

Agent's Act Of Kindness May Have Altered Life Of Runaway Youngster

By JOHN EDGAR HOOVER

Director, FBI

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Christmas stories traditionally include tinsel, trees, plum pudding, holly and mistletoe. This story has

none of those things, but it does have giving and gratitude — and an ending that makes it, I think, a most satisfying story of that wonderful season when every member of every family longs to

be at home. This story began about 10 days before Christmas eight years ago. At Chambersburg, Pa., an FBI agent, on leave from our New York office, was asked to provide

transportation to the next large city on his route for a youth who had been ill and who was hopeful of securing a job on his arrival in a distant city. The agent willingly agreed to

take the boy as far as Winchester, Va. Noting that his passenger appeared to be extremely young to be seeking a full-time job, the agent, genuinely interested, began drawing him out. Bit by bit the story developed.

The youth had left his New Jersey home, but his reasons for leaving proved to be very different from those of the usual runaway. A junior in high school, this boy had just come out of the hospital where he had been confined for a three-week period with a glandular ailment. His mother, a registered nurse by profession, was widowed, the father having died before the youth was born. The mother bore the burden of rearing the lad and his sister, and caring for her own aged mother as well. The sister had completed high school and secured a job. The youth felt that he also should seek a job and thereby ease his mother's heavy burden. So he had left his home.

Once he had learned the boy's story, the special agent sought to convince the youth that his action would in no sense ease the mother's problems, but would add to them, and that it would be much better for all concerned if he were to return to his home.

The agent, meanwhile, had learned the boy had only 20 cents, and that he had spent the previous night in a Salvation Army barracks.

Using all his powers of persuasion, the young special agent at last succeeded in convincing the youth that he should go home. As soon as they arrived in Winchester, the agent purchased a bus ticket to the point nearest the boy's New Jersey home, gave the youngster \$5, wished him well

and bade him good-bye.

That is almost the end of the story. The FBI agent drove to his home. He sent the boy a Christmas card and wrote a note to the mother indicating he was happy to have been able to help her son. He stated that the boy's attitude appeared to be commendable, and he expressed his hope that the youth had arrived home safely.

On his return to New York, the agent received a Christmas card. In it, the youth who had run away expressed his appreciation for what had been done for him. He would, the boy wrote, never forget the agent or ever regret returning home. The card was followed by a telephone call from the youth's sister, expressing gratitude in behalf of her mother and herself. The young woman advised that her brother had reached home safely, had returned to school, and was doing well.

That is the end of a Christmas story of a few years ago — or perhaps it isn't, because an act of kindness may have wholly changed the course of a life. But

MORTY MEEKLE



H-N Scribe Pays Visit To A Family In Denmark

Herald's Note: Peggy Walsh, Herald and News' Dunsuir touring correspondent, writes from Frankfurt.

By PEGGY WALSH

FRANKFORT—If the people of Dunsuir have any doubts as to the value of participating in the American Field Service foreign exchange student program, we hope they will forget them. I only wish Russia and China could be included.

When a mother entrusts her son

or daughter to another mother in another country, she can only do so with love and understanding. The family units we have met in Europe are no different from family units in the United States despite differences in language and custom.

We were aware that this year's AFS student, Inger Saeter of Denmark, had not been able to adjust to life in Dunsuir and had been assigned to another city. I made this clear before accepting the invitation of Inger's aunt to spend

the evening at her Copenhagen apartment. That made no difference. Inger's father came. Inger's grandmother came. Her cousin and the cousin's husband came. We had wine and open sandwiches and cakes and coffee and

laughed and talked. The size of the United States is difficult for the Danish to comprehend. Denmark is about the size of Siskiyou County. Inger's father seemed disappointed that I wouldn't see her again now that she was staying in Milwaukee. We explained it would be about a four-day trip from California. We tried to help them see Dunsuir situated in the mountains, surrounded by forests and populated primarily by middle-income families. Dunsuir is vastly different from flat, tidy Denmark and the fact that Inger was unable to adjust to these differences should in no way detract from the value of the program. The fact that we were from Dunsuir and not from Milwaukee made no difference. We were from America and we were welcome.

Ulla Bernston of Sweden and Dieter Heinrich of Germany were able to adjust to the differences. I was aware in meeting each of them early in their stay in the United States that adjustment was not easy but only since visiting them in their homes have we become fully aware of the demands their stay in America made upon them.

A meal alone is apt to put the Walsh family in a tizzy. Of course, neither Dieter nor Ulla had to go through the agony of ordering a meal in a foreign language, but wondering what one is eating and whether one is eating it properly is sufficient strain to give one indigestion.

Take bread for instance. In Scandinavia, bread doesn't seem to be eaten with the main course of the meal. It is eaten before the meat course is served with the traditional appetizers and with unsalted butter lavishly applied. Bread forms the basis of these entrancing open sandwiches.

Our children would take the sandwiches apart, scrape off three-fourths of the butter and eat the sandwich top as a salad or simply balk at the whole thing if the ingredients were unfamiliar. Our children have been equally ungracious about other meals. At one restaurant in Copenhagen where the service and cuisine were impeccable, both of them picked at their food and sulked. The food was delicious but I'll admit the sauces, seasoning and method of

Lighting the national Christmas tree, Eisenhower greeted broadly and exclaimed "Merry Christmas" as the 70-foot spruce from Maine burst into light from 3,800 colored bulbs.

Halley's comet is scheduled to next appear in 1986.

Partnership Is Needed, Not Bare Coexistence, President Tells Nation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mankind needs an open and peaceful partnership instead of a bare coexistence, President Eisenhower has told the world in his annual Christmas message.

The best way America can contribute to such a goal, he said, is to give needy nations the right sort of spirit.

The President delivered his message of peace and good will Wednesday at ceremonies opening the annual Christmas pageant of peace. As part of the observance, he pressed a switch illuminating the nation's Christmas tree in a park adjoining the White House grounds. The program was broadcast by television and radio.

Speaking 18 hours after his return from a trip that took him to Africa, Asia and Europe, Eisenhower addressed his remarks to his fellow countrymen and "workers for a just peace wherever you may be in the world, whatever your race or flag or tongue or creed."

The President said "our concept of the good life for humanity does not require an inevitable conflict between peoples and systems — in which one must triumph over the other. Nor does it offer merely a bare coexistence as a satisfactory state for mankind."

"After all, an uneasy coexistence can be as barren and sterile, joyless and stale a life for human beings as the coexistence of cellmates in a penitentiary or labor camp."

Eisenhower said the leaders and the "humble men and women" with whom he talked during his tour share a common faith that America will help lead the way toward a just peace.

"They understand that we look and work toward the day when there can be open and peaceful partnership — communication — interchange of goods and ideas between all peoples; toward the day when each people will make its maximum contribution toward

the progress and prosperity of the world," he added.

The lands he visited, he said, seemed united on these three points: their friendship for America and Americans; their fervent hope for betterment of themselves and their children; and their deep-seated hunger for peace in freedom.

Repeating a theme used throughout his 11-nation tour, the President said: "The assurance of peace in freedom is the key to the betterment of peoples everywhere; and in a just peace friendship between all peoples will flourish."

America's best interests, he said, require continued financial investment in and aid to underdeveloped nations. All other free nations must be persuaded to join in such efforts to the limit of their ability, he added.

"This is not a matter of charity for the poverty-stricken nor of easing our conscience through doles for the distressed," Eisenhower said. "The help we give to our friends is help and strength for the cause of freedom — American freedom — as well as freedom throughout the world."

Cold winds swept across the park area south of the White House as the President stood on an open stage to deliver his message. His breath was frosty and he rubbed his hands at times while he spoke.

Mrs. Eisenhower, wearing a black fur coat, accompanied the President.

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aside from that, the story itself from enough such candles can shine, as Shakespeare said, "in make a Christmas season a naughty world." And the light throughout the whole year.

Greetings

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