

Rituals

Henry Latourette Miller

To the Purveyors of the Good Light,

On the whole, I would have to say that my experience as a Ritualist was a full one. I never felt once the competitive edge that many of my friends, who are also Ritualists, have felt. Not to say that I do not understand how competitiveness comes about in the process, but I have always felt that getting the job done carefully and with conciseness is more important than going for the numbers. I am sure you are aware that many of my colleagues do not feel the same way. In fact, I have heard the story of Walter Beemer rushing through a job so quickly that it led to the death of not one but three of the members of the Performing family. In fact, it has always been my goal, my prerogative, to prevent such incidents from occurring. I have always brought the Lunder Studies Manual with me to every home that I visit and kept it open throughout the entire process. I honor it as my lifeblood, my sustenance. As you have already investigated my history at the College, you have seen that I was an avid student, with relatively high marks in all areas of study. I believe that this is evidence of my commitment to being an exceptional Ritualist. So I would hope that this incident has come as a surprise to you, as much as it was a surprise to me.

Upon my arrival to the Cylinder home, I became immediately apprehensive of the fact that their mailbox had been recently utterly destroyed by what seemed to be either a bolt of lightning or some other disaster involving great levels of heat. The evidence of this was that there were black scorch marks in the dirt around the crispy wooden pole, which to my surprise was still standing. All that remained of the mailbox itself was a nail

in the top of the post that still held firm a bit of dangling tin. Seeing as the Cylinder family lives far from any township or Municipal Reassurance of Lunder Performances Outposts, I felt that the loss of their mailbox would most definitely put them out of touch with the current Lunder Studies Manual, and therefore their Performance was already at risk. I made note of this immediately and it can be found on the first page of their Performance Aggregator.

I would like to make it clear that both Lawrence and Sue Cylinder were excellent Hosts and invited me into their home without hesitation. Lawrence gave me a firm handshake and Sue was indeed eager to hear about my experience at the College. They seemed to be, although somewhat secluded, a perfectly modern family with good intentions as well as pleasing auras.

It was not until I saw their elder child, Barb, who is in her early twenties I would say, walk into the front hallway from the kitchen to meet me without executing Rit. 2217d properly, that doubt began to grow in the pit of my stomach.

Rit. 2217d as you know is a combination of actions that follows as such: "Upon entering an area of one's home in which there is an expected and yet unfamiliar guest, one must immediately acknowledge that guest with an jubilant smile, walk over to give a solid right-armed handshake, and state: 'It is a/an honor/pleasure/delight to finally meet/make acquaintance/confront you.' This statement is then followed by addressing the guest by their name or title." (Lunder Studies Manual, Lattimore, Book 8, line 22-25) I only reiterate the specifics of this Ritual to point out exactly which acts in Rit. 2217d she had formally Undone. At the moment when Barb Cylinder was meant to begin the Ritual, she erupted in vehement laughter aimed directly at my face with one finger extended

towards my body. Her relatively frail figure shook about in the salmon pink dress she was wearing, making her appear as a fish out of the water, gasping for air. Her laugh gave me the chills to say the least.

Although her explosion made a dampness grow from my forehead, I continued to watch as she executed a series of bizarre performances contrary to the order of 2217d. First she strutted over to me, her thin limbs shaking with exuberance, and took hold of my hand and began to swing it this way and that with such force that I felt my wrist would snap. Then, with a kooky smile splattered across her pink face, she began to shriek these expressions to me all at once: “IT IS AN HONOR PLEASURE DELIGHT TO FINALLY MEET MAKE AQUAINTANCE CONFRONT YOU PETER LAEMMLE RITUALIST OF THE LUNDER STUDIES.”

At the time I felt that a noise machine had just throttled my eardrums. I pulled my hand out of her grasp, tried to rub away the pain, and followed protocol by executing Rit. 129a: thanking her for her generous hospitality and making no mention of any eccentricities. I made the assumption on the spot that, due to the loss of their mailbox, the Cylinder family might be unaware of how to properly execute Ritual 2217d and possibly all of the Rituals in the updated Lunder Studies Manual. I immediately made note of this, and it can be found under the Undone Rituals section of their Performance Aggregator. After the butchering handshake, Barb and her parents led me into the living room without making any mention of the hideous mistakes their daughter had just made.

In the living room I was correctly offered the most comfortable chair that had not been broken in through extended use by the Cylinder family, in accordance with Rit 343f. I was also happy to see that the room itself was organized in a way that was pleasing to

the eye and was therefore in accordance with Rit. 343m. My doubt of the Cylinder Performance subsided.

I then started a conversation that focused on my reason for being in the Cylinder home. Lawrence and Sue politely acknowledged my purpose by nodding their heads as I spoke. Barb, however, seemed rather confused as to the manner of the conversation I was creating. Rather than nod humbly and sit with an open bodied expression, she was heaving backwards and forwards, her eyes glazed over with fire, devoting every ounce of her soul to the words coming from my mouth. It was as if she was hearing each word, no matter how casual or arbitrary, and giving it an importance over her very own thoughts. I found this peculiar but allowed myself to believe that she was simply a more spiritual woman than what I had been expecting.

Our conversation went well, with every question I asked came an enthusiastic answer. I was impressed when Rit. 44t was conducted with much care and grace, my cup of tea being filled neatly to the brim with a dollop of honey placed so gently upon the bag. I made sure to mark down every Ritual that the Cylinders fulfilled, taking extra notes on the style in which the Cylinders were completing them. Both Lawrence and Sue were performing with excellent marks, as can be seen on their Performance Aggregator, and yet Barb was continuing to struggle.

First of all, she could not sit still. Constantly switching from this position in her chair to that, stretching that salmon pink dress against her chest and revealing the ridges of her ribcage. I made note of this as well. And secondly, every time I asked Lawrence and Sue a question about their lifestyle, she would shout out the answer before they could even get a breath in. After Barb had thrown in her say, her parents would follow up with

their own response. During the whole conversation I felt that Lawrence and Sue were trying their best to act as if Barb's behavior was normal, and they often rubbed each other's hands in a reassuring manner. To me, their appearance was similar to that of a pair of salt and peppershakers. Calm and dainty, confident that everything around them is just as it should be.

It was when it was time for Ritual 1c that everything went wrong. At some point I decided that it was time to meet the youngest in the family, the reason I was called to visit that home. I asked Sue to bring him into the living room while I laid the Circumcision Administration Tarpaulin down across the living room coffee table, neatly so that it hung over all four corners of the table. I set up my Incision, Removal, Sanitation, and Infant Relaxation tools orderly along the edge of the table, each one shining in the warm light of the Cylinder home.

Sue returned in minutes holding in her arms the petite Ambrose Cylinder, only three months old. I sat myself on the floor at the head of the prepared coffee table, setting my teacup on the floor. Lawrence followed my example and sat at one of the sides of the coffee table. Sue laid little Ambrose on the center of the other head of the table and sat herself opposite of her dear Lawrence. We were ready.

According to Ritual 1c, it is the responsibility of the closest relative who is not the parent of the child to perform the Circumcision. Therefore it was Barb's task to perform the Ritual. I had complete faith in her, for I saw the ritual as time-tested and I believed in the value of what I do, analyzing the Performances of followers of the Lunder Studies Manual to make sure that all Ritual are understood properly.

I believe in every word written in the Studies. I believe that they have brought thousands to Salvation from lives with no purpose, no tradition. I believe that the Lunder Studies offers a security of the soul and a peace of the mind to those who accept them. In the Cylinders I saw nothing if not vibrant faith, the suspension of petty thoughts and the ultimate acceptance of the trueness of Ritual Belief.

So you can see that I had no reason to not trust those who shared in the trueness with me.

Barb sat down, her constant spasms subsiding for a moment as she began to perform Ritual 2a. And she spoke well, calling out to the Manual for its' forgiveness and endless ability to give to those who ask for it. She spoke of the happy days in her life, her moments of virtue through the assistance of the Word.

And then she set herself upon the duty, and lifted the tool of Incision. Lawrence, Sue and I lowered our heads, with our eyes closed we all had confidence in Barb.

It was during this time; these moments of silence, that I felt my stomach turn itself over. It felt twisted and scrunched, explosive. And then I heard little Ambrose wail, and I could not prevent myself from vomiting.

I spewed forth all over my side of the table, purple and green it slid across the Circumcision Administration Tarpaulin to the tips of light hair crowning Ambrose's precious head. First I darted between glances at Lawrence and Sue, who were staring at me as if they believed that this never could have happened. Surely it has before, I cannot believe that never has a Ritualist made such a mistake.

Then I looked down the table to Barbara, sitting calmly still, after my little explosion. She held the tool of Incision in one hand, and a bit of skin in the other.

And I was relieved in thinking that the Ritual itself had gone successfully, that even with my little explosion the Lunder Studies had proven their worth yet again. I looked down at my sick and was grateful that at least it had been contained within boundaries of the Circumcision Administration Tarpaulin, and would therefore be not too difficult to clean up and discard. And I was also grateful that my spill had stopped before touching even a hair on little Ambrose's beautiful head.

I looked at Sue and Lawrence with a apologetic but confident smile, and then again over to Barb. She still had not moved, not an inch. Still holding the Incision tool and a hunk of severed skin, staring down at her little brother on the coffee table. Then I noticed sprays of red sprinkling itself upon her salmon pink dress, anointing the ridges of her ribcage with a purer color.

I looked down at Ambrose, and he was no longer screaming. His little arms and legs were still raised in the air, but they were only swaying in little circles, softly listing this way and that, as if time had slowed them down from the frenzy. I could see the rolls on his wrist turning blue, the veins popping out as his little arms continued to drift about in the air above, like an upturned beetle slowly embracing the end.

I looked again at Barb, staring at the groin of her new brother, and saw in her hand that there was far too much skin. She had cut off his entire penis.

That is the incident of the Performance of Ritual 1c by the Cylinder family. It was more than ghastly, more than enough to turn a man, who has been faithful his whole life, away from the practices of the Lunder Studies Manual. And yet I persevere, I continue on with love, and I sincerely wish that I will serve as a Ritualist until I die. So I beg of you to see this incident as it truly is, an act of fate, in which I had no power. Please allow me

Henry Miller

to continue to serve and let this be only a small stain on what will hopefully be a long and successful career.

Yours and yours truly,

Peter Laemmle