

Eulogy By Ralph Engelman -1-
August 9, 1964
The Meetinghouse of The Society of Ethical Culture

Ralph Engelman

Although I was perhaps Andy's closest friend, I do not speak for Andy. He always spoke for himself. It was one of his finest qualities, I can only speak about Andy, and try to state a just tribute and farewell not only to a martyr, but also to a best friend.

We are a generation which does not know of the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, the concentration camps and World War II. And we live in an age which often uses euphemisms to obscure rather than describe human suffering, and which sometimes appears to know how to use the word idealism only in a sarcastic sense.

Andy was one of those individuals - rare in any generation - who are not satisfied with the wisdom and success they more or less inherit but do not have to struggle to achieve themselves.

Andy's decision to go to Mississippi was the result of a simple ability to perceive and feel the reality of the social evil which pervades our society. And for Andy the step from conviction to action, made quietly but firmly, came naturally.

On the ~~y~~ eve of his departure for Oxford, Ohio, Andy was conscious not only of the danger which awaited him, but also spoke with equal concern about the special risk being taken by Mississippi Negroes who would remain when the summer project was over. This was characteristic of Andy.

In going to Mississippi Andy risked not only death, but dying in vain. Whether the most important and publicised domestic crisis since President Kennedy's assassination will quickly disappear from the public consciousness, or whether it will become a small watershed in American history, remains to be seen. But the significance Andy's sacrifice will assume in the years to come will be a sure barometer of the fate of the cause for which he gave his life.

Andy has retaught us an old truth: that although we live and die alone our personal happiness and destinies are inextricably linked; that none of us is free unless all are free; that we must demand not only comfort, but also justice; and that there will always exist those superior souls such as Andy to remind us of these truths.]

When, far from home, I first learned of Andy's disappearance, my first reaction was to tell everyone around me that I knew Andy, and to describe him, as if by doing so I could translate into human reality a name in the New York Times, because, I thought at ~~the/time~~, that moment, Andy does not belong to the news media and certainly not to history, but to me as a friend.

The friendship, the love, of two young men is a non-sentimental, elusive kind of thing, but it can cut very deep. There were a thousand little but important things that were ours alone, and a part of me died with Andy.

[One of the things I liked best about Andy is that when he was angry, or ill-at-ease, or happy, it was always beautifully obvious. I will miss forever that unique combination of good-naturedness, of an ability to laugh with abandon, and that intense seriousness and introspection, that was Andy. I will especially miss his laugh.]

Then there was an Andy I think none of us knew, or rather, an Andy we were just beginning to get to know.

Why should a future exist for me and not for Andy? Am I turning away from Andy when I look to the future? No, I cannot experience only rage and despair, if only because I would thereby repudiate the very hope Andy embodied. Andy's life is ^{above all} the victory of a human being, and of two parents and a family, a school, and ^{also} of a society.

It was the most painful moment of my life when I left Andy's home and his parents after my first visit since his disappearance, yet we did not feel as if we had lost Andy completely.

"And then I heard the door," William Faulkner wrote, "and it was as if he had not been. No, not that; not not been, but rather no more is, since was remains always and ~~✓~~ forever, inexplicable and immune, which is its grief. That's what I mean; a dimension less, then a substance less, then the sound of a door and then, not never been but simply no more is since always and forever that was remains..."

If I do not speak for Andy, I would like to address my final words to Andy:

Andy - the world will never seem exactly the same without you, I will cherish the moments we spent together, and you will always remain important to me. I will draw upon you in the future. Because you once existed, I will never be quite the same. Perhaps our nation will never be quite the same. For although, like a pebble thrown into a lake you are no longer with us, we can never be sure where the ripples spreading over the water will end.