

Celestine
Sibley

But Aren't We All Guilty Of Snobbishness?

A letter from a newcomer to Atlanta wants me to write about snobs. "You said in one of your columns that you had only met one snob in your entire life," she said on a slightly accusing note.

"How can that be? You are a southerner, I know, and I believe southerners are the most snobbish people in the whole United States. I have lived here less than two years. I have not acquired any friends, or been asked to join any group except a church. There's one nice old lady in the neighborhood who has been gracious to me and to my children, but she asks pointed questions about who our parents and grandparents WERE and who we know. What do you say to that?"

Nothing, honey. That's what interests the nice old lady in your neighborhood — but don't hold it against everybody. There are some people who might judge you according to the cost of your house or your car or the brand of sneakers your little boy wears to kindergarten. For, of course, there are all flavors and denominations of snobbishness if you get to looking for it.

She Bored People

If I said I had known only one snob, my remark was in reference to the snobbishness of social climbing. It is said to be prevalent in the world, but I have known only one person who had leanings in that direction, and she was such a tedious, striving lady I think she failed to get the acceptance she sought because she bored people.

Nevertheless, everybody is guilty of some form of snobbishness, I'm sure. I didn't realize this until my children pointed out that I'm snobbish about not putting the jam jar or the ketchup bottle on the table.

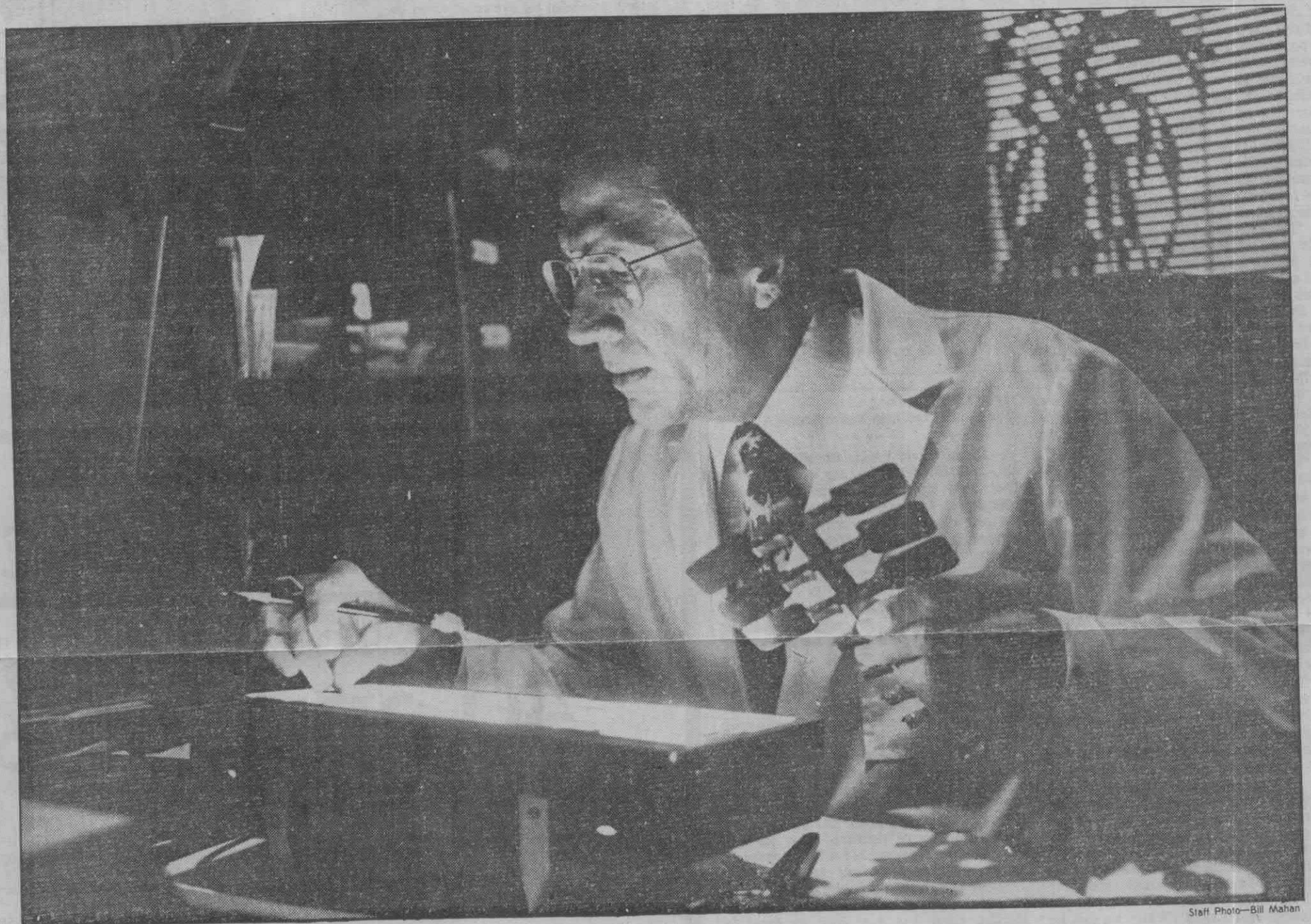
Insecurity, I told them. When I was a child, we heard a great deal about "po' white trash." Poor was one thing, but poor trash meant you didn't take the trouble to have a clean cloth on the table or your silver, if any, polished. In short, you left the jam in the jar instead of transferring it to a dish.

Is this snobbishness? A form, I suppose, but then isn't all snobbishness a kind of insecurity? Thackeray identified a snob as one who "meanly admires mean things." If a jam in a dish isn't a mean — or small — thing, I don't know what is.

Recently I was rereading one of the knitting books by that delightful writer-knitter, Elizabeth Zimmerman. I am well acquainted with her feeling that knitting anything but the best wool is a waste of time. She holds that if you put your time and labor into a knit garment, it deserves the kind of care people no longer wish to give their sweaters and jackets.

Snob About Acrylics

It should be bathed by hand with all the tender loving care you'd give a new baby, contends Mrs. Zimmerman. That I could believe in, but I had forgot, until I reread it recently, that she categorized her aversion to acrylics as snobbishness. She



Staff Photo—Bill Mahan

The Medical Examiner As Sleuth

By Roger Witherspoon
and Gail Epstein
Constitution Staff Writers

To begin with, there weren't enough bones.

The Fulton County medical examiners had two skulls, a handful of teeth, and partial skeletons. The evidence was not inconsequential — it just wasn't enough.

"You can tell a lot from a skull and a few bones," said chief examiner Dr. Robert Stivers. He has been a criminal pathologist for 12 years, and he specializes in mysteries.

"You can look at a skull and tell if it is a man or a woman, Negro or white, adult or child by the shape of the head and jaw."

Stivers lined up four skulls in his office on Coca-Cola Place, under the 10-foot-long photo of his 100-acre cattle ranch a few miles north of Atlanta. The skulls looked bleached.

"With whites," he explained, "the forehead tends to be higher and more pronounced than those of Negroes, whose foreheads tend to slope back."

He separated the skulls into two pairs — segregating the former whites from the former blacks. He continued: "The nasal passages are also different, the wider and more rounded being Negroid features."



Above, Dr. Peter Mills studies the teeth X-rays of missing Atlanta children in efforts to identify the remains discovered recently. At left, three of the missing children who figured in the investigation: (L-R) Darron Glass, Christopher Richardson and Earl Terrell.

From a few bones and other evidence, the criminal pathologist often can tell who the victim is and what killed him

And there was more. Under the jaw, two of the skulls had pronounced ridges, where their muscles had been, and the palates were more of a "V" than a "U." These were the skulls of men, who tend to have stronger jaw muscles — probably from gnashing their teeth — than do their female counterparts. And these were adults, for their teeth were full, and the skulls were fused whole. With children, there are seams in the skull, allowing for expansion

and growth. In the basement workroom, two floors below his office, there were two such skulls — the seams held together with Scotch tape — which had been found Friday off Redwine Road in East Point and apparently belonged to two of the Atlanta area's missing black children.

Bones talk, Stivers said. Bullets leave traces in bones, showing where they came in and went out. Knives leave scars and pieces of metal. If an adult has been strangled, the hyoid bone in the throat will be broken. On a child, however, this bone is small and made of cartilage, which, in time, disintegrates.

"As long as you are growing, most of the end of the bone remains cartilage," said Stivers. "At some point, it begins calcifying in the center, and fans out till you reach the end and fuse. That's when you are grown."

"There are 244 bones in the body, and they all fuse at different rates, and we have tables delineating the chronological age for each. Sometimes, we can tell the age of a victim with just a few bones, though with really old people, where everything is fused, we may not be able to say much more than that the victim was over 40.

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