

Worker's Sin— Hair on Chin

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IT IS one of the facts of life in this country that even with all the courts and all the boards and all the commissions that are set up to make sure it does not happen, if somebody wants to get you bad enough he gets you.

Learning this has been the big lesson of Stanley Daniels' life this summer.

Stanley Daniels used to be a welfare worker. He had a job with the Youth Conservation Corps, which consisted mainly of taking 10 or 12 kids out in the woods and teaching them how to cut down trees and pull up weeds.

These were usually kids in trouble. The bureaucrats who are afraid to use real words call them kids with a "high delinquency potential." This means they are likely to stick a knife in you at any moment.

But Stanley Daniels understood them and he liked them. He had three years of sociology at Penn for background, and he was black like they were, so everybody got along fine.

"There is a marked degree of cohesion and positiveness in the relationships among the boys in your group in their relationships with you. They are noticeably well mannered and follow your instructions willingly. The boys show organization in both their work and recreation.

"It seems that you are finding means of releasing the inner strengths you possess in a very positive manner. This creativeness has been unquestionable value to the boys."

THOSE were the comments of James Henson, who was Stanley Daniels' boss. They were in a report that James Henson made in May of 1966. In that report, he gave Stanley Daniels a rating of Superior.

Stanley Daniels was fired in November. There was a lot of double talk at first but then it came out that he was fired because he wore a beard. He fought this in front of the Civil Service Commission and on July 19 it was ruled that the Welfare Department had to take him back.



JOE MCGINNISS

"... Therefore, the appeal must be sustained and the appellant ordered reinstated forthwith to his former position..."

Those words were in the last paragraph of the commission's opinion.

But when Stanley Daniels went to work it seemed that a new position had been created for him. He would not go back to "his former position." He would become Assistant to the Driver of the Station Wagon. There never had been one of these before but when the welfare people heard that Stanley Daniels was coming back to work they decided that one was necessary.

So Stanley Daniels has spent the past six weeks riding in a car, handing out lunches and attendance forms. He figures he rides about 150 miles a day, from one part of the city to another. It is not exactly the same as working with kids in the woods.

The head of the Welfare Department, Randolph Wise, was asked why this was done to Stanley Daniels. This was in his office, on the eighth floor of the City Hall Annex.

"Well, we... ah... we don't think... ah, the thing is... it's just that we don't feel that he's a good inspiration for young, impressionable kids."

This was a slow start but Randy Wise was only warming up.

"You see, most of these kids come from homes with no proper father figure, and the boys tend to identify these group leaders, and we have to look ahead a few years, when they're going to be facing the employment market which would probably not consider..."

WHAT he was saying was the kids would grow beards because Stanley Daniels had one and then they would never get jobs.

Randy Wise shifted a little bit in his chair.

"Look," he said, finally starting to level, "his philosophies are just not consistent with the philosophies of our system."

"What are his philosophies?"

"Well... ah... ah... I can't... ah, I really can't... ah, I can't give you page and verse, but they're ah... well, they're consistent with ah... a sort of... ah... a kind of... liberalism."

Yes, this was it. This explained it all. Stanley Daniels' philosophies were liberal. Of course this would never do in the Welfare Department. How stupid to have even raised the question.

"What does that mean?" Randy Wise was asked.

"Well, look, I'm not really familiar with this firsthand. This was what I was told by my men in the field. I have to have confidence in my people. If they tell me something I've got to accept it."

Yes. Of course. That takes care of it all.

What might be the real problem is that during the time he was suspended for his beard, Stanley Daniels began to write a column for the Negro weekly, Night Life. This is not an Urban League publication.

Maybe that is what the welfare people did not like. Not only did this man wear a beard, he wrote like a black man. Definitely, very poor taste.

So even with the Civil Service Commission and his supervisors report on his side, and with three years of sociology at Penn, and even with the YCC program short-handed, Stanley Daniels was made Assistant to the Driver of the Station Wagon.

Cities are beautiful to work for.