22|28

REMARKS

HELPERN LIBRARY

NEW YORK, NY

OCTOBER 10, 1990

Introduction
Generic
Used "Pot + Kettle"

Used "Generic" Pot + Kettle

19-15

GREETINGS, ETC

HELPERN LECTURE

INTRODUCTION

WHEN I FIRST GLANCED AT THE NAMES OF THOSE HONORED PREVIOUSLY BY THIS DISTINGUISHED GROUP, I FELT THAT SOMEHOW OR OTHER I WAS AN INTERLOPER. IT REMINDED ME OF THE TIME THAT DREXEL INSTITUTE INVITED ME TO ACCEPT THE STUDENTS AWARD IN ENGINEERING. I HAD JUST SEPARATED A PAIR OF DOMINICAN SIAMESE TWINS AND THEY WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT IT.

WELL, I CAN'T ATTEMPT TO SNEAK OUT OF THE SITUATION THAT SAME WAY TONIGHT, BUT I CAN REMINISCE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT MY ALL-TOO-BRIEF CONTACT WITH THE INDIVIDUAL WE TRULY HONOR TONIGHT, MILTON HELPERN.

I WAS TAKEN WITH THE MAN THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM, ATTENDED EVERY LECTURE POSSIBLE THAT HE GAVE AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY MEDICAL COLLEGE, AND EVEN OCCASIONALLY HAD THE CHANCE TO SEE AN AUTOPSY DOWNTOWN.

WHEN I WENT TO CORNELL, MILTON HELPERN'S LECTURES IN FORENSIC MEDICINE WERE ELECTIVE. I THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT MISTAKE AND FAILED TO ADEQUATELY ASSESS HIS TEACHING ABILITY. HIS LECTURES WERE HELD ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AT 1 O'CLOCK DURING THE FOOTBALL SEASON. THAT WAS AN ERA WHEN COLLEGE FOOTBALL WAS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO ALUMNI THAN IT IS TODAY, AND EVEN MEDICAL STUDENTS LEFT NEW YORK CITY FOR THE ATTRACTION OF THE MARVELOUS AUTUMNAL RITES WHICH USED TO SURROUND FOOTBALL GAMES.

THE ABSOLUTE PROOF OF HIS MARVELOUS TEACHING IS THAT IN THE AUDITORIUM ASSIGNED TO MILTON HELPERN THERE WAS STANDING ROOM ONLY.

HE HAD A WAY OF REPORTING ANECDOTALLY HIS BEST EXPERIENCES,--SO MUCH SO THAT TODAY THEY REMAIN MY BEST STORIES EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE BEEN RETOLD TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

When I went to Cornell, Milton Helpern's lectures in forensic medicine were elective. I thought it was a great mistake and failed to adequately assess his teaching ability. His lectures were held on Saturday afternoons at 1 o'clock during the football season. That was an era when college football was much more important to alumni than it is today, and even medical students left New York City for the attraction of the marvelous autumnal rites which used to surround football games.

THE ABSOLUTE PROOF OF HIS MARVELOUS TEACHING IS THAT IN THE AUDITORIUM ASSIGNED TO MILTON HELPERN THERE WAS STANDING ROOM ONLY.

HE HAD A WAY OF REPORTING ANECDOTALLY HIS BEST EXPERIENCES,--SO MUCH SO THAT TODAY THEY REMAIN MY BEST STORIES EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE BEEN RETOLD TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

THE ONE THAT STANDS OUT WAS THE WAY THE FATE OF A YOUNG MAN IN SOUTH JERSEY HUNG IN THE BALANCE WHEN THE CORONER DECLARED THAT A BULLET WHICH HAD KILLED THE ACCUSED'S FATHER HAD ENTERED HIS BACK AND EXITED HIS FRONT.

ONE THING I WILL <u>NEVER</u> FORGET MILTON HELPERN SAYING IS THAT EVEN EXPERTS CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE SOMETIMES.

WHAT A DRAMATIC MOMENT IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN COURT WHEN MILTON HELPERN, HAVING FOUND THE DECEASED'S CLOTHING, PUT THEM ON A DRESSMAKER'S DUMMY AND FOLLOWED THE PATH OF THE BULLET FROM THE FRONT, THROUGH THE COAT, THE VEST, THE SHIRT, THE UNDERWEAR, THE BODY, THE UNDERWEAR, THE SHIRT, THE VEST, BUT, ALAS THE BULLET, HAVING SPENT ITS ENERGY, MUST HAVE DROPPED TO THE GROUND BETWEEN THE COAT AND THE VEST.

THERE WAS NO HOLE IN THE BACK OF THE COAT. IT WASN'T PREMEDITATED MURDER AS THE STATE CONTENDED; IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE AS THE DEFENDANT CLAIMED.

WHEN I ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO DELIVER THE MILTON HELPERN LECTURE,--WHICH SHORT TALK I HATE TO DIGNIFY BY SO IMPOSING A TITLE, I WAS NOT AWARE OF HOW PLEASED I WOULD BE ON THIS OCCASION TO LINK MILTON HELPERN'S LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO ONE OF MY CURRENT ENDEAVORS. I HOPE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WILL EVENTUALLY USE AND LEARN IN A FACILITY AND THINK OF US BOTH.

AFTER OUR CIVIL WAR, THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY PUT HIS COLLECTION OF MICROSCOPES, WAR MEMORABILIA, AND HIS LIBRARY INTO ONE BUILDING. THE LIBRARY EVENTUALLY BECAME THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE AND HIS COLLECTION BECAME THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE AND WAS HOUSED IN THE OLD RED BRICK BUILDING, A FAMOUS LANDMARK IN WASHINGTON FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS.

ALL WAS WELL UNTIL LADY BIRD JOHNSON BECAME ENAMORED OF THE HIRSHHORN ART COLLECTION AND ESPOUSED THE DESIRE OF MR. HIRSHHORN TO BUILD A MUSEUM ON THE MALL IN THE SHAPE OF A BAGEL. LADY BIRD'S HUSBAND CAJOLED CONGRESS INTO DECLARING THE HISTORIC OLD RED BRICK BUILDING, ALREADY PRESERVED BY CONGRESS, NO LONGER A LANDMARK. ON THE OCCASION OF THAT INFAMOUS ACTION, CONGRESS DECLARED THAT BUILDINGS WEREN'T LANDMARKS, THE ONLY LANDMARKS WERE THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE KEPT IN THEM.

A SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS HAS EXISTED EVER SINCE.

TODAY WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE COME TO WASHINGTON FOR THEIR HIGH SCHOOL TRIPS, THEY CAN BE STIMULATED TO ALMOST ANY CAREER EXCEPT ONE IN HEALTH, MEDICINE, SCIENCE, NURSING, AND SO ON.

FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR 15 MILLION KIDS CROSSED THE MALL DURING THE SUMMER AND VISITED THE SPACE MUSEUM. BUT ONLY 40,000 OF THEM MANAGED TO GET AS FAR NORTH, IN WASHINGTON, AS THE WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER WHERE THEY SAW AT THE ARMED FORCES INSTITUTE OF PATHOLOGY AN EXCELLENT BUT MEAGER COLLECTION, JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG, A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE 250,000 EXHIBITS THAT WE HAVE.

I AM NOT ONLY INCENSED AT THE PIRACY OF OUR BUILDING AND OUR COLLECTION, BUT, ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASING FAILURE OF OUR SOCIETY TO ATTRACT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TO CAREERS IN SCIENCE AND HEALTH.

THAT'S THE REASON THAT I ACCEPTED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE. WE ARE DETERMINED TO HAVE A PRESENCE BACK ON THE MALL AND, ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE AFTER MY LIFETIME BEFORE A NEW BUILDING IS ERECTED, WE HOPE THERE WILL BE AN INTERIM SITE THAT WILL SERVE AS A STOP GAP.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MILTON HELPERN AND CHICK KOOP, AND WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK, IS THAT, AS MANY OF YOU HERE KNOW, THE ARMED FORCES INSTITUTE OF PATHOLOGY WHICH WILL BECOME THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE HAS JUST COMPLETED ACCESSION/NE THE MILTON M. HELPERN NEW YORK MEDICAL EXAMINERS COLLECTION, A GIFT OF MRS. HELPERN AND THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING PERMANENT CARE AND CONSERVATION OF THIS IMPORTANT COLLECTION, WE ARE ALREADY UTILIZING IT FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITS AND DISPLAYS TO BE SHOWN FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. I AM DELIGHTED THAT MARC MICOZZI, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE, WITH WHOM I HAVE WORKED HAND-IN-GLOVE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, IS HERE TONIGHT.

WELCOME, MARC.

--(GO TO PREPARED TALK)--