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J.B. Stoner Turns 'Soft-Hearted' On Genocide

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MARIETTA, Ga. — "Y'know, I'm glad to see you. I've never been close to you, but I'm glad to see you." Daddy King laughed at the white man he had just encountered in the elevator. His companion was J.B. Stoner, a senatorial aspirant and recently convicted bomber. J.B. Stoner, head of the National States Rights Party, who is proud to call himself a racist, was not laughing.

"So who you running against?" asked Martin Luther King, Sr., even though he knew the answer to that one. Stoner is attempting to run against four Democratic candidates, foremost among them Herman Talmadge. One has to say "attempting" because just last Thursday the Georgia Democratic Party had the impertinence to send back Stoner's filing fee, claiming that because he'd just been convicted of the 1958 bombing of a black Birmingham church (in which no-one was injured), the man was ineligible to run for the U.S. Senate.

It is Stoner's contention that a) he is innocent of the bombing, b) he will appeal both the conviction and his exclusion from the primary ballot, and c) Talmadge, like his other opponents, are all race-mixers and nigger-lovers.

Daddy King sputtered with laughter. "Talmadge is gonna be the senator. You hear what I'm telling you? What if I did support you and you got it?"

"I'd rather not get elected that way. Thank you anyhow." Stoner, whose every word was being recorded by a local radio reporter who happened to be sharing the elevator ride, had more important things on his mind.

"I want to stop racial intermarriage. Are you in favor of racial intermarriage?"

"Hub?"

"Are you in favor of racial intermarriage?"

"I ain't getting married," replied Daddy King.

Jerry Ray, who is James Earl Ray's brother, points to the newspaper article containing that chance encounter, smiling broadly. It is he who opens the door to Stoner's office, the door that reads "Whites Only" as well as the other door, which is guarded by a mangy fly magnet named Polo, his race white, his ancestry German, his type shepherd. Jerry Ray and Stoner have been friends ever since the white supremacist (who is also a lawyer) defended James Earl after he killed King, but that doesn't mean the two men agree on everything.

"You know, you never agree with anyone on everything," Jerry Ray argues reasonably, drawing alternately on a Pepsi and a cigarette. "But I do agree with J.B. about the Jews. Well, I believe the Jews control the press and that they try to control the world. Well, I don't just believe it, it's a fact."

It is at this moment that the formulator of many of Jerry Ray's ideas, the author of "Christ Not a Jew" (50 cents a copy) enters his office, his hair freshly cut above his ears. Short, stocky, dressed wholly without irony in a white shirt and black suit, J.B. Stoner walks with a limp, the legacy of a childhood with polio. "Mind if I smoke a cigar?" His voice is soft with apology. J.B. Stoner has superb manners.

"No ma'am," he says genially. "Never met a Jew I liked. Course I have to do business with 'em once in a while. I mean a lot of people in the media are Jewish." Here he shoots a shrewd, piercing look at his interviewer. "But it's really not personal. My position against the Jews is based on self-preservation. Ever since I can remember when I was growin' up, I've been reading Jew and nigger publications. Yes ma'am, I guess you could say I believe 100 percent in knowing my enemy."

"So it's my opinion that Hitler was a moderate. No ma'am, I don't advo-

cate killing all the Jews. I advocate sending 'em to Madagascar, which was an idea advanced in the 19th century by an Englishman named Henry Hampton Be-a-m-i-s-h, so we could have peace in this world and save the world from Communism and Zionism. No ma'am, some of 'em can be civil enough, but never did meet a Jew I liked."

"What about Dr. Jonas Salk?" a reporter named Gregory Jaynes once asked slyly, but Stoner refused to honor him with a reply. These days he says, "I always walked as much as I wanted to. Danced the jitterbug pretty good, but never could do the twist. I just don't like the nightlife here in Georgia. Well 'cause everyone knows me. If I'm out to put on a show that's one thing, but to have people observing me at night..."

His gaze lowers demurely. "I do believe I want to get married, so I can have children. Yes ma'am, to keep the white race going. But also I need some little Stoners to carry on my work. Yes ma'am, I am 56, but I date girls much younger than me."

Now it's easy enough to suggest, as some embarrassed Southerners would have you believe, that J.B. Stoner is just some lonely kook without much of a following. But in 1974, when he ran for lieutenant governor (he's always running for something), Stoner got 71,000 votes, almost 9 percent of the vote. In 1972, when he ran for senator, 40,600 voters turned out on his behalf, spurred on by TV spots carrying the memorable Stoner message: "The main reason why niggers don't want segregation is because the niggers want our white women."

In vain have local newspapers tried to psych out J.B. Stoner, searching for clues in the polio, or his childhood spent on a Chattanooga Valley farm, or his father who died when the child was 5. At 18 (for there was always ambition in the boy) he was a kleagle in the Klan, but he is mournful about his old organization. The Klan is too fragmented for J.B. Stoner's taste. But Stoner is neither stupid, nor is his mind so ravaged by paranoia that he can no longer grasp — and instantly — exactly what is expected of him. There are things that simply cannot be explained, but it is true that J.B. Stoner is, as he would say, "putting on a show," and it is not his fault (because his heart really is in it) if the show is pedestrian. "No ma'am, never been to a psychiatrist. Anyone who goes to a psychiatrist should have his head examined, ha-ha-ha."

He fears Jews far more than blacks. "Yes ma'am. Because the Jews use the blacks. First time I ever met a Jew was when one stole my mother's car." For 10 minutes he discusses that incident, which is odd because normally Stoner's discourse is terse and businesslike; now, unasked, he recalls

precisely where that car was parked, who owned the grocery store where his mother had been shopping, the name of the thief. J.B. Stoner may be mad, but he is not alone, not in this country. And J.B. Stoner, despite his bombing conviction, is a man of principle: "I do not," he maintains stoutly, "believe in violence."

Well, didn't he once suggest that being a Jew should be a crime punishable by death?

"Oh that." He smiles gently. "I don't believe that any more. See, I've mellowed. Ha-ha. Back on the farm I used to wring the necks of chickens, used to chop their heads off." J.B. Stoner laughs again. "Yeah, but I couldn't do that any more. Just too soft-hearted."