

MEANS

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times, I could put up some numbers. I feel like in order for us to be a success, the running game has to be successful, and that means me."

Or on taking off his helmet to celebrate a 20-yard TD run, his longest of the year, in the regular-season finale against Pittsburgh:

"I wanted to show everyone my face. I wanted to show them the man behind the mask."

Means might not be a Jim Carrey, but he's certainly headed for stardom, which should please his mother, Gwendolyn Stevenson, who banned her son from

football when he was in junior high school.

"He had to learn what was important," she said. "I had to slow him down a little bit."

"After that, I didn't have any problems."

Nor did Means — until just before the 1993 draft.

Means was an immediate hit in high school, returning a kick-off 80 yards for a touchdown the first time he touched the ball. Sometimes playing half a game, he rushed for 2,300 yards at Cabarrus High in Concord, N.C., and was an All-American.

He also was a standout at North Carolina, rushing for more than 1,000 yards as a sophomore and junior before leaving school

for the NFL.

But Means wasn't taken on the first round of the draft, mainly because teams feared he had a weight problem.

The Chargers had no such worries. Reasoning that Means always carried lots of pounds — he was 230 when he entered college — and wasn't slowed by it, San Diego traded its 1994 No. 1 choice to grab him.

Although he fared well as Butts' backup in '93, the Natrone Bomb didn't go off until this season.

"I never doubted myself," Means said with a smile and a puff on the cigar. "I always felt I could play here from the first day I got here."

HENRY

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the inside — for that's the true measure of an individual.

In a perfect world, the story would be that the America3 crew has worked hard and gone the extra mile to defend this nation's honor. But in this "book by its cover" society, all thoughts are concentrated solely on their outward appearance.

We're all at fault for this lack of depth in coverage. We make 10-second generalizations of those we meet or read about based on what we see, not what we discover.

The short-attention span society we live in requires that our views be prejudged and that our perceptions of others be discontinued once we've reached the basics.

So why not make the ultimate

change in 1995 by going beyond an individual's outer-shell?

America3 isn't a newsworthy story because the crew is comprised solely of women. It is a newsworthy story because a group of individuals have pulled together to make the ultimate physical and mental sacrifice of their lives.

America3 is newsworthy because these individuals are attempting to qualify for the right to defend the pride of a country where "all men are created equal."

In the land of the free and the home of the brave, give these individuals the proper respect they deserve.

A little change never hurt anyone — and the opportunity for change is what truly exemplifies this country.

Kris Henry is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

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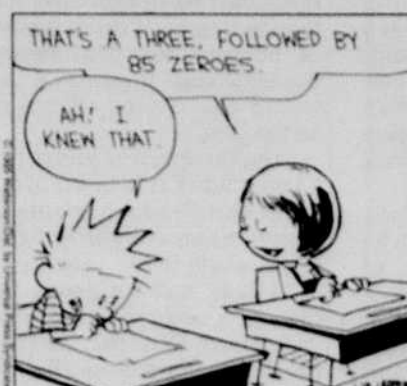
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