

In Memoriam, David Brian Warrior. June 12, 1960 - September 26, 1992

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a foolish question. It is disingenuous. Corrupt. For we all know that in a capitalistic democratic society like ours, *it is money that talks*. It is money that tells the stories. Money and Baseball, that is. And Bingo. Like W.P. Kinsella said of the baseball diamond in "Field of Dreams": "if you build it, they will come"... "if you build it, they will come." But, remember, it was baseball he was talking about. Not justice. Nor ethics. Nor literature.

And, sadly, it is Bingo that the tribes are interested in these days. Not storytelling.

The question, then, "Who gets to tell the stories?" is asked for two reasons: first, it is asked, we paranoids say, simply to keep us from our work to divert our attention from the stories we know, to make us quarrel amongst ourselves; second, and most importantly, I think, it is asked because Great Plains writers who *have* gotten to tell their stories, even in some diminished way, and that includes me, cannot let go of the idea that they must possess this place; that, yes, something unnameable connected to the land will tell us not only who its enemies really are, but, and more importantly, hopefully, *who possess it*. It has always been about possession. Hasn't it? For American Indians and for indigenous peoples all over the world, that is the real issue. It's what Silko and Simon Ortiz, and James Welch, and even Momaday and all the others take up. It's what I as a Dakota writer want to take up, over and over again.

It is no small irony, of course, that the new American storytellers of the Great Plains and the mythical west, the Kevin Costners, the Gary Snyders, the Barry Lopezes, and others may be seen as the new land seekers, and tribal storytellers may look askance at their motives and they may say, "well, but, you see, those aren't *our* stories." The *Prairyerth* effort to "penetrate the terrain" is not the same thing, they will say, and the *Hole in the Sky* is, well, *mea culpa, mea culpa*.

If history is to tell us anything, it tells us that land seekers are, and always have been, the dangerous ones. And, if the study of literature tells us anything, it is that the stories hold the secrets to our lives as much as does the land. That is the dilemma in American literature and particularly in the Great Plains, and that is why the question, "Who gets to tell the stories?" is not only never far from our thoughts, it is the political question of our time.

[Eulogy]

In Memoriam, David Brian Warrior June 12, 1960 - September 26, 1992

by Robert Allen Warrior

One morning during August, while I was in New York, I began to know that my brother, David Warrior, did not have much time left. He had driven me in my truck to San Francisco International Airport a week earlier and had used the truck during my absence to run his always countless errands, go to also endless doctor's appointments, and go out on the town with friends. That morning during August, though, he was planning to take a road trip to Chico to visit his friend Kathy Waste.

My truck was not cooperating. Newly purchased, it decided to have its first mechanical problem that day when David rose early to hit the road and beat the heat. The impatient frustration in his voice as he left messages about mechanics and hydraulic systems on my girlfriend Margaret's answering machine prompted a pit in my stomach that has not gone away since. Even when he dealt with the problem and departed late in the afternoon, I sensed a desperate moment approaching more quickly than I ever imagined it would.

My anxieties grew after my return to San Francisco as I saw beneath his strong body and personality a gnawing away, bit by bit, chunk by chunk, of his precious and blessed life. He was worn out. He was scared. He was confused about why his PCP tests were negative when he felt no better day after day.

I mention this story because I want to teach you some things about my brother, things almost none of you can know. As I look back on my 29 years with him, I realize he was a teacher almost by instinct. He gathered people around him and taught them -- about their spirit, about their minds, about the nerves under their skin, about sensation and sensuality, about bringing all of these things together; people somehow became involved in his life and he taught them.

I was his first, if not best, student. As I know the story, he was elated when he began to realize he was going to have a sibling. Like my father, he knew I would be a boy, and after my mother gave birth to me in the middle of 1963, David impatiently waited for her to return home with his "Robbie baby."

Over the next twenty-nine years, I would learn from his example, foibles, and specific instruction. I cannot, of course, tell every story or even all of the great ones. If I could, you would hear of a broken

candy necklace and little rings of candy scattered around my crib and across the floor; time we spent with our Grandma Flo in the basement of her house in Wichita, where I was a sort of bit player in David's first repertory company and witness to their ongoing fascination with make-believe; David's first job as a busboy at Y'et Yet?, a local hamburger restaurant; early 1970s pop culture items he bought with his earnings that will someday, probably, end up on display in the Smithsonian -- fluorescent fish nets to hang from the ceiling, black lights and black light posters, elephant bell blue jeans, platform shoes, polyester print shirts, and, yes, leisure suits; David spending afternoons in front of his record player, singing along to *Funny Girl* and constructing shoebox movie theatres from construction paper, glue, and scraps of fabric; his time as an apprentice (the glorified name for go-fer) for Music Theatre of Wichita, our local summer stock company; singing groups; waiting tables at Denny's; the first of a string of boyfriends when he was fourteen; his insisting that I sit down with him and listen for the first time to "A Chorus Line"; David and I driving to school together every morning, always late, in a 1969, navy blue Opel Kadett, with him popping a No-Doz, sticking his head out of the window to dry his hair, and styling his hair; his starring roles in "The Boyfriend" and "My Fair Lady"; graduation from Southeast High School; taking up residence in a rented, run down shack in Wichita; the Pink Flamingo and the other gay bars of Wichita no longer holding his interest so that, like most of the other gay men from Wichita of his generation, he made his first move to Dallas; some homophobic thugs beating him severely outside of a gay bar in Dallas and his refusing to pass cynical judgement on the world; our cross-country trek to California, he in his Chevette, me in my Nova, arriving in L.A. thinking only of unlimited possibility.

That moment in L.A. is probably as good a point as any to begin in earnest the story of how David came into your lives. He was in those years the embodiment of gay culture and gay liberation clubs, Oscar parties, trips to the gay beach at Laguna, an apartment in West Hollywood, the baths, growing political consciousness. He wrote a screenplay, "The Legend Most," about the life and death of Judy Garland and another film treatment. He eventually found a smaller stage upon which to produce his theatrical visions, the Craftsmens Gallery.

By the early '80s, he was already in fear of the strange gay cancer that was killing his friends and former lovers. A set of odd illnesses in 1983 gave him a sense that soon he would be living on borrowed time. In the ensuing fear and, in 1987, confirmation of his HIV-status, he made poor business decisions

and abused whatever substances he could find.

Bankrupt and with nowhere to live, he came to northern California. His business partner locked him out of the house one day. Gone were his clothes, his "Ethel Merman Sings Disco," "Green Willow," "An Evening with Stephen Sondheim," and all his other show tune albums. He headed north to Santa Rosa, spent a few nights with old friends who turned him out, and called me one night from underneath a bridge where the previous night he had slept.

I told him to find a hotel and have them call me so I could pay for a room with a credit card. A few days later, I told him that I just didn't have the means to loan him money or put him up in hotels. What I could do, though, was to help him get enrolled full-time in school and make sure he got as much financial aid as possible. I promised to make phone calls, guide him through the paperwork, and hound him until he knew how to work the system by himself.

From that commitment and the support of many others who loved him began emerging the David Warrior that most of you came to know. He spent a summer waiting tables, living with his friend Jim Lusk in Dallas. Returning west, he took to school at Sonoma State in a way none of us imagined he would. He joined the LGBA. He joined the speech team. He worked hard. His life began making sense even as the looming shadow of death chased him in the moments when he would slow down. Most of you know the rest of the story -- tournaments, his first bout with pneumocystis in 1989, moving to State, the gay fraternity, the LGBA, his graduation, graduate school and teaching, ice skating.

From these last two years, many moments stick out in my mind, but two especially. In 1989, David made his one and only trip to New York City, where I set him up in an absent friend's apartment. From there, he relived the great moments of gay past present and future. Every night, he hit the town running. On New Year's Eve, he went to Times Square for the ringing out of the 1980s and, of course, hooked up with a flight attendant.

Over those ten days, he saw Jerome Robbins' "Broadway," Tyne Dale in "Gypsy," Tyne Daly's understudy in "Gypsy," Timothy Busfield in "A Few Good Men," and Tommy Tune's "Grand Hotel." He would stay out every night until 5 a.m., popping AZT with others at gay clubs around the city. For the first time in years, he was surrounded by pretty gay men his age.

On most nights, he would end up at the 1/9 subway station at 50th St. and Broadway. He would buy donuts at a little shop there, eat some on the subway uptown, and leave a cinnamon roll outside of my door. One night, though, he walked from a club

on the east side at dawn, through Central Park. Snow had begun falling about an hour earlier and he watched the sun rise while crunching through undisturbed new fallen snow.

On his last night in the City, I went out drinking with some friends and he and I both got home about 2 a.m. He was stone cold sober and sat up with me as I sobered up. We talked philosophically about musical theater until it was time for him to go to the airport at 6:30 a.m. We had just a wonderful time speaking with each other and knew that we were having a good time and that he had had the best time of his life the ten days he was in the city. I can't believe it now, but we never had a conversation like that again, no matter how hard we tried.

The closest we came was this summer in Santa Cruz. After I worked furiously to move and settle in here in the Bay Area, we finally found a day just to relax. With Margaret providing a focal point other than AIDS and mortality, we exhausted ourselves shopping in Santa Cruz and wandering around the beach and paddle-boating in Capitola. For some reason, in spite of our exhaustion, we decided to make a brief stop at the Boardwalk. Margaret and I rode several scary rides while David watched on, taking pictures and reveling vicariously in the goofy, childlike innocence of Margaret and me in love.

Though he was reluctant to allow himself the extreme pleasure and thrill of the various rides, we finally persuaded him to join us on the roller coaster. We waited in line until our turn came and got the last three seats. David sat in anticipation behind us while Margaret and I held hands as the train of cars headed into its dark tunnel. Halfway through, I wondered if David was able to let go and enjoy himself, fairly certain that even the exhilaration of the antique thrill ride would not overcome his reluctance.

I glanced behind me, and, to my surprise, his head was reared back and he was writhing with pleasure. A gigantic smile was on his face and his enormous laugh, long ago demoted to a wry chuckle or single guffaw, made a temporary return to his life and mine. After we exited, I found the nearest men's room, entered a gray concrete stall, and sobbed. This, I somehow knew, was to be our last perfect, wonderful day together. Later, with my beloved in our bed and my dear, beautiful brother asleep in my guest room, I stayed up until 4 a.m., unwilling to admit that the blessed simplicity of a perfect day has to end.

Soon after, I left for New York and returned here to an increasingly weak man. I sensed we were nearing the end and so did he. We made an unspoken agreement. I would take care of him when he was too sick to go on and would not let on to his

friends and family how dire the situation was becoming. He would come to Redwood City on Caltrain or I would pick him up in the City and I would nurse him as well as I could. Sometimes he joined me on forays to the market or the video store, sometimes he just lay in bed and wondered if he would ever feel good again.

He began teaching his two courses, often returning home and staying in bed for a full day trying to recoup some life. He continued singing with the chorus, going on retreat with them two weeks before his death, singing with them for the first and only time just eight days before his death. As he maintained a facade of declining, though not dire, health, I sensed that he actually was preferring to go out still checking things off of the list of things he wanted to do rather than radically alter his life with oxygen masks and bedriddenness.

The weekend before he went to the hospital, I picked him up at the Caltrain station Friday afternoon. The next day, he tried sitting in the sun for a while and couldn't bear it. He hardly moved again until early evening when we went to dinner at a little San Carlos Mexican restaurant. We watched a video and my copy of Johnny Carson's next to last night on the Tonight Show, the one with Robin Williams and Bette Midler. He tried to laugh, but had a hard time summoning the heart or the strength. After Bette sang "Here's that Rainy Day," and "Make it One for My Baby and One More for the Road," we quickly changed tapes and avoided what we both were desperately trying to avoid.

Sunday, we woke up early and watched talking heads. That evening, I came home from the market and passed by the bathroom, catching a glance at his wasting, weak body in the shower, preparing himself early for teaching the next day. The next morning, I drove him to San Francisco State and dropped him off as close to his classroom as I could. I wept as I watched him hobble off wearing a heavy wool overcoat, gloves, and giant red scarf into the press of students. We spoke after class and he sounded not well. Later, my mother called from his house, saying he needed me. I packed a small bag and within two hours we were heading for San Francisco General.

Five weeks later, when we scattered his ashes at Jenner by the Sea, I looked at our mother's face and the faces of his friends who were family. I thought of the things we had done that last week and that last day and the days that followed. I thought of David Clark staying up all night with him in intensive care the night before he died, listening to the terrifying sound of the respirator and deciphering the notes David wrote. I thought of Lee holding his hand, reassuring him that his students would be taken care

of. I thought of my mother saying goodbye one last time to her boodle.

Those who could not be there that last day or at Jenner also came to mind: Jim Lusk, who knew David through Dallas and the years since and brought as much comfort as anyone could to David in that moment; Kathy, who saw David in the hospital before the respirator and who read beautiful poetry that filled his failing heart; my best friend Steve Smith, who overwhelmed me with human kindness when he flew out to do what he could the day after David died; David's friend Tom, who was our tour guide at Jenner; a group of Osage ladies in Oklahoma who never knew David, but, upon learning of his death volunteered to sew some traditional Osage ribbon work for his panel of the Quilt; so many others whose large and small acts of kindness proved what David had tried to teach me in my despair and cynicism all along: no matter how dark a picture I want to paint of the injustices and absurdities of the world, life is too precious, people can be too wonderful and kind, love is too beautiful and delicious, for us to waste even a moment believing otherwise.

Of everything that happened at Jenner, I will not remember most the sleeper wave that soaked my mother or me stepping into the stream where the river meets the sea and clumsily dumping the last of my brother's ashes into the magnificence of the Pacific. I will recall Margaret, who knew him for the shortest time of anyone there, taking a handful of ashes, running as powerfully as possible into the strong surf, throwing the weightless ashes as hard she could, and shouting in the loudest voice she could find, "I love you David."

No election day, no filling out of a ballot will pass without memories of the Clinton/Gore campaign and how much David wanted, in his words that last week, "to see those guys get in there." No first day of class will go by without me wanting to pick up the phone and tell him how it went. No Osage In-Losh-Ka ceremony will pass without me listening for his spirit in the songs and other sounds and looking for him circling around the drum. No important occasion will be complete without me missing his supporting, physical presence at my side.

Finally, all of these words are about the search for that youthful, unconsolated, disappointed, and confused voice speaking words it will never, at least at some level, understand. Today, to my first and best teacher, my friend and only brother, the best brother anyone could imagine, I guess I just want to say, "I love you David. You left me way too soon."

[Statement]

Public Statement, January 12, 1993

by Kendall L. Baker

President, University of North Dakota

The question of whether or not the University of North Dakota should use the team name "Fighting Sioux" has generated considerable discussion during the fall semester. This has been particularly true since an unfortunate incident occurred in which young Native American dancers were taunted at the Homecoming parade. Since then, a student group has organized a campaign to gain support for a change in the Fighting Sioux nickname. The issue has generated some controversy in Grand Forks and around the state.

Whenever asked about this issue, I have repeated that my approach would be to seek input from as many people as possible, representing all points of view. And, in fact, such input has been forthcoming in letters, phone calls and conversations. During October, November and December I visited communities across the state, and raised the question myself when it was not brought up (as it often was). I have talked to several of my counterparts in the tribal colleges, and others on the reservations as well. I have noted that newspapers have editorialized on both sides of the issue. I have received a petition in favor of changing the name that now contains more than 1,200 names. However, since the petition was circulated abroad, some of those who signed it are not American citizens. I am told that it contains the names of about 800 current UND students, though I have not checked the names against our student file. I have also been told that petitions opposing a name change are circulating.

My object today is to do two things: first, to state three primary conclusions I have arrived at; and second, to state a course of action the University intends to pursue on this issue.

With respect to the incident at Homecoming, the way in which the young Indian dancers were treated was highly inappropriate and completely unacceptable. Only a few individuals were involved in this, at best insensitive, and, at worst prejudiced, behavior. However, other University students, while not participating themselves, did nothing to stop this obviously reprehensible behavior. As a consequence, I have been told, some of the Indian children now refuse to wear traditional dress or engage in traditional activities like dancing because of the possibility of being ridiculed.

The parties involved have apologized. I have