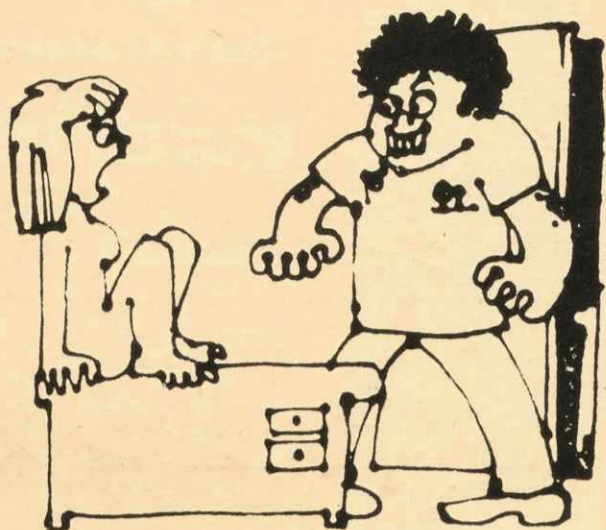


## The Right to Choose



I met Linda B-----, one day as I was wandering through the Public Gardens, she was sitting there alone and I couldn't help but notice that she was crying. Being somewhat compassionate for the human race (and being stoned at the time) I slithered over and sat down next to her.

I really didn't know why I felt sorry for her. She was just another kid to me, blue jeans the whole bit. When she lifted up her head and when I looked into her eyes I could see that her misery went deep into her soul.

"Hi, the park is really nice isn't it?" I figured it was good for openers. Her reaction to what I said reminded me of a doe that senses a hunter near. Before she had a chance to say anything I started off on a tangent of words.

She eyed me skeptically, or should I say like a nut? Then in a very soft voice said "Yes, the park is so beautiful, it takes my mind off things I really don't want to think of".

By then I figured out that she was really depressed about something and it was really bringing me down. So, I decided to do something about it. "hey man, I know a better place than this, if you want to blow your mind on beauty, do you want to come? I expected her to tell me to go to hell, but instead she said "OK I really don't have anything better to do and this park is becoming too crowded." I led her out the front gates all the while talking to her about anything, I found out some of her personal info, like she was from CB and that her name was Linda. I asked her if she wanted a cup of coffee she nodded her head and we trucked over to Murray's.

She was quiet as we slowly sipped our coffee, and I was wondering all the time what I was doing here with a person I didn't know and I was starting to let my mind wander when she spoke "Are you stoned? she asked me in her child-like way. I had to laugh at that, "not really". I lied. "Why? Her answer really freaked me out. "I have never seen anyone stoned." "like wow, where have you been all your life? I thought she was

leading me on.

"My parents have a farm in CB, and I live on it, we don't have the drug problem around there the strongest thing anyone takes down home is aspirin and whiskey".

Her naive ways touched me very deeply, I attribute it now to the fact that I was stoned. Nonetheless, there was almost a wizened air about her.

I decided to get down to the nitty-gritty and ask her just exactly where her head space was and what she was doing trucking around Halifax? So, I asked her. She took a deep breath and for an instant her eyes held a far away look, slowly she began her story. "I came to Halifax to get an abortion, I told Ma that I was up here for a job interview and that I was going to stay at the Y, I didn't want to lie to her but if she found out that I was pregnant she'd go off her stick especially if she found out it was Bo's. "Who is Bo? I asked. "she blushed and said "He's my cousin, we love each other, and we would like to get married but Ma says that he's no good 'cos he drinks, he really don't drink that much just every now and then". Oh, wow, I thought Has this kid ever got her head fucked up royally." "Why did you come to Halifax to have an abortion?" I kind of knew the answer before she said it, but I hoped she wouldn't say it.

"Bo went and found me a doctor to fix me up, cos a friend of his had the same problem, so I took all my money out of the bank and he took his and to-morrow we are going to see the doctor". I'm kind of scared but Bo said that there was nothing to be scared of."

The hate, sympathy, and all other emotions welled up in me I felt like crying. Here was a kid, 17 yrs. old naive as the day she was born, pregnant, away from her home, scared and tomorrow she was going to have an abortion. I had to hand it to her though she had GUTS.

"I love Bo alot, and I want to keep this baby, but I don't want no trouble". With that she started to cry. C'mon, let's go somewhere, where, we can talk."

She followed me out the

door, like a lost puppy trying to seek some shelter. I didn't know what in the name of God to do about her but I was determined to try and talk a bit of sense into her head. So, I ended up going to my house, she sat on the couch looking quite apprehensive. I made some coffee, handed her a cup and sat down opposite her.

"Just where exactly is this Bo? I asked.

"He's gone to the tavern, he told me to meet him at the hotel where we are staying, I wish he was here. "She sounded so folorn." I don't like the hotel very much cos there are alot of old men living there." I scanned my brain for a place she and her boyfriend could crash. "What's the name of the Hotel? I figured it was probably some dumpy one downtown. Her answer assured me that I was right. I thought my next best move was to phone the help line or welfare, when I mentioned this to her she protested violently and said "I thought you were my friend, I think I better leave now."

I couldn't let her do that so instead I said "Let's go back to your hotel, and wait for Bo." She agreed so off we went.

We clambered up the three flights of stairs, Linda unlocked the door.

There wasn't anything particular I had lined up to say to Bo, so I started out by saying "Hello." He looked up at me as if to acknowledge my presence for the first time, then he spoke, "Who are you, and what are you doing here?"— I rattled off my name, and how I came to be there.

After hearing this, he looked at me with pure misery in his eyes, and for a brief second I thought he was going to cry. Instead, he spoke very softly and said "You know, I really don't want to get rid of this baby, but there are so many things that I had to consider, I love Linda very much but we are so young, and I think that after I git' my schoolin' and I'm earnin' my keep, that then we can have another baby."

That was two months ago, I wish it would've never of happened. During the latter part of the summer I had the opportunity to go to CB, and I thought it would be a good chance to visit Linda and Bo, so off to CB I went.

Linda's family had moved, and I was wandering around the main drag when I saw Bo. He told me that Linda had died of post abortive complications, then he cried long and hard. I expressed my sympathy, b]inked back the tears, said a silent prayer, and cursed the butcher.

Not all abortions are like Linda's, most of them are done under hospital and government strict legal control. On the statistics I was given, the average illegal rate of abortions, still, are much



## WOMEN

### 1975 miss canada contestants' statistics

This year the Miss Canada 1975 Contestants ages range from 18 to 24 years old, but within that span not one of them is 21.

Fifteen brunettes, twelve blondes and three with black hair. Heights varying from 5'2" to 5'9" with the average being 5'6". Average weight 110 lbs.

For those following the stars, the contestants are made up of the following Zodiac Signs: Scorpio - 2; Sagittarius 2; Capricorn -2; Aquarius -2; Pisces -2; Aries -6; Taurus -4; Gemini -2; Cancer -1; Virgo -5; Libra -2. There are no Leo's this year.

Favourite film stars of the contestants Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford . . . a close second are Paul Newman and Julie Andrews.

Blue won the favourite color poll with red as the second choice. Six pair of blue eyes, ten pair of brown eyes, six pair of hazel eyes, six pair of green eyes and two pair of green/blue eyes will be eagerly watching each other to see which one is crowned Miss Canada 1975 on Monday, October 28th, 1974, on the CTV Network from 9:30 to 11:30 p.m.

The above quote is from a forty-seven page press release advertising that great annual cultural event, - the Miss Canada Pageant. By the time that this paper goes to press, we will have all had the opportunity of watching thirty young women parade themselves in swim suits and evening wear, and be "judged for beauty, poise, and personality." One of the thirty will 'win' the title of Miss Canada '75, and will represent Canadian womanhood at home and abroad during the coming year.

Surely, no one could miss the plastic values in the quote above nor in my description of the pageant, which was lifted from the CTV advance report on the contest. The universal reaction (male or female) when shown the 'statistics' was one of amusement and laughter. But laughter is not the reaction intended by those who present the contest. In all seriousness, empty shells of persons with random characteristics tacked on are paraded as ideal examples of the young Canadian woman. These 'girls' will walk around, answer a few questions, and have honours bestowed upon them. They do not enter into any kind of competition, yet one will 'win' the title.

Perhaps the reason that we have difficulty in considering the issue of beauty contests seriously is that they imply attitudes carried to a ridiculous extreme. Few women today feel inadequate because they hold no beauty awards. Nonetheless, these pageants do imply attitudes accepted and perpetuated in our society. Women MUST conform to certain physical standards. From puberty to senility, we primp and apply gobs of cosmetics, we cinch and diet. If we are five pounds overweight (by fashion, not medical standards), if our hair is not styled, then we might not get a man, or might lose the one we have been so lucky to 'catch'.

I would not try to claim that attractiveness judgments are exclusively against women, but rather that in the case of women, they are carried to destructive extremes. The 'must', the explicit necessity with regards to compliance, creates situations in which women can be put down, or their claims discounted, because they do not meet certain physical standards. (Or conversely, it is accepted that no one ever really listens to a beautiful woman.) How many times has it been alleged, for example, that feminists are just covering up their natural inadequacies as women with arguments. (I mean, really, feminists don't even shave their legs!)

This is not amusing. I feel no temptation to laugh. The pervasive subtleness destroys the comic illusion.

The GAZETTE office hours will be as follows:  
 Sunday : 1:30 - 3:30 (all copy must be in by 1:00 at latest)  
 Monday : 11:30 - 12:30, 2:30 - 5:30  
 Tuesday : 1:30 - 5:30  
 Wednesday : 11:30 - 1:30, Layout starts 7:30 - till paper finished  
 Thursday : 1:30 - 4:30, 3:30 GAZETTE out  
 Friday : 10:30 -12:30, 1:30 - 3:30 Deadline for copy 7:30. (Put in box at Inquiry desk)

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