

Dear Jim,

Entertainment, I think

EW 7/11/76

I think this is too good not to pass on. As one of the victims, I think it is funny.

In a note of several hours ago in our last instalment the non-hero reported the expected arrival of Kimsey lady friend with a supply of her peaches. She came just as a very short note to HR was about completed. With the peaches, close to a bushel.

They she and I were in the house and just settled down for a friendly visit and chat that included the last message from Kim in the Great Beyond when outside the living-room window I saw this really great St. Bernard. Among the species a giant. There are none native to this area. (As it turned out in the ~~kt~~ veins of this one flows none of the blood of the rescuing ~~skunk~~ branch of the order.)

In the middle of the repeating of the last message from Kim I hear a yelp.

"That's Mollie," I think, reminded of the neighbor's friend dog. I go to the door to let her in and there is no Mollie. My eye is attracted by the turmoil in the swimming pool. There this ~~St.~~ St. Bernard is. And a skunk.

The St. B. has its forepaws on the coping of the pool. Its eyes are bloodshot. It can barely breathe. And so noisily. I am touched. Not enough to get bitten, not enough to risk a damage to these expensive supports. But touched. So I decide to go to the cellar for a nice, stout plank. I do. When I return for the first time I realize that IT is actually standing on its hind legs - almost drowned! When it can stand!

I negotiate a situation in which I can get the plank under its hind-quarters and heist with my own weight content in the belief that when the creature, which has two legs on terra non-wet, feels the other two going up it will go with them. They don't and it won't.

So I try a pole in its mouth, ~~foolishly~~ foolishly thinking that in its desperation it will clamp down and I can pull. It tosses its head and that doesn't work.

When I decide to give up I see the skunk, now dead. I get the skunk out with a net.

Eve says to let it get over its hysteria. If it can sant it won't drown. Maybe it will get over its hysteria. We return to the house, I por a drink and we chat above the loud, hoarse respiration of this giant.

After about an hour and ~~several~~ several depressing inspections - It has moved laterally but not in any other direction - Eve suggests I call my friend the Dog Warden. On a Sunday? "ay. But there is the State Police. They refer me to his number, on his day off, Sunday, and give me the sheriff's number in case he is not there. (He was, ~~at~~ it turned out, at a late Sunday Dinner.) He calls back. He'll come. Another hour passes and his assistant calls. There are these five dogbite cases and he is at the hospital with one, unfortunately necessary. Is it still alive? Good, he'll be here as soon as possible.

Eve and I, meanwhile, have decided that while all the flowers should bloom, this animal is too stupid to live. We ~~under~~ under-estimated the stupidity, despite the ample demonstrations of it. We have ~~come~~ come to believe that drowning would be a blessing. Besides, the noise is down. It no longer intrudes.

More time passes and we hear a truck. I put shoes on and go out, regretting that this most diligent of public servants (literally, to my knowledge) had not been delayed a few minutes more. Why? because of all the improbables, with this nice lady of the farright my guest. the Baltimore Public Radio Station is playing an original pressing of Paul Robeson singing Ballad for Americans. My explanation is thus interrupted. She has described the voice as magnificent. And I've had time to show her our records, which I'll brought up last week to play for the students after dinner. When one shot himself that was aborted. Who knows? Maybe they've never heard it. Or even of it.

All Eve has had a chance to hear is that the words of this son come from the best of the American tradition when my friend Simons is here.

He really is my friend. And I really do believe him to be the epitome of public service. Thus when once in a single day he dragged in 75 unlicensed dogs I persuaded the Commissioners that at this rate they could afford an assistant. It is the assistant who thus has a job who was thoughtful enough to phone and apologize for the ~~unfortunate~~ unfortunate delay of the serious dog-bite.

Simons Knows His Dogs. Dogs is his business. So, knowing this one was in the pool he has a steel choke-chain and a steel chain attached. He soon abandons getting that over a head of this size. He drops it in favor of a device that spreads a heavy rope wide enough for a cow. Cajoling and soothingly he eases it to the head.

Oh, I forgot. This crazy dog is so big he can stand up in the pool with his head above the water! He hadn't done it earlier but after several hours on his hind legs they were tired. But he almost drowned before he tried!

The lasso is on. Stout Simons, 185-190 lbs and a full stomach, pulls hard. Without budging the dog. It doesn't even resist. It just stands choking on the ~~stz~~ water. Without even a skunk for company.

Aha! says our sneaky non-hero, and with it again has Stout Plank under ~~his~~ where with most dogs - indeed with most species - it is tender. Only then is drowning not the most attractive of prospects. It raises a leg, Simons pulls and I tromp and lol with its own discomfort, the one sensation that registers with the raising of the other leg, it is out. Laying there. Limp and so wet!

We catch our wind and Simons remembers is is his day off. It says. So he gets the giant to its feet and drags it to his truck. But it won't get on. He pulls and he persuades (English, not Swiss) and it won't budge. But a lesson has been learned. There is this useless chain. Almost useless. It gets under a hind leg and I give a lunge and there is another lunge and Simon is on his back with the dog in the truck.

The one thing this dog has is the tenderness.

It is on its feet and placid. But it won't fit in the cage. That is solved by hooking it to the cage. And that is the last I saw of it and Sunday's entire afternoon.

I decide that if I restrict myself to apologies and thanks I'm better off. I still wonder, however, if the game plan ~~at~~ I have my friend several years ago worked.

It seems that his high-school son got a high-school girl pregnant. Having been raised decently son decides to be a man before he shaves and a father and a breadwinner. Father insists that son finish high school so he can be a better citizen-breadwinner. So, with son determined to be a man, father gets an old house for him, more than he can afford. They work and make it habitable, with father's debt ex scalated. But the county won't even give the son food stamps. Because he is a minor with an employed father.

Years ago, before JFK was offed, I had a handshake deal with Crown for two books, one about what happened to us on the farm titled Everything Happened.

Can you now believe it?

Can you believe there ever was a dog this stupid? It could have come out un-assisted. It elected to drown instead of trying. Of even reacting.

But the whole afternoon was not a total waste. I have Jim's explanation of why he had to leave the Agency. There were those for whom he was too successfully and strongly anti-Communist. So they didn't let him sweat out the almost-enough years that began in

If you don't believe this is The Day that was, well:

There were thunderstorms all night, beginning early in the night. It cleared briefly. long enough for me to take a walk. They they hit again, loud, hard and long. Four hours later I hear the AP's weather forecast on WETA-FM: possibility of ~~thunder~~ scattered light showers. The house is shaking. So is the announcer down there. He says the lightening display around the studio is spectacular.

Some time later AP let it be known that it might rain.

I can't remember the time I had to light the house after daylight when its walls are all glass.

But I'm not AP.

It is now 6 and I'm happy that enormous beast is out of the <sup>pool</sup> ~~yard~~ because it doesn't require AP to tell me another one is close. The light and the air tell me.

I'm sure that if another dog had bitten another kid on the warden's day off I'd be as wet as that St. Bernard before it was out of the water.

I can't believe they ever save anyone. I think it is a myth foisted off by those under the influence of the loads they carried around their neck. They were too stupid to leave the marvels of their burdens.

I'm not. If I don't have any Courvoisier or Martell or Hennessy.

Besides, when I drank brandy I lived Metaxas. If you are too young, they are among the original Greek fascists. But they made a good brandy.