on game and wildlife. But we add to the natural diet with white man's foods from the market." We walk on. Lucy opens a new area of interest as if she has sensed my growing enthusiasm. I learn that Florida Seminoles are under the jurisdiction of the Florida Seminole Agency.

"We receive no government dole," Lucy mumbles matter-of-factly. "When needed, aid is sometimes accepted from missionaries."

Russel adds, "Independent by nature, we prefer to be left alone, to pursue our own way of life."
"Your own thing," I murmur as two puzzled faces turn my way.

I learn that two nongovernment organizations help the Seminoles. The Friends of the Seminoles, Florida Federation, Inc. is active in promoting the social, educational, physical, and economic welfare; in general, they endeavor to advance the interests of the Seminole in Florida. Part of their program sponsors a kindergarten for Seminole children at the agency.

The purpose of the Seminole Indian Association of Florida is simply to help in any way possible. They are especially instrumental in fighting any encroachments of Indian lands.

Our stroll continues. At this point, I become especially intrigued by the Seminole housing itself. The Seminole Indian still sleeps on a platform about three feet above ground level. The elevated position serves two practical purposes: protection from the dampness of the swamp and a safeguard against snakes and rodents. By day, bedding is rolled and laid aside. The chickee platform then becomes a dress making shop. Centrally located in the village, a larger chickee serves as a community kitchen. An open fire burns beneath an iron grill on which cooking utensils rest. Five or more logs radiate from the flame at the center and are fed into the fire when needed.

The day's tour ends as a chicken brushes our path. Pigs and fowl roam the village at will.

As if prompted by the startled expression on my face, Russel remarks, "They serve only one purpose—food!"

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August 5, 1971. The children are more cheerful and playful than before. The old folks grin anxiously and more than once a young Seminole gestures a slight greeting as I walk past.
"They remember you," Lucy tells me. As I walk with the attractive young Cow Creek woman, an air of indifference and withdrawal seems to lift and the manner of strict dignity dissolves into an atmosphere of congenial welcome. I feel trusted and I am confident and grateful. A few Seminole men sit in a circle at one edge of the village, whispering among themselves. They seldom gesture. I learn that the native dialect is being enriched by contact with the outside world. Illiteracy rates are being reduced and nearly every Florida Seminole is now able to read and write with remarkable fluency. Lucy has learned much of her speech and mannerisms from external influences. Although she does not know it, it pleases me immensely each time she accidentally ends a comment with "you know". It is as though my hopes of sharing something rich and rare with the Indians are becoming more than idle dreams. We seem to be "rubbing off" on one another.

During this, our first stroll through the village since my return, I notice an old woman deep in thought, patiently sitting beside her fireplace while the contents of the pots slowly simmer over the crimson flames. Old people are highly respected in Seminole society. A beautiful young girl stands nearby. Her neck is encircled with pounds of multicolored glass beads. Lucy explains that a girl of the tribe is given a string of beads when she reaches the age of twelve. Additional strings are given on birthdays and to reward acts of virtue; they are sometimes offered as gifts in good times. This process continues until the girl's neck up to her chin is literally buried deep beneath many strands. This custom is not practiced as religiously as in years gone by but remnants of the past have not completely vanished. The girl's hair is fashioned
in what seems to be a recreation of the Gibson Girl of the 1890's.

During the evening hours, I am served a thin porridge called "sofkee". A favorite of the natives, the drink is made from boiled corn meal. It is quite good! It has the distinct flavor and feel of mushy hominy grits.

On my second visit to the village, I become acquainted with the religion of Brighton. A Baptist church in the southwest region of the reservation is one of two churches serving spiritual needs in the Indian community.

"We accept Christianity not as a religion but as an aspect of all religions," Lucy states.

The Indian believes that the well-being of his people depends directly on the observance of the Green Corn Dance. To forfeit this ceremony would result in disintegration of the entire social, political, and religious organization of the tribal society. Lucy notes that the Seminole is not to be blamed for resentment and mistrust of white missionaries who attempt to make the Indian abandon their sacred dance for what a traveling clergyman once called "a more edible form of worship".

The day ends as families of the camp gather in the large chickee at mealtime. The dinner consists of sweet potatoes and chicken. After the meal, the old and the young linger to visit with neighbors who stay for a free exchange of conversation. New friends are made as the red men speak freely with their white guest. They seem eager for me to entertain them with stories. They laugh easily.

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August 6, 1971. Today I conclude that the Seminole possesses a unique corner on the market of longevity. Because of their
stoicism, lack of worry, and belief in the inevitable, it is not uncommon to find old people over one hundred years of age. I also realize that despite the dismal swamp conditions of the Seminole reservation, these Indians are among the healthiest persons I have ever observed. I am almost ashamed of my summer rash of colds and influenza.

This is a day of much relaxation and enjoyment of the natural wonders about me. I know no facts greater than the simple beauty of the Seminole community calmly following its daily routine of business without confusion or unnecessary rush. I speak with Annie Jones, a youngster who is as interested in the ways of the white man as I am in the Indian. It seems she has looked at picture magazines and developed a hunger for knowledge of the world beyond her own confines. We talk for a long time, exchanging facts and fairy tales, news and nursery rhymes. There is a time when I want to grab the child up into my arms and say, "You are the closest thing to an angel I have ever seen." She is truly a beautiful little person.

Since my second sojourn to the Seminole's land, I have searched text books and historical volumes for more information on these unconquered peoples. I have learned that a federal law passed in 1924 declares that all Indians born in the United States are natural citizens. This, of course, includes the Florida Seminoles. The Indians can vote, hold public office, own land, and possess personal property. I also discover that Dwight Eisenhower signed the Haley Bill as President which gave the Cow Creeks title to 27,000 acres of land on the margins of Lake Okeechobee. The Indians had spent $73,000 of their own funds to develop this tract of land by the year the land title was transferred.
My most recent visit to the Seminoles extended from February 27 to March 8 of 1972. During that time I spent three days with Lucy Billie at Brighton. These days of reunion were devoted to the pleasant task of amusing the Indians and being entertained by my Seminole friends. The Cow Creeks filled my waking hours with folklore and legends of their people. I learned the myth about the origin of corn and pumpkins and folktale describing the origin of koonti, a root used as a corn meal substitute. In return, I spoke to the Indians about the ways of the white man, the modes of life outside the reservation. They listened intently, perhaps trying to form visions of a foreign world in their minds. They knew nothing of skyscrapers, apartment complexes, ice skating arenas, and the hysteria of basketball season in the Midwest. A small boy made me promise that I would send him a bottle of snow. I was serenaded by songs, chants, and dance rhythms. I heard the "Horned Owl Song," "The Night of Love," and "White Feather." The women and children gathered under the trees one mid-day for a picnic dinner of rabbit meat and citrus fruits.

I was eager to invite the entire tribe to come to my home as guests. Instead, I cautiously extended my gratitudes and shook their rust-colored hands before I turned to go. Lucy pledged to visit me in Sarasota during the remaining days of my vacation. She never did; she was called away to speak at a parents-teachers conference.

As I was preparing to leave the Seminoles after my third visit, young Annie Jones ran to me carrying a brightly decorated Indian doll. She handed the tiny figure to me, gently arranging the toy's native costume as it passed from hands of two distinct tans. She touched my leg as she whispered in the hushed tones
of the Seminole. "Come back soon, please. We want you to be Indian." I had proven worthy of the Seminole's trust and respect. I was certain that it would be quite a long time before anyone would compliment me so greatly.

I recently contacted Lucy so that she could reply to ten basic questions devised for all my interviewees. The following features her responses:

1. WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?
"My people, they are good. Your people are good, too. But the Indian hurts no one and lives, as he has for many years in the past, a quiet and contented life. The newspapers and the radio and television do not always tell what has been good through the day. It seems the bad news always receives more attention that the good. It is good that two people who are not born of the same family or race can talk and become friends."

2. WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?
"Nearly everything. Family and friends and blue skies and fresh food all make me happy. I like to make my friends happy so that I may be glad also. Happiness is in doing the right thing even if it means going a little bit out of your way."

3. WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?
"The war is the very worst. And all of hate and killing and pain and people suffering. Good people hurt without reason or explanation. Man hurts himself and other men. That I can't understand. We judge too harshly and too quickly. Old Indian prayer says not to criticize until you have been in another's shoes. That is good advice for any person."
4. WHAT SMALL THING HAVE YOU DONE TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE?
"I am teaching and guiding my people to learn about life away from the reservation. But I don't discourage them from going about life as they have been taught before, as their fathers have shown them. I love people and I try to help them. I really believe that is the best a person can do."

5. WHO IS YOUR HERO?
"All men are heroes in some way. Great warriors and great Presidents are best remembered but everyone is a hero at least to one other person. I admire a lot of people, some of them only a poor Indian or a common soul I have met. They are great in some little way."

6. IS THE WORLD DOING ENOUGH FOR YOU?
"I do not ask for anything but sunshine and water and health for myself and my people. Everything is earned by what you put into the world. I am satisfied with what I have."

7. ARE YOU DOING ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD?
"I don't think you can do enough. You just keep trying to give what you have and you might make a little good happen."

8. IF YOU WERE TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME, WHAT WARNING WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE PEOPLE BEFORE YOU?
"I would tell all the peoples of the world that their worries will carry them nowhere but to exhaustion. The white man seems so worried and hurried. They must work for what they desire, not dream of better things. I would warn them that they have the power to bring destruction if they do not care. They must love their land or it will be gone by neglect and waste."
9. SUPPOSE BEINGS FROM ANOTHER PLANET VISITED YOU AND WISHED TO
KNOW OF LIFE AND EARTH. HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE THE GOOD, THE
BAD, AND THE UGLY OF THE WORLD?
"I would not need to tell them. If they had eyes and minds
they could find their own answers. That way they could not
forget what they learned. What I call bad might not be some­
one else's same idea. A beautiful spring day would be a rain­
maker's curse. Nothing is ugly unless it hurts on purpose.
I think there are ways of turning a bad thing into a good thing.
At least I like to believe it is so."

10. WHAT IS LIFE?
"That is hard to tell. I would say life is living without
fear, being glad of today, proud of yesterday, happy that
tomorrow is coming."
FATHERS AND FRIENDS
FATHERS AND FRIENDS

I rarely confess that I am one-fourth American Indian because I hate to boast. My dad's father, Jesse, was a full-blooded Miami Indian, once a "micco" or chief. I never knew my grandfather; he died of leukemia at age fifty-four.

Several months before he was hospitalized, Jesse told his only son to keep the chief's moccasins under his bed until the baby arrived and he would be assured of having a girl. My father promised and I was born May 22, three months after the Indian man died. Somewhere in the bottom of a cedar chest, under the bonnets and blankets and embroidered bibs, lie those moccasins. I am certain that someday my father will secretly plant them under my bed and pray for a granddaughter.

It was not only this family sentiment that prompted me to "adopt" two little Sioux Indian girls over one year ago. It was an effort to help any needy child. I decided to begin on American soil.

June Long Crow, a twelve-year-old South Dakota Sioux living on the Rosebud Indian Christian Children's Fund Project, was the first of my sponsorships. Monthly I submitted checks to supplement the Crow family's meager earnings. My donations bought clothing, school supplies, and school lunches.

Five months after I received June's personal information folder, I found a neatly typed notice in my mailbox. It read:

Your sponsored child is no longer enrolled at the aforementioned CCF affiliate. The details as to reasons were not given to us, but apparently the girl moved with her people to another area in search of better employment opportunities. This is a frequent occurrence with Indian families. We can assure you that the youngster benefited greatly from your help while she was with us.

Immediately, my sponsorship was transferred to Corinna Eagle Elk,
a seven-year-old who received a penny a day for sorting clothes and
drying dishes. Corinna lived in a private dormitory on the Rosebud
Reservation, one of two housing developments operated by mission
groups. Her parents were migrant workers who traveled most of the
year.

I have amassed a volume of letters and homemade cards and
drawings from Corinna. The youngster's letter writer, Kristen Jesset
of Rosebud, begins all of her correspondence with "Dear Smiling Face."
She once explained that when Corinna received my photograph, a grinning
head and shoulders shot, she gave out a cry and exclaimed, "She has
a big smiling face." I am pleased that the title lasted.

I plan to visit the South Dakota project in July of 1973.
I am partially prepared for what I will encounter from my experiences
at the Brighton Reservation. Hopefully, I will find another section
of wise Indian folk who can chuckle knowingly as I recite, "Lo,
the poor Indian! Whose untutored mind sees God in clouds, or hears
him in the wind." *

*From Essay on Man, Alexander Pope.
LIFE

Some try to define it.
Some try to endure it.
Some try to live it.
Jesus came to give it.

Graffiti on the chalk board
of the Otis Kendall gas station
in Amboy, Indiana
For years I had visited the home of Beatrice Strauss, a wife, a mother, farm woman, seller of Oil of Herbs, and an Amish. As a child I asked my mother precisely why Beatrice and her family were different. She could not explain all that I learned years later when I returned to the tiny community of Amboy, Indiana.

September 18, 1972. I approach the Strauss home in late afternoon. The sun is setting and darkness is reaching its chilly fingers toward the farm land but I can still see it clearly. The house remains much the same, whitewashed stone with a wooden barn. There is the chicken coop and woodshed. Yet something has changed. I see incandescent bulbs winking like fireflies in the windows. The Amish have become electrified! I am soon to realize that much has changed. "Wexelin!" as the Pennsylvania Dutch say it.

I enter the house. There hangs a testimony to the "wexelin"—dark curtains and dark rugs where no such decorations were previously allowed. I am greeted by the entire Strauss family. The children playfully eye my camera and tape recorder. However, the older folks do not receive my automized state with much welcome. I believe they are unsure of my equipment so I try to carry the paraphernalia in a less threatening manner. I decide to employ my pen and paper as modes of recording my visit. I do not want to turn these people off with machinery that makes them feel uneasy or cautious. Following a casual conversation about my grandparents and the sad state of the weather, I am invited to stay for dinner. I accept gratefully and I am soon feasting on "schnitz und knepp" (small dumplings, cooked with dried apples.
and ham); dandelion salad; and pan pudding, a concoction consisting of ground-up scraps of pig's head, neck, and tail meat. The pudding is served on toast. I am offered a section of shoofly pie which I decline because I am literally stuffed. Ben Strauss, one of the "springers," or young people, remarks as he swallows the last bite, "This shoofly pie is wonderful good!"

September 25, 1972. I return to the Strauss home to learn more about these unique peoples. I find the change in the Amish runs deeper than I had expected. The Amish have become motorized. Although the Bible does not mention the gasoline motor or electricity, many Amishmen pull their plows with tractors. The springers buy automobiles. The young people cannot take their vehicles home so they park them behind a sympathetic non-Amishman's garage and then return on Friday and Saturday nights to pick them up. The teenagers have a distinct desire to "brech," or break out from their homes. The Amish girls still wear the proper uniforms of Plainwomen: long skirts, little net prayer caps under black bonnets, and blouses brightly colored red, orange, and blue (almost matching the brilliance of their eyes). It is a mystery to me exactly why the females are required to act and dress in an obviously dull manner yet they display the most fantastic of hues in their blouses. I ask several of the men and women to answer this inquiry but they only nod and go about their work. The Amish have long been portrayed as a backward group shunning modern conveniences due to their strict religious adherence. They never used a mechanical device nor did they dare employ any but the simplest tools in work or play. I am learning that progress is overcoming their desire for an unadorned existence.
September 25, 1972. Evening. Returning to my grandmother's house, my headquarters for the weekend, I stop at a small grocery store to pick up some broth for Granny's infamous chicken and noodles. I engage in discussion with the store keeper. I realize that the proper uniform of the young Amish girl is deceiving. The store keeper tells me that each spring, herds of Amish girls take off for Florida, buy bikinis, and do what the natives do. When they are ready to come home, they simply give their suits away, put their long and proper skirts back on, and report to their parents that religious services in Daytona were "wunderbar gute." Naturally, they do not mention the bikinis or the boys. The Amish are being displayed in quite a new light.

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September 26, 1972. I stop at the Strauss farm one final time to ask them my ten basic questions and to thank the rosy-cheeked people for their hospitality. I am fascinated by the long, stiff yet flowing beard of the older Strauss and the clean, clear complexions of the blond, blue-eyed youngsters. I wish to record the Strauss' on tape and on film but they remain reluctant. I do not wish to spoil a brief but rewarding relationship with my modern mechanics.

Beatrice answers my inquiries for her husband is tending the livestock. "Gay nows to der shier, vunst," he says. I understand, "I am going now to the barn." Her responses, translated into phrases more easily understood by a non-Amish are as follows:

1. WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?

"I suppose a lot is good in the world. We know most of the people and things here. God is good, of course we know that. He makes His children good by loving them."
2. WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?
"I have happiness enough in my family. There is happiness in the ones you care for and in Christ."

3. WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?
Too many wars and problems to solve. No one is settled. No one wants what he has even though he is well enough provided for. There is too much hurry."

4. WHO IS YOUR HERO?
"God."

5. IS THE WORLD DOING ENOUGH FOR YOU?
"I don't ask the world for much. My family and myself have enough of everything important. We are happy together and we live well. I will do what I want for myself—with God's help."

6. ARE YOU DOING ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD?
"I do not understand. I am staying out of the way. I do not wish to be run over by the world in its rush to get places."

7. IF YOU WERE TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME, WHAT WARNING WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE PEOPLE BEFORE YOU?
"There is too much injustice. I would warn them against bringing onto themselves and their families a harm that could make them sad. I mean that people sometimes go so fast they forget what is important. I might warn them against making too many inventions too fast."

8. WHAT SMALL THING HAVE YOU DONE TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE?
"I follow the word of God. I teach my children to do the same."
I teach my children to be honest and trustworthy and loyal and to obey the Commandments. I practice the word of our Lord. I love my neighbor and I am easy to forgive them for their trespasses."

9. Suppose beings from another planet visited you and wished to know of life on Earth. How would you summarize the good, the bad, and the ugly of your world?

"I cannot answer that, thank you."

10. What is life?

"Our life is in God. That is all."
BON VOYAGE
BON VOYAGE

When I signed my name to the college lease for winter quarter housing in April of 1972, I never planned to share bunk beds with a South African male. Eight months later I looked down from the upper berth and discovered a huge tan Teddy Bear snoring below. We were not properly introduced until he was dressed and I had pinched my body black and blue in an effort to shake the nightmare.

It seemed the handsome Hindu had flown in from London, bused to Muncie from Indianapolis, and wandered into his girlfriend's apartment (which inconveniently was also my abode) and gone to sleep. I slept through all the excitement of his bungling into the lower bunk.

The days following our strange introduction allowed Pat Moodley and I to exchange ideas and ideals. He was a twenty-eight-year-old bronze South African with raven hair and deeply piercing black eyes. His beard refused to remain in stubble stage so he had let it grow into an attractive full bush. Pat detested shoes so he simply walked without, in snow or slush or on frozen pavements. Likewise, he preferred to travel bare-chested. I would have called his knack for undress conceit on anyone but this congenial character.

My roommate met Mr. Moodley during her three month sojourn with Ball State's London Center study program. Sharon, a twenty-one-year-old who had barely been over the state's border, once told me, "I was immediately attracted to him. His face and his voice, that international appeal demanded attention for the very start."
The two became engaged seventeen hours after the South African from Durbin arrived in the United States. The wedding ceremony was planned for March 11 in the living room/kitchen of the couple's most recent homesite, a two room apartment on Muncie's eastside. The only two guests invited, my fiance and I, will serve as honor attendants, witnesses, ring bearers, and the sole source of support during the simple ceremony. A poster-size print of the ancient stone carving of the marriage of Siva and Parvati will add a sentimental touch from its position on the kitchen wall.

All did not fall into the proper place as hoped, however. The bride's parents were less than pleased with their only daughter's choice of mates. Her father, a bigot at best, objected to the union on grounds of race and earning potential. He met Pat only once before he ordered the couple out of his home. Father and daughter have not spoken since that first introduction. Instead Poppa began telephoning his daughter's former roommate nightly to talk of his offspring's misjudgements and irrational behavior. I listened--always.

It all seems strange and unreal to one who has known Sharon for seventeen years. It is grand and quite glorious in the picture books but I doubt now that dreams do come true without complications.

It is difficult to visually picture Sharon's accounts of their first meeting: a celebration at London's Duke of Richmond Pub. They danced to one tune and then left, hand-in-hand. She did not even know his name until the next day when he brought her one red rose and a bucket of England's own Kentucky Fried Chicken.
From that day forward they were like putty to a windowpane. Now they are together on her territory, cooking curry concoctions on a tiny two-burner gas range and sipping Chinese tea from styrofoam cups.

Pat admitted in his heavy Dutch accent, "I left home at age eighteen and have since traveled here and there. I went to Johannesburg and through most of the African continent. Just a year ago I started visiting all of the European countries. I've never seen anything like Muncie, Indiana. I honestly don't think I like it here."

Pat promised to stay in Modeltown, U.S.A. until Sharon's graduation in May. He has planned to return to Durbin, South Africa in April, one final trip to his native land and a dying father.

He told me with unembarrassed tears in his eyes, "I don't expect Father to live another year. I can't think of going away without seeing him at least one more time."

The eighty-four-year-old elder Moodley is nearly blind; his body is a veritable skeleton weighing no more than eighty pounds. His feet have shrunken so that he now wears a size three shoe. Sharon would love to meet the parents of her future husband but the apartheid government of Pat's land does not allow a South African to marry a Caucasian. So Sharon is sending a written note to the inlaws she will never know, only hear about in tales of far away. Pat will have to translate the message because his mother does not read English and his father would not be able to see even the largest of letters.

Pat has already issued explicit orders to his neighbors for the thirty days he will be away. The two men sharing the adjacent apartment are conveniently the soft spoken South African's best
friends from South Africa. Danny Govendor and Casey Naidoo came to the United States to initially find better work opportunities and secondly, to be with the female friends they met in London during the fall. Casey is currently illegally employed at one of Muncie's hamburger palaces. He does not have the work permit required of aliens working in the United States. He does have a social security card and all the necessary forms to secure a work permit. Pat does not plan to begin work until the newlyweds relocate in Los Angeles. He is a skilled laborer interested in the printing profession. He is presently relaxing with amassed savings of $4,500.00. The twosome will depart for the west coast with most of their savings and a few special gifts from the friends they leave behind.

A Ball State professor of Latin presented Sharon with two books at the announcement of the wedding. The volumes included The Perfumed Garden of the Shaykh Netzami, the Arabian Manual of Love and Vatsyayana Kama Sutra, the popularized Hindu ritual of love, "complete and unexpurgated."

I have yet to decide what I will give my best friend and her new husband for a wedding or departure gift. I think that I will write a sentimental poem, then tear it up and hand them my address and a book of stamps, already sticky with a tear.
"After all there is but one race--humanity."

The Bending of the Bough,
George Moore.
DONITTA JAMES

One cannot escape the controversy exploding every minute at some point in our world concerning the racial equality and right of the Black man. One is only blind or passively settled into apathy to ignore the demands and accusations being volleyed by the two modern moieties.

With convictions and questions ever present in the recesses of my mind, I began to consider the situation of the Black man. My thoughts were intensified when I read a letter to the editor in an issue of Penthouse magazine. I clipped the comment so that the fullness of the writer's words might be preserved.

I have followed the letters discussing the sexual prowess of the black male and would like to make several comments. First, it is ironic that myths invented and perpetuated by insecure white males as further reason for black suppression (supposedly to protect the white female from black lust), are facts to some white girls. For the white male to demand sexual equality with a myth he created only adds to the irony.

Second, I found my own feelings on this matter revealing. I am disturbed when a black man even admires a beautiful white woman. The fact that some white girls acknowledge black sexual superiority only increases my resentment. Is this an indication of racial prejudice? A lack of confidence in my own virility? Fear that the black male may be sexually superior? Perhaps a combination of the above? Regardless of the reasons, I feel it is an attitude quite common among white males.

Third, according to an article which appeared several months ago in a national weekly magazine, an increasing number of white girls (primarily the young and college educated) believe the black male may really be sexually superior to the white male. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity. I think this is probably an accurate assessment of many of today's black males. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity. I think this is probably an accurate assessment of many of today's black males. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity. I think this is probably an accurate assessment of many of today's black males. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity. I think this is probably an accurate assessment of many of today's black males. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity. I think this is probably an accurate assessment of many of today's black males. Among reasons cited were aggressiveness, fewer hangups, and strong individual masculinity.

Finally, if you take this letter as a personal indictment of your own virility, you probably should take a close look at yourself. I did and was disturbed by what I found.—R.B. (name and address withheld), Newington, Conn.

A matter of sexual supremacy becomes a controversial topic when discussed in terms of Black and White. Heated discussion often becomes a fire of passionate rivalry when White meets Black. The two preach equality yet frequently practice a sort of racial supremacy. It appears that each faction wishes for de facto segregation.
On October 10, 1972, I set out to talk with a young lady who was one of only three Black students in a high school of over four thousand. The girl seemed to be a suitable candidate for a day of observation and interviewing.

October 10, 1972. I have left the confines of college life to return to the scene of my high school daze, Southport High School. I feel much like an alien visitor now, someone long removed from sock hops, dating the star baseball player, and editing the high school newspaper. I am here to serve as the shadow of a sophomore girl busily going about her routine affairs. I have received permission to accompany Donitta throughout her morning classes and the lunch period. I hope to learn how a young Negro girl acts and reacts in a school with 4,210 white faces and three Black ones.

7:45 a.m. I meet with Donitta in the gymnasium. She can fully understand my project and is willing to cooperate. I note that her braided pigtails almost reach her shoulders and her eyelashes are more than an inch long. She is rather becoming in her plaid skirt and plain sweater in shades of red and green. I smell the familiar fragrance of tennis shoes and sweat socks. I suggest we move directly to her first class. She thinks I am only eager to begin my project. In three minutes I am gratefully out into the open air of colognes and lotions and fresh mimeograph copies.

8:05 a.m. Public speaking is Donny's first course. The students prepare for oral interpretations; my Black companion is asked to present her reading second in the line of speakers. I listen intently as each student rises and trembling, shuffles to the front.
The nerves and talent of the high school beginning speaker has changed very little since my own days behind the podium. Donitta presents her humorous interpretation of "Old Dad, Poor Dad" in an admirable manner. The students heap Donitta with praise during the time allotted for criticism. It is almost as if she were a visiting Hollywood celebrity showing the students the proper method of delivering oratory. I surmise from this brief encounter that Donitta is regarded somewhat as a rarity. The students listened closely to her presentation; there was much shuffling when the others performed. The hush of expectation when Donitta rose signaled an apparent esteem (possibly an envy?) for the girl's abilities. The instructor called Donitta to her side after class and congratulated the girl on another "A". I conclude that Donitta is a skilled speaker respected by her classmates and teacher.

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9:15 a.m. Our second class is psychology. The infamous Dickey Dart continues to lead his brigade of students to confusion and complete disorganization. I recall my own trip through that horrid class. As we enter the classroom, the students greet Donitta and myself with smiles and "hello's" that fade as quickly as they appear. I sense an air of superficial kindness as if these students are providing us with a service. Donitta responds to the salutations with pleasant returns. As the class begins to settle into some semblance of order, Misha Ferguson, another Black student enters the room. Donitta hurries to her and pokes her arm with an extended index finger, "Hey there woman, what's the latest?" It is obvious that Donitta is much more at ease with Misha than with the others who so generously issue
their grins and greetings like supermarket hand bills.

The entire class is devoted to a dull and uninformative lecture. Nothing has changed, I tell myself. Once Donitta raises her hand for a question. Her query prompts the class into discussion. A fellow three seats from me whispers, "Why doesn't she just lay off." I guess that he is referring to Donitta. Apparently, the young man does not appreciate an instigator of conversation in the classroom. He might prefer to doze during the fifty minutes of class.

10:05 a.m. As we are leaving the classroom, a petite blonde girls tugs at Donitta's sweater sleeve and asks, "Is your mother coming to the GAA mother-daughter banquet?" "Why, of course," Donitta answers, "It's the big deal of the year." "Well, I know that but I wasn't sure if your mother would make it this time. I remember she cancelled out on officer initiation just last month," the sassy female bit before she turned to meet her friends at the water fountain. I presume there was envy in the little girl's deliberate spite because Donitta had been elected president of the school's Girl's Athletic Association. My subject recognizes my puzzled look and began to explain, "Mom can't always come to school stuff. My dad's in the hospital getting over an operation. It wasn't anything serious but she sure couldn't leave him just for some stupid officer initiation." I nod and we walk to room 212, homeroom headquarters.

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10:15 a.m. The homeroom period remains a time for activities and foolishness. There are the tic tac toe games, the restroom
sojourns, and the hard desk tops on which to nap. Donitta is destined for a meeting with members of the advanced biology club. She has served as treasurer of the organization for two consecutive years. "They think it's only fair to have one Black among six other officers," she remarks.

Following her meeting with the aspiring biologists, Donitta travels to the office of the dean of girls. She is attempting to secure a ride to her exploratory teaching class at a local grade school. The dean welcomes the attractive Black girl into her office. I listen from the doorway as she rambles what seems to be a prepared list of friendly phrases. "And how is your daddy, Donitta?" Apparently my subject has no time for nonsense as she answers, "Dad is doing fine, thank you. Now, about that driver going to Southport Elementary.

11:15 a.m. Lunch in the old cafeteria is notoriously a time of entertainment with only a minimal emphasis placed on eating. Boxing matches, Jello pitching contests, and hair raising "girl fights" were among the attractions when I was a student. Donitta assures me that such scenes are still available between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.

Donitta and I seat ourselves with a table of ten chattering females. As the Black girl pulls her chair out to join the coney dog crew, all eyes turn toward us. Mouth half-empty blurt a cordial greeting and we are immediately thrust into the conversation, some banter about Jimmy's ring getting lost in Sheila's breast pocket. Suddenly someone asks Donitta, "You're goin' to the prom, aren't you Donny?" There are no Black males attending Southport High School.
"I doubt it. I've got some people coming in from out of state and it falls on that same night." Her friends at the table giggle nervously and turn back to talk of Sheila and the mysterious missing jewelry.

As we move from the lunch room to third period where I am to part company with Donny, she begins to tell me softly. "The prom is two weeks from Saturday. A guy in one of my classes asked me a few days ago but I told him I had to be somewhere else. I don't really. But this guy is White. I'm not ready for that business yet." We share a round of belches, blame our rudeness on the weiners, and wave goodbye.

I decide that my visit has been less than extraordinary and almost a disappointment. Perhaps I expected wild rioting in the hallways or Ku Klux Klansmen battering the defenseless Black girl by way of majority rule. I realize that I entered the scene with prejudices and prejudgments that I may never discard. I found a friendly Black girl doing the right things. She is a responsible, respected citizen in the school system and her friends are not unlike the companions a White girl might have as a sophomore in high school. My cynical self considers her eagerness to become a WASP. Her feet seem well established on solid ground but she has obviously not dismissed the chance of a quake. I dismiss the case with hopes of securing perhaps a more enlightening subject at a later date.

Donitta did respond vigorously to my ten basic questions. She replied:

1. WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?

"Everything! I really enjoy so many things! Maybe it's a good feeling I get when I'm up for the day. People are
basically decent. Society messes a lot of people up. They are misled too easily by stuff they read or see in the movies and they start living in a fairy tale world."

2. WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?
"Felling wanted and accepted is the most basic thing. I think I'm reasonably accepted here at Southport. I hold offices and I make the grades. That makes me feel good. I like doing things for people. I want to be a teacher someday. In fact, I'll probably wind up Ball State. I'd seriously like to help other people in any way I can. I have been pretty lucky all my life and I think it's almost a duty to share a little of my own happiness."

3. WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE WORLD TODAY?
"Number one bad thing is telling like it isn't! I hate lies and rumors and falseness. I know, everyone is guilty at some time. But that doesn't change the fact that truth is a great plan for peace. I really believe that."

4. WHAT SMALL THING HAVE YOU DONE TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE?
"I try to do something good everyday. It sounds like an old do-gooder story, I know. But I hope to add at least a little touch of happiness once in a while. I plan to start doing more, though."

5. IS THE WORLD DOING ENOUGH FOR YOU?
"The world is treating me pretty good. I was afraid to death when I came to Southport High School. But I have fit in pretty well now. I think. I've got security and a
good chance to really become somebody. That was given to me as much as I earned it. Maybe I deserve for bravery. That first day here was a real nightmare. Then I saw another Black face and I felt at ease. The world has been good to me so far."

6. ARE YOU DOING ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD?
"I keep trying. Like I said before, I want to help people. And the world is made of nothing but people and a lot of them need help. If I could do something really valuable for one person, I would say I helped the world be a better place."

7. IF YOU WERE TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME, WHAT WARNING WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE PEOPLE BEFORE YOU?
"I might warn them against using up all their water, air, and resources. I'm a nut on conservation. That's a big, big problem right now and if people before us had given a little thought to the matter, their grandchildren might have had a better chance to preserve the earth for their grandchildren. If that doesn't make sense, then I would tell the pioneers to just hang loose cause the gasoline engine was on the way. Alright, I'll be serious. The most obvious hint to my ancestors would be to abolish slavery before it ever began. That needs no explanation."

8. WHO IS YOUR HERO?
"I have always admire Helen Keller and I really like Rod McKuen but they aren't exactly hero figures. I think I would say Martin Luther King. I loved that man. When he died, I wrote a letter to his widow and children. I couldn't stop
crying. He was a great leader for Whites and Blacks both. He fits my image as a hero.

9. SUPPOSE BEINGS FROM ANOTHER PLANET VISITED YOU AND WISHED TO KNOW OF LIFE ON EARTH. HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY OF YOUR WORLD?

"I would point him toward a hospital full of newborn babies. Then I would show him to a ghetto and a slum. I'd take them to the war in Vietnam and I would show them to a cancer research center. I would tell them that every second a baby is born and an old man dies. They might understand."

10. WHAT IS LIFE?

"Life's a bowl of fresh bananas. I think it has a lot of a-peel. Again I'll try to keep serious. I think life is the only human possession that is truly valuable. All else is incidental. I don't care if I have a big car or the fanciest clothes. I'm glad to be breathing and walking and healthy. I'm glad for friends that matter and a wonderful set of parents. I love life. I really do."
WILLIAM LEWAYNE HENSON

AND

PRISCILLA ELIZABETH MATNEY HENSON*

*Translation: Will and Beth Henson
The following article was originally written for the Ball State Daily News' Weekend Magazine supplement.
WILL AND BETH HENSON

On the evening of February 7, 1968, William LeWayne and Priscilla Elizabeth became Will and Beth Henson. It was not a spectacular wedding. Really quite usual in many ways. The bridesmaids and ushers were all in order. The cake and the flowers were fresh. The organist was prepared at every cue to strike out the selected melodies.

The bride wore white and the groom came in black. And, of course, Mothers cried. But this time not for the loss of an offspring. This time they cried because no matter how the happy couple changed their clothing, the bride would always be in white and the groom would forever be in black.

The vows, written by Will and Beth, told the story:

... And as long as these two shall live together on this earth, let them love for promises, not pigment. Let them give for need, not acceptance. And let them work as one to bring light to minds and souls of those yet to know how man must live with his brothers.

After the ceremony, the reverend shook their hands and whispered, "You know what you're up against. Now go show the world how right two people can be."

Some of the guests were less hasty to bid the newlyweds fond farewell. Several of them openly asked why she had done this to her own mother. Will's best man kept mumbling, "It's your life, I guess." There was a demonstration down the street. That same day a fraternal organization tried to oust the bride's father from the roll after seventeen years of membership.

It was no mystery why the Hensons left the reception early. But no one knows yet who threw the rock that pashed the flower girl's left temple. Someone said it was a sour pitch in a school boy's game. Possibly.
In September of 1968, Will and Beth moved to Muncie. Beth wanted to be a teacher and she felt she could fit in with Ball State's aspiring educators. Will considered working nights while taking a few classes in business administration. Seven months later they moved away. Not because Beth didn't assimilate with the college crowd and not because Will couldn't hack the principles of management. They simply found it impossible to handle the bias in Middletown, U.S.A. Beth remarked, "That city's people enjoyed burning us with their tongues. We walked down the street and were spit on, laughed at, lectured and sent to hell all by a seven-year-old whose father probably told him it was the only right thing to do."

Will jumped in at this point, "One day we spotted a little old lady almost gasping for breath on a bench downtown. She looked to be dying. Anyway, I stepped back and let Beth ask her if she needed any help. The woman said yes, she had some pills in her purse and had to take a couple. She also said she'd like someone to make a phone call for her son to pick her up. I decided to step up and get the phone number while Beth fished out the pills.

"Well, when I showed up and went over to Beth, this woman says to her, 'Do you know this man?' Beth told her I was her husband. The woman slapped Beth's hands and told her to get away. We left. Beth started crying, not for what the woman had done to us, but she was afraid of what might happen to the old lady."

Beth added, "That sort of thing would have happened anywhere, but it just went on constantly while we were in Muncie. We had to get out."
From Muncie they went to Findlay, Ohio, and then to Toledo where they've found what might be a permanent home. Beth works as a helper in a local kindergarten. Will plans to start a business of his own when he saves enough money from his factory job. For a while he moonlighted in a nearby shopping mall pet's center. They own a keeshond puppy and a stray cat named "Homer." Beth delights in the fact that Homer is pregnant.

The Henson's leisure activities are less than extraordinary. Will plays basketball one night a week. Beth tutors three grade school children in math and English two weekly. She refuses to be paid for her services. They both take time at least one weekend each month to see a Detroit basketball or hockey game. Beth's favorite Sunday afternoon drive usually takes them to Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. When sports enthusiast Will hides behind a volume on Maravich, Mays, or Connie Hawkins, Beth embroiders, knits or stitches minikin outfits for the children.

The couple now has two children and plan to adopt when financially able. William, Jr. and eight-month-old Robin are more than a joy to the Hensons. Beth tries hard to chuckle when she notes, "Will, Jr. is the picture of his dad and Robin looks just like me."

Will and Beth agree that their children have brought fresh inspiration to their "equal in the eyes of man" struggle. Quite often someone in a grocery or discount shopping store will approach Beth and the kids to offer congratulations on her open-mindedness and generosity. But their appreciation seems to detour the real issue.
Beth said, "Many, many people have stopped and smiled at Will, Jr. and then at me. They don't have to say it, although several of them have gone the full performance with, 'How cute! Where did you find the little fellow?' or 'We need more liberal-minded people to adopt the helpless creatures.'"

Beth's blue eyes begin to blaze as she speaks, "It's almost an immediate reaction to lecture them or punch a few noses. But both are useless and empty solutions to opening a closed mind. Plus, Will and I never want the kids to think that anger or violence are answers to any problem."

She continues in her usual soft but expressive tones, "There's a deep pride in introducing Will and Robin as my children. It's become almost a game. When someone stops us, and it happens almost every time we go out, I'll simply say that Will is my son. Little Will looks up at me and says, 'Mommy, you're a nice lady. I love you.'" No one need ask more.

Will and Beth are happy people. One doesn't really want to make them discuss times gone by. It would be best not to remember the threatening notes and phone calls or the beating Will took after the announcement of their marriage. Neither of them delights in displaying the scars, mental or physical, that caring has caused. What one of Beth's acquaintances once called a "not so funny off color joke" has matured into a success story that bears repeating. The Hensons want to write about it.

Will begins, "We've tried to make our situation clear. We recognized the obstacles and we've made it over some pretty big hurdles so far, but there's still much to do. We've discussed the pros and cons and decided to put our story into print."
Beth continues, "All we've got to offer is sincerity and guts. With these two on our side, we've made it this far and although there's something coming up every day, we feel we've got the big problems under control. It hasn't been easy, of course. But if what we've done or how we've done it can accomplish even a baby-step of progress for someone else, we want to help."

How are the Hensons going to spread their word? A full length work beginning with their first date (Beth's mother fainted and was confined to her bed for three days after) is underway with one chapter completed. They work on organizing their words and thoughts usually in Sunday evenings when the kids are in bed. The book won't be a civil rights manual, nor will it preach, the Hensons promise. Amidst the hard times, the rock throwing and the name calling it will be fun and games—the worst turning into better and best by letting out a laugh.

An important segment of their story is about to happen. Christmas will be a special time in Toledo in 1972. Will and Beth are not going home to celebrate the holidays. They plan to host both pairs of parents at what will be the first family get-together since their 1968 wedding. Previously, Will and Beth traveled from Beth's original home in Lima, Ohio, to the elder Hensons' home in Fort Wayne.

Beth commented, "It was probably pure fear or cautiousness that kept us all apart during the holidays. Our families were tolerant to say the least, maybe friendly at most. But we wanted them to be really happy."

Will concluded, "The kids and Beth and I visited our homes often and we divided our time equally so not to cause any more
problems right off." But the Hensons and their parents have come a long way. The birth of Will, Jr. placed a color portrait of the new grandson atop the elder Hensons' black and white television. Beth's parents might have hoped that Will would have his mother's features and delicate coloration. They didn't say. When Beth's mother first saw tiny Will in his hospital crib she began to sob. Her husband couldn't calm her. She cried uncontrollably for several minutes until the grandmother next to her at the viewing window remarked, "Why, look at that poor little Black child in there with all the White babies." Beth's mother spoke slowly and proudly, "He's the image of our son-in-law."

Late last spring, Will father, "Big William," was hospitalized with a heart attack and paralysis for several weeks. During the second week of his hospital stay, Beth's parents entered his room and nodded a greeting. They could stay only a few minutes but promised to return. Six times they made the drive from Lima, Ohio to Ft. Wayne, Indiana to visit with Big William no more than fifteen minutes at a time. It was then that Will and Beth decided to bring the two families together.

The Hensons plan a quiet holiday. Beth will cook a turkey and dressing and a few of the trimmings. They vowed not to be fancy or frivolous. That would spoil it all. Will said, "We're going to make everyone comfortable. We care about our folks and want them to accept us for what we are--happy."

Beth added, "They're the ones that instilled a sense of honesty and sincerity in us, their children. We might not have been strong enough to have ever made anything of our first meeting.
It would have been much safer for either of us to let our relationship stop before it really began. But we aren't the kind of people to run off. We owe thanks to both sets of our parents for giving us independence and a lot of opportunity to think for ourselves."

In the midst of Beth's declaration, the phone rings, "I understand," she says to the voice on the other end of the line, "We'll discuss this more later. Thank you." Beth's eyes map with crimson lines before she closes them. Looking first at her feet and then directly into her husband's face, she explains, "It makes the third child in eight months to be taken out of school. Parents see me at the kindergarten. Then they see Will and I together somewhere. Some of them don't like that sort of influence around their children. The kids are pulled out."

In a flash the conversation turns again to the holidays and there is Christmas joy somewhere behind those reddened eyes of a lucky couple whose parents "gave us a lot of opportunity to think for ourselves."
I am the inferior of any man whose
righis I trample under foot. Men
are not superior by reason of the
accidents of race or color. They
are superior who have the best heart--
the best brain... by bending above
the fallen. He rises by lifting others.

From Liberty, Robert Ingersoll

Beth Henson telephoned me December 21 just to say that
she had found a "sympathetic ally." I accepted my title
without explanation. I knew. She knew that I knew. Likewise,
there was an understanding silence when little Will, Jr.
waddled up to me during an after-dinner conversation in Toledo
and praised, "You're a good kind a mushy." He had heard that
somewhere.

The Hensons had long been friends tied to me by mutual
curiosity. Beth thought me to be amusing and entertaining.
I considered her my contemporary Joan of Arc, Susan B. Anthony,
and Mrs. David Frost combined into one gallant gal, marching
into hell for a heavenly cause. We both recognized the danger
of these fantasies when woven into a newspaper feature article.

The Hensons and I were afraid when we started talking last
December. We were afraid of creating a grim fairy tale. The
story of two saintly souls delivered direct from the gilded gates
above to brave the human element and leap tall buildings with a
single bound. Will admitted visions of Peter Graves standing
steadfast by his Zayre tape recorder. "Your mission, young Black
man, if you decide to accept it..."

I so admired the twosome for their sincerity and fortitude
that I wanted to preach equality. I wished to phone all the
Bunkers in Brooklyn and tell them I had captured a couple of law-abiding, tax-paying, meat-eating American citizens who were truly decent people, even if they didn't quite match.

Will and Beth and I were frightened of melodrama in my article. So we talked about it. Beth told me, "So you think this silly nigger is so great, huh? Well, I could have married a nice White boy just as easy." We all laughed and I wrote the story. No one has called it unfair that my admiration for them showed.

If I weren't so damned liberal, unclean, and color blind it might have been different. I could have penned a scathing saga of two fools on the road to ruination because they didn't follow the classic course of romance within their own race. It all could have been very different. I might have lost two of the finest friends I have ever had—in any shade.
God bless pawnbrokers!
They are quiet men.
You may go once--
You may go again--
They do not question
As a brother might.

Pawnbrokers, Marguerite Wilkinson.
M. John Garribine is one hell of a fellow! He looks good to the women which looks bad to his wife; he drives a midnight blue Cadillac; his name is in print in a national magazine. What makes Morty (the "M") tick? The secret is a time bomb housed deep within the heart of a man preaching Jewish power. Mort is the strongest sort of follower in his faith. He believes in it; he's no hypocrit and will tell anyone the thoughts tumbling off the rim of his mind without fear of censure. He talks in terms that not only hit the nail square on the head but drive the point to the core of the matter.

Morty recently uprooted his family and set out from Flushing, New York destined for Indianapolis, Indiana. He is now sharing the harvests of his father's pawn shop, "Sams," on the circle of the capitol city. Before he left Flushing, Morty submitted a letter to the editors of Penthouse magazine. He stated:

I must protest in the strongest possible manner about Tony Escott's "Jewish Power" cartoon showing Santa Claus with a ridiculous and unusual nose. It is indeed a terrible thing to depict a person of the Jewish faith in such a disgraceful manner. I am particularly surprised and shocked at a magazine of your stature stooping to these depths of anti-Semitism.

Mortimore meant what he said. "My wife said I was being difficult. I told her to shut up, I had something to say and I wanted to get it off my chest. I can write good when I sit down and have something eating away at me inside. They printed it."

I met Morty when I enlisted the help of Sam in finding me an inexpensive exposure meter for my 35 mm camera. While Sam worked with an elderly Negro man who insisted he was born in
Oklahoma in 1906 although he was equally as certain that he saw the first light of day in Knoxville and was sixty-one years old, I was introduced to Mort. From this initial meeting, I developed an interest in this unusual guy who bounced about selling diamonds and dining room sets, televisions and tape recorders, guitars and girlie calendars. The man was exceptionally handsome with his black hair neatly arranged in the latest of fashions, his double knit pants perfectly co-ordinated with a Banlon sweater decorated with an embroidered penguin. "That's Herman, the penguin," he remarked when I stared obviously at the beast on his breast. "Herman quacks when a pretty customer comes into the shop." I didn't hear the bird utter a sound even though a stunning female form entered the back door of the store.

"And this is my wife, Zoey," Morty introduced as he pinched her cheek and patted her rump. "The old lady's some looker, right?" he questioned. No one could disagree with that observation. Zoey possessed perhaps the most beautiful mane of red hair I had ever seen. Her eyes were a brilliant emerald and her complexion was flawless. Suddenly I felt self conscious about my lack of make-up and exited the shop, turning once to peer through the glass in the front window. Between the rows of pistols and watches and radios, I watched Morty Garrabine peddle his wares from behind the jewelry counter. I decided to return with a prepared list of questions for the young Jewish fellow. Somehow, I realized even then, I would never get the opportunity to question Morty from a sheet of paper.

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How true my first impression had been! I appeared at Morty's door shortly before closing time December 30. Pen and pad in