

# The Texas Observer

## A Death at Huntsville

*El Paso*

On May 20, 1969, Armando C. Hernandez' mother, then a waitress in a drugstore lunch counter, received a letter from her son in prison at the Ellis Unit of Huntsville. The mother of four other children, all raised in El Paso's southside ghetto, Mrs. Hernandez had long been separated from her husband. The letter from her son brightened an otherwise typically gray day.

"I will never set foot inside prison walls again!" he wrote.

Armando, 23, had been in and out of detention homes, jails, prisons. The usual offense had been car theft — although, perhaps more exactly, it amounted to joyriding. He would take a car, drive it around town, abandon it. Then he was charged in a serious stabbing, an offense reduced to aggravated assault. The testimony implicating him was, at best, flimsy. Those who knew him, while not whitewashing him, claimed this was not his type of crime. He had a good heart. But he also had a record, and he was sentenced to a county jail term and a fine. Currently he was serving a three-year prison sentence for attempted escape.

It was one of those surrealistic happenings which only the law can attempt to justify. Indicted for armed robbery of a drive-in store, he broke away along a court corridor and was downed by a former cop. The robbery accusation was dismissed, but he was now charged with attempted escape and sentenced to three years in prison. Thus he was serving time for having broken away at a time when — since the charge that brought him into custody was dismissed — he was being held without substantial reason.

*Mr. Rechy, an El Paso writer, will have his third book published next May, when Grove Press will release This Day's Death.*

Mrs. Hernandez' expectations were high, that May. Previous letters that month had expressed similar determination: "Please don't lose your faith in me, believe me. . . . I'm tired of spending my life in these

### John Rechy

dungeons. . . . I'm keeping my nose clean . . . trying to get out as fast as possible. . . . I was interviewed by a counselor. . . . I told him I wanted to be a mechanic. . . . I

promise you you'll have a house of your own."

True, other times, during other sentences, Armando had written of his intention not to be in trouble again. This time, however, it sounded convincing. There was the young girl he wanted to marry. It would all work.

The optimistic attitude on Armando's part was particularly encouraging in view of the fact that it was surviving a recent ruling by the Board of Pardons and Paroles that he must serve all his sentence.

On May 27, Mrs. Hernandez wrote her



—Ralph White

son telling him how much his letters encouraged her. When he was released and everything was fine with him, she wrote, "Maybe I'll feel like a million dollars have just been given to me. . . . Before we know it you'll be here. . . . How can anyone think of you bad when you have a good heart and love everybody even people you hurt?"

**T**HE NEXT DAY Mrs. Hernandez received a form letter from C. L. McAdams, warden of the prison. The cold words informed her that her son — "the above named and numbered inmate" — had been "temporarily placed under restriction from receiving visitors. He will be allowed to write. . . . He is not in serious trouble, nor is he injured."

Mrs. Hernandez knew that meant solitary confinement. On June 4 she wrote her son expressing concern: "I can't say it's your fault for whatever happened . . . how hard life must be living like an animal and all the abuse one must get there. . . . This news gives me a lot of worry if only because a while ago I read of all the tragedies that go on in those places, no one is safe. . . . Why, my God, must there be places like this made by men's own mistakes?"

That same day, Mrs. Hernandez received the following telegram from Henry R. Small, Bureau of Records and Identification at Huntsville: "WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON, ARMANDO HERNANDEZ #202431,

DIED 12:20 PM THIS DATE OF DEATH BY STRANGULATION; HANGING BY SUICIDE. THE BODY IS AT THE HUNTSVILLE FUNERAL HOME, HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS. PLEASE CONTACT THE FUNERAL HOME AT ONCE AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO CLAIM THE BODY IF YOU WANT TO DO SO AT YOUR EXPENSE. BY STATE LAW, BODIES NOT CLAIMED MUST BE RELEASED TO THE STATE ANATOMICAL BOARD. WE SYMPATHIZE WITH YOU IN YOUR LOSS."

Insane with grief, Mrs. Hernandez rushed to the court building where, it seemed to her, her son's life had been mangled by apathetic judges, hostile cops, prosecutors on the make. She went crying from office to office — to attorneys, clerks, even, crazily, the FBI — demanding that someone do something, though it wasn't apparent to her what could be done. She was hurriedly shuffled along to someone else until — somehow — she found herself in the office of R. Don Thorne, a young El Paso attorney. He offered, on his own, to represent her in getting further details on the death. Mrs. Hernandez insisted — perhaps needfully — that it was not suicide; is suicide possible in a solitary-confinement cell where all implements of self-destruction are supposedly removed? she wondered. She recalled her son's ambiguous remark before he left: that "they" had promised to "get" him next time.

Her formless doubts increased when the letter she had written her son on May 27 — encouraging him — was returned to her, marked "Returned to Sender, No Longer at This Address." Yet the original El Paso post office stamp on the envelope indicated the letter had been dispatched on the 28th, a Wednesday; the Huntsville post-office stamp bore the return date of "Jun. 6." Since the date of death was given as June 4, unaccountably this letter would have had to be held about a week without being delivered. This had not occurred before.

The black nightmare grew. There was the body to be brought home in order that it not be surrendered to apathetic knives in medical schools. She had no money. It would cost her \$340 to bring her son's body back from a prison where he had been sent. She borrowed the money.

No autopsy had been performed in Huntsville. Mrs. Hernandez hired a doctor to perform a private autopsy. Another \$100. The doctor's finding: "The pattern of the neck groove is strongly suggestive of self-inflicted hanging." He acknowledged "an 85% degree of accuracy." Still refusing to believe her son had taken his life, Mrs. Hernandez clung to that 15% of doubt.

There was the wake to face — and the mangled neck of the young man to avoid looking at.

**I** KNEW "BiBi" — Armando's nickname, whose origin had long been lost. He lived next to me in a southside Mexican *barrio*. He was astonishingly intelligent — a fact even more remarkable in that he had had virtually no formal schooling. Occasionally — usually he was very quiet — he talked about the detention places, jails, prisons. Horror stories. Brutality from the guards, the inmates. The excruciating desolation of solitary confinement. "You want to shout, you can't stand it, like you're tied up and you keep yelling and no one comes," he told me.

The last time I saw him — a winter he was out — I ran into him on a downtown street. A cold, windy, ashen day. He was wearing an overcoat much too large for him. His face was gray. He carried a stack of books from the library. He devoured books. Good books. He looked like an old young man.

Months later Armando's sister would call me: "They killed my brother!"

The official report was that he had been placed in solitary for seven days after he had reportedly refused to work. (Seven days, 168 hours, 10,080 minutes, 604,800 seconds.) He had been found hanging by a strip torn from the uniform he was wearing.

Hanged? From what? In a cell whose ceiling must necessarily be too high to reach? Those were Mrs. Hernandez' thoughts. Bitterly, she felt — and told all who listened — that she knew that for her

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son's death no one would ever be "tried." Not the cops who may have used him as easy prey to solve a crime on paper, not the judges whose crowded calendars squeeze out lives contemptuously, certainly not the prosecutors craving convictions as an indication of their justice.

"That this man somehow managed to kill himself when he was supposed to be under intense supervision illustrates the tremendous breakdown in our prison system. . . . No one is supposed to die in prison, much less commit suicide." This was the remark of a New York state senator, John R. Dunne, when confronted with still another suicide of a series in New York prisons. That remark, made about someone else in another state, verbalized the sentiment of those who cared for Armando.

Attorney Thorne wrote the warden of Huntsville asking for a detailed report on the confinement and death of Armando. He also questioned why Mrs. Hernandez' letter of May 27 was returned to her when logically it would have been delivered to Armando long before the date given as that of his death. Asking for details of how suicide was possible in such a cell, Mr. Thorne added: "We feel it is highly unusual that an autopsy would not be performed in a death such as this."

Over the signature of George Beto, director of the Texas Department of Corrections, a letter was received by Mr. Thorne which stated: "Inmate Hernandez used the garment he was wearing as a rope. He tied it to the bars of the cell door and wrapped it around his neck, thereby strangling himself. An inquest was held. Normally, we do not have an autopsy performed unless the causes of death are not clear. Both the justice of the peace who conducted the inquest and the physicians were of one mind regarding the cause of death. If you desire additional information, please feel free to write to me."

Dr. Beto included no explanation whatever of Mrs. Hernandez' returned letter of May 27, the letter mailed a week before the reported date of death.

**E**NCLOSED BY Dr. Beto was a "Statement of Fact," dated June 4, 1969, signed by Bobby L. Taylor, assistant warden, Ellis Unit: "At approximately 9:45 a.m., June 4, 1969, Major Savage and I checked the inmates in the Ellis solitary unit and found all of them in good health as far as their physical need was concerned. At 12:25 p.m., while officer McClellan was feeding the men in solitary, he discovered Inmate Armando C. Hernandez, #202431, sagging against a cloth garrote fashioned from his solitary clothing, the other end of which was tied to the cell bars. I was called to the scene and immediately cut the garrote with my pocket knife. Artificial resuscitation was applied to Hernandez for

about five minutes, although it was obvious that he was beyond help. . . ."

Also included was an "Offense Report" explaining the reason for the period of solitary confinement; this document lists O. S. Savage as the officer making the report, and it is signed by him and Bobby L. Taylor. It states: "On this date [5-27-69], the above captioned inmate was working in the field with his regular assigned squad. After being told by the officer in charge, several times, to do his work properly, Inmate Hernandez threw down his hoe and quit work. . . . He claimed that the officer had cursed him. After investigating the incident, it was learned that no other inmate heard the officer curse."

Included too was a "Psychiatric Evaluation" report, which stated: "Armando Hernandez appears to be the stated age of 22 years and is a Latin-American. He describes a difficult past history and one of extreme impulsiveness at times. This is his third time to come to the Department of Corrections. This man seems to be extremely tense and nervous at times . . . very bright intellectually. . . . The recommendation is that he be watched as a mutilation risk and an extreme escape risk. This man certainly could become homicidal [and now there follows a strangely ambiguous statement; the word "and" is used where the construction would logically call for "but" — unless "likely" is a mistranscription for "unlikely"] and is not likely to become suicidal. . . ." The report ends up by describing Armando as "extremely impulsive if not taken into a very closely managed situation." The name typed to the document is that of Dr. John Holbrook, psychiatrist. There is no signature indicated. The document is not dated.

"Why is the psychiatric report from Dr. John Holbrook not dated?" Attorney Thorne wrote back to Dr. Beto. "We are wondering why Mr. Hernandez was placed in solitary confinement . . . when the psychiatric report indicated that he should be watched as a mutilation risk. Could you also give me information as to whether or not his mail was withheld from him." That letter was dated July 31. Mr. Thorne states that to date no answer has reached him.

**A**MONG ARMANDO'S remaining effects, returned to his mother, are two letters to Dr. Beto; both are dated May 12. One reads: "Dear Dr. Beto, Regarding my request to speak to you personally." It ends there. The other reads in total: "Dear Dr. Beto, I had requested to speak to you when you interview inmates at the Ellis Unit."

Also included were the following unfinished and unsent letters:

To his girlfriend, in Spanish, expressing concern over her recent illness. "Please

take care of yourself." The letter is not dated.

Another letter, to his mother, dated May 26, 1969. "I'm still trying to get some training in either welding or automobile mechanics, something practical so I can take it up once I'm released."

And this one, also to his mother, undated; "My Mom," he wrote, in an untypical, spidery — perhaps trembling — handwriting, not in the even, well-formed lettering of the others: "I think of you each and every day. I do — with all my heart and soul — want to be so very good with you. I want you to be so happy. . . . But I seem to stray, I'm so weak-willed I simply don't think of consequences that my stupid conduct will bring. I get so carried away by the false excitement the free world is supposed to give the ex-inmate. Supposedly instant happiness is to meet you at the big gate leading to society. . . . [Problems] don't stay in prison upon your release. I simply will have to learn to live outside."

A fourth letter, dated May 26, 1969, indicating on the official form provided for inmates' correspondence that it was to go to his mother, is entirely blank.

Perhaps all the irregularities can be explained logically. But so far they haven't been; and Mrs. Hernandez, pursued constantly by unanswered questions, has been told even by those sympathetic to her plight — even by the attorney who helped her this far — that the matter will very probably end there. □

## Dr. Beto Replies

Huntsville

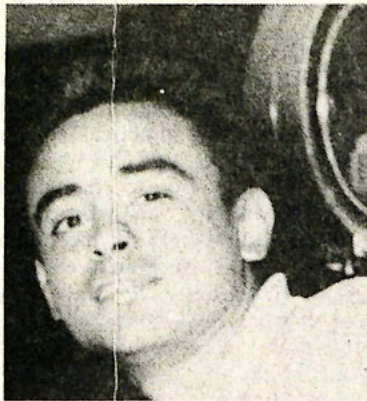
Please accept my thanks for sending me an advance copy of John Rechy's manuscript.

It would be somewhat futile to attempt to speak to each point which he raises in his article. Permit me to say, however, that I genuinely regret every death in the Department of Corrections, be it from natural or unnatural causes. The case of Armando Hernandez was no exception to that concern. As a result, a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding his suicide was made.

The results of the investigation indicate that no employee of the Department of Corrections could be faulted.

Dr. Karl Menninger in the foreword to a book entitled, *Clues to Suicide*, states, "Once every minute, or even more often, someone in the United States either kills himself or tries to kill himself with conscious intent. Sixty or seventy times each day these attempts succeed . . ."

Suicide has ranked among the first ten causes of adult deaths in the United States



Armando C. Hernandez

for most of the past half-century. Each year approximately 20,000 people take their own lives.

It should be pointed out that in a five-year period, three individuals have taken their own lives while in the Texas Department of Corrections.

Year	Population	Suicides
1964	12,104	0
1965	12,753	1
1966	12,620	0
1967	12,571	0
1968	12,277	0
1969	12,660	2

In a normal population of 12,000-plus individuals, the incidence of suicide would be much higher than the existing incidence in the Texas Department of Corrections.

Moreover, our population is not a normal population. The men who come to our gates are society's rejects — those individuals who would be considered social institutional failures. For instance, in our

population of 12,600, 85% are school dropouts, 65% come from broken homes, 18% are illiterate on arrival, 20% are mentally retarded, 5% are psychotics. In recognition of this singular population, the Legislature has been intelligently responsible and generous in appropriating funds for an effective rehabilitation program.

The quote of the New York state senator regarding "the tremendous breakdown in our prison system," does disturb me. It should be forcefully pointed out that the Texas Department of Corrections, or any prison system for that matter, receives the end product of the criminal justice system. Only after other social institutions and agencies have usually failed does a prison system receive a man.

Armando Hernandez was apparently exposed to the influences of the home, the church, the school, and juvenile agencies. In spite of these influences, the young man was not prevented from engaging in deviant behavior. For that reason, one of my colleagues suggested that the manuscript could well be directed to the El Paso community rather than to the Department of Corrections.

I would be pleased to have Mr. Rechy visit the department for the purpose of determining how much the people of Texas, through their legislators, are spending in enlightened and imaginative programs for the purpose of rehabilitating men who have fallen afoul of the law.

DR. GEORGE BETO, director, Texas Dept. of Corrections, Huntsville, Tex. 77340.

## Rechy's Response

*Mr. Rechy replies to Dr. Beto:*

Too bad Dr. Beto has chosen to take the ample time required to quote generalities about suicide — but has found, in his own word, the answering of the particulars in my article "futile." Thus each of the many questions raised by the death of Armando Hernandez remains unanswered.

An additional point: Since Armando was exposed to the "enlightened and imaginative programs" for rehabilitation which Dr. Beto applauds, on that score, too, Huntsville must share the failure Dr. Beto attributes, quite correctly, to "the criminal justice system" and to "other social institutions and agencies." Precisely: All along the line punishment assumes the form of vengeance rather than rehabilitation.

I would further point out that Dr. Karl Menninger, whom Dr. Beto quotes on suicide, is the author of the book *The Crime of Punishment*, whose title describes its disturbing thesis.

I welcome Dr. Beto's invitation to me to visit the department, and I hope he will allow me to view the solitary-confinement unit in which the 23-year-old Armando died.

## Chicanos Walk Out in Abilene

*Abilene*

More than 700 Mexican-American students showed their contempt for what they regard as an unjust and discriminatory educational system by recently conducting a nine-day boycott of the Abilene schools — perhaps the longest walkout in the history of U.S. student protest.

The young Zapatistas were not the hard-core, embittered social changers, nor the "power" students, nor the defeated, disillusioned young men and women who simply lash out at society out of discontent with themselves. No. These were young boys and girls who felt their dignity and self-respect had been ruthlessly attacked in their schools.

After years of oppression and overt discrimination aimed at them and their

families by Anglos in this basically conservative town that is 10% *chicano*, the brown young acted as a single unit to serve notice that they feel it is time, at last, for freedom and equality.

The walkout was triggered by an

### Nephtali De Leon

incident at Franklin Junior High School. An Anglo-American cheerleader stated that Mexican-Americans should not be included in skits designed to stir school spirit because the brown students are "dumb and ignorant." When two Mexican-American students protested, they were promptly suspended from classes for being "troublemakers." The Anglo cheerleader was not reprimanded for voicing a racial slur.

The incident set off a chain reaction that caused most Mexican-American students in three junior highs and one senior high to boycott school. The incident itself was not the cause of the walkout; it was simply the spark that set aglow the long-smoldering

resentment *chicanos* here have felt about their treatment at the hands of the Anglo majority.

The student strikers cited a few of what they say are many injustices and indignities practiced against them in Abilene schools:

- A physical education teacher (who no longer is in the system) would cut the *chicano* students by saying, whenever they spoke in Spanish, "Cut out the monkey talk." This caused many Anglo students to make fun of the victims.

- A brown student was accused by his principal of having a venereal disease. The teenager took credentials from a reputable physician attesting that the student had never had such a disease, but the evidence was not heeded. The student and his mother decided that the student, under those circumstances, would not attend such a school. He has been out of school for two years now.

- Another student was suspended because he stood up and said, in response to the Anglo cheerleader's remark against *chicanos*, that "Mexicans are the greatest." Carl Cheatam, principal of Franklin Junior High, said the boy was suspended because

*Mr. De Leon is the editor of La Voz De Los Llanos, a Spanish-language weekly at Lubbock. He personally viewed many of the activities of the Abilene student strike and interviewed many of the participants.*

he had been a "troublemaker" and incited "classroom rebellion."

In short, the *chicano* students believe they often are persecuted for everything they are — the reflection of a culture of great beauty, but, in Abilene, a minority culture that is little understood by most local people. In regard to language, expression, and norms, the brown student is expected to forget what he has been during his entire life. Or, as Escoc Webb, Abilene High principal puts it, "You live in Abilene and dress as Abilenians or Texans do."

**T**HUS IT WAS that a quiet, shy-looking boy on crutches, 17-year-old Johnny Sanchez, emerged as the leader of a school boycott. He was aided by Gloria Bryand, 16, a junior, as co-leader, and fellow workers Ruben Martinez, 18; Andy Gamon, 16; Jesse Davila, 18; Mary Rodriguez, 16; Anna Flores, 19; and Suzie Flores, 19.

The students' parents, moved by the courage and vision of their children, responded like the villagers of old responded to a peasant named Zapata. The

walkout made its most dramatic presentation on a warm, soft Saturday this past October. More than 1,500 marchers — students, parents, and sympathizers — participated. A few Anglos and Negroes were in the marchers' ranks. Often, sidewalk observers would leave the curbside to join the march. From time to time, mothers would hand out cups of ice water along the two-or-three-mile-long march. The only incident occurred when a local Anglo drove by several times shouting obscenities at the marchers. A police officer promptly picked him up. Earlier, the chief of police had stated, "I will pray for the marchers." Police did their job in maintaining law and order during the day, as in all the days of the protest.

The Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund (*Obs.*, April 11, p. 6) sent a representative, Mark Smith, a Lubbock attorney, to help represent the protestors in negotiating demands the *chicano* students were making of the school board. When the students were threatened with expulsion, Smith replied he would file suit. "I cannot guarantee to win suits for all the children," he said, "but I will guarantee

that if they get expelled, I will put all the school administrators and the school board into federal court."

As the days of the boycott passed, negotiations between a student-parent committee and A. E. Wells, Abilene school superintendent, went rather badly. Finally, on the ninth day, the school board decided to acquiesce partially on each of the student demands but one. The students then decided to return to classes. They did so wearing brown armbands as a sign of unity and of determination to persist in their vigilance against discrimination.

**T**HE ONE non-negotiable point was that boycotting students would receive zeroes for work missed during the walkout. Smith has filed suit in federal court contesting this point.

Smith, addressing the students, said, "You need not fear such a small-souled man as A. E. Wells [the superintendent], who but rebuffs our plea for dignity, fairness, and the end of a discrimination that is crippling. Wells refused to speak to me. I will give him the opportunity to speak to me in the courthouse." □

## Some Profit Suspected In Geriatrics Center Deal

*Washington, DC*

It now has been asserted directly that the three directors of the Austin Geriatrics Center, Inc. are eventually to gain full and private control over 26.5 acres of valuable land near downtown Austin — if the Nixon administration honors a commitment made by the Johnson administration. As recounted in the last issue, AGC had gained partial control over the land and obtained substantial commitments of financial aid from the government in the waning days of the Lyndon Johnson presidency. AGC directors are Frank C. Erwin, Jr., Roy Butler, and John Burns, Austin men who know LBJ well.

Sen. John Williams and the Knight newspapers had first raised questions about the deal but there were no direct statements as to just how the Erwin group would benefit, other than being the custodians of a valuable piece of property that had been turned over to their care in evident great haste during late 1968.

Senator Williams first complained of the situation in an Oct. 30 Senate speech. He spoke a second time, on Nov. 11, addressing himself more directly to the issues of how the AGC people would benefit. In his second speech Williams said the land would accrue in 30 years to the three Austin men since they control AGC.

"There is not one word in this contract which provides that at the end of the 30-year period the so-called poor elderly, for whom [the AGC directors] now express so much sympathy, would be the beneficiaries of one dime," Williams said. He spoke in response to a letter published by Wilbur J. Cohen, who was President Johnson's secretary of Health, Education and Welfare at the time AGC, with LBJ's help, pushed through arrangements to build a geriatrics center in Austin.

Cohen in his letter defends the deal, saying that original plans were to build the center in Washington. But, Cohen recounts, due to a variety of local problems the Washington site soon proved not feasible. At this point, he says, attention was focused on the Austin site, which the Interior Department was abandoning.

Cohen says the University of Texas originally was to be the sponsoring institution for the center but "Because of legal limitations," UT was "unable to finance and operate a nursing home. . . ." Therefore AGC was formed.

Erwin was named chairman of AGC, Cohen explains, "because it was contemplated that the University of Texas would monitor this project and would deploy its academic, medical, and other scientific expertise for experimentation and research in care of the elderly. Messrs.

Butler and Burns were chosen not merely because of their high standing in the Austin community, but because both were directors of St. Jude's, a nonprofit organization which operates two nursing homes and a psychiatric center."

Cohen says the project was the culmination of many months' work and that no one would benefit except the elderly poor. "The only 'irregularity' may be that the wheels of bureaucracy were pressed to move at a pace that most of us interested in promoting the economy and efficiency of medical service would hope they would move more frequently."

Cohen's letter was written to the *Washington Post*, in reply to that newspaper's editorial on Nov. 3 criticizing the project.

Williams, in his second speech, said "The only charity in this instance was the charity of the American taxpayers," who were, he said, giving away property worth more than \$2 million.

Cohen failed, the senator went on to say, to comment on the fact that the cash grants and land were conveyed to AGC over the objections of the evaluating boards of the respective agencies.

And "Mr. Cohen overlooked mentioning the fact that in all of these arrangements

## Austin's Tammany Hall

The Miami Herald commented as follows on the Austin fish hatchery situation in this editorial entitled "The Great Texas Land Rush."

Those Texas friends of Lyndon Johnson say they didn't get any special treatment in the final days of the LBJ administration when they were given 26 acres of choice land in downtown Austin and were lined up for \$8 million in FHA loans for a nursing home and apartments for the elderly. . . .

It was Senator Williams who uncovered the dirty dealing by Bobby Baker, another of Lyndon Johnson's dear buddies . . . We were always disappointed by the pious denial of any wrongdoing by those who wind up with public goodies. In the case of the

Texans we would prefer something like "Sure, ol' Lyndon told them boys in Washington to give us the land right before that Nixon showed up and sure he got us that \$8 million. What are you going to do about it?"

That would be believable and much better than the comment that Austin Geriatrics Center, Inc., is a non-profit corporation "structured in such a manner that nobody can benefit financially."

If there was no profit to be made, then why the last-minute scramble and arm-twisting as Lyndon Johnson was preparing to leave the White House? . . . It was all in the tradition of Boss Tweed, Tammany Hall, and the Pendergast gang of Kansas City.

not one dime of [the AGC directors'] own money was committed. All their plans are centered around the fact that for the next 30 years they are to act as the conduit for the expenditure of millions of dollars furnished by the American taxpayers. During this 30-year period contracts for the construction of buildings being financed 100% with government money and operational contracts for the buildings

after construction, again being financed with government subsidies and grants, could all be awarded or spent as they see fit."

It has become clear that the Nixon administration intends to abort the deal and demand the land back, going to court, if necessary. Erwin has said he is determined that the project go through.

G.O.

## Brannin in Cuba—II

Dallas

Since my return from Cuba friends in Dallas have asked me how I was able to go. They say "We thought that our State Department banned all travel there." This seems true as far as "ordinary tourist" travel goes. My 1966-7 passport says "not valid for travel to or in communist-controlled portions of China, Korea, Vietnam or to or in Albania, Cuba

### Carl Brannin

— a person who travels to or in the listed countries or areas may be liable for prosecution under Section 1185," etc., etc. I knew, however, that journalists and college teachers went to Cuba and came back and wrote about it, so I thought I would try. Along with my request for a visa, I sent a copy of credentials from *The Texas Observer* to write some pieces and a letter from Decherd Turner, Jr., of Bridwell Library, SMU, asking me to look up incunabula (15th century printing) in the National Library in Havana.

After considerable delay, I was advised that since I was not a full-time, salaried employee of a journal or a college my request was denied. (They held my passport so long I feared I would have to leave for Mexico without it, so I phoned my sister in Alexandria, Va., to pry it out of the office. Her call got it loose.) In the meantime I learned that the Friends (Quaker) World College of Westbury, N.Y., was sponsoring a study group on Cuba, and I sent in my application. The group had cleared with the Cuban delegate to the United Nations and had received an invitation to come as guests of the government with all expenses while in Cuba paid by that country.

Our party of 17 from California, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Texas gathered in Mexico City on July 10th (most of us had never met before) and left on the 11th by Cuban Airways in a Russian-leased plane — an easy 3½-hour flight for Havana (only one flight per week).

The Mexican government took pictures of us in groups of four and stamped our passports "Mexico D.F. CUBA." A member of the Women's Strike for Peace group, taking the same plane, protested vigorously to no avail. Since we had no US

visa stamp on our passports to visit Cuba we had been advised that Mexico would not let us return through that country. Our tickets read "New York, Mexico City, Havana, Madrid, New York, which meant an extra expense of about \$500 for me, since the plane fare from Dallas to Havana via Mexico City and return is only \$247. So I have a personal reason for advocating US recognition; I'd like to return to Cuba some time by a direct route and save the difference.

We understood that U.S. customs were very strict about letting things from Cuba come in, whether bought or printed matter, therefore I sent a six-pound box of paperback books and reports and papers by Ocean Express from Madrid to the Bridwell Library on Aug. 7. It was received there on November 5th (three months after shipping) with no evidence of inspection. At the same time I mailed a sizable package of posters and newspapers by regular postage to Bridwell. It came through by boat in about six weeks in good condition without inspection. When we arrived in New York, Customs asked three questions: Where did you emplane? *Ans. Madrid.* Have you more than \$10 in bought items? *Ans. No.* Do you have any liquor? *Ans. No.* There was no request that luggage be opened. An official at another gate had checked our passport against his list and passed us on. He must have seen the Cuba stamp.

Since my return, I have heard that some U.S. citizens returning home from Cuba through Canada were given rigorous checks by our customs, and printed matter was confiscated. If customs had gone through my two small pieces of luggage they would have found two packs of Cuban cigarettes (I can't even give them away to friends) and about twenty "El Surco" pure leaf Havana cigars (40 cents each), which had been given to me as well as other men in our party. I quit smoking long before the cancer warning, but I was going to give some friends in Dallas a real treat. I bought nothing in Cuba, for they are not making things like souvenirs or postal cards to mail home "wish you were here." (Veradero, a famous resort with its clean, sandy beach and modern hotel would be a good subject.)

**I**N HAVANA we were given a red carpet welcome by tourist department people with expensive daquiri toasts in friendship. We had rooms in the Habana Libre hotel, formerly the deluxe Hilton. Mine with a dentist from Passaic, N.J., (a grand person) was on the 21st floor with a sweeping view of the bay and harbor with Morro Castle in the background. I remembered in history the sinking of the battleship Maine in 1898 in the bay and the short Spanish-American war which followed. It was never decided whether the Maine was sunk by an internal or external

explosion. There is the never-denied story that William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper tycoon, before this happening, ordered his ace reporter and photographer to go to Cuba and report the war. The reporter answered, "But there isn't any war." Hearst is said to have replied, "You get the pictures and the story. I'll furnish the war." Whether or not this is true, the net result was that Cuba exchanged its political control by Spain for economic control by the Chase National Bank and other U.S. and British financial agencies in the amount of more than 80 million dollars. This was one of the basic causes of the Castro-led revolution against the Batista regime.

The food was very good, including Cuban beer, with fine clear-leaf cigars and cigarettes for the smokers (Cubans prefer American cigarettes — it is said that CIA agents unwittingly furnish them). Elevator service and accommodations were satisfactory. The room attendants on my floor had served under the former operator, but at a much lower wage than now. Many of the 650 rooms were vacant, since "tourism" is not a feature of Cuban life today. (It could well be for serious-minded people of the USA who want to study a revolution in operation only "90 miles away" with small travel expense and an approximately \$10 per



day living expense in Cuba.) But we "don't know officially that Cuba exists."

Besides our group there were delegations from Japan, Sweden, and other countries and quite a few Russians, Czech and other engineers. I should say here that when I wanted to talk to a friend in Dallas about personal affairs here all I had to do was to give the number to the operator at the hotel. She said the call would come through to my room. It did in about 45 minutes with good connection. The charge was about \$5, paid to the hotel operator. The Cuban telephone system was owned by US capital before the revolution. It now belongs to Cuba but international service continues.

**W**HILE WE were asked to list the things we wanted to see, our chief interpreter, who had lived and worked in the United States in the early 1950's, suggested that we see the 100-mile-by-30-mile "green belt" around Havana first. This was land formerly owned and held for speculation by individuals, as is the custom in our country and other capitalist-based countries. This land was nationalized like most industry in the 1959 revolution (excluding, however, homes or small farms occupied by the owner.) Now it was being planted in coffee, citrus fruit, and vegetable crops, mostly with voluntary labor on weekends by workers in offices and factories in the area. This system (voluntary labor) is a very important feature of the Cuban revolution. Its base is that Cuba is building a New Man (Che Guevara's term) in whom the profit or material incentive is replaced by concern for the welfare of all the people. The active Cuban youth are sold on this idea. The rest of the patriotic Cubans who have not fled and are not hoping to leave are "sticking it out" during this difficult transition period. They are loyal supporters of the government with freedom to criticize its mistakes. People who have known Cuba for years and have contacts now say it will never go back to a capitalist system. □

## Political Intelligence

• The 1970 political races are coming clear now. At this point it appears the action will be reserved for the fall general elections rather than the primaries. Gov. Preston Smith, Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes, and US Sen. Ralph Yarborough all appear likely to run for reelection for their respective offices and to run in the primaries without major opposition.

Barnes was characterized earlier this week as considering making a race against Smith next year. Polls indicate the governor's political standing is low. And though some members of the Capitol press corps believe Barnes may make the race, it appears unlikely that he will, given the risks to party unity — risks a strong Republican challenger could exploit next fall.

Probably Republican Paul Eggers will run for the governorship once again; he made an impressive showing against Smith in 1968 despite having less than full cooperation from the state GOP hierarchy.

Similarly, Houston Republican Cong. George Bush is virtually certain to take on Yarborough.

Evidently, Bush will face a challenge in the GOP primary. Dr. Robert Morris, the

conservative of some national renown who is president of the University of Plano, already has announced he'll seek the Republican senatorial nomination.

• Ed Clark, the former king of the Austin lobby, and once Lyndon Johnson's ambassador to Australia, sees a status quo election year in Texas during 1970 — Senator Yarborough winning reelection and Gov. Preston Smith and Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes running for reelection to their present offices. Clark, who lent his name and influence to Yarborough's 1964 campaign, says he will actively support the senator's reelection but will not be actively involved in the campaign.

### Easy Welch Victory

• Louie Welch walloped his nearest opponent, Curtis Graves, by a vote of 99,100 to 58,778 to win a fourth term as Houston's mayor without a runoff. Graves, a state representative, said he might try again in 1971.

• Rep. John Hannah, Lufkin, received some nasty reverberations in his East Texas district after his name appeared in a

Houston newspaper advertisement endorsing a rally for Graves. The ad listed one congressman, Bob Eckhardt, and 15 state legislators as "Friends of Curtis Graves who will be at the rally."

Hannah's apparent endorsement of a Negro did not go over well in Angelina County, a county that went for George Wallace last year. Some local politicians, as well as the editor of the Lufkin newspaper, predicted that it might be just the issue to beat Hannah in his legislative campaign next spring.

The young Lufkin legislator made no public statements about the ad, but a telegram from Graves was circulated, saying that the placing of Hannah's name in the advertisement was "a total mistake." Graves said that his staff had erroneously listed Hannah and Houston Rep. Jim Clark as endorsing him when in fact he had not been able to reach either man to get his permission for the endorsement. Neither attended the rally.

• The reform slate of candidates led in all four contested positions on the Houston school board. Two of the

## Legislators Visit Vegas

Austin

Fourteen Texas legislators were among a group of Texans who visited Las Vegas, Nevada, in September, the guests of the Texas National Guard. The legislators, 13 House members and one senator, were in Las Vegas as part of a program the guard has instituted to improve relations with civic and political leaders. While in Nevada the group toured Nellis Air Force Base, sat through briefings about the guard's activities, and, of course, spent some time on the Vegas strip.

Making the trip were Sen. H. J. Blanchard of Lubbock and State Reps. Jamie Bray of Pasadena, Raul Longoria of Edinburg, Bill T. Swanson of Houston, Lindon Williams of Houston, John A. Traeger (a National Guard colonel) of Seguin, Malouf Abraham of Canadian, Tom Christian of Claude, Bill Clayton of Springlake, Dean L. Cobb of Dumas, Lamoine Holland of San Antonio, Tom Niland of El Paso, Henry Sanchez, Jr., of Brownsville, and James L. Slider of Naples.

Also making the trip were O. R. Crawford, formerly on the board of the Liquor Control Board; Jerry Hall, a member of Gov. Preston Smith's staff; and Vic Mathias, manager of the Austin

Chamber of Commerce.

Transportation, a reception, and a luncheon were provided by the guard. Guests paid their own motel bills, bought their own meals and drinks, and (one presumes) purchased their own chips.

The flight was on a KC-971 tanker aircraft, which flew from Austin's Bergstrom Air Force Base. Maj. Gen. Ross Ayers, state adjutant general, on issuing the invitation to civic and political leaders, said that the Tactical Air Command, "has arranged a briefing and tour of the Tactical Air Command fighter weapons center to acquaint you with their operation and the vital role of the Tactical Air Command's air power in defense of our nation."

The Texas guard last month took civic and business leaders on a tour of Fort Sill, Okla.; making the junket were people from communities that are home stations for Texas National Guard Artillery units, at Wichita Falls, Port Arthur, Fort Worth, Austin, Dallas, and New Braunfels. Later this month citizens from the Austin area will tour Fort Bliss, Tex., White Sands, N.M., and the North American Air Defense Command facility in Cheyenne Mountain near Colorado Springs, Col.

Committee for Good Schools (CGS) candidates, Mrs. James Tinsley and Dr. George Oser, won without runoffs. The two other CGS hopefuls, Dr. Leonard Robbins and the Rev. D. Leon Everett, face runoffs against members of the conservative Committee for a Sound American Education (CSAE) slate.

If Everett and Robbins maintain their leads, the liberal-to-moderate faction will hold a majority on the seven-member school board for the first time this decade.

Restoring free kindergarten to the schools was one of the most popular issues of the race. The conservative school board majority did away with free kindergarten in an effort to economize, and it proved to be a highly unpopular step. Although both slates endorsed free kindergarten, it remained a liberal issue.

Dr. Oser ran for the school board two years ago but his name was removed from the runoff ballot on a technicality. Immediately after the election, he helped form the CGS with the stated purposes of interesting Houstonians in the problems of public school education and conducting educational research as well as endorsing school board candidates. The group now has a membership of more than 3,500

families. CSAE, on the other hand, has never been more than a shadow group of wealthy conservatives who funnel funds to candidates at election time.

The *Houston Post* endorsed the reform slate while the *Chronicle* declined to take a stand in the school board race.

## Challenge for Mauzy?

Rep. John Wright of Dallas is under considerable pressure from the lobby and influential members of the Dallas legislative delegation to challenge liberal Oscar Mauzy for his senate seat. Wright, a moderate, has not decided whether he will run.

The Austin daily says that liberal Sen. Don Kennard of Fort Worth is in "deep trouble," facing possible opposition from Rep. Joe Shannon, Rep. Doyle Willis, or former Rep. Don Gladden. The newspaper reported a Kennard poll showing that only 34 per cent of Tarrant County voters approve of the job he is doing.

Before he died last week, State Sen. V. E. (Red) Berry endorsed Rep. Glenn Kothmann of San Antonio to take his place in the legislature. SA Rep. James Nowlin already has announced his intention to enter the race for Berry's seat.

## Counteracting the SDS

The conservative *Houston Tribune* has begun a campaign to provide subscriptions for high school students to counteract the efforts of "the foul-mouthed hippy spokesmen for SDS." Houston State Rep. Bill Archer has added his voice to the campaign, saying in a letter to prospective supporters of the campaign that "One of the best ways I know to beam the right information to the high school students is through the *Houston Tribune* youth subscription fund." Archer says the effort is needed "to counteract the SDS and the other leftist organizations who are subverting the minds and morals of our nation's youth."

SANE, a peace group, has distributed a voting record on issues before Congress this year that were related to peace. Sen. John Tower was rated as voting right three times, wrong ten. Sen. Ralph Yarborough was 6-3, with four absences.

Senator Tower ranked high in an opinion survey conducted by the Conservative Book Club. The club polled every 20th name on its membership list of some 31,000, enclosing an alphabetical list of 95, asking for relative ratings. Tower was fourth, ranking behind Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and William Buckley. President Nixon was 30th; Vice President Agnew 34th.

## Patman's Finances

In a generally admiring article in the *New York Times Magazine* about Cong. Wright Patman, the Texas populist from Texarkana, Robert Sherrill earlier this year reported that Patman, while asserting a net worth of about \$100,000, has participated in some interesting business deals in the past year.

In 1940, Congressman Patman helped establish Lone Star Steel Co. Sherrill quoted Patman: "We went up to Dallas to get money, and the Dallas banks seemed sympathetic, but they said we'd have to go to New York to get the big money. Well, we went to New York and we met with the bankers and they tried to discourage us. As I looked around the table, I saw why — the banks' directors were also the directors of US Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Republic Steel, and Jones and Laughlin. They didn't want our competition."

Dallas insurance companies also told Patman and his Texans, Patman continued, that "You'll have to go to New York for the big money." We did, and we found that the directors of the big insurance companies headquartered in New York were also directors of the big steel companies."

Sherrill reported that Patman ultimately persuaded Houston's Jesse Jones, head of

the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to lend \$75 million to start Lone Star Steel, now a flourishing East Texas company in Patman's district.

Sherrill also reported that Patman and Troy Post, the entrepreneur behind the big conglomerate, Great America, "started out in business together, organizing the Pioneer American Life Insurance Company (Patman's interest was sold years ago)," and that another of Patman's associates in the insurance venture was Bill Blakley, the conservative US senator from Texas in the late 1950's.

Although Sherrill's article appeared last spring, the *Observer* missed seeing it at that time.

## More VISTAs Out

The OEO did not wait for Gov. Preston Smith to request the ouster of 15 VISTAs in Cameron and Willacy Counties. Charging that the young anti-poverty workers were being made scapegoats of local political disputes, Regional Director James W. Griffith withdrew the volunteers and said they would be reassigned to other areas.

The Cameron County commissioners had asked the governor to remove the workers because of alleged political activities over the past year and a half. Insiders believe the courthouse officials actually are trying to wreck the political aspirations of Ray Ramon, the controversial director of the local community action agency, through discrediting his agency's volunteers.

This is the third group of VISTAs to be removed from Texas counties in the last year. In the two previous cases (*Obs.*, April 11 and Sept. 26), the governor ended the projects at the urging of county commissioners.

## Chavez in Texas

Cesar Chavez, the farm workers' union leader, was in Texas earlier this week. His union is conducting a nationwide boycott of grapes to pressure growers in California whom Chavez is striking against. He was to appear in Fort Worth and Houston.

Tony Orendain, a veteran of Chavez' staff who served during the ill-fated strike of Starr County farm workers, has been working in recent months in Hidalgo County. Evidently the Chavez union plans another effort in the Texas Valley some day. Chavez tactics call for long-term intensive community organizing work on a variety of problems that affect the farm workers before beginning any strike effort.

The Texas Civil Liberties Union, which continues to grow and extend its influence in the state, has a new executive director. Wayne Oakes, 29, has

this month succeeded Doran Williams. Williams has resigned to devote his time to Greenbriar, an experimental school near Austin begun by New Left radicals for students in grades 1-12.

Oakes has taught history and government at Southwest Texas State and Blinn College and for the last year worked for the Texas Education Agency. His concern for civil liberties is long-standing, antedating his participation in the Huntsville sit-ins of 1965 (*Obs.*, Aug. 6, 1965).

Oakes was on hand when ten Southwest Texas University students were suspended for participating in a rally against the

Vietnam war. The ACLU is seeking reinstatement of the students.

Cong. John Dowdy of Athens has introduced a Big Thicket National Monument bill providing for 35,000 acres. The size of the monument is considered miserly by Thicket fans, who incline more towards the 100,000-acres proposal of Sen. Ralph Yarborough. Real estate and timber interests prefer the smaller park.

Dale Hager, the ultra-conservative Beaumont city councilman (*Obs.*, Oct. 24), was given the boot Nov. 1 in a recall election. The vote was 10,390 to 7,021.

# A March Against Death

Washington, D.C.

Someone has said that the quality of a civilization can be measured in terms of the value it places on an individual human life. There has been little sense of that system of values during the last four or five years of human slaughter in Vietnam. Kill ratios, search and destroy missions, and the

## Greg Calvert and Carol Nieman Calvert

figures on tonnage of bombs dropped have given little concrete sense of the fact that death is always the death of one single body and not a statistic that can be raised to the nth power. Technology and technologized over-kill have obscured the human reality of life and death, war and peace, and turned the destruction of human life into a balance sheet which resembles a football scoreboard more than a moral calculus of the situation of man.

Washington was many things during the November 13-15 Mobilization. It was an

*Mr. and Mrs. Calvert are the co-authors of a book to be published by Random House next spring on neo-capitalism. They write a column on New Left thought in the Guardian, the national radical weekly. Mr. Calvert earlier this year wrote in the Observer about the SDS national convention.*

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outcry, a festival of life, and a funeral dirge. Behind the forms and the symbols, however, it was a desperate (and perhaps futile) attempt to put the question of human morality back at the center-stage of political concern. This may sound strange to the liberals whose concern was to co-opt five years of anti-war organizing and move the focus of dissent back into the respectable limits of peaceful protest. It will sound equally distasteful to those radicals who sensed the ill winds of liberal co-optation and manipulation and tried to maintain radical hegemony over the movement which they had built by adopting ultra-militant tactics of confrontation in the streets of the nation's capital. Our concern is not with either of these sectarian interests but rather with the intent and activity of the vast majority of that half-million Americans (mostly young) who came to Washington without any particular political allegiances, but with a firm determination to express what they felt most deeply and most immediately.

December 5, 1969

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- **Dr. Hayakawa in Thought and Action:** How S. I. Hayakawa, the general semantist, failed as a liberal academic, but became the darling of the Right by calling in the cops at San Francisco State College.
- **After the Olympics:** How attempts have been made to buy up the militance of black athletes since the Mexico City Olympics. Harry Edwards reveals the threats and pressures that have stalked those who participated in Olympic Project for Human Rights.
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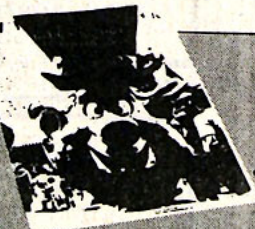
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ONE GROWS cynical about the politics of "moral protest" after years of ineffectuality. Such protest rests, as a political strategy, on the false assumption that those who own and control the American empire have a conscience which can be moved sufficiently to counter their immediate economic interests. The continuous appeals to the powers-that-be

to reverse existing policies have been the substance of liberal activity during the 1960's. Radicals have been right to insist that corporate power has no conscience apart from the demands of power and profit and radicals have consistently and courageously striven to expose the bankruptcy of the liberal approach. In the process of denouncing liberal complicity, however, radicals have lost hold of their

own legitimate levers of moral suasion. In place of the affirmative power of radical moral certitude which characterized the early years of the New Left, there has entered a form of radical moral nihilism which denies that political questions can be posed in terms of any moral category whatsoever. History and historical consciousness overwhelm individual experience and individual responsibility. In the face of the system's statistical overkill, radicals pose their own criteria of revolutionary correctness.

Lost in the process is the moral notion of the primacy of individual lives and the moral basis of radical action. As a response to liberal manipulation, there arise the new forms (or old) of radical manipulation. Lost is the basic truth that a radical alternative can only establish its worth and necessity if it poses a morally, intellectually, and culturally preferable form of civilization.

## The Long March

Do the names of hamlets  
weigh heaviest? No, they said  
and marched along.  
One GI is much to bear? I asked  
the girl with yellow hair.  
No, not much, said she  
and marched along.  
A dike? How great a burden  
must your dikes be.  
No, they said, no burden.

Co Ong  
La Dang  
Trinh Li.

Villages are for growing,  
villages are for gathering the rice into,  
villages are harbours  
for lovers — are the act  
of love being made  
and remade  
when the sun rises  
and when the sun goes down,  
when the rains come  
and when the sun dries the  
raindrops off the leaves  
and off the glistening brown bodies  
of lovers.  
Villages are a protection against loneliness  
and cold  
and  
old  
age.  
Villages are for life —  
not for burning.  
They are a warm bosom  
not a flaming volcano.

Forty-six thousand came the  
marchers with their burdens  
and I ask her —  
Is his name heavy?  
Yes, said she, but not as heavy  
as my heart or the tears  
of his father which fall  
in two deep streams  
each night in bed ten  
thousand miles from where  
he died  
in  
vain.  
Not as heavy as fatherless  
children in the womb,  
said another.

Johnny Rogers

Buddy Starr  
Billy McKool.

Boys are for breathing  
and touching and making  
love — timid and gentle  
and powerful lovemaking.  
Bodies aren't much good  
for love when  
the life's gone out.  
Eyes won't light a fire  
when the light's gone out.  
Hard to make love to yourself  
or anybody much at all  
with your hands blown off.  
You can't give love away  
'cause it can't run out —  
unless you give life away  
which you can't get back.  
Lucky bugger, Mr. Death.  
Old USA just made you  
a fine present of 40,000  
times the fact of life  
— and us — we ain't gettin'  
nuthin' in return  
except credit on the next war.

No, not heavy, he said.  
What's in a name when  
you take the body away?  
Folks down my way  
used to say  
the soul was *in* the body,  
like they told us back  
in the sunday school crap  
game.  
Forty thousand souls  
later we found  
out that the soul  
was  
the  
body.  
And he marched on  
bearing  
the soulless  
bodiless  
name.

(They did a body count  
after the napalm raid  
and the priest  
said seventy-two souls  
were lost.)

GREG CALVERT  
Washington, D.C.

WE WENT to Washington with the cynicism of those who have witnessed the ineffectuality of protest marches, and the 40-hour "March Against Death" seemed likely to represent the most impotent reformulation of symbolic protest that one could conceive.

We were surprised, caught up, and made to question our assumptions.

From Thursday evening through Saturday morning, a constant stream of people marched from Arlington Cemetery, across the Memorial Bridge, up, past, and around the White House, and along

December 5, 1969

11

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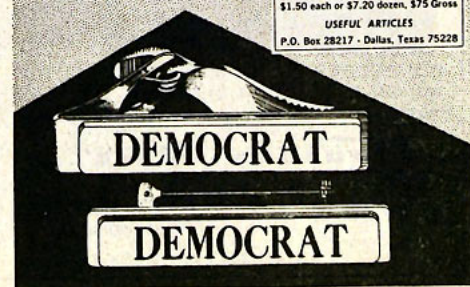
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Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. Forty-six thousand names had been scrawled or stenciled on placards — the names of American soldiers killed, or of Vietnamese hamlets and villages destroyed, or of dikes bombed. As the demonstrators passed behind the White House, they called out the name which they bore — shouting it towards the abode of an absent president who was off in Florida to watch the launching of our second garbage courier to the moon.

We drove up Pennsylvania Avenue on Friday morning and watched the strange counter-marches of demonstrators bearing their burden of death in one direction and federal employees marching toward their deadly jobs in the other direction. We had not intended to spend any time on this "symbolic protest," but the power of this medieval morality play began to catch us in our guts. We were soon parked near the White House and walking slowly past the mourners in the opposite direction. Conversation between us stopped across from the point where the names were being called out to the absent and symbolic elective monarch of the republic. We both knew that the other partner was breathing deeply to keep back the tears. We never dared to ask each other which names make our eyes and chests most uptight — the guys, the villages, or the dikes. We only knew that one spoken word would break the carefully constructed composure which

was necessary to get us through the weekend.

There were tourists on the other side of the White House — arriving in buses. Were they the "silent majority" which Nixon so proudly proclaimed as his constituency? We did not stop to ask but walked on across the Mall trying to find a demonstration planned by FEDS (Federal Employees for a Democratic Society) to take place before the HEW building. That

at that point. A girl was singing "Where Have All The Flowers Gone" and accompanying herself on a mandolin. Each death seemed more real and more relevant than ever before in these last years. Each placard was the real body of a real life snuffed out forever and each village was a life-giving place which would never give life again. Tears were real and unquenchable and we dared not look into each others eyes during the eternal moment which we spent there. Somehow it would have been obscene for us to hold and comfort each other in the face of the deathly testimonial which was being re-enacted before us. There was no place to hide before the reality of death and destruction: no place to find comfort: no place to wipe away the eternal scar which had been blazed across the soul of this planet in Vietnam.

If radicalism is the search for a new and alternative civilization for mankind, then the March Against Death was an affirmation of that hope and possibility. Those who listened to the liberal speeches at the Washington Monument on Saturday seemed too patient emotionally. Those who broke windows after being gassed (as we were) around the Justice Department on Saturday evening seem too frustrated to create a relevant political program. Those who dismiss them all summarily did not witness, or would rather ignore, the attempt to address the problem of civilization and the value of individual lives which forty-six thousand marchers attempted to proclaim.

America may very well get "out of Vietnam." When it does, it will have to come home to deal with itself. Not all of the military hardware or the Pentagon budgets or the wars on poverty will begin to address the questions which Vietnam has raised. Certainly the question of the value of one human life and the value of life itself have been put permanently on the political agenda of a country which thought it was getting freedom cheap. □

## Texas Work Solicited

Austin

The *Observer* plans, in the near future, to publish one or perhaps two issues on "Life in Texas." Contributions of material pertaining to this general theme are solicited from writers, artists, and photographers. Articles may be either reportage or fiction portraying life in the state (its cities, small towns, the country, whatever). Artwork and photos likewise should depict Texas life.

demonstration actually did occur, but our fascination with the passion play ultimately led us to the spot where the March Against Death culminated with the placing of the names of the soldiers, the villages, and the dikes in a dozen unpainted coffins below the Capitol.

**T**EARS WERE harder to suppress there. The names were much too personal

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# Dialogue

## Rationalization

... I am compelled to believe that the defects [John] Silber thought he found in [Lawrence] Caroline's character largely derived from Silber's deep-seated need to rationalize his jumping across a moral chasm to come down by [Frank] Erwin's side. Silber did not undertake his "own evaluation of the man [Caroline]" until Frank Erwin had told the world that Caroline would be fired. . . .

An official who has the power that Erwin has — particularly one who abuses that power as Erwin does — doesn't have to fire someone on the university staff . . . Erwin simply has to make public his desire to fire a person. Any number of underlings will scurry about and implement that desire. . . .

Don W. Allford, 1505 Cloverleaf, Austin, Tex. 78723.

## Enough Already

"Silber Replies To Sullivan," "Sullivan's Answer," "And Arrowsmith," "Sullivan Replies," Dugger comments.

Oh shit! Won't it ever end?

Maury Maverick, Jr., 114 Bellview, San Antonio, Tex. 78209.

## Personality Conflicts

... The *Observer* has never seemed particularly preoccupied with the necessarily hypocritical search for "objectivity." Hence, I cannot grasp your penchant for replies in the Sullivan-Silber-Caroline-*et al.* controversy. There probably is journalistic justification

for publishing Sullivan's "Valedictory." Personally, I found it rather arrogant and difficult to follow. . . .

Lengthy coverage of such personality conflicts is not in the best tradition of the *Observer*. May the fare improve next fortnight!

Lon Curtis, 225 Lawyers Inn, SMU, Dallas, Tex. 75222.

## A Pome

"... I was under no illusions as to whom was the power in the department."

—John Sullivan, the *Observer*  
November 21.

Him seems at least to be under some illusions as to the case of pronouns.

All these professors of Latin and Greek  
In matters of syntax are strikingly weak.

Silber and Sullivan holler and yammer,  
They fumble and stumble and mumble and stammer  
With little regard for the standards of grammar.

The Lord in his infinite cognizance knows  
Whom taught Silber and Sullivan prose.

Must we poor Texans send far overseas  
To hire for professors such blockheads as these?

H. Mewhinney, Bow Creek, in the depths of the Big Thicket, Rt. 3, Box 307-A, Cleveland, Tex. 77327.

## A Word to the Fellas

Why don't you just let John and John  
and William and William and Roger and

Ronnie write letters to one another in their tedious little bickering and get on with your usually excellent job of backgrounding the real news events of the day? Lots of us simply don't give a damn about such tiresome, catty exchanges.

U. A. Hyde, Box 9218, Austin, Tex. 78757.

## Judge Garwood Replies

Your issue of October 10 and its article by sometime Cambridge "don" [*It was Oxford-Ed.*] and former UT-Austin classics professor, John Sullivan, now grazing in the evidently greener pastures of New York:

Having myself no protracted nor intimate connection with the university beyond having taught a couple of years at the school of law and (with my wife) contributing a fair amount of money and a lot of time toward the welfare of the latter and other departments of the university (including the Parsons Library) I am almost flattered at being mentioned, if less than favorably, in Professor Sullivan's generous chronicle of the bad points of that institution, at which he voluntarily (but doubtless nor gratuitously) served for some years.

My claim to this "honorable (?) mention" evidently derives from two political advertisements of some years back in the Austin newspapers; to wit, one by some 150 UT faculty members recommending to then president, Lyndon Johnson, that he stop the bombing of those gentle communist cut-throats of North Vietnam, and the other a reply ad by myself, being a copy of my telegram to President Johnson commenting unfavorably on the recommendation of the faculty members.

Rather curiously, Professor Sullivan refers only to my advertisement as an advertisement, omitting to mention the quite relevant fact that the action of the faculty members was also in the form of a political advertisement — and certainly a no less elaborate one than my published reply thereto. More importantly, the former "don" seems to infer, without clearly so stating, that my advertisement was some sort of attack on academic freedom, as well as a less-than-honest "insinuation" that French Professor Roger Shattuck, one of the participants in the earlier advertisement, was well known as a general opponent of American intervention in Vietnam (I actually used the word "notoriously" as synonymous with "well known").

As to my advertisement being an attack on academic freedom, even a casual reading of it shows clearly that it was not — however Professor Sullivan and his colleagues may have chosen to interpret it. The faculty-member ad was not only political, but also obviously designed to

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carry special weight with Texas voters (and the president) as coming from persons of academic standing affiliated with the chief university of the president's own state. My reply did not even remotely question anybody's right to advertise his politico-military views, but (perhaps rashly!) it did question the intellectual value of the opinions of the faculty members concerned, of whom few, if any, appeared to have more competence in the field than most any reasonably well-informed citizen. If, indeed, the academic profession is such a high priesthood that the politico-military propaganda of any professor of French, medieval history, philosophy, or what have you, can be challenged by outsiders only on penalty of sacrilege, then freedom of speech for most Americans is considerably less free than "academic freedom," or, as George Orwell might put it, some of us are substantially less equal than others!

As to Professor Shattuck's position on the Vietnam war, I did not "insinuate" anything, but said what I did say quite plainly. Later, upon receipt of a letter from him, I replied that if he would tell me he was not opposed to our Vietnam involvement, I would promptly publish a public retraction of my statement to the contrary. My offer was not accepted.

I might add a modest word of thanks to the British or ex-British savant for his witty concession that I possess at least the virtue of having once been refused confirmation by the Texas Senate for appointment to the UT board of regents. Oddly enough, the only reason I have ever heard given for the action of the eleven senators in question is that I was a too liberal advocate of greater political unity between Great Britain and the United States! Considering the professor's obviously limited admiration for so many Texans, I suspect that he might have voted the same way as the eleven senators — and for the very same reason (which, incidentally, would have disturbed me even less than did the fact of my "disconfirmation"!).

W. St. John Garwood, 204 Austin National Bank Bldg., Austin, Tex. 78701.

## Today's Revolutionaries

Having read with interest . . . Dr. John Sullivan's "Valedictory," I sympathize with his British puzzlement over American respect for revolutionaries of the past and obvious disrespect for some contemporary ones. As a descendant of DAR members and other revolutionaries, perhaps I can suggest a solution to the apparent paradox.

By and large, our old-time revolutionaries were totally committed to the business at hand and would brook no collaboration. Could anyone imagine Sam Houston holding a teaching assistantship at the University of Mexico while marching to

San Jacinto? Americans generally respect honesty and good faith, even in an enemy; witness the high reputation of Robert E. Lee in the North.

In contrast, many of the current breed are widely held in contempt because they insist on sucking the government (or university or parental) teat while preaching "bloody" revolution against the giver of largess. Similarly, but in a minor vein, beard, sandals, dirt and drugs ostentatiously display nonconformity; but the wherewithal is all too often wheedled from good old conformist, middle class Mom and Dad. I submit that many Americans regard this as cowardly or, at best, weak. I suggest to Dr. Sullivan that when some of our current revolutionaries stop being parasites, their protests will sound less like whining, and perhaps they will be revered as of old. I congratulate him on voting with his feet against what he dislikes at UT, even though his articles smack of Mary Gallagher.

E. K. Poole, MD, 1810 San Gabriel, Austin, Tex. 78701.

### Hardie, Not Heath

... I write this letter on the basis of my experience as the leader in the fight to end de facto segregation at the University of Texas with particular reference to the tumultuous period of academic year 1960-61 and immediately thereafter. Professor Sullivan is wrong when he charges W. W. Heath with being the segregationist chairman of the board of regents. The record will show that it was Mr. Thornton Hardie of El Paso, Texas, an

Alabamian by birth, who served as the real stumbling block.

I am sure that Page Keeton and Bill Morgan, the former pastor of University Methodist Church, would join me in testifying to the fact that Ambassador Heath became a positive force for good and that during his tenure as chairman of the board, much of the nastiness disappeared and certainly the effort to take away my tenure terminated. . . .

E. Ernest Goldstein, 51, Ave. des Champs Elysees, Paris 8, France.

### Inadequate Minus

Among top departments in the country, as cited in Professor Sullivan's account of the "1964" (*recte* 1966) account of the *Cartter Report* (*Texas Observer*, 10

## Y'All Come

Austin

The *Observer* will host a subscription party on Saturday, Dec. 13, 8 p.m., at the Austin home of Ann and Dave Richards, 810 Red Bud Trail. Admission to the second annual Beer, Bull, and Ballad party will be by the purchase of one new or gift subscription to the paper, not a renewal; such a purchase admits an individual or a couple. Subscriptions will be sold at the door.

The first such party, held last year at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Shattuck, drew a large and congenial crowd, and enriched the *Observer* coffers by a few hundred dollars.

No decision has yet issued from the paper's executive suites on a date for the third annual Yuletide Whiskey-Drank, which has been held at the *Observer* offices the last two year-ends sometime between Christmas and New Year's. A date for this is expected to be announced in the next issue.

October, p. 8) the commentator grossly errs in acclaiming classics as ranking 16th, philosophy 18th, but English "not . . . at all." In this *Report* there are two categories, "distinguished" and "strong," together ordered numerically, and then two lower divisions, "good" or "adequate plus," each separately listed alphabetically.

Actually, of the 52 departments worth grading in English, UT is classified as "strong," rank 23 (or in the upper 44th percentile among superior divisions). Another and more select panel of experts (*Report*, pp. 86-93) later reviewed several departments including English (but not the other two) and upgraded UT to rank 18 (or 35th percentile).

On the other hand, with only 24 departments worth considering, classics is ranged as "good," and here below the 16 upper-count, does somewhat better since,

along with Duke, Illinois, Iowa, NYU, Pennsylvania, and Washington, it rates around the 60th percentile.

So far as Professor Sullivan's statistics go, I am inclined to rate him not even in the mathematics section ("adequate plus") but in a category of my own devising — "inadequate minus and perverse."

William B. Todd, Dept. of English, University of Texas, Austin, Tex.

### Let's Hear It!

I say it's high time Texas honor the men who serve her well! Particularly, Frank Erwin. Let's have some JUSTICE FOR FRANK ERWIN. Stop all this hand-wringing and moaning over the trees along Waller Creek in Austin, and academic freedom. Try to understand Frank. Appreciate what he has done for Texas, singlehandedly. ('Bout the only way Frank does anything.)

Frank's carrying on and clapping his hands during the Battle of Waller Creek was in no way related to how he feels about the health and welfare of cypress and oak trees . . . He was concerned with just one thing during that affair: retaining his title and crown, "Champion Foot-in-Mouth-Man of the United States."

Don't forget that Frank had won that title the hard way — entering some of the toughest bouts in the country, coming up through the "Dirty Nothing" matches, the "Caroline Case," and the "law school faculty" fracas. He was justly proud of that crown. Modest though he is, he wore it with pride.

Then here comes Spiro Agnew giving himself airs and challenging the champ. Prancing out into the arena, flexing his muscles with "Effete, impudent snobs," and "professional anarchists." Making smashing headlines. Setting the Republican fans to preening themselves. "We've got a winner!" they were saying, "Look at that footwork! Ever see anything like it! First one foot, then the other, right in the mouth! Never misses!" And, "Spiro's the one! A natural! Our Champ!"

How do you think us Erwin fans felt, Frank himself felt? When the Agnew crowd started sneering, "Erwin! Minor league stuff! Stumbles around and gets a foot in his mouth accidentally. Embarrasses the university administration, yes. But Spiro scores *everytime*. Embarrasses the Nixon administration, a near-impossible feat."

Frank reacted like the champ that he is: Jumped into the fray, standing firmly on both feet, popped them into his mouth AT THE SAME TIME! Kept the crown in Texas. C'mon men, let's hear it for Frank!

John Henry Faulk, 1420 Red Bud Trail, Austin, Tex. 78746.