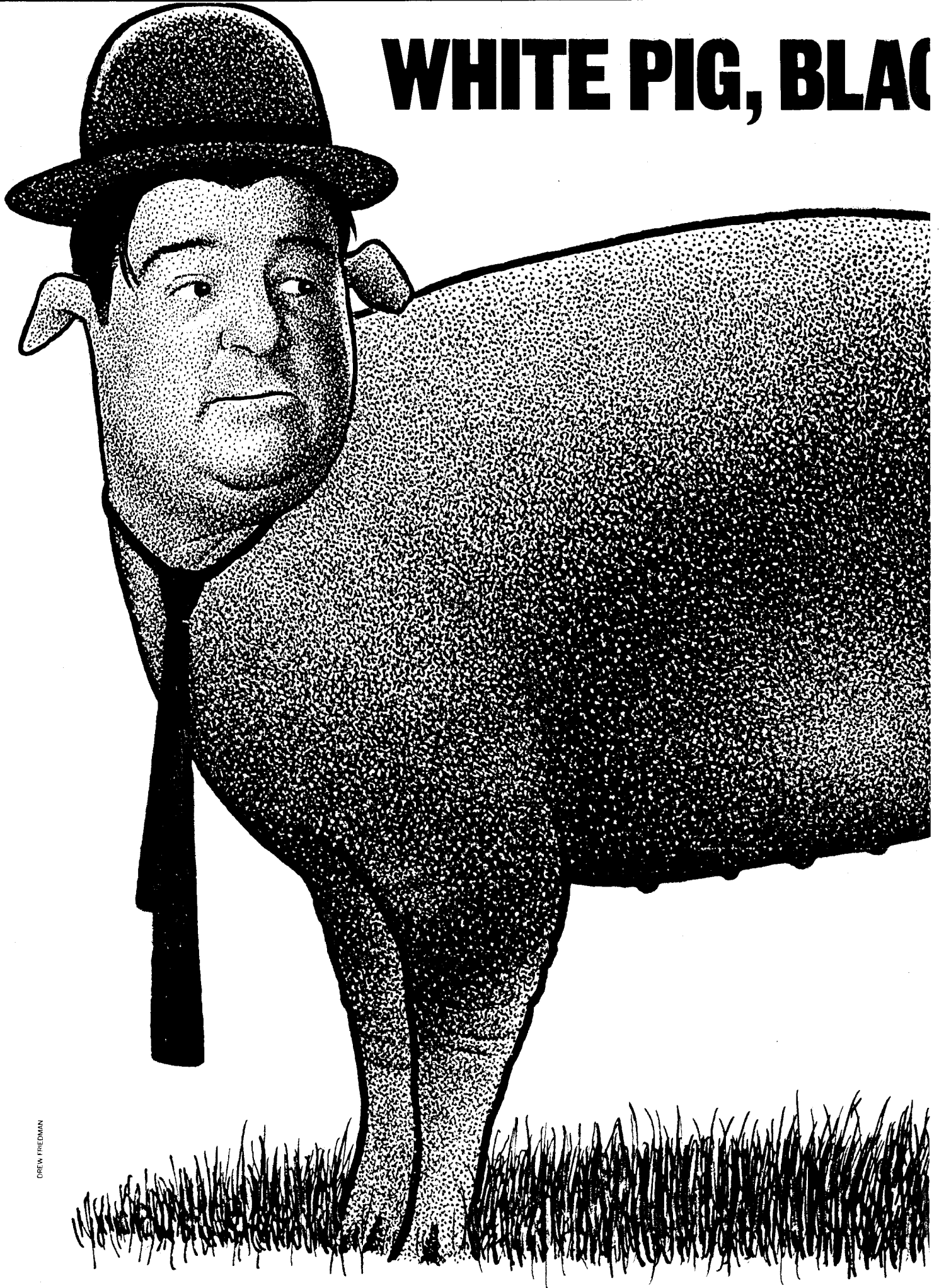


WHITE PIG, BLACK



DREW FRIEDMAN

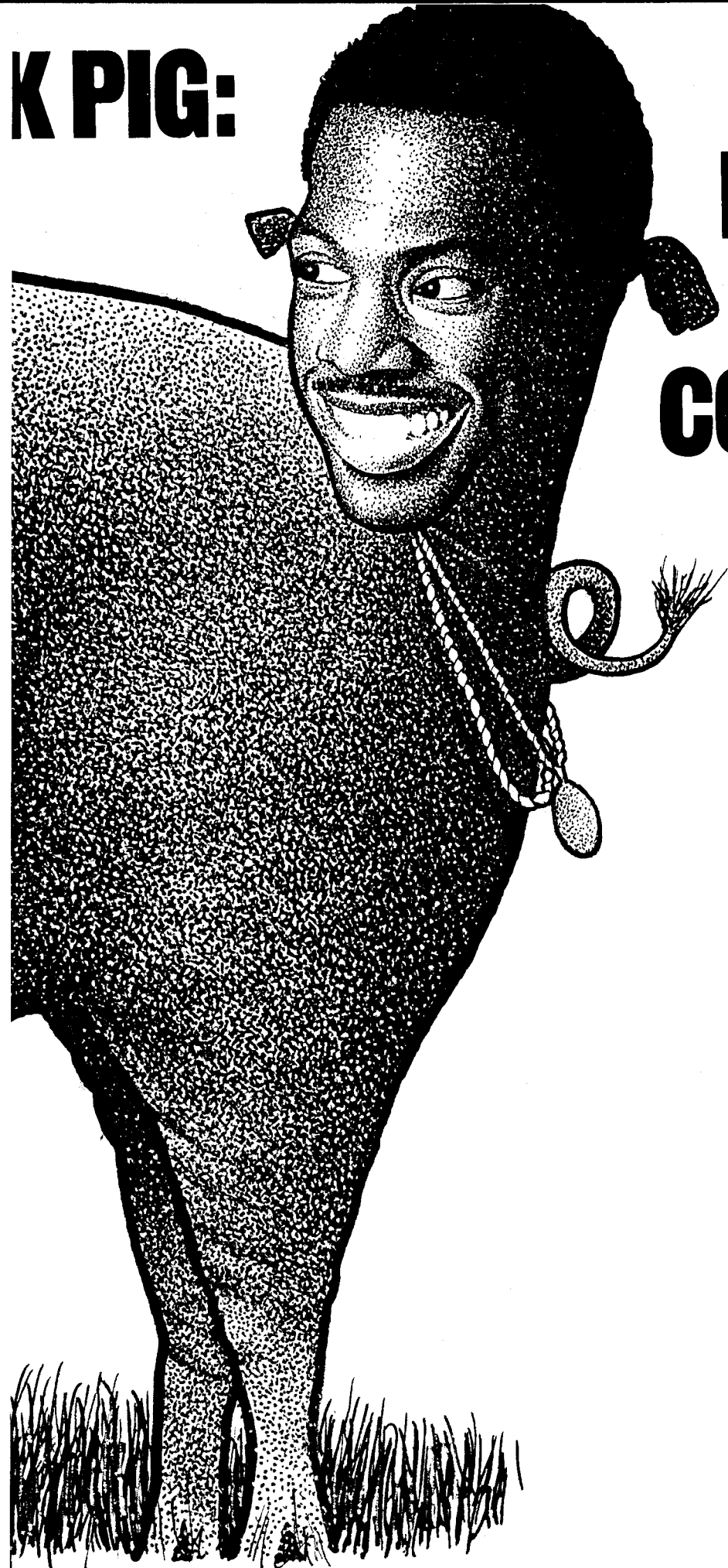
K PIG:

THE MURPHY AND COSTELLO STORY

BY CHARLES KAUFMAN
AND PAUL PROCH

GET YOUR INCENSE HERE. INCENSE for sale! Lots of different flavors. Incense, incense, incense!" said the incense salesman. Oh, yes . . . he was black, black as they come. And many of them come very very very black indeed. (Not that it matters to us or anyone we know. We swear upon a stack of our mothers' graves.) "And do not laugh, you white trash, not that I or anyone I know, all of whom are black, would notice or care what color skin a man might have," he said to some white thug-like youths, all named Vito (although not meant to represent any particular ethnic group, only a small group of ruthless criminals from S*c*ly), who threw spitballs and flaming stones at him as they passed.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 71)



WHITE PIG, BLACK PIG

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41)

"Perhaps I did not have the advantages that others might have had," he called to them. "Perhaps I have had to work at incense selling since I was seven to support my mother's habit, which was licking her finger before turning the pages of a newspaper. But that is nothing to be ashamed of. It is an honest living. Which is more than can be said of most men, black and white, but more white than black, and in particular your small group of ruthless fathers and their olive oil import—ha!—businesses. There are, remember, both white pigs and black pigs in this world. Of course you remember the horrible affair of Costello's soul. No? It was reported in all the radical underground Black Muslim mimeographed, therefore splotchy and hard to read, leaflets or, when they fold them in half, pamphlets. Or, when collated and stapled together, booklets. Look, here's one now. Read it, then call me *Mister Incense Salesman Tibbs*."

And, throwing a final flaming stone at him, the boys sat down curbside to read. . . .

MURPHY AND COSTELLO . . . COMEDIANS OR COMEDIAN?

BY
NIPSEY RUSSELL,
a.k.a. CASSIUS PLAY-DOH

THERE ARE WHITE PIGS AND BLACK PIGS. That is, there are, in this world, evil men who are white, and evil men who are black. Sometimes they are one and the same. But not often—sometimes only once in a zillion-years, sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes exactly. It depends on the zillion years in question!

In this particular zillion years, this interracial synchronicity of evil only occurred once, in the case of Costello and Murphy. It all began in ancient Egypt, where a certain soul had just separated from its first mortal body, that of Sam the Sham, a.k.a. Cleopatra, but only in the privacy of his own home, a.k.a. pyramid. The Sham had been killed instantly, a consequence of throwing a spear at a chariot of the gods, which he had mistaken for a cylindrical glowing fleeing Jew.

Upon the death of Sam the Sham the soul was free, by virtue of its highly evolved state of purity, to ascend directly to the House of the Lord and bypass the chain of reincarnation necessary for most souls. But the disembodied soul of Sam the Sham saw that dwelling in the House of the Lord, at the side of the Divine Light of the Universe, meant being low man on the totem pole, whereas on earth one could be a very big noise, indeed.

Therefore his soul sought out the nearest glowing red light, which meant

rebirth and one good time after another. And after many hundreds of years and many dozens of lives, that soul became adept at finding the nearest and reddest of glowing lights, in its decadence turning more and more to evil and greed and selfishness. The better the time it had in one body, the better the time it wanted to have in the next.

In its incarnation as the hellish Harriet Beecher Stowe, it enjoyed a life of ultimate pleasure at the expense of millions of starving children in India, until Stowe was killed instantly in the act of throwing a bomb at the touring car of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, mistaking it for a cylindrical glowing fleeing Jew. And thus it was that the soul was once again free, and in its freedom delighted at the discovery of the nearest and reddest of all the glowing lights it had ever seen.

"Oh boy," said the soul, plunging into it. "This one's going to be a pip!" And it was. Weighing in at a remarkable eighty-five pounds seven ounces, Lou Costello was born.

AS THE FAMOUS COMEDIAN LOU COSTELLO, the soul achieved new heights of evildom. Gone were the restraints imposed upon a woman in the Victorian era. And not having to write so many books left more time not to write books, but to have fun. Fun with a capital Plenty Of It. Harmless fun, yes, but mostly at the expense of those who trusted him most: that is, his friends, family, and Bud.

Ah, Bud . . .

The man Louella Parsons dubbed, in her column, "The Philosopher King." The man Bertrand Russell, a philosopher king himself, referred to as "The Philosopher King's Philosopher King."

Ah, Bud . . .

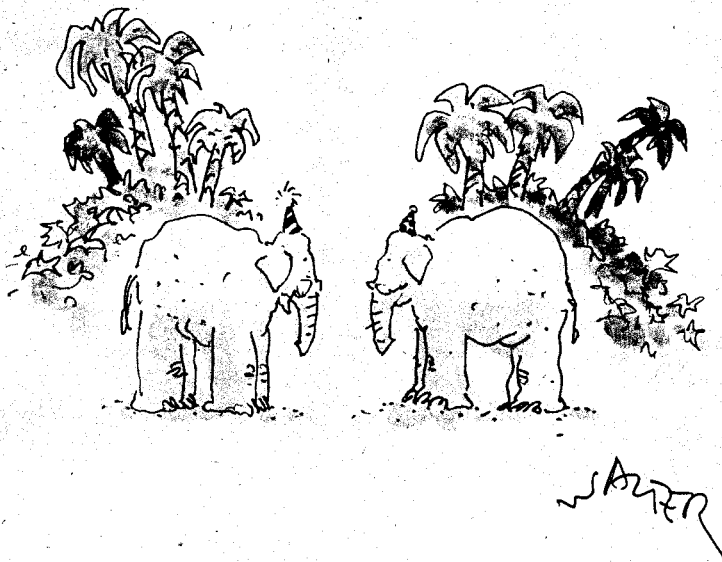
The driving force behind the formation of the League of Nations, the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts of America, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The man Father Flanagan called "Father Flanagan."

Ah, Bud . . .

Oooh, Lou . . .

Child porn star under the name of Jackie Coogan Wadd. Schoolyard bully with his own portable iron maiden. Armchair vivisectionist at the age of ten; full-time, highly paid professional by the age of thirteen. Hit boy for the Mob.

He learned how to use a gun before he learned how to talk, and when he learned how to talk his first words were



"I can't remember when I've had so much fun. Of course, that's just a figure of speech."

WHITE PIG, BLACK PIG

"Please pass the cartridges."

Costello once shot a man for snoring too loud. Soon afterward he shot a man for not snoring loud enough. Still another time he shot a man for snoring at just the right temperature.

Costello killed men the way other men killed ants—by stepping on the hills in which they dwelt.

He never went to college because "college is for men without guns." Instead he traveled from town to town in the Midwest selling specially printed Bibles in which the word "God" was removed from all passages and replaced with the words "Lou Costello."

Costello met Abbott in Kansas City when, during one of Abbott's epileptic fits, Costello mistook him for one of those hoses that ring when you jump on them in a gas station, and ran over him thirty times trying to get some service.

"Ding," Abbott finally said. And vaudeville was born. A year later it died when it fell into Costello's swimming pool, an accident for which Costello never forgave his wife.

"What do we do now," said Abbott, "now that your wife in her allegedly drunken stupor has let vaudeville die?"

"You said 'now' twice," said Costello. "What are you, one of those optical illusions?"

"Will you never stop razzing me? Just because my head in profile sometimes looks like half a lamp, other times like a head in profile?"

Shut up, Abbott, I'm thinking, thought Costello. Optical illusions . . . movies. That's it! We'll go to Hollywood, get a contract with Universal. Then, after fourteen of the most low-brow pictures ever made, all with Bobby Barber, our popularity will wane. And after three more feeble attempts to regain the love of millions of postwar dopes, we will be sent packing by the studio bigwigs. Then we will become estranged and do a television show, the first season of which will go down in entertainment history as the second-funniest television series ever produced starring performers with some combination of the names Bud, Lou, Abbott, and Costello. Our second season, on the other hand, will be fatally marred by the inclusion of a plot in each episode, and by a crack in the camera lens that will run all the way up Abbott's right leg and halfway across the lighting grid, a crack to be caused by my eccentric insistence that two teams of six horses harnessed with chains be employed to constantly pull the set apart.

Then I will die, and you, Abbott, will have your picture taken reading about my death in a newspaper. . . . Oh, yes; Harvey Korman will play you in the movie, and Buddy Hackett me, damn it! Why couldn't it be the other way around? Why why why? Then you will die, before the movie, actually. But after the stilted Saturday morning cartoon, for you must supply the voice of Abbott. And on this ultimately humiliating note, your life will end.

Abbott tapped Costello on the shoulder.

"Speak up," he said. "What do you think I am, a brain reader?"

"All in good time," Costello said. "First we must hock your clothes and the ring your mother gave you on her deathbed—no, do not deny it, I know it is in your left shoe underneath the Odor Eater, hand it over—and buy two train tickets to California, one first-class, and one for the baggage car. You cannot expect to ride in first-class naked, can you? Now let's go!"

And they did. And it all came true.

On his deathbed, Costello was visited by the entire cast of *The Abbott and Costello Show*, except for Abbott, who had said he would have nothing to do with Costello's death except maybe have a picture taken of himself reading about it in the papers. But only maybe. And only if the photographer said, "Please, Abbott."

"Louie, we hardly knew ye," said Stinky, weakly.

"Thank God for that," said Mr. Fields. "With that kind of knowledge I think we would all become madmen, madwomen, and madchimps. But not necessarily in that order," he concluded, glaring savagely at Gordon Jones, as Mike the Cop.

"What are you extenuating?" Jones grimaced.

"Simply this," said Fields. "If I were to remove the gun from your holster and replace it with a banana, it would not be at all ironic."

"Oh leave him alone, Fields, you big slumlord, you," said Hillary. "Even if Mike were twice the chimp he is now, he'd still be only half the chimp you are."

"That means," Stinky said sadly, "that Mike is only one-quarter the chimp that Mr. Fields is now. We studied that in math today."

"Ha! See?" said Hillary. "And what about that leaky pipe I asked you to fix last week?"

"I only have two hands," said Fields. "Well, use your feet. I'm sure they have thumbs on them."

"Stop it! Stop it!" cried Melonhead Fields, played by Mr. Fields in a toupee. "Costello's the man we should be hating; not ourselves."

"You're right," said Gordon Jones, as Mike the Cop. "Why doesn't he die? I wish he would die already."

"We all wish he would die," said Hillary. "He has always brought new
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 76)



"You know, Rex, I can't very well go on calling you 'The Wonder Dog' if you're going to continue urinating in the kitchen each and every night."

WHITE PIG, BLACK PIG

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 72) meaning to the phrase 'vile devious crumb.'"

"Listen," said Bingo the Chimp. "He speaks. He speaks to us of the red light. He must mean the one described in the *Bardo Thodol*."

"What's that?" asked Fields.

"The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Mr. Fields. It says that for a soul to enter a light that is red means rebirth, and nothing but."

"Oh yeah," put in Stinky. "I read that once for my humanities class at the local community college."

"I'm gonna kill that kid," said Mr. Fields.

"I'll have to confiscate you if you do," said Mike the Cop.

"Now I must die!" screamed Lou at the top of his lungs. And he did.

And everyone was happy, and peppy, and bursting with love. Everyone, that is, except Bingo, who was pensive and handsome.

"Costello reborn?" Bingo worried aloud.

"God help us, everyone," wept Stinky, throwing away his crutch. He would not be needing it anymore. For Lou Costello, dead, would never again break his legs every day as a practical joke.

Stinky rubbed his chin. *Or would he?*

ON A COLD, COLD JANUARY NIGHT IN OCTOBER OF 1960, somewhere in the steamy, teeming, slum-like ghetto that is Long Island, a child was born unto the world. Three wise addicts from the east, where the pool hall was, brought him gifts of basketball shoes, the laces of which were not for tying, a baseball cap with stripes around it, a little too small for his head, a belt buckle with a space for his name if he ever got one, and myrrh.

The unlicensed midwife said, "I've never seen a black child look so much like Lou Costello."

"What about Gary Coleman?" said the least wise of the wise heroin addicts.

"He is yet to be born," said Mrs. Murphy, the unnamed, and possibly unnameable, child's mother.

"We must go now," said one of the wise addicts, "and take all of your belongings with us." And they did, but not before messing up the joint.

"I have a dream," said Mrs. Murphy, "that someday my son will be the kind of addict that can support his habit honestly."

"Dream on," said the unlicensed

midwife, tying off her arm.

"Let us pray now, that the babe will grow up to be an honest hardworking man," said Mrs. Murphy.

"I have a better idea," said the unlicensed midwife. "Let's go down to the bodega and play the numbers."

And they did, leaving the hungry infant an unopened can of RavioliOs and a pint of Peach Ripple. But not before messing up the joint some more.

And for fifteen years the child was left on his own.

"I will call myself 'Eddie,'" he decided one day. To make it legal he went down to the smithy, where, if you were black, you could have your name engraved on your belt and bet on the razor fights "While-U-Wait."

While Eddie Murphy watched men slice each other to ribbons with straight razors, a voice echoed in his head: "I used to do this to Stinky." He did not know the meaning of the words. All he knew was that if he could find this "Stinky" and cut him to ribbons he would be a much happier man. Then it came to him. It did not have to be "Stinky" and it did not necessarily have to be a razor. It could be to all white people and it could be with jokes. Better yet, to all people everywhere and with verbal abuse.

Lou Costello's soul was awakened. And it wasn't long before Eddie Murphy was richer and crueller than Lou Costello and Harriet Beecher Stowe put together.

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE IN A PRISON, somewhere in Kansas, somewhere in the United States, the mutant offspring of Bud Abbott sat, stewing not in his own juices, but in those of his cellmate. Jack Henry Abbott stewed because of the humiliation Lou Costello had caused his father, Bud Abbott. On his deathbed, Bud Abbott said to little Jack Henry this: "Daddy's partner was an evil, evil man. His soul had inhabited many, many bodies before that of your uncle Lou. By the time you grow up, he will have been reborn. He will surely be more terrible than your uncle Lou ever was. You must promise me to seek out and destroy this . . . this New Costello, if you will. And before he dies, you must place him in a lead box and seal it tightly so that his soul can never escape. You will recognize him by the sign of the belly of the beast on the top of his pointy little head. The sign is this number: Alexander-2222. Good luck, good night, and may God bless."

Then he died. No watch, no nothing.

"If I ever get my hands on the numbered head of that reconstituted Lou Costello," thought prison barber Jack Henry Abbott as he shaved the head of the new death-row prisoner, "I will surely kill him and then blame it on society. Then I will seal his body up tight in a lead box and drop it into the deepest ocean in the world, which is in Egypt. And I will blame it on my father, who commands me from beyond the grave, with the power of many remote-controlled garage-door openers aimed at my entirely self-educated-past-the-second-grade, ask-me-anything-about-the-existentialists-type-brain . . ."

"Ouch," yelled the prisoner, who was black and Eddie Murphy to boot. "Watch my ears! You tryin' to kill me?"

"Shut up," Abbott said. "I am white, and therefore superior. Remember, my good invisible man, there are no white pigs in this world, only black ones. Now bend forward so I can get the nape."

"If I were white, you wouldn't be talkin' to me this way," Eddie Murphy whined.

"If you were white," Abbott heckled, "you would not be facing execution for a parking violation; namely, parking where a white man might have wanted to park, had one been in the neighborhood."

"Too true, too true," wept Eddie Murphy, bowing his head to expose his nape to the white man's razor.

Scrape scrape scrape, cried the razor as it slid effortlessly across the black man's pointy little scalp.

It was then that Abbott saw it. There, etched across the dome of Eddie Murphy's skull-like head, was the number. The ACCURSED NUMBER foretold so poignantly by the expiring elder Abbott so many years ago.

"Cazart!" cried Jack Henry, rubbing the number with an ink eraser to make sure it was not just some broad's telephone number that Joe Piscopo had scrawled on Murphy's head one night in lieu of scrap paper.

"You racists cannot get rid of us that easily," said Murphy. "We may be the invisible men, but we are also the indelible men."

"Here, let me help you escape," said Jack Henry, fondling the double-barreled shotgun he had cleverly disguised as a belt. "Now comes the supreme test of your acting abilities, my high-priced Desmond Wilson. The success of my plan depends upon the guards believing that you are prison laundry. Emote or be executed."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 78)

WHITE PIG, BLACK PIG

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 76)

Instantly, the prison barber chair was filled to capacity with dirty prison laundry.

This man is a director's dream, thought Jack Henry, impressed. He is certainly the greatest actor who has ever breathed. Laurence Olivier played laundry, but never like this.

Exclamation point, thought Jack Henry.

"Now I will carry you to the laundry truck, and place you in the lead-lined laundry cart. Then, disguised as the prison laundry washer extraordinaire, I shall spirit you away to Egypt, where the prison laundry is traditionally washed on the shores of the deepest ocean in the world."

The laundry wept with gratitude.

"Don't start the rinse cycle yet," said

Jack Henry Abbott. "Do you want us to be caught?"

The laundry did not, and they weren't. They made their escape without a hitch.

Soon they found themselves in mysterious old Egypt, a land older than both men put together, even end to end. Jack Henry parallel-parked next to a pyramid and put a dime in.

"Now," said Jack Henry, taking the pile of laundry from the truck, "you must die, both body and hellish soul. The joke is finally on you. Wherever he is, Bud will finally rest in peace."

As Jack Henry aimed his shotgun at the laundry, the real Eddie Murphy, laundry no more, sneaked out the back of the truck and began his ascent up the biggest and brightest pyramid of them all, the one known affectionately

among the locals as the "ten-thousand-dollar pyramid."

"The joke is not on me, after all!" screamed Eddie Murphy. "For, you see, you forgot the one thing every convict knows. Prison laundry carts lock only from the inside! I have done it to an Abbott again."

"I'm coming after you, Murphy," Jack Henry screamed as he began to climb the pyramid.

Murphy laughed like a banshee from the fifty-dollar level of the pyramid, then threw his wallet down on top of Jack Henry Abbott, knocking him back to the ground.

Jack Henry fired his gun, blowing a hole in Murphy's stomach the size of the basketball he never had as a child.

"Okay, I'm dying," said Murphy. "But what are you going to do about my soul? I'll find another body. Perhaps the body of your yet-to-be-born son Peter Abbott."

Murphy slid down the side of the pyramid and into the laundry cart. Jack Henry climbed in with the dying comedian and locked the cart from the inside. Then he climbed out and huffed the cart into the wine-dark sea of green, the Sea of Egypt.

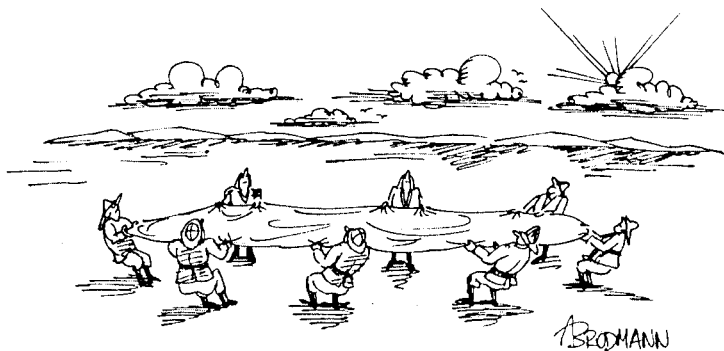
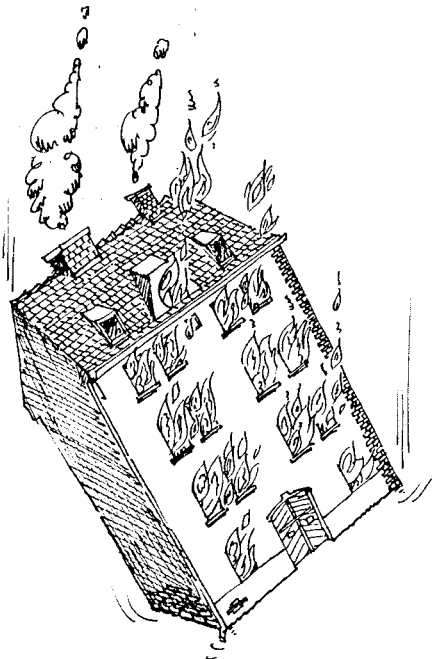
Then, knowing he could never return to prison as he knew it, he collapsed onto the sand, where he slept for forty years and forty nights.

As for Murphy, he died. As for the laundry cart, it eventually plummeted to the ocean floor, where it upset and punctured (which upset it even more) a metal canister of toxic and radioactive waste left behind by a band of gypsies called Alan's Father's Shoes. The radiation, in turn, contaminated a pregnant fish.

For, you see, the laundry cart in which Murphy was entombed had been fashioned not of true lead, but of pencil lead, which, as everyone knows, is made not of true lead, but of graphite. And, as every child knows, graphite is as tissue paper to a determined soul looking to get through it.

Years later, the radiated fish gave birth near Tokyo to a monstrous thing seventy stories high and twice as ugly. And this thing, which ravaged Japan many times over before going on to the rest of the world many times over, is the creature we call . . . Coztilla!!!!

"I SEE YOU BOYS—AND REMEMBER THERE are both white boys and black boys—have finished reading this most incredible but true article." It was the incense seller, chastising the boys for reading too fast. "Do you want to get



cramps?" he demanded.

"But Murphy's alive and the world has not ended," said one of the boys, smugly.

"So says the capitalist, bourgeois, white-supremacist press. But look around you. Look at the rubble, the barren wasteland that was once New York City. Coztilla's radioactive footprints are everywhere you look. What are you, blind as well as Sicilian?"

"You look around you," countered the boy. "See the thriving metropolis that is New York? Even you, in your infinite blackness, can see the veritable hustle and bustle that is also New York."

"It is nothing but ashes!" the incense seller spat.

"It is nothing but the utmost in civilization as we, the white man, know it!"

"You are wrong!"

"You are wrong!"

"You are wrong!"

"You are wrong!"

They argued like this for hours. Finally, tired and hoarse and ragged, the white boy said with disgust, "Demon black man, begone! You are like all your people who are all like you."

Realizing the futility of his arguments, the incense seller slumped against the wall.

"Yes," he said sadly, "you are right. We are all alike. But so, too, are all white people."

Then a magical thing happened. Without really understanding what the black man had said, the white boys knew that he was right. His few simple words had brought them closer to a more complete understanding of the human condition in all its tragic beauty. They saw that the condition was the same not just for whites, not just for blacks, but for some of the yellow hordes as well.

One by one, they shook his hand, then stood before him and, in unison, in a single voice both unafraid and reverent, they called him Mister Incense Salesman Tibbs.

Then they bent to kiss the hem of his dashiki, but it was too late, for he was already as dust, and a small mound on the sidewalk.

"He . . . he was just an apparition," said the Sicilian boy they called "The Poet."

The one they called "The Leader" pushed The Poet up against the wall and said through gritted teeth, "They don't like to be called that anymore."

The Dust smiled. . . .

And there was light. ■

One flew over the animal house



The scene: American Megaversity
—The Big U.

The time: fall semester enrollment, 1984 or thereabouts.

Overage freshman Casimir Radon is up to his neck in red tape, two of his dormmates engage in stereo warfare (heavy-metal vs. fugues), a "worm" eats away at the crucial computer system, "The Airheads" (♀) battle "The Terrorists" (♂), and the rest of the campus has become a hotbed of cults, mutant rats, Crotobaltoslavonian freedom-fighters, radioactive waste, educational theory, drugs, Dungeons & Dragons . . .

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