

## Meeting Sandy Scheuer

The most notable thing that ever happened to me while manning the SMC anti-war literature table was when "Jumper Girl" as I called her, actually came up to talk to me. It was during a change of classes and this time I could see she was heading right for me. When she got to the table she stopped directly in front of me. "Do you ever go to class? You're always here!"

Today was no exception for "Jumper Girl's" dress style. Today it was a pretty light blue one over a white satin blouse. She looked rather fetching in it I thought.

I gave her a sheepish grin. "Yeah, I suppose I am here quite a lot, but I do get a lot of studying in so at least my time is not wasted."

She smiled demurely and then put out her hand for me to shake it. "My name is Sandy. What's yours?"

I took her hand and shook it. Her grip was firmer than I was expecting and it was warm. I liked how she was looking me right in the eye. "It's Doug. I'm an economics major so sitting her I get to read a lot of socialist literature. I'm getting influenced by that and so I'm about to change my major to Labor Relations. I just found out you can do that."

"Ah! But you are evidently against the war."

"Right. Maybe because I have a 29 in the draft lottery. Looks like I'm headed to 'Nam as soon as I graduate."

She gave me a frown. "Well, I don't like that! Like war ever solves anything. Or teaching war either!" She lightly put a finger on a ROTC Off Campus button.

Her finger stayed on the button and she just looked at me intently.

"So, what's your major Sandy?"

"Speech therapy. I hope to be a social worker eventually. I think it is a more effective field than politics."

"Hence your Pat Paulson for President button. I do love that guy!"

She beamed back at me. "Yes. I think Pat's political double talk absolutely nails it."

I was starting to like this girl. "He's so good I think he makes people aware of all the political bull shit out there."

"Exactly Doug." Her hand suddenly went right to the speeches by Martin Luther King and picked it up. Reaching in her purse she pulled out a ten and handed it to me. "No bull shit from this guy! Keep the change. Well I have to get to class. Maybe I'll see you around sometime." She turned slightly to give me a friendly wave goodbye as she walked away.

"I certainly hope so. Nice talking to you!"

And so, if winter quarter at Kent State was quiet, I was learning quite a lot I felt and meeting great people.

Second to meeting Sandy, the other most exciting thing that happened at that time was off campus at Case Western Reserve. It was a huge deal. Case Western was hosting a national conference on how to make our anti-war efforts effective in the coming months.

## **The last time I saw Sandy**

Apart from the tear gas and the uproar around the ROTC building getting torched there is one salient thing about May 4th that haunts me to this day. Like a lot of the students I just had to see the ashes of the ROTC building. The smell of the charred wood was quite strong and the fact that it was ringed by Ohio National Guardsmen gave counter point to the glee some students felt at seeing the ashes. Me? I was not feeling all that good about it.

Having seen enough, I started to walk away but spotted a friendly face sitting on the curb with a dog sporting a red ribbon around its neck serving as a leash. Holding the leash was Sandy!

"Hi Sandy!"

"Doug! So nice to see you!" She nodded toward the charred remains. "That's a pretty powerful statement." She patted the spot next to her, indicating I should sit.

I took the cue and as I sat down beside her, I narrowed my eyes taking in the rubble. The strong smell of the smoldering wood assaulted my nose. "It truly is. But I bet there is going to be hell to pay for it."

Sandy frowned. "I bet you're right."

I reached out to pet the dog. It responded by licking my hand. "Our sorority sisters found this stray. We took it in. It was my turn to walk it."

"Okay. What's the dog's name?"

"We're calling it Heavy, because she's pregnant." She laughed.

Grinning back, I leaned over to notice the dog's drooping teats and round belly. "I see. Good name for it."

"We are trying to find it a home. I tried my Mom but she didn't want it. I asked my boyfriend Bruce but he said he already has a dog."

"Well that's a bummer. I hope you find a home for Heavy."

"Yeah me too." Sandy watched me approvingly as I continued petting the dog.

I was not just petting it to be petting. I was trying to avoid the scowl of the National Guardsman in front of us and no longer looked up, instead focusing on the dog who was enjoying my attention. As I continued petting the pregnant dog, my mind went to Rebecca who I had scammed into thinking we were going to napalm a mother dog, for the sole reason to trigger her moral outrage. It had worked beyond my wildest expectations!

Now here I was petting the mother dog to be in front of the burned out ROTC building. A very weird irony! Where was Rebecca these days anyway? I had not seen her lately. I bet she hated me! No doubt! I felt a tightness in the pit of my stomach thinking about her. I snapped back to the present moment and the awful smell of smoke.

"So, are you a dog person, Sandy?"

She brightened and smiled. "Yeah, I love dogs!"

"Aww. That is so sweet. You must be a very kind person."

Sandy looked a tad embarrassed. "Well, I try to be."

Feeling a bit flirty I replied, "I confess I have a soft spot in my heart for animal lovers."

She looked a little flustered by my attention but she quickly recovered. "Say, I'm glad I saw you today. That little book of Martin Luther King's speeches you sold me was one of the best purchases I have ever made. When I woke up this morning, knowing the ROTC building was gone I thought of the last speech in that little book. How his I Have a Dream turned into a nightmare. I remembered the one thing that stood out for me: how the dream turned into a nightmare when 16,000 military advisors became half a million U.S. troops in Vietnam."

I nodded. "My take away from the Christmas Sermon was how it did not sound like a sermon one would expect to hear at Christmas."

"Yes! Exactly Doug. It left me feeling very uncomfortable. But it also made me

better understand why you are so against the war.” She touched my hand and I felt a lump in my throat.

Sandy looked up at the charred rubble then looked at me. “It feels like we are smack in the middle of the nightmare he saw.”

“It sure does and it makes me wonder if the nightmare is going to get any worse.”

“I have a bad feeling, like it most certainly will.”

“I agree Sandy.”

“Why did he have to be assassinated? Sadly, it seems like the best people are the ones who get martyred. Why do the best people have to die?”

I looked at her searchingly then at the burned out rubble. My mind flashed on the heart of the Buddhist monk that miraculously survived his immolation. "I'm not real religious but maybe some part of them survives."

Sandy gave me big smile. "As I was recently confirmed in Judaism, I have to belief in an afterlife."

I could tell she was absolutely serious and was not about to get into a theological discussion with her. "I'll take your word for it. I hope you're right."

Sandy nodded solemnly. "Well, what I hope is that nothing like that is going to happen here."

I simply nodded in agreement before answering. I looked up once more at the stern faces of the National Guard troops holding their rifles. "Yeah. Me too! That would be horrible." I looked at my watch. "Say, I wish I could stay and talk some more but I'm supposed to meet Mike Alewitz in the student center." I stood up and started walking away.

"Great talking to you Doug. I'll see you around, I'm sure. And tell Mike I said hi. I know you both are adamantly against the war but keep your hearts open and stay safe now."

I stopped and turned back to respond. "You too Sandy!"

I was soon to see her again but not in the way I would have ever wanted.