

communiqué

Politics make for some strange dead fellows

By Thomas A. Rhodes
Of The Print

SCENE: A party at the Mariott Hotel in Portland, sometime during the summer. Out of the dark, smoke filled room, two people have found each other. The party is for an elitist band of college dwellers. MAN has crashed the party and only knows that he has crashed an elitists' party. VIRGIN is a 17-year-old virgin-like nymph: With virgin eyes, virgin ears and a virgin nose, she is completely innocent of all crimes against humanity. Naturally, she is dressed in a pretty white skirt with matching blouse. Wearing a light brown pair of nylon stockings, VIRGIN wears, below her knees, a pair of bright green suede Nikes.

MAN is tough and macho. An anarchist from any point of view, he knows what he wants and is always prepared to go out and get it. MAN knows what makes the world go around. He dons himself a pair of black Army boots, a black tuxedo and a black beret on top of his head. An unfiltered cigarette dangles from his thin, dry lips. His cigarette is unlit, it's always been unlit, because MAN never lights his coffin nails.

Curtain opens in mid-conversation...

VIRGIN: All I know is what I read in the newspaper. What it said was that all these people died...there were a lot of them...Aldo Moro, Bobby Sands, Raymond McCreesh, Lord Mountbatten, General Samoja, countless numbers of children, women and no names that are just blasted off the planet. My lord, someone even tried to kill the pope....

MAN: You miss a great amount of information in these articles.

VIRGIN: But all they say is pretty much who did it. Groups like the IRA, the Red Brigade, the PLO, rebel guerillas, the British Army, some people even do it to themselves.

MAN: You got it.

VIRGIN: But why? I just don't understand the reasoning behind murdering someone like Mr. Moro or Mr. Pope.

MAN: It's simple.

VIRGIN: You mean simple-minded?

MAN: No, just simple. You see, death is an easy way to make a political statement. People will pay attention.

VIRGIN: But, what's wrong with putting up signs that state your purpose? Wouldn't it be

cheaper and easier to put up a sign than purchasing a bazooka and a set of machine guns and blowing General Samoja to bits and pieces?

MAN: Of course it would be cheaper to hold up a sign saying, "Samoza's a gob of spit," but because it is cheaper, it means that you're not as strong-willed on your subject as if you killed someone. Take Lord Mountbatten, for instance. He was pretty much England's answer to John Wayne. One day, while sitting in his yacht, the IRA decided to make him an ex-lord.

VIRGIN: Why did they do that?

MAN: Because the Irish are oppressed by the British, and the only way the Army felt they could get the English to pay attention to their problems was to hit the British right where it hurts.

VIRGIN: Did it work?

MAN: If you mean, did it hurt the British right where the sun don't shine, you bet it did!

VIRGIN: No, I meant have the British started paying attention to the problems of the Irish people?

MAN: If anything, they've sent

in more troops.

VIRGIN: So, it has just made the Imperialists want to send in more troops to suppress the already suppressed Irish population even more.

MAN: I guess so...

VIRGIN: So the whole thing has been a waste of time and life?

MAN: Not in the least, it hasn't.

VIRGIN: Clarify, please, what was it then?

MAN: It was a...political statement.

VIRGIN: You mean a violent political statement.

MAN: Violent...non-violent...a political statement is statement. If 1,000 women got together and marched down Main Street in a quest for peace between the Catholics and the Protestants, that would be a political statement...although a rather insignificant one.

VIRGIN: How do you mean?

MAN: Well...it didn't work.

VIRGIN: But for one whole day, no one in the nation was killed or injured.

MAN: The next day, someone was, though.

VIRGIN: But the peace lasted longer than when Lord Mountbatten was murdered.

MAN: You don't understand. If the IRA or any other subversive Irish group performed such a peaceful statement, we—I mean they—would have been snubbed away by the British for being stupid. Killing Lord Mountbatten shows Thatcher and Charles that we are sympathetic to our cause. Now this forces the English to stand up and take notice of the problems. When the United Kingdom finally stands up and takes notice, then the problem will be solved.

VIRGIN: Does the end justify the means?

MAN: If it's the end, then it does. If it works toward a solution to the problem, then it does. It will work, that's what violence is for. Believe me, miss, if I didn't have a good reason to go out and kill the pope, I wouldn't go out and do it.

VIRGIN: Why did he go out and shoot the pope, anyway?

MAN: I'm not really sure, but I'm positive he had a damn good reason for it, otherwise he wouldn't have done it.

VIRGIN: There aren't any better solutions to the problems...say...Northern Ireland and Ireland are having?

MAN: If better, you mean peaceful solutions, of course there are. Say economic sanctions against England, NATO pressure...peaceful protests...riots...bombings...I mean, think of a situation...say you're sitting in a front lawn, and you see a spaceship land in your

EDGERTON



yard. What would be quicker, to go in your house, find paint, a brush, some paper and write down, "You're going to oppress me, so get the hell out of here!" or grab your sawed-off and blow the bastards' brains out?"

VIRGIN: But you're not thinking when committing violence upon another human being.

MAN: Wrongo, milady! That's what political causes are for, to make up for the lack of thinking. That's what the Red Brigade has done. As opposed to labeling ourselves nuts who are running around kneecapping judges, we give ourselves a political cause, so people will respect us. People will respect a band of left- or right-winged extremists, especially if their guns are pointed at your heads.

VIRGIN: What are you saying?

MAN: I'm saying that if you murder someone with political intentions (it could be someone completely innocent, for all I care), then you get caught and thrown in prison, someone else with the same intentions can take a bank, hold 25 hostages, and demand your release. If the government gives in, then you're out on the streets murdering more innocent women, children and no-names. If you were nuts, you couldn't label yourself a political prisoner, so an early release is impossible.

VIRGIN: Oh my God...I can almost detect some logic in there.

MAN: I knew that you would see it that way.

VIRGIN: But I don't, I just don't see how you can justify murdering people like the pope!

MAN: Andy Warhol once said, "Everyone will have their moment in the spotlight."

VIRGIN: But you're justifying murder on the grounds that it will make other people pay attention to your demands.

MAN: I'm saying that

sometimes murder is necessary in order to obtain your goals. Besides, I want my moment in the spotlight, too.

VIRGIN: Are you nuts?

MAN: (smiling) No, not nuts...
VIRGIN: Who are you, anyway? I don't even know your name.

MAN: It doesn't really matter, I shouldn't be talking, I have a job to do.

VIRGIN: Oh, really? (genuinely interested) What's your job?

MAN: Well...I'm a member of the United Judea Front (he slowly removes a "Saturday Night Special" from his tuxedo pocket and aims it at VIRGIN's right breast), and I'm afraid I must terminate your life immediately.

VIRGIN: (stunned) But...but why?

MAN: (coldly) Because we of the United Judea Front have repeatedly demanded free tickets to the upcoming Celebrity Attractions season. We have been denied at every turn, so, with the season nearly upon us, we must take this final, desperate act.

VIRGIN: (desperate) I'll give you mine, balcony seats to "A Chorus Line!"

MAN: Not good enough! I want tickets to the Joffrey Ballet, too (his gun explodes, sending the dead virgin sprawling into a set of fun-fur coats. A scream is heard, but is quickly silenced by another person wanting to survive. The crowd of pseudo-elitists stares in stunned silence as MAN walks slowly to the exit. He turns to the crowd, smiling.) And remember, if you don't get tickets to "They're Playing Our Song" soon, there's going to be more violence. (He pretends to take a puff of his unlit cigarette and walks out. The crowd begins to mill amongst itself. A man walks to the phone and calls the police. Soon, the television cameras will arrive.)

Fade to Black

Clackamas Community College

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