



Washington Merry-Go-Round by JACK ANDERSON

WASHINGTON — Al Capp, the famed cartoonist and caustic critic of college students, was shown out of town by University of Alabama police a few years ago after he allegedly made indecent advances toward several coeds.

The incident, hushed up for three years by the university administration, is both ironic and significant. For Capp's scathing denunciations of college students and their morals have made him one of the most controversial commentators of the day.

He now has a syndicated newspaper column and his broadcast commentaries are heard on some 200 radio stations. He was even approached to run for the Senate. But his principal forum has been the campus where some of his biting remarks have become famous.

In a widely quoted speech at Princeton, for example, Capp said: "Princeton has sunk to a moral level that a chimpanzee can live with, but only a chimpanzee. It has become a combination playpen and pigpen because it disregards the inferiority of the college student to every other class."

"President Nixon," Capp has said, "showed angelic restraint when he called students bums." On another occasion, he said: "Colleges today are filled with Fagin professors who don't teach . . . They just corrupt."

Although Capp denies any misconduct and says he cannot remember being asked to leave Tuscaloosa, we have confirmed the Alabama incident with a number of high-level university officials.

They include Dean of Women Sarah Healy and University Security Director Col. Beverly Lee. On instructions from University President Dr. Frank Rose, Lee went to Capp's hotel, asked him to leave and followed his car to the town line.

CAPP ON CAMPUS — In addition, we have established the details of Capp's alleged encounters with the four young women involved. Two of them have given us notarized affidavits recounting their experiences.

Based on our interviews and affidavits, here is what occurred: Capp arrived in Tuscaloosa, Sunday, Feb. 11, 1968, to make a speech as part of the university's annual arts festival.

Late that afternoon, a coed, active in the arts program went to his room at the Stafford Hotel to deliver a university yearbook and other materials he had requested for his speech the next night.

Capp told the young woman he was impressed with her, and discussed the possibility of hiring her to help produce the "Capp on Campus" radio series, then in progress.

He began making forceful advances toward her and exposing himself to her. She tried to leave but found she could not get the door open. She finally broke free and locked herself in the bathroom until he agreed to let her go.

That evening, another coed, whose job it was to greet visiting speakers, went to see Capp at his hotel. He exposed himself to her and made suggestive comments. She, too, found she could not open the door, but he let her go when she threatened to open a window and scream.

The next afternoon Capp was introduced in his room to another woman student who had just completed a taped interview with his staff for a planned broadcast called the "Now Morality." Capp exposed himself to her and made suggestive comments. She immediately left.

Late that night, he brought another coed to his room where he said a party was planned. There was no party, however, and Capp made an unsuccessful pass at the girl.

EXODUS FROM TOWN — By the next morning, reports of the four incidents had reached the university administration and Dr. Rose sent Col. Lee to Capp's room. "He was asked to get out and he did get out and went to Birmingham," Lee told us.

Asked why no charges were preferred against Capp, Dean Healy explained: "The young women were not physically harmed and we felt that the publicity and notoriety should be avoided."

Reached at his studio in Cambridge, Mass., Capp told my associate Brit Hume that the Alabama allegations made him sick and he would neither confirm nor deny them. Instead, he immediately boarded a plane and flew to Washington to discuss the matter with us.

In our office, he repeatedly declined to discuss the episode, claiming it made him ill. All he would say was: "I have never become involved with any student." Pressed, he finally listened to a review of the allegations and, when questioned about them specifically, denied them.

It gives us no pleasure to make these revelations about a man whose legendary "Li'l Abner" cartoon creations have amused millions of Americans for generations.

But Al Capp today is much more than a gifted cartoonist and brilliant humorist. He is a major public figure whose views reach and influence millions. He even seriously considered running against Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.

Therefore, we believe the public has a right to any information which may bear on his qualifications to speak, particularly when the incident involved is so obviously relevant to the selfsame subjects on which he has been holding forth.

Although she was not injured, she was sufficiently upset by the experience to be admitted a few days later to the university infirmary where she remained under sedation for several days.