

Portly worker loses in job cut

By Marion Kuclo
special writer

TOM WAS a likeable fellow. He never would set the world on fire, but he had a good job he really enjoyed. There was always plenty to eat.

In fact, his wife, Henrietta, who loved him dearly, was constantly trying to get him to diet.

"Tom, you're getting too fat," she admonished. You know your cholesterol count is up, and that's dangerous. Please lose some weight, darling. I don't want to be a young widow."

TOM PROMISED to try, but he hated to diet. Thinking exercise might be the answer, he took up jogging.

After a week of huffing, puffing and eating more than ever (running in the fresh air worked up his appetite), he decided it wasn't for him.

"Wedding is more my style," he joked. And indeed he had gained so much weight that he really did seem to waddle.

But Tom was happy enough. He dressed well, in spite of his weight. He went in for bright colors for so portly a fellow, but he was far from unattractive. More than one

of the young chicks at work flirted outrageously with him.

Although Tom assured her of his love and loyalty, Henrietta often was jealous.

THEN THE AXE fell. One day Tom was called into the main office and told the boss wanted to see him.

Jack had been a friend of his for years. There never had been any formality between them. Tom was unprepared for the cool way in which he was treated.

Jack left Tom standing there for several minutes while he shuffled papers on his desk and avoided looking at him.

Finally, Tom could stand it no longer. "Hey, Jack," he said, "What's this all about? I got a message that you wanted to see me, and now you're acting like you don't know I'm here."

"I'm sorry, Tom old boy," Jack said sadly. "I really hate to be the one to have to tell you, what with the holidays coming and all. It's a bad time . . . We have to let you go."

"DO YOU MEAN I'm being fired?"

"Well, I guess that's one way of putting it," answered Jack.

"Why?" demanded Tom. "I've always been a good worker — up at dawn, never missed a day, never been a minute late."

"Frankly, Tom, it's your weight," said Jack. "You were warned that once you reached a certain weight, you'd have to go. You've always known about the corporate image."

Angry, Tom stormed out of the office shouting, "I'm going to take this up with the union. You haven't heard the last of this yet. Discrimination — that's what it is! I'm being deprived of my civil rights."

HENRIETTA WAS frantic when Tom failed to show up for dinner. She became frantic as the hours ticked by, and he still wasn't home by midnight. At 8 the next morning, she was called to come to the morgue to identify the body of her husband.

Yes, it was Tom — stripped of his finery, naked, cold, dead on a slab, a numbered tag on his foot.

Henrietta was in shock. "Not Tom! Just yesterday he was happy and carefree, strutting about, impressing the females. In spite of his faults, I loved him — and now he's dead. How did it happen?"

And that is the mystery for you to solve. Answer these questions:

1. Did Tom die of a) natural causes, b) suicide or c) murder?
2. What was his boss Jack's business?
3. What was Tom's last name?

The solution

1. Tom was murdered.
2. His boss Jack was a farmer.
3. Tom's last name was Turkey.

The writer is a Garden City resident better known by her single name as an entertainer.



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