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National Summaries

The Chattanooga Fax

From Internet Services

The upcoming CBS miniseries on President Ronald Reagan portrays him as a foul-mouthed buffoon who repeatedly used profanity, said his son Michael Reagan. He called the portrayal "horrendous" and said "they also have my dad taking God's name in vain in an angry, angry way...I've never seen my Dad that angry and I've never heard him use the 'G-D' word in my life," Reagan complained. "They dislike my father, and you can see that," he said.

Arnold's Austrian friend Hans Janitschek is writing a biography of the Terminator entitled "Kaiser von Kalifornien" ("Emperor of California"). It says 37% of Austrians say Arnold will be president and that the U.S. will change its Constitution to allow this. Though he has been valued at more than \$800 million, Janitschek says he's really worth \$3 billion, "thanks to his savvy investments." Also, Arnold has dual-citizenship, with Austria and the United States. ■

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Local Opinion by Dean Arnold, Publisher

Email him at dean@cdc.net



The Late Preacher Dan Martino was a Legend. And a Basketcase.

Infamous Chattanooga street preacher Dan Martino died this week. He was a legend.

Martino spent nearly the entire 1980's on Chattanooga's streets holding signs and preaching against abortion, pornography and homosexuality, becoming one of the most visible fig-

pable of the greatest sensitivities, he was generally rude, self-centered, obnoxious, cruel, ungrateful, and a first class jerk. He was also my friend.

I knew Dan probably as well as anyone. He was loathed by most people, including the Christian and pro-family community,

But he lost all credibility in 1992 when he admitted to 45 homosexual encounters the previous two years.

ures in the city. In 1988 he earned his first 15 minutes of fame for a sign at the GOP convention in Atlanta that said, "God is a Republican." A few weeks later, he held a sign at the Democrat Con-

vention in New Orleans: "AIDS is a Cure, Not a Disease," and was quoted in the national media saying, "Like capital punishment, it is 100% effective."

But he lost all credibility in 1992 when he admitted to 45 homosexual encounters the previous two years.

So the legend was an enigma. While partly sincere, he was mostly hypocritical. While ca-

and rightly so. He ignored them and shamed them, long before his outing. But I really loved the guy. There was something of the genius in him (the close relative of insanity). His deep acumen with words and ideas emerged through the bitterness, once in a while, in the form of a very sharp wit. He may be the most complex person I've ever known -- and also the most screwed up.

He left Chattanooga in the 90's to become the self-appointed "Missionary to the Supreme Court." But just a few weeks ago, years after leaving town, he was still the hands down winner on talk radio in a poll for the most colorful character in Chattanooga. He enjoyed more name and face I.D. than any elected official.

Every town doesn't have a guy like this. He had a knack for visual antics in front of the Court with dolls and baby carriages. His image made the *AP Wire* several times, the front page of *USA To-*

— See Dan Martino: RIP, Pg 2



Dan Martino: RIP (cont.)

day (twice), and all the major networks. Andy Rooney even featured him on '60 Minutes.' After confronting Justice Harry Blackman in the Court cafeteria ("A woman's exclusive right to abortion ends where the placenta begins," he instructed the author of *Roe v. Wade*), a guard told him, "You're the talk of the Supreme Court."

In fact, a spokesman at the Su-

(He had a certain genius for such schemes.) Under the grand jury's pressure and a growing citywide anti-porn campaign, the D.A. shut down eleven bookstores.

Dan was also instrumental in a boycott that caused Erlanger Hospital to stop performing abortions. Regarding the Supreme Court, he sensed the need for someone, somewhere to confront the justices, admitting to me that

Dan then told me to "take the stuff out of my top dresser drawer." I opened it and found three loaded guns.

preme Court, who asked not to be named, told me this week that Dan was a fixture there. When *The West Wing* came to tape an episode about a new justice, he kept meddling with their background view. "He ended up being amenable," the spokesman told me, "and he ended up posing with Martin Sheen for a picture."

Though it can be argued that he did more harm than good, he did accomplish a few things. When the District Attorney here wouldn't prosecute adult bookstores, he visited the grand jury and presented evidence for them to indict the D.A. for failing to carry out his constitutional duties.

he himself was hardly the best candidate and only "partially healed" of his sexual struggles. "Do you realize there's no one in front of the court? There's no one else doing this," he said passionately. Sincerity seemed to be a part of his motives, at least.

Dan had physical challenges. He was very short with a limp and sizable hump back. He was also deeply ashamed of his teeth which were in horrible shape. He was writing his autobiography, he said. He titled it, 'Sentenced to Live.' There was that biting wit hidden by anger and rage.

I had a tough Christmas two years ago. Then I decided to be

— See Dan Martino: RIP, Pg 3

Opinion by Jeff Styles

The City's Leading Radio Personality -102.3 FM



Tell a Lie Often Enough... And Joe Chattanooga Believes it

Anyone who's ever attended a liberal arts college can tell you all about the Big Lie concept.

That's the premise that someone with significant charisma can get anyone to believe anything as long as they repeat it often enough and with enough force and perceived credibility.

This addendum follows: The bigger the lie, the better.

est-to-goodness TRUTH of a situation, there's really no PR alchemy that can take the place of reality.

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Here are two things that are not and never will be true in our

Ask to see [a new officer's] paycheck and report back to me if it comes anywhere near the \$34,000 a year city finance hack David Eichenthal says is "average starting pay"

From the perception of the liar, the more control you have over the media, and the more docile the media, the easier time you have of it when it comes to the repetition part of the equation.

When it comes to the credibility aspect, there's little that beats an official government insignia behind each and every one of your press conferences, photo ops or "surprise appearances" in the homes, playgrounds and workplaces of Joe Six-pack.

But when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, down-and-dirty, hon-

world if the status quo remains:

1) George Bush cares about the environment, the middle class worker and invaded Iraq to liberate its long suffering people from an oppressive regime that posed an imminent threat to America!

The publisher of this weekly institution doesn't want me to waste time talking about national or international issues when you can get your facts and editorials from pundits far more informed, intelligent and pithy than I. But

— See Jeff Styles, Pg 3



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Dan Martino: RIP (cont.)

proactive and help someone less fortunate. Who's the loneliest person I know, I asked. I called Dan.

I have two favorite Dan Martino stories. One took place while he ran for sheriff of Hamilton County, just after losing a \$20 million lawsuit against the city for violating his free



speech rights. (He let the ALCU attorney defend him and the adult bookstore owner finance it.) While candidating for sheriff, he bought a can of coke which seemed to have been tampered with and called in the bomb squad to protect him from what he thought might be an attempt to ruin his candidacy. Investigators opened the can and a

better and felt better. Knowing that he was likely to have a relapse, he then told me to "take the stuff out of my top dresser drawer." I opened it and found three loaded guns.

Sure enough, he called me two weeks later demanding I return them. I told him no, and left the office to figure out what to do with three loaded guns in a bag in my trunk. I threw them off the Market Street Bridge into the river.

When he called me again, I assured him I did not have them. The next day I received a

letter from an attorney demanding that I return "Mr. Martino's property."

Fortunately, a few days later, Dan had another spiritual surge and we hooked up for dinner. He came by my office and I told him I needed a favor -- he was going to sign a letter I just drafted absolving me of any liability for the guns. We both laughed as he

But at the end of his life he starting to heed that easy-to-forget teaching: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

\$10 bill tumbled out, part of a national promotion for Coca-Cola. Dan, claiming distress, attempted to sue Coke.

The other story has never been made public. I knew about his sexual struggles (he was so jealous that I was attracted to women, he often said), and one day a few people met at Dan's apartment to pray for him. He was desperate for help.

It wasn't your usual gathering. Evil spirits were identified, including one associated with suicide, and what I believe to be an exorcism took place. He shrieked and convulsed and exhibited other behaviors appropriate for such a moment.

When he came to, he looked

signed, because we both knew he'd be calling soon to demand them back. He did. But I had the letter.

I think one of the reasons I cared for Dan was that part of him truly wanted help. In certain moments, he knew the wretchedness of his problems and the level of his hypocrisy. But at the end of his life he starting to heed that easy-to-forget teaching: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And that applies to us as well. Who always practices exactly what he preaches? If Dan Martino can get mercy, all of us can get mercy.

In 1996, he returned to Chat-

— See Dan Martino, Pg 4

Jeff Styles (cont.)

just look at the facts. This guy has not offered up one single environmental policy that is truly fashioned to protect anything more than the bottom line of the coal, oil and timber industries. Every step we make toward bettering the global economy means a loss of jobs and buying power at home for the little guy.

And on the war issue, a recent poll shows two-thirds of the nation still thinks Saddam Hussein had a direct involvement in the attacks of 9/11. I weep for my people.

2) The morale of the Chattanooga Police Department is high and satisfactory, our officers are plenty well paid and there are more than enough blue feet on the street.

I can't tell you how many individual officers approach me at public events and in private moments when I'm out on the town to tell me the "real story" about what's going on down on Amnicola Highway.

The "off the record" phone calls I've fielded and secret meetings I've attended would fill an ordinary businessman's daytimer many times over. No, they're not happy. Yes, they're overworked. Yes, they're underpaid.

The recent spat between C.P.D. chief Jimmy Dotson and his spokesfolks and downtown's num-

ber crunchers is all a matter of record. Chattanooga's best say we're nearing a crisis stage when it comes to pay, respect and manpower and the relentlessly optimistic boosters at City Hall say the numbers tell a different story.

Solution to this one? Grab any relatively new officer on the street and ask to see his paycheck and report back to me if it comes anywhere near the \$34,000 a year city finance hack David Eichenthal says is the "average starting pay" for an officer. At a recent meeting between the department's sergeants and the chief bean counter, they called him a fibber to his face. It wasn't pretty.

There are many more that I don't have the space to go into here. Or the cajones. You can tick people off around here telling blatant, ugly truths. But a brief list would include such categories as:

- River City Partner's support of Riverbend
- the city council serving as anything close to a "check and balance" system on Bob Corker's municipal wish list
-and local music radio's constant insistence that there's really such a thing as a "request line". ■



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tanooga after a few years of therapy in Kentucky and presented each city councilman with a plaque that read, "Life is all

about living mercy to everyone without exception." It was an awkward moment.

He was never completely consistent with that mantra. He later roamed the halls of Congress preaching from "Sinners in the

hands of an angry God." But he also held a sign in his final years saying, "Lord Jesus, please heal all people with HIV."

The obituary said he died at age 55 "after a long illness." I

called the coroner but was unable to learn the cause of death.

Whatever the cause, it wasn't by gunshot. And for that, I'm very thankful. ■

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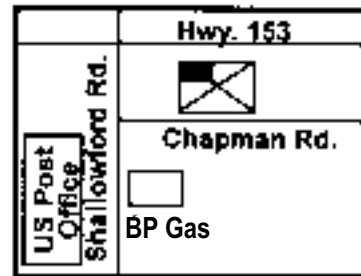
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