

I awoke to the sun pouring in on my face and the yell of the guys.

"Did you call the can man?" I lay in bed wondering where I was, and then remembered. The house was over a hundred years old; the hardwood floors held memories of many children, many families, many tragedies, and many triumphs.

Now its use is different. The house that stands on a tree-lined road in a small, antique town is home for fraternity boys who long to relive the days of the Old South.

I watched the boys talk among themselves. Stories of the previous night's happenings filled the air. There didn't seem to be a worry in the world greater than what time the fish would start biting.

I saw Mr. Can Man then. As I walked out into the backyard, I heard a rustling, a tinkering, and then a gruff voice. There stood a dark man clothed in navy blue. I looked for a moment, and I didn't understand. Then, slowly, the lazy feeling wandered away and was replaced by more alert sensations.

I watched as he talked among the boys. Mr. Can Man didn't

## Rosie Molinary In my eyes.



seem like he was okay. It was hard for me to understand his deep voice and I thought he might be drunk.

We left for lunch. As we drove past the scenic homes that told the tales of the Old South, I sat silent, disturbed. I couldn't pinpoint what was bothering me, though.

He was sitting on the back porch when we pulled up. Leaning against a support pole, his eyes lingered for a moment, closed, and then popped open as he heard our car doors. He rose from the porch in a hurry and rushed back over to the trash bins surrounded by beer cans.

"I'm getting along," he said aloud.

We all greeted him and introduced ourselves. He paused, taking us all in with his dark, endless eyes. As he did this, I observed him. His face seemed to say he had seen better days, but he didn't understand they were days that had passed. He had seen a lot in his life

and maybe all of it was just a blur now. I didn't know, and I couldn't understand, even though I really wanted to.

"They call me Can Man. My real name is Manuel." He didn't seem to mind the nickname, but I immediately made a mental note to call him by his name. I wanted him to know that I saw him as a person and not just someone who came to take the cans to be recycled after a big party.

He looked at me for a moment, and I wondered what he was thinking, or whether he was just remembering golden days.

"You look foreign," he told me.

"Yes sir, I'm Puerto Rican."

"You don't talk like a Puerto Rican—your English is good. You talk like white folk." He was looking at me, as I had at him.

"Yes sir. I've been in the States since I was two. Military. But both my parents are Puerto Rican."

Rob King



## Dare to cross barriers.

It's Valentine's Day, and you're probably thinking that I'm going to write about love, the true meaning of romance or some other nebulous concept which reflects today's holiday.

Well, surprisingly, I don't have a date on this special holiday, and I'm just not in the mood to write about love, so bah humbug. (Actually, I should be used to not having a date since I'm only battling 1 for 22 on Valentine's Days in my life which might even be worse than Nathan Seay's average. And, yes, Nathan, even dressing up like a woman didn't get me

**"God created  
Adam, Steve,  
Eve, Jane,  
you, me, and  
everyone else."**

a date.)

Recently, I went to see a movie that not only disturbed me, but left a deep scar on my soul, probably for the rest of my life. In the movie *Philadelphia*, the rapid deterioration of the main character and the prejudices against homosexuals and people infected with the AIDS virus should be enough to disturb even the most insensitive of viewers.

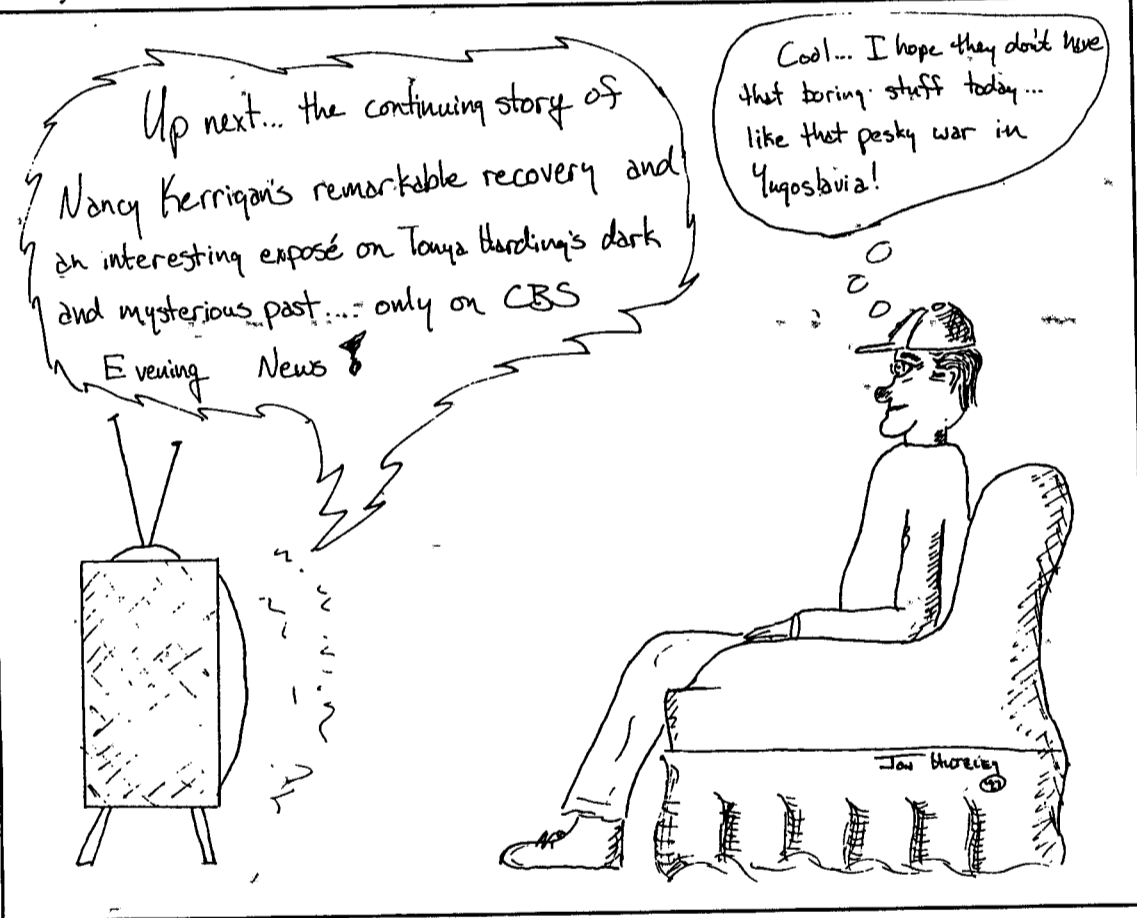
The one scene that stands out in my mind the most, however, is a scene in which a man comes to the front of an angry mob and yells to Hanks' character, "God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve." For the rest of the movie, I was troubled by this unloving comment proclaimed in the name of God (kind of like the really cool medieval Crusades concept of killing for Christ). My response to such a comment would be that "God created Adam, Steve, Eve, Jane, you, me, and everyone else."

In giving such a response, I'm not saying that homosexuality is "right," nor am I saying that it is "wrong." I think such a question is not as important as everyone seems to think. What is important is how we react to anyone who is different than we are.

As a Christian, the first example which I look towards for a model of behavior is Jesus. The Jesus I look towards is not the popular icon carelessly used as a cultural justification for book burnings, abortion clinic bombings, condemnation of homosexuality and all of the other negative images which seem to plague Christianity these days.

The Jesus I look towards is a radical with an unbending commitment to loving all people by crossing over any boundary, no matter how scandalous such an action would be. The Jesus I look towards is the one I find in the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

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## Whites not always "out to get" African-Americans

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mission, they are less likely to go out of their way to help their customers.) Let me explain myself.

I think everyone has experienced bad service, or at some time has not been treated with respect. I could not even begin to count the number of times that I have had a bad waitress, or sales clerk who either ignored me or treated me improperly. I cannot necessarily defend the sales clerks at Dover's because I was not present during this incident, but couldn't we just as easily chalk it up to incompetent, bad service?

I am positive that most African-Americans are justified in claiming that they have at some time in their life been treated unjustly because of their skin color. As a white American I find it very difficult to resolve our past history of slavery. It embarrasses me the way white Americans abused an-

other race because they incorrectly believed they were "inferior." I am sure that African-Americans must also have difficulty resolving their resentment for this treatment.

Thus, African-Americans can often be justified when they believe that people mistreat them because they are of a different race, but I think that sometimes we are all too hypersensitive to these issues. Ms. Miller cannot be certain that those employees were racist any more than she can claim that they were wearing red underwear.

Quoting Miller: "Until you know for certain that my personal character is less than acceptable to society, never discriminate or show racial bias toward me." Just as she accuses people of judging someone's character before they truly know a person, she too seems to be assuming too much without knowing all the facts.

Many of the racial tensions stem from misunderstandings and

ignorance. Instead of always looking for some way to be offended and insulted, we should try to give the benefit of the doubt (whenever possible) and work together.

It saddens me to think that many African-Americans assume that the majority of whites are "out to get them." In many cases this is not true. Instead of getting angry, one may achieve more by explaining oneself articulately than when one yells and argues.

I reflect on my own experiences at home. If I really wanted to get something from my parents, I might make myself heard if I screamed and yelled, but I was not making myself understood. The only time I ever achieved any ground was when I sat down and explained myself in a soft manner.

If the Dover's employees were racist, Miller telling them that they were "ignorant" and "narrow-minded" probably instilled more hate than previously existed.

"So you don't speak Spanish?" He seemed disappointed.

"I do speak Spanish. I just never picked up an accent."

"I was wondering. I was with a Puerto Rican woman. Down in Florida. Yes ma'am, I was with a Puerto Rican woman. She could cook. She could sing. She could dance. And when I got her mad—oh boy, I better watch my back because my woman taught me some lessons. You sure do remind me of her. You have her eyes. Those black eyes, you know that. Puerto Rican women seem mysterious because of those eyes. They're pretty powerful. And that temper. Have you got that temper?" I shook my head no.

"Yes ma'am, that's the love of my life. And you brought her back to me today. It's a long way to Florida, you know. A lot more than these cans can pay for."

He grinned now in the memory, lingering in the past. I realized these were the days I had seen in his eyes that he didn't realize were over. My heart shed a silent tear as I remembered all the days I had cursed how dark my eyes were, how horribly plain I was, or how little I had to offer others.

There were days when being Puerto Rican didn't even occur to me. And there I was, on the back porch of a house in a strange town, with a man whom I had pleased unintentionally because of my nationality and my patience to hear his story. It dawned on me that we often overlook and fail to appreciate the things that make us unique.

Suddenly, the little girl that had begged for green contacts seemed to notice her black eyes for the first time. She smiled.

## Get married in the Union Outpost.

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has had chocolate bars.

I can help out in other areas that require special ministerial assistance as well. Have you ever been frustrated by one of those Catholic (or any other right wing religion) girls (or boys—I guess it happens) who chant that Georgia Satellites song to you: "No hug-ee no kiss-ee 'til I get a weddin' ring. . . . Don't hand me no lines and keep your hands to yourself."

Well, look no further. All you have to do is get your honey of choice good and liquored up, find the good Rev. Nathan (around three o'clock in the morning I'm usually in the Outpost telling girls what extraordinary legs they have) and—presto—you have a blushing spouse. No ring? No problem. All you have to do is find an old beer cans with the pull off tabs.

One of my uncles actually used a pop top from a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon when he asked his wife to marry him. Suffice it to say that family reunions are a hoot.

Now that I'm a great religious leader and all (and a pacifist to boot), I guess Davidson has two people on campus who are exactly like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Amen, brother.