

**EULOGY FOR CLIVE BURRELL**

**By John Judy**

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Lords, Ladies, Members of Parliament, Your Majesties:

We gather today at this Cathedral of Saint Mark to pay tribute to a fallen son of Albion, my brother, Clive Burrell. Though, he had strayed from that noble path we had walked together in our youth, still he was a Burrell and as such we have no choice but to pay him this final heed.

We were born, Clive and I, humbly to circus folk at the cusp of the last century. Our parents, Cassius and Sophie Burrell had intended nothing more than that we carry on the tradition, started by them, of the Flying Burrells Tightrope and Aerial Cavalcade, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ringling Brothers, Barnum, and Bailey Circus. From infancy on we were held precariously aloft by instruments of Cassius Burrell's devising whenever possible so as to inure us to the acrophobia so common among the acrobatically unsuitable.

Alas, it was early on that Cassius and Sophie were to learn that their twin boys were meant for a different portion of the Big Top altogether. My brother and I were to be among the earliest formally diagnosed patients possessed of the condition dubbed "Octoroon Follicle Syndrome" or in parlance of the East End, "Caucasian Kink."

By the age of three my twin and I were possessed of such riotous plumage of the exposed dermis that it was clear we should never find employment with Ringling Brothers outside of the sideshow venue dubbed then and now "The Congress of Freaks."

This seeming misfortune was transformed by genuine tragedy into a blessing when our parents were crippled during the famed "Trapeze Unpleasantness of '08" when an influx of shoddy, foreign rope proved the bane of many industries throughout His Majesty's Empire.

Mr. Ringling would have been forced to turn our family out, had it not been for the hirsute distinction with which

Clive and I were able to support our family as "The Twin Bear-Cubs Who Speak!" With no more than our natural attributes, a modest working-class vocabulary, and collars provided by our employers, we were able to provide for our family in a manner not overly reduced from that which we had previously known.

Those were glad times for the Family Burrell and so they continued until the advent of the Great War. The Kaiser's armies were on the march and so too were England's sons, rallying to defend Old Blighty 'gainst the rapacious Hun. What else could the Burrell Boys do but answer the call?

Indeed, it was among her majesty's "dough boys" that Clive and I knew our finest hours. In every battle, it was Clive and Clement Burrell first sent over the top. The belief was that the Hun, upon seeing our hair-tangled forms cresting the trenches, would fall pale in fear at the thought that England was sending ravenous circus beasts to feed upon their Teutonic flesh!

In modesty, I must confess the true effect was to inspire more bafflement than fear, but Fritz's confusion was oft more than sufficient to grant Britannia the edge on the field of mortal contest.

But all glory must dim in time and thus, at the signing of the armistice, we returned to the circus we considered our home. By this time our parents had passed on, having succumbed to the rigors of wartime rationing. Nonetheless, Clive and I had acquired a quality of perseverance through our time in service and returned heartier and stronger than when we'd departed.

Seeing the Burrell brothers could no longer be dismissed as mere "Bear-Cubs", Mr. Ringling promoted our billing and wardrobe allowance so that we were now "The Lion-Headed Nobles of Hy-Brasil!" And so we were, playing the part of far-traveled ambassadors from that mythical realm of the Celts, resplendent in a garb so reminiscent of our soldiers' days! This was to be our lives for the next 21 years until that black blitzkrieg at Dunkirk stirred our blood to face the Hun once more!

Of course by then we were both 39 years of age and unfit for direct combat. No matter! In our past forays abroad we had picked up more than enough German to pass undercover as freaks in a nomadic carnival, the most ingenious ruse

ever to originate in British Intelligence. As agents of MI6, Clive and I (along with other specially trained human oddities) traveled the war-torn European countryside, gathering what operational knowledge we could from drunken Deutschland soldiers unburdening themselves in the bucolic environs of a traditional country sideshow.

Our greatest moment came in the waning days of '45 when we almost succeeded in kidnaping Dr. Joseph Goebbles, who as it turns out was double-jointed and quite keen on the prospect of leaving his post as Hitler's Minister of Propaganda for the simpler life of a sideshow freak. Sadly we lost our opportunity at the last moment when he was recalled to Berlin and shot by his orderly.

Would have been quite the feather in our caps really....

Our lowest marks in our battle against the Axis came early in the conflict during a tour of occupied Poland. We lost a tarot-card reader of whom we were both quite fond. A tragic victim of our misinformation regarding the Reich's policies vis-a-vis Gypsies.

At the conclusion of this, our last war, The Crown briefly dallied with the notion of sending our "troupe" behind the Iron Curtain. But it was then 1946 and our once luxuriant, twisting braids were thinning with the onset of years and a Britain sore and depleted by martial exercise was uninclined to further exert her treasury in the purchase of such cosmetic augmentations as might have extended our credibility as the "Lion-Headed Nobles of Hy-Brasil."

Retired thus from civil service, on modest pensions, we found ourselves pre-occupied with the formerly unallowable considerations of family life.

Neither of us had married during the War and it should be noted with regret that our temperaments during the Ringling years were averse to matrimony, preferring instead the less demanding society of Giant Maidens and the Diminutive Queens of Lilliput (or, as Clive himself once dubbed them: the Diminutive Queens of Ill-Repute).

It was at this post-war juncture that our unhappy estrangement first took hold. I found myself drawn to the sirens of duty, family, and traditional values. Clive,

unable to adjust to a "piping time of peace" began drifting in less desirable circles.

In truth, he had always been the "angry" Lion-Headed Noble of Hy-Brasil. Spurned as always by the "toffs" of polite society, unappreciated by those in the mainstream intelligence community, Clive found a welcome channel for his ire in the burgeoning criminal enterprises of Reggie and Ronnie Kray.

The excesses of the Kray twins require no elaboration to any of this gathering. Let it suffice to say that the skills of dispatch and discomfiture acquired by Clive in time of war were noted with approving familiarity by the Krays.

As to my own declining of Clive's entreaties to join him in these sordid, romantic ventures, I confess it was owing as much to my own timidity as to my belief that one set of remorselessly violent twins marauding the streets of London was quite enough, thank-you, and I could imagine no reason sufficient to compete with the Brothers Kray for such distinction.

Rather I directed my efforts and acquaintance with popular entertainment to the management of musicians, cabaret talents, and comedians, all the direct spiritual descendants of my youthful "Congress of Freaks."

In the proceeding years I had little reason to regret the course I'd chosen, as I found my legitimate pursuits enjoying a fruition paralleled only by the personal ruin which befell dear Clive as his enterprises with Reg and Ronnie Kray wound down to their inevitable and well-documented conclusion.

And yet, the curiously nomenclatured "Beat Years" were to hold for me the three great disappointments of a life abundantly blessed, those being my twin brother's incarceration, my too-hasty-in-retrospect dismissal of a band back then calling themselves "The Quarrymen", and the time forever lost defending the good name of Clement Burrell against the multiple, slanderous, and wholly unfounded charges of embezzlement by those young "Quarrymen", Mssrs. Lennon and McCartney (of whom no more shall be said by me).

The next four decades passed quickly as Clive and I pursued our separate Bliss. I, with a rich family life, a Knighthood, and the flourishing firm of Clement Burrell Oddities and Grotesques.

Clive with license plate manufacture, religious awakening, and quadrennial attempts at escape.

It was thus we each labored to "fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run", even as we discovered that time, like ourselves, was relative.

It has been said that siblings, twins in particular, are competitive oft-times to the point of spiritual detriment.

I must beg to differ for, if the lives of the Burrell brothers may be considered a case in point, I should say they amply demonstrate the axiom that competition becomes an irrelevance when one party always wins.

I am happy to report that, in the twilight of our lives, we brothers Burrell were reconciled at the age of 101. When my brother was paroled last week for unobtrusive behavior we had already made plans for him to come live out his remaining days in the guest cottage of my modest estate outside London.

It would have been a pleasant conclusion to a life both remarkable and vexing, had not Clive, delirious with joy at being freed from confinement after forty years, brought his life full circle by stepping too hastily into the road outside his prison only to be cruelly run down by a speeding lorry, a lorry transporting the big tents, arcane props, and bejeweled accouterments of a company known the world over as the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Had Clive not hated irony so much, I'm sure he would have appreciated it.

In closing I should mention that Clive wrote a great many poems in his years of forced isolation from his non-felonious countrymen. As his executor I learned there was one poem in particular he wished to have read at his funeral. It spoke of his life and his deeply felt emotions

on having been a hero of two wars, now a prisoner of the very country he'd served to defend.

It was terribly personal to the point of being not very good poetry at all. And, as it is such, I shall not abuse him further in death by actually reading it.

I thank-you Lords, Ladies, Members of Parliament, and Your Majesties for your attendance today as we bid farewell to my brother, Clive Burrell, the other Lion-Headed Noble of Hy-Brasil.

May the peace of Our Lord be with you.

God Save the Queen.

Good afternoon.