

Where's the Story

By Bob Miller

It is late, 11:15 Saturday night and I am at the typewriter trying to put together a story for the Sunday Edition of the Washington Heights Gazette. The byline reads Jonathan Swift; the real name is Desi O'Mally. You guessed it mom was an I Love Lucy fan. I had been asked to attend a speech by Mayor Philbin at the Northgate Mall. The speech was the same rhetoric he has been spouting for six years, promises to lower taxes, clean up the down town prostitution and build affordable housing for the elderly. I had almost fallen asleep except the cameraman the paper sent came in 30 minutes late and asked me what he should shoot. I was tempted to say "shoot the mayor and put me out of my misery" instead I said it did not matter one shot was as good as the next.

The speech ended at five thirty and the cameraman left to develop the film. I went to a bar called the Blue Goose. The bar is in a run down building on the corner of Elm and Fifth streets. The clientele are an assortment of Italian and Irish working stiffs just like me.

My father came to this country on a steamer from Ireland met my mom on the boat and had the captain marry them. Nine months later, I was born in a boarding house where they were staying while my father looked for full time employment. They found an apartment right after I was born. It cost \$22 a month, utilities extra. Now here I am at 42 chasing down stories for a second rate newspaper. Wouldn't dad be proud?

I found a seat on a stool near the door and ordered a Blue Ribbon beer. I sat there looking at the reflection in the mirror behind the bar drinking my beer slowly. The clock struck seven and I was about to get up to leave when in the door walked a leggy redhead dressed to the hilt. She had a form fitting red top cut low and barely covering her ample bosoms. The mini skirt was black and had a split up the side. She wore fish net hose and four inch stiletto heels .Her features were striking and every male in the bar had their eyes fixed on her. I thought she looked familiar like maybe I had seen her on a magazine cover. She came my way and took the stool next to mine and ordered a double gin and tonic. I waited until she had taken her first drink then tried some small talk. “ Haven’t we met somewhere before, you look so familiar.” She looked at me strangely, and then began her story. It had everything romance, betrayal, infidelity, and a boyfriend that was both rich and influential. We sat and talked for over an hour and then as suddenly as she had appeared she disappeared. I had gone to the men’s room and when I returned she had left. The bartender said she just paid her tab and left. There by my drink was a slip of paper with a number. I slipped it in my pocket.

With nothing to keep me, I paid my bill left a five-dollar tip and walked out into the night. It was almost nine and the streets were deserted. Walking toward the office I had just rounded a corner and noticed a cab with the motor running parked about half way up the block. I walked up behind the cab and I sensed something wasn’t right. There was no movement by the three occupants and one had red hair. Looking both ways up and down the street and still seeing no one, I

timidly tapped on the driver's side glass. The driver did not move, even an eyelid. I was getting very scared but I knocked a little harder, still no response from anyone. I tried the door but it was locked. I saw a phone booth on the corner and headed for it. Dialing the police, I waited for the ring. Sergeant Mahony answered and I explained the situation he said "There is a squad car cruising about three minutes from there. Wait by the phone booth until they show up."

It was more like five minutes but soon the black and white squad car stopped by the phone booth and together the officers and I went to check out the cab. The officers tried, as I had to get some response from the car but had no more success than I had earlier. Finally, they got a lock bar from the squad car and opened the door. All three people were dead. I breathed a sigh of relief, none were the leggy redhead. Apparently, one passenger had shot both the other passenger, and the driver before shooting himself. While one officer called it in and got the medical examiners office, the other told me to wait. I ended up having to go to the station house and make a statement and answer some questions about why I was on that street so late at night.

While I was waiting to talk to the detective who was going to take my statement, who should I see being hustled in by two uniformed officers, Jimmy Karns, the movie actor. He was raising the roof with his yelling about his rights. It would have been sad but it was so comical. Jimmy was wearing a dress and heavy make up sporting three-inch heels. Never knew he was a cross dresser, bet his fans would be surprised. Jimmy plays a tough mobster boss in movie the Untouchables.

I finally was told I was free to go about twenty minutes ago and made my way back to the office. No one was here but I then prefer to write alone. I have been sitting here for the last ten minutes trying to come up with just one good story for my column tomorrow. I can't seem to think of any. I mean what is the editor of the Home and Garden column suppose to write about after the night I have just been through. Besides I had a phone call to make.