

Opinion

The winner gets a lovely 10-year sentence

The following is a true story. The names and places have not been changed to protect the innocent, because, as Kurt Vonnegut puts it, they are protected by God as part of the heavenly routine.



Mark Nair

And this is the way the story goes:

Beauty contests are everywhere. Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Warsaw Pact. There're everywhere. But behind the contests, the glamour, the lights and sounds and music and the et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, there is a menacing evil lurking about. While the babes doll themselves up to impress the panel of celebrity judges, while the celebrity judges doll themselves up to impress the babes, bad things are afoot.

The scandal this week? Shoplifting. Shoplifting by prospective Miss USA.

You see, Sue Bolich, Miss ex-Minnesota-USA resigned her crown in disgrace last Monday after some theft charges were filed against her. Miss Minnesota-USA, accused of shoplifting.

By the pricking of my sticky fingers, something wicked this way kind of lingers.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL! Sue's replacement, Miss Minnesota-USA number two, has had to resign her crown and all its glory, too. The scandal? Shoplifting. I kid you not.

They must have very light stores in Minnesota.

BUT, THERE'S MORE! Yet another promising candidate for fame and fortune has had a run-in with the law. The police last month arrested Suzanne Pitman, Miss Kentucky-USA, for driving while intoxicated. This does not sit well with the parents.

Now here's the catch: the Miss USA officials have decided to ignore the transgressions and sorrowful ways of ex-Miss Minnesota-USA and Miss Ken-

tucky-USA. The officials have chosen to give our fair ladies the chance to compete in the Miss USA competition. That is, if Sue and Suzanne want to. Suzanne wants to. Sue is taking the fifth.

So, this is what our sacred beauty contest institution has come to — a display of thugs, ruffians, misfits and rogues. We should all be ashamed of ourselves. What has become of the American dream? What has become of (here the author begins to weep; tears stream down his pallid face) our love, our life, our beauty pageants?

Jud and Jed are sitting by the TV. The fire in the empty can of chewing tobacco illuminates the room.

Jed: Shoo-wee, there sure are a lot of perty girls there on that stage.

Jud: Shoo-wee, there sure are.

Jed: Hey ain't that Miss Guam? Didn't she git arrested last week for bank robbery?

Jud: No, Jed, you're thinking of Miss Ideeho. Miss Guam was the one that blew up that armored car.

Jed: Oh, yeah.

Jud: Hey, ain't that Miss Cheeseburger? She killed twenty-three people yesterday with a toaster.

Jed: Shoo-wee, that was some trick. I bet she got this thing all wrapped up because of that.

Jud: Shucks, she'll take the talent part, no problem.

The host of the pageant begins to ask Miss Cheeseburger a question. Host: Miss Cheeseburger, if you win the title, what will you do for all mankind?

Miss Cheeseburger: I would like to help all mankind and help everyone live in peace and harmony, knocking over a few convenience stores while I'm at it.

Jed: Shoo-wee, hear that?

Jud: 'Course I did. What a crook.

Jed: Yeah, but who cares? She's perty.

Host (to Miss Guacamole): So, Miss Guacamole, for the talent part of the program, you will show us how to construct a small nuclear device, is that right?

Miss Guacamole: Right, Bob! She goes on to mix plutonium Soft Soap together.

Jud: Look at that! What a terror!

Jed: Yeah, but who cares? She's perty. Real perty.

Days pass. The contest is finally over. Bob the Host is declared the winner. There is much rejoicing.

Jud opens a beer. Jed looks for comics in the newspaper. On the top page of the paper, a headline yells: "Kiddie Crime Spree Strikes City—Police Blame Pageant Candidates."

News At Ten, Eleven, Twelve and One.

Doll makers begin to outfit Barb with a switchblade. They give Kenzie Mace.

Heavy weapons sales are brisk. Agents fear for their lives. The American economy bounces back.

And that's the way the story goes. Mark Nair is a senior political science major and opinion page editor for The Battalion.

Athletic ability not based on race

During the Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder media circus, I noticed a common theme in most of the rantings and ravings about the Greek's alleged racism.



Mike Royko

Everyone agreed that Snyder spouted nonsense when he said black slaves had been bred for size and strength, and that's why their descendants are superior athletes.

But I don't recall hearing anyone argue with the Greek's basic premise — that blacks are better athletes than whites. That's probably because it has become conventional wisdom that blacks are just born with greater natural physical skills.

So the sports experts and other commentators bawled Jimmy out for his half-baked genetic theories, but they didn't dispute the basic premise.

Well, I'll dispute it. I don't believe blacks are better athletes than whites. Or that whites are better athletes than blacks.

I don't have any scientific evidence to support my argument. I base it on what I've seen with my own eyes.

For example, I've seen Willie Mays, who is black, play center field brilliantly, run fast and hit baseballs often and far. To some people, Mays might be an example of black athletic superiority.

But I've also seen Mickey Mantle, who is white, play center field brilliantly, run fast, and hit baseballs often and far. In fact, he could hit th ball further than Mays. And did it batting lefty or righty, on defective legs, and frequently with a hangover.

Mays was a little faster. Mantle was a little stronger. Beyond that, there was little difference, except their skin color.

Or consider more recent players. It's generally agreed that the best first baseman in baseball is Don Mattingly. The best second baseman is Ryne Sandburg, the best shortstop is either Ozzie Smith or Cal Ripkin. And for years, Mike Schmidt has been the premier third baseman. All but Smith are white.

Does this mean that whites are better infielders? No, it just means that these particular athletes happen to be the best right now.

What's that you say? There are some sports in which blacks are clearly dominant? Right. Basketball and boxing. But what does that prove?

In basketball it proves two things. First, height is an important factor. And it has been scientifically established that a greater percentage of black men are above 6 feet tall than white men.

Second, there are few sports that cost less to play than basketball. That's the biggest reason impoverished big-city ghettos produce so many basketball players.

The same holds true for boxing. The lowest economic classes have always produced the fighters. When Jewish immigrants were stuffed into big-city tenements, they produced toughs like the great Barney Ross. He knocked hell out of most of the blacks he fought, but nobody suggested that meant Jews were better athletes than blacks.

For that matter, Rocky Marciano, the great heavyweight champ, never lost a fight. And many of the large men he decked were black. Did that mean Italians were superior athletes?

Then we have football, the game that caused Jimmy the Greek's downfall.

The best runner I ever saw was Jimmy Brown, who was black. But I saw him knocked backward by Dick Butkus, who was white and the best linebacker who ever played. What does that prove? Nothing, except that they were both superb athletes. One was a great runner. The other was great at flattening great runners.

Gayle Sayers, a black, was the most elusive runner I ever saw. Larry Czonka, a white, was the most powerful runner I ever saw. Look at their records and you'll see they achieved the same results but in different ways. Who is to judge which one was the better athlete? I do know I would have preferred to have Sayers run past me than Czonka run over me.

If we want to deal in generalities, I can make a case that Chicago's Poles, Bohemians, Italians and Irish have a special athletic gift. We are the greatest 16-inch softball players in the world. We proved it by winning every national championship of that bare-handed sport every year for a quarter of a century.

Is it in our genes? Or Chicago's water supply? Did our peasant ancestors have big, strong hands, which we inherited?

Or could the answer be simpler? Such as the fact that about 85 percent of all 16-inch softballs are sold in the Chicago area. And that this is where the game is most often played, so if we play it more than anyone else, we are going to be better than anyone else.

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Mail Call

Just what is the USSR?

EDITOR:

Goodmorning campers! It's time for some basic geographical awareness. This week's current bitch is a simple matter of terminology. I'm just about fed up with the misuse of the word "Russia."

It has become apparent that even supposedly learned folks in this and other great cities of the USof A can not grasp the concept that the USSR is not RUSSIA!!

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a country while Russia is a state (or republic, you choose). If one is speaking about the Soviet Union before the revolution of 1914, then it is appropriate to call it Russia. However, Russia in current times refers to a specific cultural and political

region within the USSR. Calling the Soviet Union "Russia" is akin to referring the the USA as Texas.

While it is true the some folks believe the only decent state in the United States is Texas, I do not feel that it would be all that neat if Soviet journalists and politicians stated to call the United States "Texas."

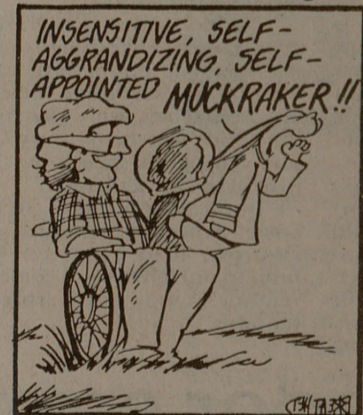
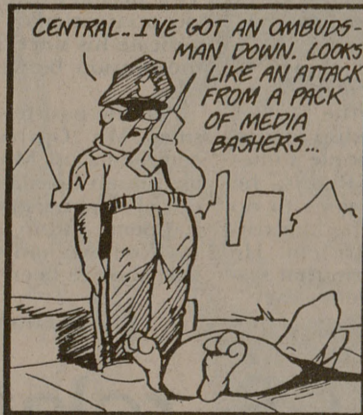
It is not the "Russians", it's the "Soviets." Here endeth the lesson.

John R. Grizz Deal
Graduate Student

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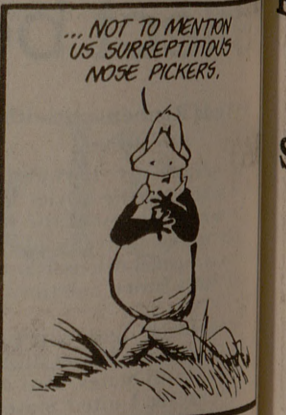
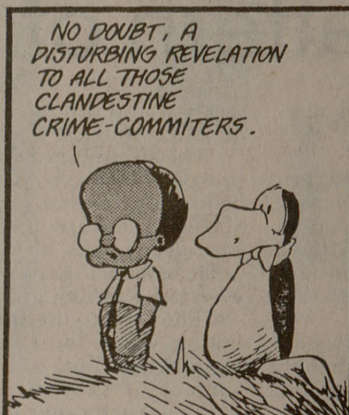
BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



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