



November 1, 1985

Central Parking People-Who-Need-People
220 E. Las Colinas Boulevard
Suite 290
On-The-Beach-in-Las-Colinas, TX 75039

Dear Letter Opening Department:

Am I bitter? You bet. A little more than a lot!

Yours truly (that's me) has been trying his darndest to piece together this thing poets call "life." And I'm not so sure I've got enough mucilage. But I am not ready to throw in the ol' towel-a-roonie just yet. No my parking pal. I am a fighter. A scrapper. Kind of like a heavyweight boxer-- if I might venture a little dip into the metaphor well. And if life's going to deal me some blows, I've got to learn to take it on the chin. If fate wants to dish me a couple jabs, I'm gonna lead with my nose. If luck wants to slip me a few uppercuts, I'm going to try and bust its knuckles with my skull. You see, my beef-eating friend, this is one hombre who refuses to take a dive. I've got spunk. Lots of it. I'm rich with the stuff. Mister, I've got the guts, determination, and will to win that marks the pedigree of a champ, not a chump!

I'm no schmo!

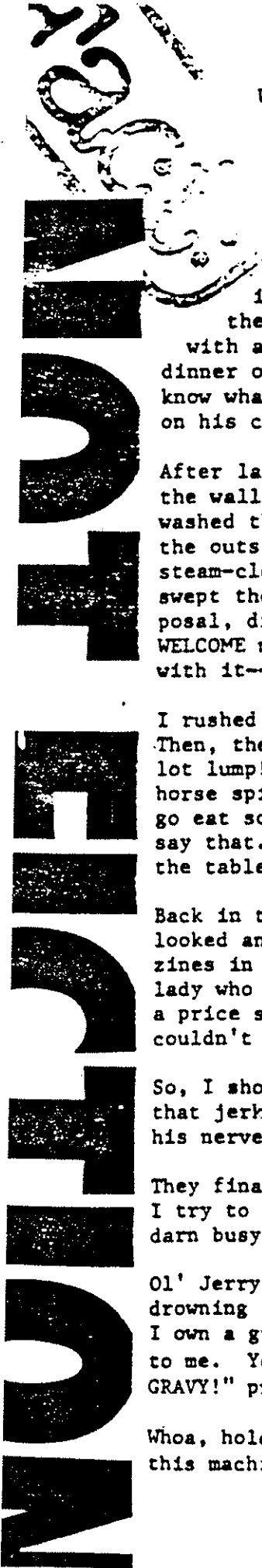
Allow me to yank my can of Pledge from my cranium and "wax poetic" about what's been going on in my tattered life. I hope you will bear with me as I bare my soul.

It began, oddly enough, last Tuesday. And the catalyst was gravy. You knew that my almost store-bought-new-Bride had run off and linked up with a scumbucket named Jerry who manages a two-bit parking operation on the jazz-side of downtown D. And you knew Jerry had moved in with my honeybun and me. What you didn't know is the hell I've been living since this parking punk has entered my life!

Since Jerry moved in, I've had to sleep on the floor in the kitchen, while he's wrapped toasty warm in bed with my angel. I asked the wife, I said, "Sugarsmacks, why I don't I share the bed with you-- after all, I am your legal husband." And she just tossed back another tumbler-full of gin and said, "because you're just a parkee in life. Jerry is a parker!" You see, she meant that Jerry tells people like me where to park, and we do it. I despise him!

Listen: I park where I damn well please. I could slip a Caddy into a slot big enough for a Toyota. Like I said before, I'm a champ!

But my babe don't see that.



Well, this past Tuesday I had worked a full hard day on the canal of Las Colinas. I was as tired as a cat in Australia with mono. I was beat. Yet, I scampered home to cook my darling (and her date!) a wonderful meal. I stopped at the store and got a prime rib roast, some exotic vegetables called potatoes, and some other goodies including some Sara Lee rum 'n raisin breadsticks. I got home and began cooking to beat the band. Although I was tired as could be, I slaved over that hot stove. I pre-heated the oven, made sure it was hot enough by laying my tongue on the bottom shelf, and put in the \$17.43 roast. I was going to town. And the apartment was filled with an aroma I can only describe as "very nice smelling." After I had dinner on, I ran out and did a couple loads of laundry. I swear, I don't know what that Jerry does at work, but sometimes he has the most awful stains on his clothes. Oh well, I'm not going to fret over the likes of him!

After laundry, I cleaned the apartment, dusted, beat the rugs, washed-down the walls, scrubbed the floors, hosed-down the bathrooms, scoured the ceiling, washed the windows, polished the plastic, shampooed the carpet, mopped-up the outside bricks, sponged the sinks, swept the stairs, tidied-up the closets, steam-cleaned the curtains, sanitized the drinkingware, bleached the bathtub, swept the chimney, fumigated the dishwasher, expurgated the garbage disposal, disinfected the ice cube trays, purified the fridge, and combed the WELCOME mat. I was going to wipe-off the soap tray, but I thought-- to hell with it-- why knock myself out for Jerry!

I rushed around like a banshee on fire and got dinner just about ready. Then, they walked in. My angel in the brawney arms of that lazy parking lot lump! "Hey," he shouts, "when's dinner? I so G-D hungry I could eat horse spit and gravel!" Well, I felt like saying: "Oh yeah-- well then go eat some horse spit and gravel and give me my wife back!" But I didn't say that. I said, "Give me a couple minutes. All I've got to do is set the table."

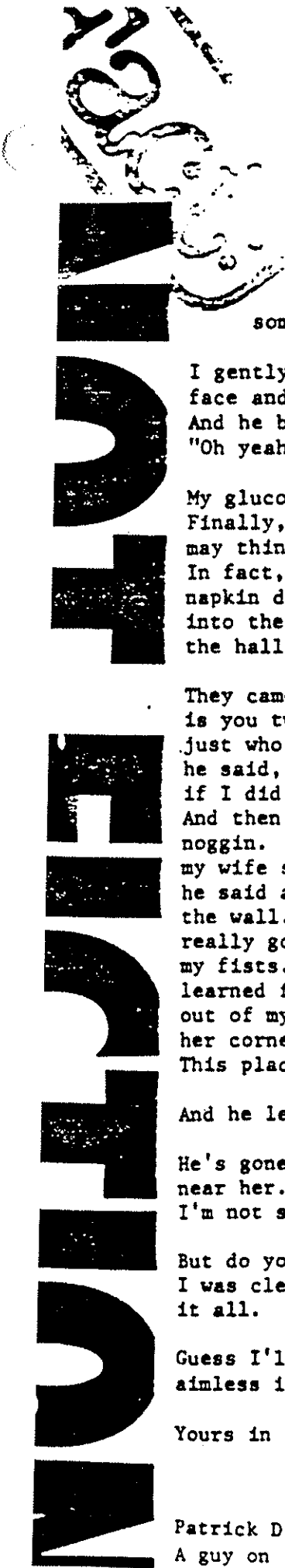
Back in the kitchen, I whipped-up a feast. I'm telling you everything looked and tasted better than those pictures you see in those ladies magazines in the supermarket when you're waiting in line behind some dumpy lady who happened to pick-up every item in the store that doesn't have a price stamped on it (probably because some drug addict hungover stockboy couldn't do his job-- that's what's wrong with this country if you ask me!).

So, I shout "Dinner!" and bring the bowls and platter to the table. And that jerk Jerry is mauling my honey-do-drop on the couch! Can you imagine his nerve?

They finally sashay over to the table and plop down like they're royalty. I try to have them join me in saying grace, but they won't/ they're too darn busy making their silverware sparks! So here comes the big showdown.

Ol' Jerry douses his tatters and meat with a lake of gravy. I mean he's drowning food in puddles of thick, rich, brown gravy. This guy must think I own a gravy tree. So, I ask him nice-like to please pass the gravyboat to me. You'd like the gravyboat, it has "I WON'T TAKE ANY LUMPS FOP THIS GRAVY!" printed on it. Jerry passes me the gravyboat-- and it's empty!!!

Whoa, hold that gravyboat-- we've got to get another slice of ex-tree in this machine so I can finish this!



So, I looks down at this empty gravyboat, and I looks over to Jerry, and he's winking and giggling as he looks over at my beautiful bride, and I'm telling you my blood pressure began to soar. I mean I could feel all the blood in my body taking the elevator and going straight for my face. I must have been as red as a devil's buns after he's been spanked my Satan for saying something good. I was mad, but ever!

I gently laid the gravyboat on the table and I looked Jerry right in the face and I said: "I don't know what you think is so funny about this." And he burst-out laughing and said, "You're a grade-A chump!" And I said, "Oh yeah?" Do I have comebacks, or what?

My glucoselips was chuckling, too. And I kept getting madder and madder. Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. And I said, "Listen, you two, you may think a dumb bohunk on a one way trip to Palookaville, but I ain't. In fact, this is where I get off!" And with that, I stood up, laid my napkin down (without so much as even thinking of folding it!), and went into the bedroom and began throwing Jerry and my darling's stuff out into the hall.

They came in. "What's the big idea?" Jerry said. I said, "The big idea is you two are hereby ixnayed from this place." He said, "Oh yeah-- and just who's going to toss us out on our butts?" And I said, "Me!" And he said, "You and what army?" And I said, "I don't need no army, but if I did I'd call on the United States Army 'cause they're the best." And then he came and gave me a quick punch in the gut and whack to the noggin. I hit the floor like a sack of buckshot. "Hey, leave him alone," my wife screamed as she beat her fists on Jerry's chest. "Get outta here," he said as he shoved her away. She flew across the room and whapped against the wall. "That does it," I said as I rose to my feet. "Mister, you're really gonna get it now," I said as I rolled-up my sleeves and spat into my fists. Just as I was about to wrap my fingers into a fist (a trick I learned from an ex-Marine), Jerry dealt me a blow that knocked the wind out of my sails but good. "Leave him alone!" my loving dear shouted from her corner. "That does it," Jerry said as he grabbed his gear, "I'm leaving. This place is getting (THE F-WORD) crazy!"

And he left.

He's gone. The wife is with me. She only shouts a little bit when I come near her. So things are getting better all the time. Yet, in some ways I'm not so sure I can ever win her respect back.

But do you want to know the real irony of it all? After that big blowout, I was cleaning the table off and I tried a bit of the gravy that had caused it all. And it didn't taste good at all-- it was too salty.

Guess I'll get over it. And I hope you'll bear with me if you see me moseying aimless in the parking lot. I've got a lot to ponder. Geez, Louise!

Yours in space,

Patrick D. Scullin

A guy on the up-n-up and who appreciates the difference quality parking makes.