

Opinion

Me, Nancy, and the White House Coffee Pot

I have seen an advance copy of Wanda Grobnik's book "Me, Nancy, and the White House Coffee Pot" and it will surely be the next political blockbuster.



Mike Royko

Few people know that Wanda Grobnik, an aunt of my friend Slat Grobnik, worked for many years in the White House kitchen.

She was listed on the federal payroll as a cook, but the title was merely a cover for her top-secret duties.

Her true job was looking into the future by reading coffee grounds, a rare gift she was born with.

She would share the visions she saw in the coffee pot with Nancy Reagan, who would then use them to tell the president how to run the country.

"She wanted to become a beautician,"

Wanda writes, "but I looked in the coffee pot and told her, no, your destiny is to go to Hollywood, become an actress and marry a movie star. Just don't do cheesecake. You ain't got the legs for it."

Wanda later joined the Reagans in California where she resumed her occult counseling.

"I remember looking in the coffee grounds one morning and I said: 'Don't trust monkeys.' Nancy asked me what that meant. I said I didn't know what it meant. But that's what I saw. Monkeys are strictly out."

"So what does he do? He makes that Bonzo movie, and sure enough, his career goes downhill from there. See, I warned them not to trust monkeys."

"At that time, Nancy was worried and asked me what they should do. I looked in the pot and said he should find a new line of work. She said he didn't know how to do anything. I looked in the pot again and said: 'OK, if he can't do anything, he should go into politics.'"

And that, Wanda writes, is how the Reagan political saga began.

"Nancy didn't tell Ron to do anything without asking me to check the pot first. She'd ask me: 'Should he have a press conference?' I'd look in the coffee pot and tell her: 'No. It is a better time for him to get a haircut. And not too long on the sideburns.' She'd say: 'Is this a good week for him to meet with the ambassador from Russia?' I'd look in the pot and say: 'No, it is a good week for him to spend the afternoons drinking Ovaltine and watching the soaps on TV.'"

"But sometimes we got our signals crossed."

"Like the time he got his first nomination and Nancy was trying to decide who his vice president should be."

"Well, it happened that I had a hard day. I mean, every time a problem came up, I had to make a fresh pot of coffee so I'd have new grounds to look at."

"So Nancy come in the kitchen. My feet hurt and my back aches and I tell her: 'I'm bushed.'"

"She misunderstands me and goes running out, and the next thing I know, there's Ron holding up (George) Bush's hand at the convention."

"And I remember when she came in the kitchen while I was watching a ball game on TV and there was a bad call and I was really mad and yelling about it. She goes running out. Then I pick up the newspaper and read where he called the Russians 'the Evil Empire.'"

"I asked Nancy why he did that. She said: 'You said you saw it in the pot.' I told her, no, I was just talking about the umpire."

"Another time, she comes in the kitchen and I tell her: 'I seen Star Wars.' She goes running out and all of a sudden they come out with all their plans for the goofy space defense system."

"The next time she comes in, I tell her: 'Look, Nancy, I was just trying to tell you that I saw a good movie, that "Star Wars" thing, and I thought you and the president might get a kick out of it.'"

"She said: 'Oh. Well, don't mention it

to anyone else. Who knows, maybe a crazy thing will work.'"

As Wanda says in her book: "I tell that the coffee grounds give a vision because their first term was bad."

But like many of the recent authors, Wanda displays a certain fullness in describing her eventual with the Reagans.

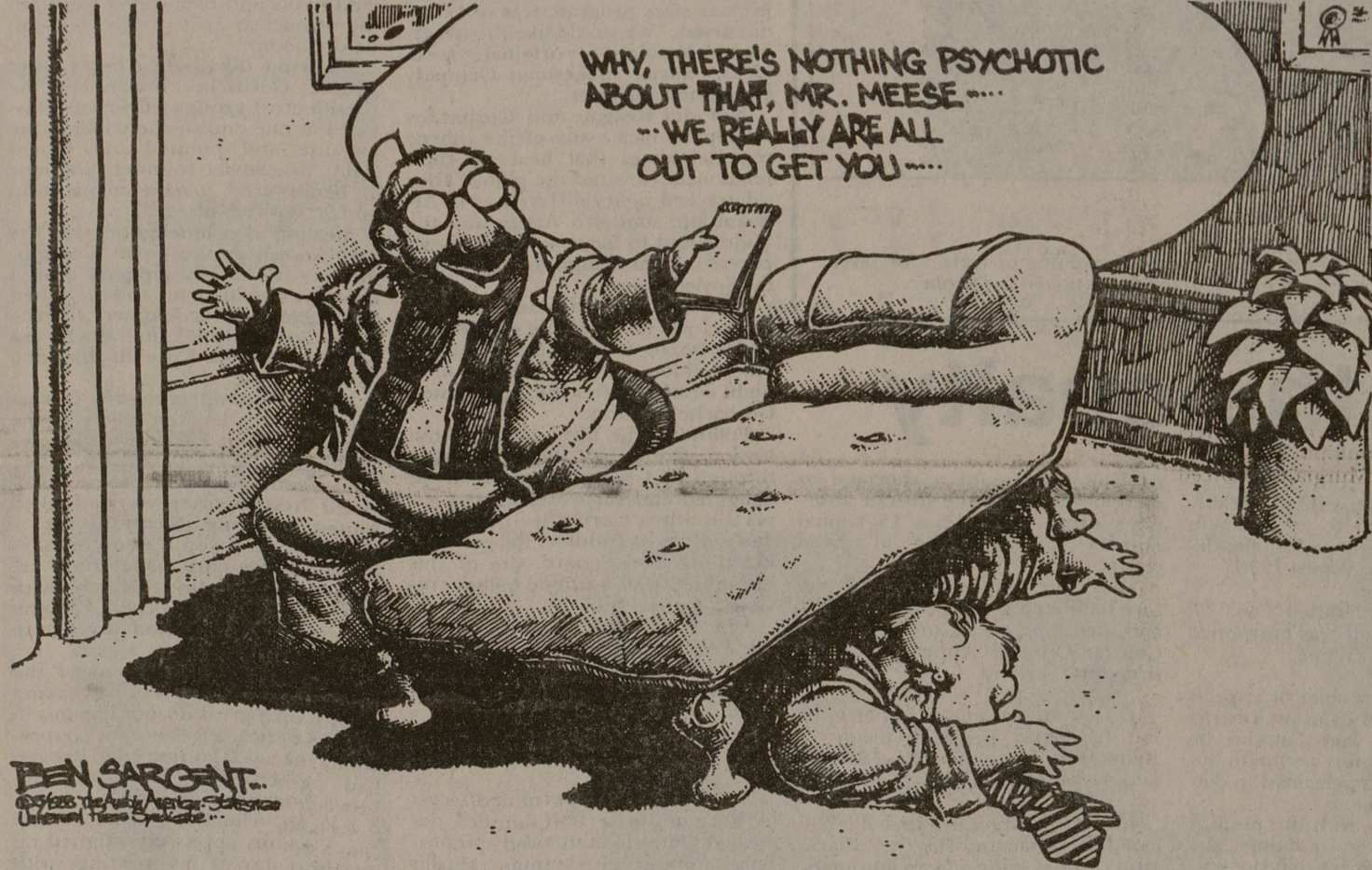
"I left after the first term and started listening to those California gazers. And look what happened to his second term. The scandal about arms for the crazy ayatollah, and North and Meese, Deaver and the dope-pusher. What a mess. I had stuck with my coffee pot, wouldn't have all these troubles."

And why did Nancy abandon her longtime adviser?

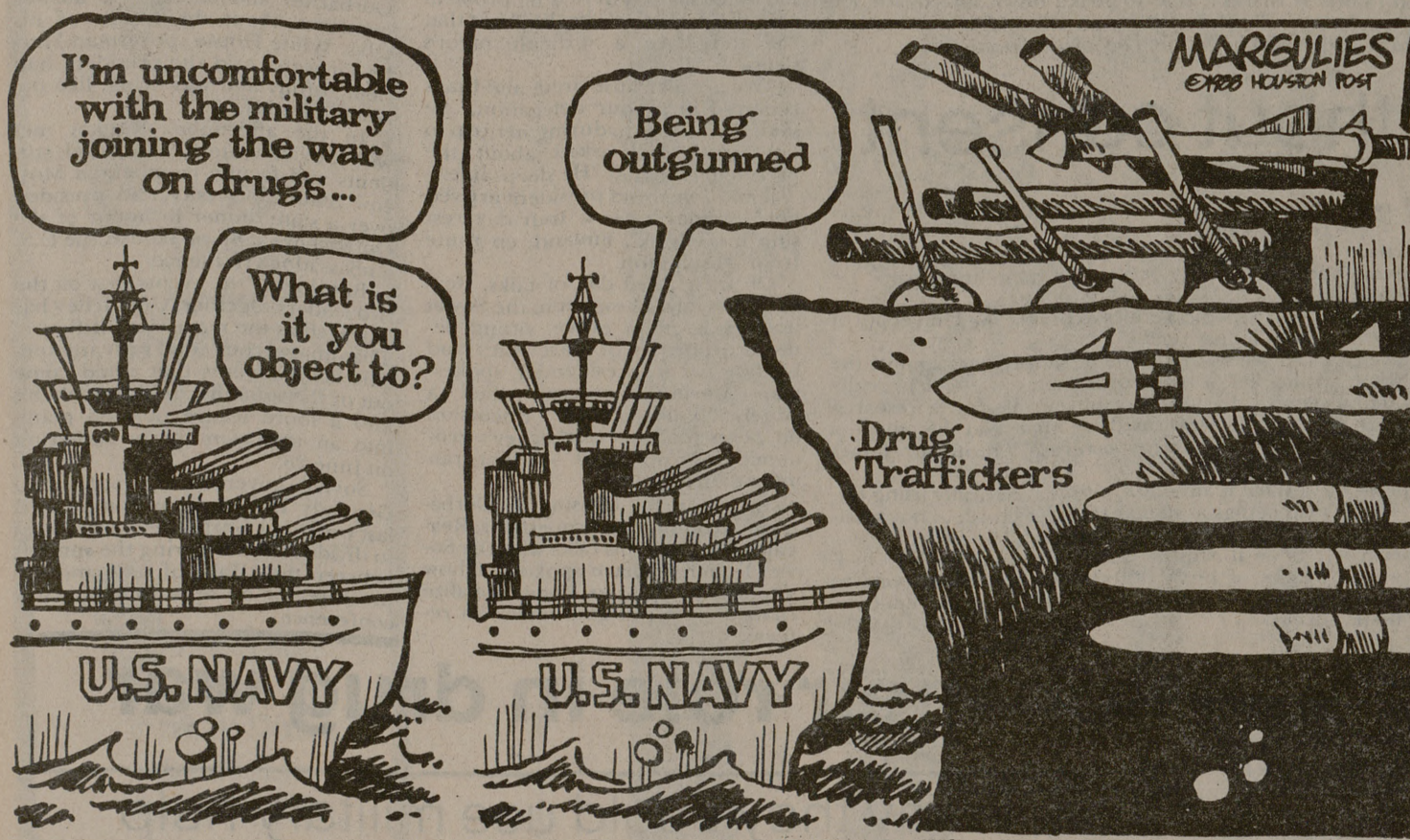
As Wanda explains in the end of her book:

"She said they were switching stant deaf. My coffee was keeping me awake all afternoon."

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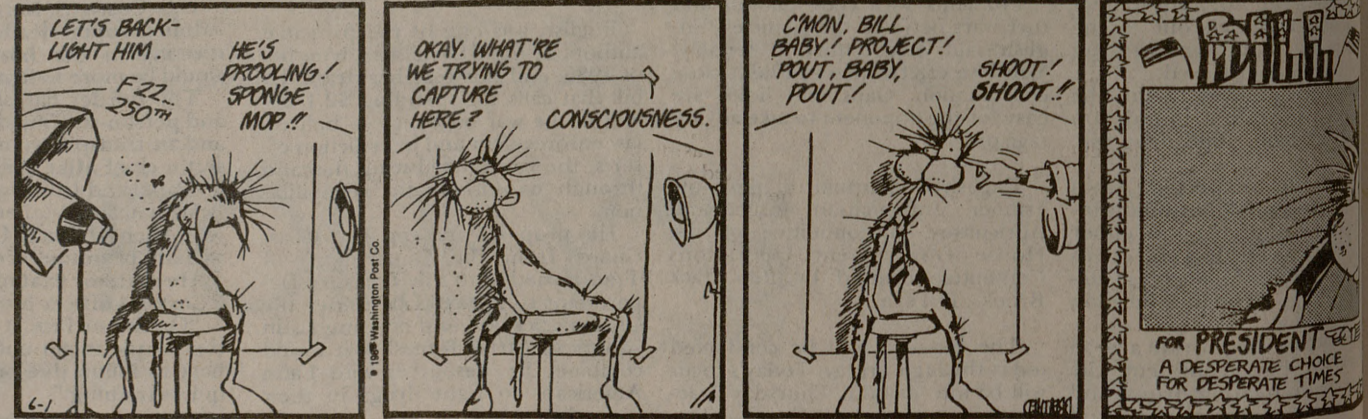
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BLOOM COUNTY



Old poor Aunt Fannie loses all her dough to religious vultures

Aunt Fannie, who's 90, never got married and never had any children. For the past several years, she has lived as a recluse in an apartment in Charleston, S.C.



Lewis Grizzard

Relatives tried to visit, but Aunt Fannie would refuse to open the door for them.

"She was living," said a grandniece, Beth Speaks, of Stone Mountain, "on powdered milk and cereal. A man who lived next door to her called and said when she walked to the mailbox, she was in shreds."

Beth Speaks' father, Aunt Fannie's nephew, finally talked to her landlord and was able to get inside the apartment, which he found in shambles.

He also found that Aunt Fannie, who was thought to be quite comfortable financially, was nearly broke.

"She had been eaten up," said Beth Speaks, "by religious vultures."

Beth's father obtained power of attorney for his aunt and found she had been giving away to \$500 a month in donations to religious organizations.

Most of her money had been sent to Feed My People out of Phoenix, Ariz., which is headed by a Rev. Don Stewart.

"Aunt Fannie still thinks this Stewart is the most wonderful person who ever hit this earth," Beth Speaks explained.

Here is a part of the sort of letters Don Stewart has been sending out to the Aunt Fannies of the world:

"Dear Fannie:

"I must talk to you. I must talk to you NOW. Please listen. If I can't talk to

you, who can I talk to?"

The letter continues with a discussion of how Feed My People needs \$80 to pay off a contractor who has something called an Emergency Headquarters.

"Now, here is what I am asking you to do," Stewart's letter goes on.

"Rush \$300 back to us today for need. Just think, your \$300 will be working for you long after you've gone to heaven."

"... if you don't have \$300 now, you can use your credit card... I can't talk to you. You love the dollar just as much as I do, don't you, Fannie?"

"Those letters made Aunt Fannie think the entire cause depended on her," said Beth Speaks.

Aunt Fannie's situation got worse. She fell and no longer can care of herself. She has been placed in a nursing home and faces welfare.

"I don't know," said Beth Speaks. "Maybe she felt she needed to make for something by giving this way. I don't know how those people can do on old folks the way they do."

What Eline Conley of Feed My People said was, "We're sorry, but we have no way of knowing the condition of people we send our letters to. We chase our lists of names."

Beth Speaks' father called Feed My People and demanded they send more mail from her beloved Don Stewart.

By the way, Don Stewart, Aunt Fannie needs your help. Right now. Send her money back.

Don't have the cash? Use your credit card, Slick.

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