

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE

Coordinator: O. L. Davis, Jr.

Another Day

WILLIAM C. MILLER

This piece is undated. Tomorrow? Twelve years in the future (1984)? Or is the time today? Or never?

Dr. Miller writes from a deep reservoir of concern and commitment. Showing through also are apprehension, disappointments, frustrations. Fiction often serves a more compelling function than does description of reality. Perhaps "Another Day" will illuminate for us all a number of important personhoods too commonly obscured. Hopefully, Bill Miller and Richard Bolton.—O. L. DAVIS, JR.

THE gears of the half-track protested loudly as Richard Bolton down-shifted to prepare for the barricade. He stopped directly in front of the high, barbed wire-topped gate to the compound and waited for the armed and helmeted figure to come from the shelter of the guardhouse. Bolton showed his identification, gave the current password, and received the correct countersign. He waited, tapping the accelerator impatiently, while the guard checked inside and under the vehicle. Finally, after receiving the go-ahead, Richard Bolton prepared himself for the most dangerous part of his day. He always dreaded his vulnerability as he moved from the safety of his armored vehicle to the shelter of the building. There had been talk

of a tunnel or covered walkway because snipers had already killed two and inflicted a near-fatal wound on a third predecessor.

The trip into the inner city each day was tedious and time consuming. First it was necessary to reach the assembly point early enough for the convoy to be formed. Then came the slow, grinding journey behind the ponderous, outdated tanks through the "no man's land" which separated the center city from the suburbs. The convoy system was necessary since any individual or group of vehicles not flanked by such protection was almost certain to be firebombed by the Free Revolutionary Army (FRA).

As Bolton reached the safety of the doorway, he stopped to catch his breath. The dash from the compound parking lot was a long and emotional trip. Bolton reflected on how the cities had reached this state. Certainly things had been bad in the early seventies. However, it was Bolton's belief that it was the initiation of the "Neighborhood Protection Doctrine" and the supporting legislation which precipitated the revolution. This questionable legal move raised the voting age to 25, overturned the 1954 desegregation court decision, and mobilized the National Guard in each state on a permanent basis.

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doctrine and the accompanying mass internment of revolutionaries and liberals was a last ditch move on the part of the establishment to retain the status quo. What resulted was just the opposite. Outraged citizens stormed the internment camps, freed the political prisoners, and formed the FRA, which now nearly controlled many of the major cities of America.

Breathing more easily now, Bolton turned, knocked for recognition, was scrutinized by the security guard through the peephole, and was finally admitted. He was greeted briefly by Tom Sloan, head of Security, a bright young fellow who was attracted from the FBI by the lucrative hazard pay his job offered.

Bolton glanced at his watch and realized that before long they would begin to enter. His carefully kept records showed that each day there were fewer who braved the retaliation of the FRA and subjected themselves to the laborious showing of ID cards and the personal and electronic frisking.

Although their safety and security required it, Bolton was sure few would continue to show up to spend the day in this oppressive atmosphere. He felt that no matter how greatly the federal and city officials desired to retain a foothold in the inner city, the task was impossible. He knew what a political and psychological blow it would be to close down, but hanging on much longer didn't seem feasible.

Now he could hear their hushed tones as they filed in. No joy in these voices. Then a slight sound of chairs scraping as the group rose. Dr. Bolton could hear clearly some of their words, "... one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," and then a bit of a familiar song, "... sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. ... " Then a brief scraping of furniture, and another day had begun for Dr. Richard Bolton, principal of Lincoln Compound School.

—WILLIAM C. MILLER, *Deputy Superintendent, Wayne County Intermediate School District, Detroit, Michigan.*

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