

(05) BILL HOWARD - THE EARLY STAN

Subject: Re: The early Stan
From: Howard, William A.
To: robtully
Cc: jazmin
Date: Friday, 25 September 2015, 7:58

Dear Rob,

Stan did not speak very much about his early life. He grew up in Cincinnati; his father owned a large furniture store or company, already established by the grandfather. He spoke to me about this a couple of times. My impression is that there was quite a bit of money in the family. I met his mother when she paid a visit to Chicago in the mid 1950s. Cincinnati socialite, very domineering.

He was on his high school's football team. I remember him telling me that when they played against the local Catholic high school, he would be out on the field and the members of the opposing team would be calling to one another: "Get the Jew-boy."

After the following episode, there was no doubt in my mind that he had been a serious player in the high school football scene. In the fall of 1953, we were walking down the street. There was a group of young kids (around age 12) playing football in the middle of the street. STAN: "Give me the ball. I'll show you how it should be done." He punted the ball expertly, high in the air. While we were leaving, the kids were saying, "Who is he?"

So, at age 16 there was a big step in Stan's life: from Cincinnati bourgeoisie to the Hutchins program. In your memoir, Spring 1966 - Winter 1966, you say: "I always had the impression that Stan's life started at 16 at the U of Chicago, that an unknown world yawned before him, one courtesy of Hutchins' vision, I also had the feeling that it was here that he 'constructed' himself, block by block, building an intellectual, philosophical, metaphysical foundation, of course informed by the Chicago curricula, out of his own rational thought."

I find your observation very perceptive. It may help explain the changes in his behavior that began to manifest in the late 1960s. He had built one personality on top of another that was radically different, and the contradictions began to make themselves felt.

He had a sister approximately his own age. Here is an amusing story. I met him through his pal Raymond Smullyan in, I think, 1951. Raymond also had a sister approximately his own age. Raymond knew a lot about psychoanalysis (it is my impression that he himself had undergone psychoanalysis for a

number of years, but I don't know this as a fact). Shortly after Raymond had introduced me to Stan, I witnessed the following conversation between Raymond and Stan.

RAYMOND: "Do you think that it would have been therapeutic if you had slept with your sister?"

The discussion went on for some time, considering the therapeutic pros and cons for sleeping (ie., having sex) with one's sister. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the details because I was sitting there open-mouthed. I had never seen anything like this. I was a hick from the sticks, having grown up in the mountains near Vancouver. So, for me, this was very avant garde. Of course, after a few months of conversation with Stan, in which he passed on some of the knowledge of psychoanalysis he had acquired from Dr. B., I would have regarded the above conversation as completely normal. I'll break off here. I assume that you got the cc of my email to Jasmin. She is a friend of mine, on the humanistic side of the cultural divide, interested in the Weil, Bourbaki, and my relationship with Stan.

Bill