

**A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR – JERRY HOROWITZ**

"I first met George Carlin a few years ago when I was collecting material for a pictorial history book *The Western Union Story*. It was published a year ago. It's about the Western Union Telegraph Company, at one time the largest telecommunications company in the world.

"But what does this have to do with George Carlin? George worked for Western Union as a young-man. I called the comedian's agent to relay the story I had heard about his employment with WU. His agent called me back and told me that Carlin wanted to speak with me. Two days later, Carlin called and told me the story I had told his agent was, to put it politely, a combination of a large mammal that fights in an arena in Mexico and one of the seven words you can't say on television. He told me he wanted to meet and to bring a tape recorder.

"I interviewed George and recorded our first meeting:

In 1952, George Carlin was 15 years old. He was discouraged after his first semester at Cardinal Hayes Catholic High School in the Bronx. He had lots of ambition. George had plans for his life. He knew what he wanted. He wanted to be famous. An actor-comedian like Jack Lemmon or Bob Hope!

He quit Cardinal Hayes. George decided to enlist in the U.S. Air Force. He was told he was too young and to come back when he was seventeen with a letter from his mother. Then the New York Board of Education told George that he had to finish six more months of high school, that he could not leave school until he was sixteen. In January of '53 he went to George Washington High School and just after his 16th birthday he quit for good. His mother told him to get a job or get out of the house. He kicked around that summer and worked at odd jobs.

In January of 1954, he went to the Western Union Telegraph Company at 60 Hudson Street to answer an ad for messengers and office boys. Interviewed by a Miss White, he filled out an application and was told he would have to take a written test. Miss White looked over the application and told him they wouldn't hire him without a high school diploma. George pleaded to take the test. Miss White gave in to George's charm and he aced the written test. He did so well (100%) that she waived the high school diploma restriction. She offered him two jobs – one as a messenger where he would be given a uniform, a bicycle and would receive tips from his customers. The other was to be a clerk.

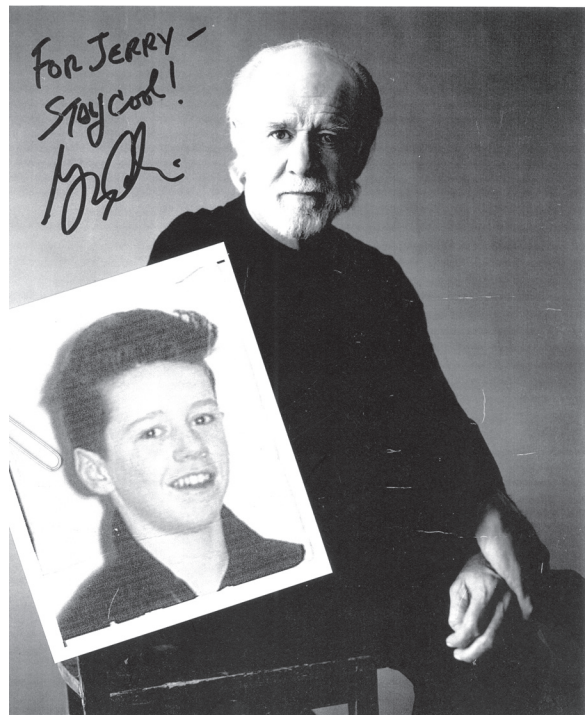
George replied to the first offer: 'The uniform I want is in the Air Force, the vehicle I want is to fly an airplane, and I don't care about the tips.' He opted for the job as clerk and she sent him up to the sixth floor. George said he was probably the youngest office boy in the building. He worked at a desk with older men. Some were disabled veterans from the Korean War, some of the others were telegraph workers hurt in the field that were given office jobs. George soon became a junior clerk, then a line clerk for the Plant and Engineering Department. He recorded weekly work reports of the men who strung telegraph lines along the railroad tracks.

In August of 1954, after eight months, George resigned from Western Union to seek a career in the United States Air Force. Western Union assured him that a job would be waiting for him when he returned. With a letter from his mother, he was accepted in the Air Force. He knew he was destined for bigger and better things.

"I wanted to be a Boy Scout, but I had all the wrong traits. Apparently, they were looking for kids who were trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. Unfortunately, at that time, I was devious, fickle, obstructive, hostile, rude, mean, defiant, glum, extravagant, cowardly, dirty and sacrilegious. So I waited a few years and joined the Air Force," George quoted to me.

"George Carlin had been my friend for the past three years. On May 30th, I gave George a replica of a Western Union clock, to remind him of his days at The Western Union Telegraph Company.

"George died on June 29th. He never failed to amaze me; he had a brilliant mind."



**George Carlin, Clerk  
Western Union  
60 Hudson Street  
New York City**