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OPINION

State government hiring

We are extremely pleased that the Maryland Human Relations Commission is making a thorough look at hiring and promotional practices in the various state agencies and commissions.

Although we already know the conclusion: too few minority workers hired at all, too few blacks at the top of government from career advancement at all levels, we are glad to see HRC focusing on the problem.

Each state agency needs a clearly articulated affirmative action plan that will be implemented without delay.

If HRC does no more than point the way, it will have done a service.

But HRC can do more than point the way. It can be the right direction and who among the tax-supported instruments of state government cling to racism in hiring and personnel practices it will have done yeoman service to the citizenry.

If Maryland is to be the Free State then state government must open its doors wide to increased numbers of minority citizens.

Board of Elections representation

We cannot urge too vigorously to Gov. Harry Hughes that he appoint black to the city's Board of Election Supervisors.

Of the eight people nominated by the Democratic Central Committee to be considered for appointment to three slots on the Board of Election Supervisors, only one black Baltimore resident, Sam Sawyer has been included.

Sawyer would be an ideal choice. He knows the political process, is bright and committed to his community.

Sawyer fills the bill. We cannot allow the black representation on this important board to discontinue.

We recommend that the governor follow our recommendation.

Unifying the Council

Recent debate aired in the daily media by black Councilpersons about the methods by which Mr. Burns achieved the presidency plainly show that there has to be far greater unity among Councilpersons from our community than has been the recent case.

There is enough blame to go around on all sides.

Black Baltimore has every reason to expect far greater harmony and unity among the officials it elects and we intend to watch closely and yell whenever things get out of hand as they did at the last Council session. No one won anything or can win anything in such circumstances.

Freeze weapons not military pay

Dear AFRO:

It is high time for military personnel to join ranks with the workers, farmers, senior citizens, youth, unemployed, poor, and dispossessed of this country to oppose the anti-people policies of the Reagan Administration.

I recently read that President Reagan's solution to cutting the Defense Budget is to "forgo the 7.6 percent military pay raise scheduled for October, postpone some military housing construction projects, and curb training exercises. No more weapons systems would be affected."

And why is this sacrifice necessary? "Because of the threat we still face." I can only assume that he means that the Soviet Union is the threat. However, each day I read of new proposals and statements by General Secretary Yuri Andropov, as well as, the "WE" Russian refers to are the profiteers of the weapons industries and the giant multinational monopolies seeking continued control over the third world countries they exploit.

Let's face it! This administration is vulgarly following the "Course" of the super-rich with no holds barred, including, not only the destruction of the livelihood of millions of people in this country, but even the risk of the destruction of all life on this earth.

It's time for service men and women to re-examine their patriotism. Are they fighting for the powerful rich minority, or are they fighting for the democratic majority of the people of this country? Who is really being threatened by these policies that help the rich get richer, and the rest of us get poorer?

BARBARA TUTOR

Off beat Romeo

Madeline Murphy

"On his side he has a variable number of factors.

"Possibly a resident academic tradition in certain teachers that leads them to respect his competence; possibly a real evolving political consciousness in him that make him something of an adolescent statesman.

"Possibly a family which is not sympathetic to groups' values, possibly himself, he knows youngsters resist manipulation very well."

When I re-read this paragraph in Friedenberg's "Vanishing Adolescent", it brought to mind a grandson who at 16 (10 on Feb. 20) has the best of these worlds—parents who care, teachers who see that spark of genius that makes him write with such clarity, wit and depth.

Christopher Rabb from birth was a demanding child in the sense that he wanted to know "why". He rejected yes answers and then even after probing your answer, was wont to doubt that that was the right one.

So off he went, just recently, into the realm of research, which after all is the most hallowed source for answers. Yet, a little doubt even there is a bit healthy.

When he was younger, he was stubborn beyond belief. He hated school early. He often doubted himself. He procrastinated.

Now, at 16, he is the only child of an older brother, married his parents, grandparents and relatives, the thrill of self-expression.

He cannot wait to do his homework, especially to write. And what a writer! Let me share this with you, his poem "Hidden Emotion".

"I seek for knowledge, I seek for truth. Why am I curious? Is it because I'm a youth? Although I'm young, I've gone through a lot. I want people to realize I'm not a tot!

"I've been angry, scared, sad and glad. I've been happy, I'm loved. But what have I gained? I try and try and try again, it's like I've been kicked out of Lover's Lane.

"I want romance, joyfulness, companionship and trust, all of those needs are one big must. I need these things, they are my desire.

"Feelings like those make my adrenalin run higher, higher and higher it runs, I can't stop it, it control!

"But this is reality. Not some fairy land. When can I going to face it, where will I understand?

"I want answers. Does someone know? Is it true I'm one damn, off beat Romeo?"

Then on the higher side, Chris has become involved in the mayoral campaign of Congressman Washington, in Chicago. So this is what he wrote for the benefit of his typically white classmates who doubted Washington's ability.

"When we Byrne took office, I thought she was OK. But since she's been mayor, I'm sorry to say...

Congress should reject military budget

Dear AFRO:

We, as Black Americans, have a special concern with what our representatives in Congress will do about the national budget.

President Reagan is not a dictator. He acts as though his decision to build up billions of our dollars into his system of propelling death machinery is a better use of our resources.

It is time for us to be aware that around the world intelligent citizens are demanding that the United States and Russia quit wasting physical and psychological war game money.

While billions of human beings suffer in a variety of living environments, military contractors get and propagandize fears between Russia and the United States.

The word "Communist" is used to silence any intelligent discussion of survival other than aiming death weapons at each other.

Just think of how many decades and how many trillions of dollars have been allocated and spent for the military budget. There is enough weaponry to keep both sides from venturing aggression. Who wins in a nuclear holocaust?

Our special concern needs to be voiced to have Congress reject the military budget and persist that there be no further reduction in domestic spending. Our urban problems are to be paramount, not the war games.

MARION M. BANFIELD

'Big brother' atmosphere permeates Civil Service

Dear AFRO:

As a former career soldier in the U.S. Army, now retired, I have had the occasion to visit and live in most major U.S. cities.

Recently I decided to relocate to Baltimore for various reasons; some of which are the rapid growth of the city and its potential to become a model to the nation in the areas of city planning and human relations.

So far I have only regretted one aspect of my transition:

The treatment afforded to some citizens in Baltimore.

The MTA drivers are mostly rude and have no knowledge of the bus system.

The police overreact to minor incidents while serious crime goes unchecked.

There is a "Big Brother" type atmosphere that permeates the Civil Service of this city and it affects mostly the minority and indigent citizens.

Since the identification of a problem is useless without a proposed solution, I have arrived at this conclusion:

Civil servants, whose job is to protect and insure the well-being of All Baltimore Citizens, must be trained to interact with the "down and out", economically deprived citizens as courteously as they do the affluent citizens.

A concerted effort must be made to improve city-citizen relations or this city could easily become another Miami, Fla.

ELDON PITTMAN JR.

Put something back into the pot

Dear AFRO:

The salvation of the Social Security System is in the concept of recycling. Recipients of Social Security must do something themselves to save the system. With millions of unemployed, not contributing to the system it is doomed to failure.

There are thousands of jobs advertised in newspapers throughout the U.S.A. The unemployed must be trained to fill them. I am willing to help establish a crash program that would save the system forever.

SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS MUST PUT SOMETHING BACK INTO THE POT.

According to Congressman Claude Pepper, there are 27 million people on Social Security including myself. I am willing to have one dollar taken out of my Social Security check each month.

If others would agree to do likewise, Social Security Recipients would contribute 27 million dollars each month to train unemployed people for available jobs. With jobs ensured applied to training the unemployed, thousands of them would soon be gainfully employed and putting money into Social Security.

With this recycling system operating, unemployed people would always be trained to take skilled jobs and put money into the Social Security space left vacant by retiring employees.

The Social Security System would be safe without putting another burden on taxpayers.

Please give this idea your utmost consideration and if you think it has merit, please bring it to the attention of the influential people that can put it into operation.

JAMES O. MURPHY

Calling it like it is

What I really mean is...

By James E. Nichols

You are aware, of course, that some folks speak some of the time with a forked tongue and what they SAY and what they MEAN can often be two different things. In other words, they deal in double entendres. A double entendre is a word or expression capable of two interpretations.

Just for the heck of it, let's take a look at a few expressions in this column and hopefully get a better look at "forked-tongue" talkers and "double-entendre" buffs.

I shall list eight examples of some of dealings folks say and immediately after each him give the translation.

Number One: "He's a hard-nosed player. He's not fast. He doesn't have any good, deceptive moves. He won't gain many yards or score many points for you; but he's intelligent."

Translation: He's a white mediocre athlete. He can't play a lick, but he'll stay on the team until he retires. Then, he'll be appointed as an assistant coach.

Number Two: "She keeps to herself all the time because she's up to no good. She doesn't talk much. She must be hiding something."

Translation: She doesn't gossip. And she minds her own business.

Number Three: "I quit him because I realized we were not compatible. And he's a liar. I don't like liars. Anyhow, I never did like the idea of going out with married men."

Translation: He wouldn't leave his wife as he promised he would. So, after 5 years, it finally dawned on her that he had no intention of leaving his wife and finally for her in the first place.

Number Four: "Certainly, he's a good player. But he could be averaging 35 points a game instead of the 24 he's now averaging. He doesn't go all out. He's a bit too nonchalant."

Translation: He's a black basketball player and he's as smooth as silk. Everything he does on the court seems effortless. He doesn't chap his hands. He doesn't yell "Let's go, guys." He minds his business and he glides, baby, he glides. The coaches would prefer him to be more of a rah-rah "team" man.

Number Five: "He's not so bad. He, he has a degree in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania. So, he will be all Ivy League wide receiver. So, he is a good looking, nice guy. So, he DOES have a nice job as a personal lines analyst for AETNA. So, what! But he can't dance. I watched him at a dance that night and that joker couldn't do the Philly Dog or the Chicken Pluckin' strong. In short, he may be a brilliant, talented guy. But he can't dance!"

Translation: Jealousy is a green-eyed monster.

Number Six: "I can't make it to your shindig. I promised my son I'd help him with his homework."

Translation: "I'm flat broke. I can't afford a ticket because I don't have a dime to my name."

Number Seven: "It's in the mail."

Translation: I'll send the payment on the first of the month when my check comes."

Number Eight: "Honey, I'm going to run up to the corner store to get a pack of cigarettes."

Translation: He's going up to the corner store to see the pretty stripper so he can tell his girlfriend and the like to can't make it.

And now, dear readers, you know what Tonto meant when he said to the Lone Ranger: "Kemo Sabeh with forked tongue."

G. JAMES FLEMING

Athletes too can achieve

The gods may be working in their own unusually mysterious way, regardless of the real motives of the NCAA (the National Collegiate Athletic association, in setting the grade of "C" as the minimum grade a prospective athlete must have in order to enter or remain in bigtime varsity sports.

I use the term "bigtime" because, as I understand it, the ruling affects directly and mostly the colleges whose football and basketball competitions attract the largest crowds and earn the most fantastic TV contracts.

The ruling also affects colleges whose coaches are often paid handsomely and whose "pro"-directed recruiting has tremendous clout.

These institutions are, together, classified as Division 1. Exceptions to this description are more than 100 predominantly black colleges which are also members of Division I, although not in the same money-making league.

Most of the volcanic blast against the boost to "C"—from "D-" plus or "D", or even lower, comes understandably from those persons who believe the main idea for raising standards was conceived in iniquity.

They see it as another attempt to reduce the number of blacks playing and "shining" on the football and basketball teams of the country's major colleges and universities.

Eventually, if they are lucky, also making the "pro" circuits with their fabulous salaries and national exposure.

On the other hand, the record is strewn with scandals of star athletes who could neither read nor write after being students for four years, sometimes more, at some of the prestigious universities.

This situation also is deemed largely responsible for the recent NCAA'S action.

Indeed, the "C" average is not the only change in the NCAA's standards. The new rules also require that athletes at member institutions must earn an increased number of credits in such solid subjects as English, science and mathematics, before being eligible for the bachelor degree.

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Some black young men, outstanding in brawn but not in brains, who actually cannot attain a "Gentleman's C," will be passed by if the new stipulations are enforced.

I, for one, believe that most young blacks and the black community will rise to the challenge, just as they did their ancestors have done in the past to far greater challenges.

themselves up to the "C" level if they invest as much effort into their academic commitment as into their sports.

It is not beyond a substantial number of black young people to pull themselves up to the "C" level if they invest as much effort into their academic commitment as into their sports.

Of course, these athletic-minded youths will need the help of their parents in their early years and, later, the help and guidance of teachers, principals and coaches—long before they enter college.

If the communities which support bigtime sports believe the sources of employment and recognition afforded blacks are important, then these communities may also have to establish post-secondary (or parallel) tutorial projects.

These projects would be similar to those geared to the Naval Academy and West Point to make it possible for young blacks to achieve at least that "C" rating now necessary for participation in major college athletics.

Countless numbers of blacks, down the years, have demonstrated that, despite many generations of the poorest educational opportunities, they can overcome society's past discriminations and achieve in every line of human endeavor, to the advantage of the entire nation.

Blaming the past or fighting the dark is non-productive.

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Few blacks relish the auction-block-type of bidding and buying-and-selling by which black athletes come into bigtime college and professional sports.

Nevertheless, they accept the process as one of the prices to pay for upward mobility in a money-oriented America.

Blacks of experience also know that when those favored in any society speak of "employment on merit," they do not mean "takeover" by any other group.

Whatever the tomorrows bring under the new "C" dispensation, there will surely be blacks seeking and wanting a career in sports and who will—in the best Jackie Robinson manner—be able to overcome any man-created handicaps.

If the total academic level of young blacks is improved by the NCAA challenge, then this, too, may be a blessing in disguise.

Just Thinking

Still living with memories at age 90

By Al Sweeney

There are three gentlemen who have made significant contributions towards racial progress in their respective fields on the Washington scene and all of whom are still alive, though they have passed their 90th birthdays.

None of the three would be considered black leaders. Yet, all three labored in the vineyards and away from the spotlight as headliners.

Cato Adams, a retired school system executive and the long-time treasurer of the Pigskin Club; West A. Hamilton, an armed forces colonel, former member of the school board and printer, and Louis Rochschild Mehlinger, one of the oldest living lawyers in D.C.

Both Adams and Hamilton have passed their 92nd birthdays, while Mehlinger became 100 on Dec. 20.

One of the living symbols of old Washington and its segregated society is the Pigskin Club. Founded as an answer to the white Touchdown Club by Charles Fisher and Lawrence Oxley among other District area sports officianados.

While many other black organizations founded during the same era have all but passed from the scene, the Pigskin Club flourishes with a membership that is greater than ever.

And the man who has devoted his entire retired life to its cause is Cato Adams. Until two years ago, he was very active.

As treasurer he was not only the keeper of the funds but the doorkeeper. Once a person moined, Adams was sure that to participate in the Pigskin activities he had to be financial. No skating. No excuses. Put up your dues or stay out. That was the Cato rule.

Even today, though the years have done its thing on his fragile body, his mind at 93 is still active as ever.

From time to time, I receive handwritten notes from Adams containing some of the witticisms that have been his hallmark.

As for Colonel Hamilton, every Sunday he can be found seated in a pew on the right side of the center rows in the historic sanctuary of St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 15th and P Sts., N.W.

A war hero and leader of black troops in the European Theater during World War II, he was a rather controversial school board member during the last days of 10 - 13 division (Black public schools) of the school system.

While he is dedicated to the armed forces, his community service has been varied but none more received his attention than the Twelfth Street YMCA.

Year after year, Colonel Hamilton was among the top membership recruiters and solicitors of membership dues for the historic YMCA that has apparently passed from the scene.

After a flury of activity and the focus of some of the towns politicians during a moment of civic concern, the Twelfth Street YMCA seems to fade like the old Dunbar High School building.

But, what about this man Mehlinger? J. Clay Smith, a historian, Howard law professor and former federal bureaucrat tells it. Mehlinger's father was an immigrant from Bararia, Germany. His mother was a slave. He was born in Union Point, Louisiana. Thus, a Creole or a Black.

After completing studies in Industrial Education in the all-black Mississippi College, he came to Washington, DC. in 1907 to take a job with the Treasury Department.

Mehlinger rose from a menial job as a clerk to become a stenographer after he mastered a series of shorthand, typing and bookkeeping courses.

During World War II, he served as an intelligence officer with the 300 Infantry. After the "war to end all wars," Mehlinger enrolled and passed high law school classes at Howard University. He graduated magna cum laude in 1925.

After assuming clerk's post at the Justice Department, he became a senior attorney and argued cases in the Court of Claims.

In 1925, Mehlinger with Ulysses S. Garner, George E. C. Hayes, Charles Houson, Isiah Lisemby, Charles E. Robinson and J. Franklin Wilson founded the Washington Bar Association.

Many old Washington residents can recall those lawyers. Houston, one - time dean of Howard's Law School was the architect of the legal attack on segregation through the courts, while Hayes was one of the town's leading legal practitioners.

Mehlinger was one of the founders of the old Robert H. Terrell Law School, which faded into oblivion with the death of segregation.

The Terrell Law School produces many of the town's successful attorneys. At one - time more Terrell graduates passed by the D.C. bar than Howard law school grads during a season.

Judge William S. Thompson of the Superior Court and Judge Margaret Hawthorne are among the many members of the bench and Terrell alumni. Judge Hawthorne was in Terrell's first graduating class.

Judge Hawthorne, it is noteworthy, recently retired from the bench and was honored by her People's Congregational Church on 16th St., N.W. during the Dr. Martin Luther King service, Sunday.

As a federal lawyer, Mehlinger attempted to join the Federal Bar Association. It is an organization legal practitioners working for the federal government.

At the age of 62, some 41 years after joining the federal service, applied for membership.

From 1941, until Oct. 13, 1944 there was no action on Mehlinger's application. It appears when he first applied he indicated "Negro" on the race identification line.

When he reapplied in 1944, Mehlinger identified himself as "other - mixed parentage — Jewish and Creole." Mehlinger deftly ignored "Black" or "Negro." On Nov. 29, 1944, a Federal Bar Association turned down Mehlinger's application.

However, on Jan. 20, 1945, a special committee appointed by Tom C. Clark, former attorney general and president of the Federal Bar Association, filed a report recommending the acceptance of Mehlinger's application.

He became the first black to be admitted into the association founded in 1920 as a national organization of federal government lawyers. Originally, it was composed of lawyers and judges connected with the federal government in the nation's capital and has expanded to include lawyers formerly with the federal government and has over 3,000 members.

One of the intriguing questions that this writer would like to ask Mehlinger. Born black by the accident birth, I wonder why he remained black by choice. Mehlinger had caucasian features could have passed all his life, but by choice remained to encounter the indignities heaped upon persons of the darker hue.

The story of Mehlinger is told in a scholarly approach in the October - December, 1982 by Professor Smith. It was a copy of a speech that Smith delivered as the first and only black president of the Federal Bar Association.

Adams, Hamilton and Mehlinger are among the oldest black residents. All have interesting stories about how they coped with the racial injustices that they encountered.

Black History will be celebrated next month. For this writer, to watch some of the so - called knowledgeable speakers misrepresent the facts, while men such as the trio mentioned are still living, it might be nice to sift through their memorobilia and get the facts straight.

Just thinking — Just thinking.

Elizabeth M. OLIVER

FOR ALL WE KNOW

NEWSWORTHY EVENTS

JAN. 20 was the date set by the Douglass High School 100th Anniversary Committee to start the ball rolling toward the grand event which is set for Oct. 15 at the Convention Center.

To swell the gala crowd to at least 10,000 persons President Hannibal Mickens and his committee have called for all alumni to register for future meetings and planning sessions.

Each class shall be responsible for 100 persons attending along with escorts, he states.

The Jan. 20 meeting was held at Old Douglass at Carey and Baker, 7:30 p.m. The next meeting will be announced.

NEXT FRIDAY'S AFRO will feature the history of Douglass High School.

BOTILLION PLANNED

THE HOWARD COUNTY YOUNG PEOPLES TRAVEL CLUB will hold the first Botillion the second week in April. The fabulous event will present 18 young men, ages 16 to 18, who will have their coming-out party, a debut marking their entrance into manhood (like the young ladies have at their cotillion.)

The young men frocked in spring tux and their pretty ladies at their first society Grand Ball will be from Columbia, Washington, and Baltimore with Barbara Sands as chair, Ruteena Blake, co-chair.

HEY GUYS — If you want to take part, call 542-0603 after 5 p.m. and join in on a great occasion.

GOOD WINTER READING

(clip and save for Black History Month)

AFRICAN PROVERBS

WHAT IS A PROVERB according to African wisdom?

"A Proverb is the horse of conversation. When The conversation lags, a proverb will revive it." (Yoruba)

Sierra Leone wise men say, "Proverbs are the daughters of experience."

ASHANTI

When you are rich, you are hated. When you are poor, you are despised.

One can not both feast and become rich.

It is no shame at all to work for money.

Money is sharper than a sword.

No one tests the depth of the river with both feet.

Two small antelopes can beat a big one.

You are beautiful because of your possessions

A man with too much ambition can not sleep in peace.

If the palm of the hand itches, it signifies the coming of great luck.

HERE ARE MORE AFRICAN PROVERBS. THEY ARE DELIGHTFUL TO QUOTE, FASCINATING TO READ.

Sickness accompanies a waning moon. A new moon cures disease.

BUGANDA

He who hunts two rats, catches none.

A strawberry blossom will not sweeten dry bread.

When the master is absent, the frogs hop into the house.

If you burn a house, can you conceal the smoke?

When the moon is not full, the stars shine more brightly.

He who is bitten by a snake fears a lizard.

CAMEROON

If you do not step on the dog's tail, he will not bite you.

When the vine entwines your roof, it is time to cut it down.

She is like a road, pretty but crooked.

The heart of the wise man lies quiet like limpid water.

Knowledge is better than [illegible]

He who asks questions can not avoid the answers.

By trying often, the monkey learns to jump from the tree.

Rain does not fall on one roof alone.

A man's wealth may be superior to him.

The cricket cries, the year changes.

CONGO

What is said over a dead lion's body, could not be said to him alive.

Little by little grow, the bananas.

No matter how full the river, it still wants to grow.

The teeth are smiling, but not the heart.

You do not teach the paths of the forest to an old gorilla.

Two birds disputed about a kernel. A third bird swooped down and carried it off.

Do not dispose of a monkey's tail before he is dead.

The son shoots a leopard, the father is proud.

Man is like palm-wine. When young, sweet but without strength; in old age, strong but harsh.

If you tell two people to live together, you tell them to quarrel.

The friends of our friends are our friends.

Wood may remain 10 years in the water, but it will never become crocodile.

Death does not sound a trumpet.

Let him speak who has been with his eyes.

When the bee comes to your house, let her have beer. You may want to visit the bee's house some day.

No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come.

A single bracelet does not jingle.

Those who are absent are always wrong.

ETHIOPIA

To one who does not know, a small garden is a forest.

The cattle is as good as the pasture in which it grazes.

Evil enters like a needle and spreads like an oak tree.

A close friend can become a close enemy.

A cat may go to a monastery, but she still remains a cat.

Dine with a stranger, but save your love for your family.

A too modest man goes hungry.

A fool and water will go the way they are diverted.

If you offend, ask for pardon. If offended, forgive.

Anticipate the good so that you may enjoy it.

Clothes put on while running, come off while running.

Living is worthless for one without a home.

Move your neck according to the music.

Advise and counsel him. If he does not listen, let adversity teach him.

GHANA

If there were no elephant in the jungle, the buffalo would be a great animal.

If you find no fish, you have to eat bread.

The man on his feet carries off the share of the man sitting down.

To make preparations does not spoil the trip.

A good deed is something one returns.

He who does not cultivate his field dies of hunger.

Around a flowering tree, one finds many insects.

He who has done evil, expects evil.

The toad likes water but not when it is boiling.

One camel does not make fun of the other camel's hump.

IVORY COAST

Mutual gifts cement friendship. It takes two to make a quarrel. Two flavors confuse the palate.

He who talks incessantly, talks nonsense.

A bad son gives a bad name to his mother.

A little leaven smoothes away the whole lump.

He who does not know one thing knows another.

Try this bracelet. If it fits, wear it. But, if it hurts you, throw it away no matter how shiny.

He who is unable to dance says that the yard is stony.

Tony Brown's Comments

George Kirby: straight man

George Kirby has mellowed like a fine wine. His often bitter life has also had its peaks. He's now at one such peak; not, however, because he's rich or famous. Rather, because of heroin.

Yes, because of heroin. You see, at last—after having his life destroyed and almost losing everything that matters—Kirby now knows heroin as the killer it really is. In one of the most exciting and insightful television interviews that I have ever conducted, Kirby laid it on the line.

With his siren songs of wealth and power King Heroin has duped George Kirby twice. In 1958, suffering the physical and mental horrors of a powerful drug habit, Kirby had to enter the drug rehabilitation center at Lexington, Kentucky.

After a two-year hitch, he promised to stop obeying dope and go straight. Although he stopped using drugs, he started selling them. Worried about losing his fame, house and car, King Heroin's illusions returned.

Kirby offered to sell 363 grams of cocaine to an undercover narcotics agent in Las Vegas. For the sale, he lost his home, his car, his fame, went from a $35,000 a week income to no income—and most importantly, lost his freedom. He was sentenced to 20 years in jail.

"When the judge sentenced me and I stood up in court, I apologized to everyone. I apologized to everyone all over that were fans and friends of mine, that knew me, and had followed my career. And I told them how ashamed I was of even getting involved in all this," he said. "I learned a terrific lesson behind that, and that lesson is, think three and four times before you do anything that is unlawful. And I say that to each and everybody."

Many, millions, are still doing what Kirby used to do. They underestimate dope and confuse its delusion with reality. "King Heroin," as Kirby calls his poetic message in his nightclub act, is a true devil.

Kirby has written a play entitled "King Heroin." The nine characters are entitled: cocaine, heroin, marijuana, LSD, opium, PCP, the pimp, the thief and Lucifer.

"Behold, I'm King Heroin. Known to all as the destroyer of man. From where I first came, nobody knows. I came from a land where the poppy grows. I'm a world power, and all know it's true. Use me once, and you'll know it too.

"...All nations have gathered to plot my destruction, for I'm a breeder of crime and corruption. I came to this country without a passport. And ever since, I've been hunted and sought. For I make men's will and destroy their minds and cause them to commit all sorts of crimes.

"With cellophane bags, I found my way to great men in office and children at play. From richest of states to the poorest of slums. From the highest exalted to Bowery bums. I can make a mere school boy forget his books. Make a world famous beauty forget her looks. I can make a husband forsake his family and wife and send a greedy man to prison for the rest of his life.

"I can make a man forsake country and flag and make a girl sell her virtue for a twenty dollar bag...Would you like to hear more of the things I can do? The women I defiled, the men I slew? ...Some have run to programs and to the police to get from under my wing. How dare they defy me? I who am King.

"So now they must suffer, you see that's part of my game. They lay with discomfort and they squirm with the pain. They rise in the morning with a hacking cough, six, seven dyas of this madness and they might throw me off. Oh, they'll curse my name and defy me in speech, but some would pick me up again if I were in reach.

"They heard my warning but didn't take heed. Now they must put the foot in the stirrup and mount my steed. Get tight in the saddle and ride me well for I, King Heroin, am going to bring them all straight down to hell. Are you, are you, my next victim? Sucker!"

After Kirby recited that very moving anti-destruction piece to me on television, I had chills running across my skin. Then he told me about "the joke between him and the Lord."

"God Almighty was watching me. He watches all of his children." In jail, Kirby had a revelation: "I was talking to the Lord, I said, 'Okay Lord, when I first got into show business, I was a porter, with a mop and a bucket'. And here I was in the institution with a mop and a broom and a bucket. And I said, 'I get it. You want me to get myself together and do it right this time.

So when I come out this time, that's what I intend to do!"

And that's what Kirby is doing. He's warning others. He's up against a country trying to live an illusion.

The rich openly admit in divorce court that the Master-Dope turns love to perversion; yesterday's all-American football boy is today's convicted drug pusher; lovely young girls in beauty contests carry cocaine along with cosmetics and go to jail cells instead of into the winner's circle; comedians turn to running balls of fire in maniacal laughter as the dope eats away their skin. The singer, who can no longer sing, seeks new songs in the siren songs of dope's new death.

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL TV series can be seen on public television Thursday, on channel 22 at 11:30 p.m. It can also be seen on channel 67 on Thursday at 11:30 p.m. Please consult listings.