

N. C. Coroner Set-Up, Which Invites Foul Play, Should Be Revamped

THE CASE of Grandma Doss, the poor man's Lucretia Borgia who has confessed poisoning four of her five husbands, has prompted another look at the North Carolina coroner system as well as a North Carolina graveyard. One of the men she claims to have poisoned was a Tar Heel. When he died the coroner, who is a doctor, noted symptoms of arsenic poisoning. Not long thereafter the dead man's relatives said they suspected foul play. But the coroner did not perform an autopsy.

Here, it would seem, was an example of a professional man being remiss in his duty. But in the majority of counties the coroner wouldn't even be able to detect symptoms of arsenic poisoning or other irregular deaths. This is because most coroners have no medical training. A year ago—and it is not likely that the figures have changed much—only 19 of the 100 county coroners were doctors. Many of the other 81 coroners detect cause of death even as some have proved, when it is obvious. There was the case, not long ago, of a Goldsboro boy who told Wilmington police he shot a woman. A coroner had viewed the body and ruled she died of a heart attack. Her body was exhumed and there was a bullet hole in her back. There are other instances, not so shocking as the one cited, when deaths arouse questions that should be but are not answered because the coroner phrase goes, "no inquest will be held."

LET US SAY here that Mecklenburg is an exception to the rule that North Carolina counties have unqualified coroners. County Coroner Dr. W. M. Summerville is a pathologist. He is probably the man Dr. Wiley Forbus, Duke pathologist and critic of the present coroner system, had in mind when he said only one North Carolina coroner is capable of conducting an adequate medico-legal autopsy. The benefit of having a competent coroner is readily seen by noting the number of "cause unknown" deaths in Mecklenburg with the number in counties with an unqualified coroner. During a recent period of about one year Mecklenburg had 1,725 deaths, and cause of death was determined in 1,400 cases. Wake and Wayne also with more than 1,000 deaths during this period, had none of undetermined cause. On the other hand, here are the figures for some other counties:

County	Deaths	Cause Known
Cumberland	891	43
Robeson	727	26
New Hanover	723	28
Columbus	298	20

Obviously, the situation prevailing in those counties invites foul play. And it is also true that professionally competent coroners can be slack. Burke Davis noted some figures for the GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS last year and found

Prospects For Redevelopment Brighten

WHAT PROMISED to be one of Charlotte's greatest improvement programs received a serious setback last year when the General Assembly refused to liberalize the urban redevelopment law. Redevelopment commissions in North Carolina communities were not authorized to exercise eminent domain on property two-thirds of which was blighted. Lacking this authority local commissioners regrettably resigned. Thus plans for redeveloping the Palmer St. area into a modern commercial neighborhood, and eventually redeveloping other sections of the city, were put in cold storage. The deep-freeze door has been opened by the Supreme Court, which unanimously declared recently that organizations such as urban redevelopment commissions can condemn property. This week Planning Commissioner W. W.

From The Richmond News Leader

OLD FACES BEFUDDLE

I AM SAD to report that, as the years pass, my miserable memory shows no signs of improvement. I don't mean my general memory, which is at least adequate, but my recollection of people's names.

It's slight comfort that many people have the same problem. Mark Twain thought he had it fixed; when he ran across somebody he felt he should know he would ask brightly, "And how's the old complaint?"

At any rate, I have never had quite the embarrassing experience suffered by Mrs. Richard Harding Davis, wife of the foreign correspondent, who memory for names and faces must have been infinitely microscopic.

She was riding in a Long Island train one day when an impressive-looking woman took a seat across the aisle from her, and nodded to her.

She remembered that somewhere she had met the lady, but couldn't at all recall the situation or the name. Just then, the lady said, "Won't you come and sit with me, Mrs. Davis?" Mrs. Davis changed her seat, and then,



"I don't like Liberace... as a matter of fact, I can't stand Liberace."

The Administration Crisis

'Strangle Baby' Or Live With It?

By STEWART ALSOP

A PROFOUND cleavage with overnight, though, if the challenge is to be made, the first step must be the money and time to train at least six additional divisions.

Ridgway's is the basic position, but there are many variations on the same theme. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, for example, is very well aware of the volcanic reaction probable among this country's European allies if the United States blocked China, for example, or intervened to hold the Nationalist off-shore islands. But he is equally aware of the volcanic reaction on Capitol Hill, for example, his able assistant secretary of state, Walter Robertson, resigned in protest against the administration's Asia policies.

Dulles himself, moreover, has had in the past strong sympathy with the views of the Radford-Robertson-Knowland group. The

Dulles position, therefore, is seemingly betwixt-and-between, despite his strong sounding statements in his broadcast Monday night.

In point of fact, the secretary of the Treasury is probably a more influential figure in this conflict than the secretary of State. Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey does not have to be a military expert in Asia to be a military expert in Asia. He is going to cost money—in the long run, probably a great deal of money.

Humphrey quite sincerely believes that "loose spending" at home represents as great a threat to the United States as Communist aggression abroad. He has therefore opposed taking any "un-necessary" military risks. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, his alter ego in the Pentagon, goes along with him.

People's Platform

Segregation Decision

Improved Democracy

Editors, The News: I VIGOROUSLY opposed capital punishment in the Rosenberg case solely because I had ethical scruples against infliction of the death penalty. Later, however, when an awful offense was committed in Kansas City, I believed that the guilty couple forfeited every right to human compassion, even in prison for life.

Apparently I yield somewhat to the immense horror that naturally ensues from such a monstrous act. Confined to the cell of a hard labor for life would have been a much more severe penalty than the mercy of quick, painless execution. I am satisfied that the death penalty is never justified.

I would like to clarify possible misunderstanding. Democracy even with its weakness is far superior to communism. I believe that democracy, though imperfect, is better than communism at its best. There is danger, however, in opposing evil with unjust methods.

Those who oppose evil with hatred and injustice become evil. Hatred breeds hatred. Violence breeds violence. It is the duty of the citizen to be just, reasonable and fair to all.

JOHN AND JEAN SURRATT
Charlotte Junior Chamber of Commerce

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

U. S. bankers have a lot more at stake in the Rio de Janeiro Economic Conference than most of them realize. So does the American public.

This was one reason why Congressman Jim Fulton of Pittsburgh tangled with the fellow Republican Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey, for coming to the Rio conference with "an empty case."

Congressman Fulton not only knew Latin American temperament regarding the Eisenhower administration's loan policy. He also knew that the President's brother Milton and U. S. Ambassador Merwin Bonham had stepped off the U. S. delegation because they opposed Humphrey's tight-fisted point of view.

What U. S. bankers face in Rio is a plan for a purely inter-Latin American bank put forward by Arturo Baschke, president of the Central Bank of Chile. This bank would be composed only of Latin American nations. The United States would be barred. However—and here is where U. S. bankers would get caught in the middle—the capital for this bank would be raised from Latin American deposits now in U. S. banks.

As of today, Latin Americans have a total of \$1,600,000,000 on deposit in North American banks. And under the Baschke plan they would withdraw this money from U. S. banks and put it in

their own bank as collateral against development loans to underdeveloped Latin American countries.

Any withdrawal of nearly two billions from American banks, especially if done suddenly after the Rio Conference, might have a discombobulating effect upon the American banking system.

Europe Invades Latin America

Meanwhile, what the American public doesn't realize is that German businessmen are descending on Latin America in increasing numbers, offering long-term credit and cheap prices. Thus, while the U. S. spends money building up Germany, Germany is indirectly helping money to rebuild America through Latin America.

Today, Latin America buys more from the U. S. than all of Europe and Asia combined. Ranking next to Canada, our best customer—come Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, all buying more from the U. S. than from Europe.

And while Latin delegates at Rio learn that the U. S. is considering a two-to-three-billion development fund for Asia, Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey discusses a prospective bank which would loan Latin America \$100,000,000 sometime in the future.

That's why Congressman Fulton criticized his fellow Republican, Secretary

Humphrey, for coming to Rio with "an empty brief case."

Democratic Go-Round

Harry Truman is sending his friend, Bill Boyle, to New Orleans to turn thumbs down on Paul Butler of Indiana as new Democratic chairman of the party. Boyle, also of Indiana, is down on Butler, which is one reason why Truman, always loyal to his friends, is opposing him. Harry still carries a hefty veto in the party.

Steve Mitchell says he's staying neutral in the chairmanship, but approached by the Democratic District of Columbia central committee chairman, to vote for Boyle.

Estes Kefauver's friends at New Orleans will vote for Mike Di Salle, former price administrator, or Jiggs Donohue, former D. C. commissioner.

Many southerners favor Congressman Hale Boggs of Louisiana, a good man. However, there's a general thumbs down against any part-time chairman. Boggs is a Catholic and there's also a strong sentiment for continuing the tradition of a Catholic as Democratic chairman.

Only exception to this might be Oscar Chapman, the much-hated former secretary of the interior, who, unfortunately, is in poor health.

Eisenhower Can't Call The Tune From The Golf Course

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON
PRESIDENT EISENHOWER can't achieve some kind of competitive co-existence with communism if he wants it enough. He can't achieve it on the golf course with such intellectually retreating companions as Tom Belshie and George Allen.

The President's aim is clear. He intends to avoid a military solution of the problem of living in the world with communism. He believes the free world will win in the end by wise actions and the erosion of time.

All this is commendable and even noble, but it is still not a policy, only an aim. As a policy it remains to be created. Once created, it needs to be accepted by the American people so that Congress in turn will do those things which will make it possible to go forward with its execution.

The President cannot set the tone of the world—and in essence, this is exactly what he is trying to do—by press conference statements, no matter how eloquent, nor by a few formal speeches no matter how well turned.

CAN'T DELEGATE JOB
Nor can he delegate the plain hard work and political maneuvering which will be necessary in the coming fight with those who want a harder and more risky policy toward communism.

This opposition is already organizing, its propaganda is everywhere, and in the sincere and colorful Sen. Knowland of California, they have a spokesman who has none of the old isolationist liabilities.

The authority of the presidency is great and as a propaganda outlet it has no equal. But a Senator of the United States with a handful of determined men in the helm once brought Woodrow Wil-

son to his knees, and in a peace cause too. No senator ever forgets it.

Nor will the new Senate be under the spell of the President. Due in large part to the campaign waged against the last fall by Vice President Nixon, plus the President's seeming unawareness of it, Democrats feel they cannot afford to sign any blank checks for Eisenhower. And while they are as patriotic as most men, they will also be working toward the goal of public opinion.

It is permissible to wonder if President Eisenhower realizes how very much more difficult it is to create effective new policies than to execute those which have already been hammered out on the anvil of public opinion.

He made his reputation by superbly executing assignments handed by policies which Roosevelt and Truman fought for, against often excruciating opposition.

It is also difficult to see where, among his present staff, he can get creative stimulus. The men around Eisenhower are more conservative in their behavior and less colorful than the men around Truman, but intellectually they represent no advance. Some veterans of the Senate say frankly that Eisenhower has on the whole the poorest staff of any President they have known.

During 1953, President was in Washington 251 days, away 114. The 1954 season will include the new summer vacation in Colorado and he is expected to be about the same. Nor did he see any reason to change his vacation ways in election which turned over the House and Senate to Democratic control. He has been duck hunting, he spent Thanksgiving at Annapolis and he plans an early winter vacation in Palm Springs, Calif.

The Good Old Books Best Comics And TV Programs

By ROBERT C. RUARK

I HAVE not been eager to say either television or the gruesome comic books as a purveyor of our youth's education to pervade easily enough with little assistance these sad days. There were boys and girls before TV and the comic book, just as there were boys and girls before the movies and radio.

Insofar as horrifying reading is concerned, few "comics" compare with the classic fairy tales of the Messrs. Andersen and Grimm, for head-cuttings, cannibalism, torture and sadism. Jack the Giant Killer would certainly never be permitted on TV if it were to be faithfully portrayed.

What I blame TV and the comic books for, mostly, is the impoverishment of the youthful imagination, and the atrophy of certain brain cells. You do not have to think, or even comprehend, to watch TV. An idiot can spend as creditable an afternoon before a TV set as a man with an IQ of 150—more profitable, as a matter of fact, since a great deal of TV entertainment seems specially tailored for the idiot's delight.

BOOKS NEGLECTED

As far as I can make out the average modern youngster has not sensed the treasures that can be found between the covers of a good book, largely due to lack of hours in the day to investigate the fascination of words. It is too much to expect of the child to run his eyesight poring over some fusty old effort like "Treasure Island" or "Robin Hood Sawyer" when the eyes are already weak and owl-blinded from six or seven hours of TV. It's all he can do to scan the pages of "Obscene Horror" or "Love in a Graveyard."

I made a bad witness here, for I was early led to the library, and found such an endless fascination there that I have never been able to read enough since. I will read anything, including the fine print on packets of soap-flakes. And my own staff.

It seems to me that any child who does not know Long John Silver or Injun Joe has missed out on a couple of fine

villains, and if it is horror he seeks, a morbid type named Edgar Allan Poe was a fair hand at dish it up. For young adventure, the river still satisfies my cravings. For more adult adventure, I have found that the past two years by heavy research reading have to do with the settlement of East Africa.

The historical documents of Speke and Bell, Selous and Thomson, Elsie Huxley and L.S.B., Elsie Huxley and Stanley have been a state of amusement, for there is more blood, more thunder, more slave raids, more cannibalism, more wild animals, more privation, more excitement in those volumes than in a year's program of bad TV.

KIPLING STILL FRESH

Just recently Dan Munnix and J. H. Hunter have done a book called "Tales of the African Frontier," all factual, of adventure in our time, and it makes Captain Victor's tales of the Sudan look like a child's play. It is also here in re-reading Kipling, lately, and find him as fresh as 30 years ago, when I first met his India.

Nobody ever tied more fascination to animals and boys than did Kipling. He was the great naturalist who wrote fluently and well. The saga of the fur trappers and buffalo hunters and riverboat men, as handled by a dozen American authors has more raw, rough stuff than any contrived adventure story. And Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River" is the best fishing story ever written by man.

From re-reading a book called "Mister Jellert" by Alan Lomax, I know more today about the fascinating history of the evolution of jazz from New Orleans bordellos until today, than any 200-year who talks live and who would read a hundred square.

These things are not to be found in quantity on TV, or in those blurry, awful, cheap caricatures of the human mind of a big day is to twiddle a knob and steep himself in shadowy mists when there is as much richer adventure to be found in the pages of a book.

U. S. Banks May Lose Big Account

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