

## AN INTERLUDE IN THE TRI-CITIES [DRAFT]

What was Evergreen doing in Richland? That was the question asked by the members of the LEEP [Law Enforcement Education Program] Board. Les Eldridge, serving as our liaison officer with legislative committees and state agencies, had warned me that something was up. Evergreen was expected to make its case before the LEEP Board in Seattle the next day about why it should be sponsoring a cluster of individual contracts for police department personnel in Richland. I called my secretary at dinner time and asked if she could be in the office early to type (before word-processors) a document which I should have to deliver in Seattle at ten A.M. It was a late night of writing for me, but I got the description and justification of the program done and had it in for the typing a few hours later. We made copies, and I assumed that all I had to do was pass it around at the LEEP meeting. No, we were the main item on the agenda, and I had to make our case for daring to cross the mountains to help people whom others were not helping.

What was Evergreen doing in Richland? In the middle of our second year of instruction, the police chief of Richland came to see me. He had heard about Evergreen's individual contracts and that it might be possible for people already employed to receive some academic credit for studying the principles underlying their work, the history of the field, and the reasons behind the policies governing it. He wished to enroll in Evergreen and to negotiate an individual contract to devise a plan by which some members of his department could then sign up for such "reverse internships."

Why were these police officers interested? Most of them were veterans of Vietnam or of Korea. They had joined the department at a time when a Bachelor's degree was not a prerequisite for a professional career in law enforcement, with hopes of advancement. Now they were recruiting younger people with college degrees, and they felt uneasy or even left behind. Some of them, like the police chief himself, had used their G.I. Bill benefits to complete lower-division work at the local community college [*COLUMBIA BASIN???*]. Through the Law Enforcement Education Program, money was now available for the tuition of police officers in both community colleges and senior institutions. But Central Washington State College in Ellensburg was too far away for commuting, though a few people had tried it. And though Washington State University had a strong program in law enforcement, the administrators whom the chief had approached were not interested in sending over faculty members to offer courses. The prospective students in Richland were stuck.

The chief and I negotiated a contract so that he could earn some part-time credit in the spring quarter in order to set up a suitable program. Fortunately, several of the city officials had advanced degrees in political science, municipal management, and law enforcement. They could serve as sub-contractors: assigning readings and papers, holding individual conferences, giving tests,

reading the papers, and running weekly seminar meetings for the cluster of individual-contract students. The plan looked as if it might work, my fellow deans and the Provost concurred with it, and we assigned Paul Marsh to serve as Evergreen sponsor and overseer of the program, to begin in the fall quarter.

Paul was the right person for the job. As an active non-commissioned officer in the Air Force Reserve, he could sympathize with and understand the veterans on the Richland force. He would go to Richland about four times each quarter, for at least two days of meeting with the students and the sub-contractors and sitting in on their seminar. Far from considering the assignment as an imposition, Paul enjoyed doing such work. He even helped out, in a police uniform but without badge and weapon, with traffic control and crowd management during the weekend of the Gold Cup hydroplane races on the Columbia. Improvised and far from home as it was, the Richland cluster of part-time individual contracts seemed to be working.

The LEEP Board, in the fall of the second year of operation, was worried about why Evergreen would have come over the mountains to run such a jury-rigged affair. Though such contracts did not seem all that unusual to us, people used to conventional classroom courses found our procedures questionable. And someone had lodged a question with the Board about the worthiness of our little program. We had tried to help, and now it looked as if the LEEP funding of the students might be withdrawn and Evergreen might be officially reprimanded. No good deed goes unpunished.

It turned out that the question had been put by the police chief of Pasco. He attended the crucial meeting but did not speak until after I had testified – mainly by summarizing my hastily written report – and answered questions about how the cluster-of-contracts worked. When the Pasco chief spoke, his complaint had nothing to do with academic policies but with why some of the Richland officers had an educational program and his people didn't. The chairperson asked him whether he had approached Central Washington or Washington State for help. He answered that he had done so but that they weren't interested. The chairman said, in effect, that Evergreen should not be reprimanded for trying to help when the other institutions didn't. A faculty member of the WSU law-enforcement program was sitting on the Board and said that he had heard nothing about the queries of Tri-Cities departments and any administrative rejection of their requests. The consensus of the meeting was that the funding for the Evergreen program in Richland should continue and that as soon as possible WSU should plan to take over the offering of extension courses in law enforcement at Richland.

I used the word "interlude" for the title of this anecdote in its literary sense: "a short farcical entertainment performed between the acts of a medieval mystery or morality play." You have had to put up with the description of what we were doing in Richland at all so that you can appreciate the farcical anecdote to come.

After one of his trips to Richland, Paul Marsh suggested that I had better go over with him next time. Some of the students were becoming impatient with the rate at which they were earning credit through the part-time contracts, and Paul needed some support. After kidding him a bit about his having gone native, I agreed. We reserved a room at a motel, purchased our train tickets in advance, and then drove to the station in downtown Tacoma. No passenger trains stopped there any more, and the Tacoma passengers were picked up by a bus to be taken to the active station in East Tacoma. The bus came late. We were behind schedule. To make up the lost time, the driver took us through some alleyways and even what seemed to be people's connecting driveways on the eastern edge of the city. We arrived just in time at the station, to hear that because of some problems with a freight train in the Seattle yard, the passenger train for eastern Washington and beyond would be delayed for at least an hour. Not an auspicious beginning for our venture.

When we arrived at the railroad station, we were met by a patrol car driven by one of our students, who had been a non-com in the Marines. Paul had said that he enjoyed the fringe benefit of being driven around in a police car, and it did have a reassuring feel to it. We got to the motel, escorted to the desk by the police sergeant, only to be told by the clerk that, in the crush for accommodations caused by the presence in Richland of the state Democratic convention, somehow our reservation had been lost, and there was no room at the inn. In stature, bearing, and voice the clerk resembled the comic actor Don Knotts. He was apologetic to us and nervous because of the presence of our police escort. Our escort told us to let him handle things. First he suggested to the clerk that, given the habits of convention-goers, an investigation might just turn up some motel rooms around town accommodating young ladies who were no better than they should be, or perhaps games of chance. The motel owners wouldn't really want to be embarrassed, would they? Then he leaned over the desk, so that the bill of his uniform cap was only a few inches from the bridge of the clerk's nose, and said, "Look at your register again." My goodness, it turned out that a room was available for Paul and me after all.

After dinner, we sat in on the seminar of the students and the sub-contractors. During the course of the meeting, I addressed the complaints about the amounts of credit connected with the part-time contracts. I repeated the slogan, which should be prominently displayed in any Registrar's office: "It doesn't matter how much you get paid or how fast you get paid if you get paid in Confederate money." I could appreciate the students' desires to get through faster, but I was really acting in their best interests by making sure that the credit they received would be hard currency, defensible to the world at large. Surely they wouldn't want people to think that they had graduated from a diploma mill. We should all be concerned with academic integrity.

The officers listened politely and then repeated their complaints. The academic argument hadn't gotten through. Paul, who had a better sense of how to work with these men than I did, gave me some suggestions after the seminar about how I might get across more effectively at a brief organizational meeting to be held in the late afternoon of the next day. On that day, Paul and I met individually with the students and the sub-contractors under, I guess, the general heading of quality-control. At the brief concluding meeting of the students, I took Paul's advice. Perhaps the example of the sergeant's dealings with the clerk also came to mind. "I am the dean who signs your contracts. If I don't sign them, you don't earn any credit at all. If you want me to sign, we're going to do things my way. Now, here's what is going to happen. Am I being clear?" "SIR!"

Paul and I were feeling good about how our visit had turned out. We went to bed early, because we had to be ready to leave at 6:30 a.m. to catch our train. We packed up and went to the lobby. I paid for the room with my credit card. While the clerk was running it through, we went over to get some cups of bad-tasting but strong coffee from the vending machine in the lobby. Our police escort showed up to hurry us along. I signed the receipt, we got into the patrol car and were driven fast across the Columbia to the station. With handshakes all around, the officer dropped us and our luggage off and went about his business. Inside, a group of people were gathered around the counter to hear the attendant say that there would be no train service today to Tacoma or Seattle. During the night, a barge had broken loose from its moorings in the river upstream from the railroad bridge and had smacked into one of the piers of the bridge with such force that the tracks had been knocked out of alignment. The westbound run was canceled.

What was to be done? Well, there would be a flight leaving very shortly from the Tri-Cities airport to Boeing Field. How were we to get to the airport? Paul was an old hand at dealing with such situations. He called the operator at the Richland police station, who called our escort on the police radio. In a few minutes, lights flashing and siren sounding, the police car showed up and, with all of the audiovisual show still going, raced over with us to the airport. The sergeant came in with us just long enough to make sure that at least the flight was still on and that we would be out of his hair.

Paul and I, having arrived in a police cruiser at full cry, got some strange looks from the people in line at the counter. Obviously, we weren't criminals, or the officer wouldn't have left us. But why else would a police car have delivered us in such fashion. Perhaps we had something to do with an investigation of the accident which had damaged the bridge – which was, after all, a pretty big deal for the Tri-Cities. When we got to the counter and told the young man behind it that we urgently had to get back to Olympia, he asked us, almost in a whisper, "Are you guys plainclothes state patrolmen or something?" We said, "Sssh," and tried to look like some kind of officers trying to look as if they weren't. All very invigorating – until the moment when I was going to use my credit card to pay for the plane tickets. The credit card? Not in my wallet. Where had I used it last? The

motel. It would still be in the desk-clerk's impression device at the motel. The plane was due to leave in a few minutes.

You know what we had to do. Our moment of assumed glory had turned into embarrassment. Paul called the police operator, who radioed to our escort, who thought he had seen the last of us. He drove, everything turned on, at full speed to the motel. My credit card was still in the machine. He then raced to the airport and walked in with my card. Paul and I did indeed take the flight, and by some complicated ground-transportation arrangements, got from Boeing Field to the car in Tacoma, and then safely home. I wish I could describe exactly to you the kind of grin which our police escort had on his face when he handed me my credit card. But this anecdote may find its way into a family publication, so I can't. You probably get the idea.