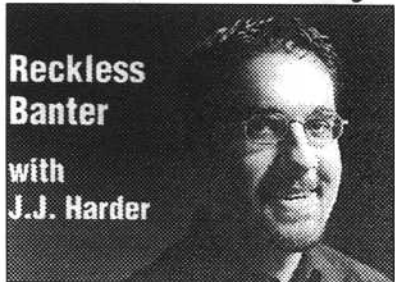


# Save the struggling star

*Gary Coleman has fallen on hard times – it's time for us to help*

**Reckless Banter**  
with  
**J.J. Harder**



It's a travesty. A real travesty. Not the is-Buchanan-leaving-the-GOP kind of problem or the is-the-women's-studies-program-full-of-lesbians sort of situation. I mean it's a sad, sad set of circumstances that has plagued one man's life.

It's a story of a boy's life gone terribly wrong. A notable child actor with ambitions of lifelong fame is left with crushed hopes and shattered dreams. His road to stardom was once paved with gold – looking back, it's but a trail of tears.

I'm talking about the television icon of my childhood. I'm talking about the little man with a big heart. I'm talking about Gary Coleman.

In 1978, he first blessed us with the classic phrase "Whatchoo talkin' 'bout Willis?" and our lives haven't been the same since. His magnificent portrayal of Arnold Drummond was but a glimpse of Coleman's acting ability.

But besides a few made-for-TV-movies and guest appearances in music videos (as himself) Coleman has seldom been seen on the tube, better yet the silver screen. He worked as a security guard for a time, then eventually filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He was arrested for hitting a woman in the face and his life hit rock bottom.

Like the rest of the cast of "Diff'rent Strokes," Coleman's life has been plagued by tragedy. Todd Bridges (Willis) has been in and out of jail, and Dana Plato (Kimberly) died of a drug overdose.

Now Coleman works as a host in an arcade/restaurant in California. I saw a story about him on TV last week that just tore me up. I mean, he's walking around showing 11-year-olds how to play video games.

And, friends, I think we can do something about it.

When you think about it, there are a lot of causes out there. Save this animal, save that animal. Save

the trees, save the ozone. Well, I believe that human life is precious. And although Gary Coleman isn't dying, he sure has a sorry excuse for a life. And we can help.

That's right, I say we save Gary Coleman.

He should be letting his talents shine on a stage. Why is our favorite little guy seating people in booths when he could be doing standup behind the mic?

Right in town we have the Lied Center and the Star City Dinner Theatre. Up the road in Omaha there's the Funny Bone and the Playhouse. He could emcee community events or be the city's official spokesman.

We could at least get him to work at the university in some sort of PR job. How about as a Husker Hostess? You know, they're those hot sorority girls that escort football recruits around on Saturday. They're supposed to attract high schoolers to Nebraska. Well, G.C. may not be an attractive 21-year-old, but it'd be cool to get a campus tour by him.

The university also has this position called "Institutional Representative to the NCAA." Some middle-aged lawyer is doing the job now, but who better to speak for our school than the figurehead of 1980s TV?

Better yet, let's get him to be chancellor. The Meez-dogg has bigger fish to fry anyway, so let him head to Florida or something. Bring in Gary to stand for good ol' NU. Wouldn't the television interviews be much more exciting? If G.C. gets asked a question he doesn't like, he'll dance around it like Bill Clinton. Wouldn't a "Whatchoo talkin' 'bout, Deb Collins?" be a nice change of pace?

Well, even though Chancellor Coleman does have a nice ring, it may have its drawbacks. We don't want Gary slapping someone if he doesn't like what they say. And I guess food service and security aren't exactly the qualifications of a Division I leader. Plus there's the whole seeing-over-the-podium thing.

Regardless, I think Mr. Coleman would like it here. I've got a huge closet with a low ceiling that would be perfect if he wants to save money on rent. Hey, I'll sub-lease! And it's

not like he'll be short on friends. We've got 25,000 students that grew up with him on TV or at least saw the reruns. We'll take him to parties and hang out on the weekends.

So let's fly him out here for awhile. We'll set up a couple of speaking engagements, let him cut a few ribbons with Johanns and take him to Misty's. With a little tour of town and a Husker game, he won't be able to leave. I figure with airfare, hotel, meals and a celebrity stipend, we can pull off the whole thing for about \$1000.

So send your contributions to the Gary Coleman Fund c/o the Daily Nebraskan. If we raise enough money to get him here, I'll call him and set it up. We'll have a parade and festival. It'll be huge. If we come up short, I'll just send him the money and let him use it for himself. (You know he could use it, he works in an arcade for cryin' out loud.)

I think Gary would not only make a comeback and fit in here, but he'd become a part of the community. And who knows what he might still become – a teacher or an entrepreneur, a spokesman or an official representative.

Gary Coleman's Bar & Grill? The Gary Coleman Barbershop Quartet? Mayor Coleman? Gov. Coleman?

Or maybe he could completely rebound from his celebrity despair and reach new heights as a star.

Visualize an 8-foot inflatable Coleman on gamedays. Lil' Gary. Oh, yeah.



MATT HANEY/DN

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# Sex and the 21-year-old virgin

*Questions surround those who haven't yet done the deed*



What about the 21-year-old virgins? They see: large billboards with Calvin Klein advertisements. Lace underwear of near nothing. A design to pleasure the minds, and a promise comes with it. Everybody knows what underwear companies are promising.

Then turn the pages of magazines, beautiful bodies enraptured in embrace, implied: ecstasy to emancipate itself later. It's what they want, they think. But are they sure?

In bars, and dorm rooms, restaurants and lounges, conversations continue, and they can't be avoided.

"I got with her, and we did it ..."  
"Really!? Have you ever ...?"  
"Yeah ... You know what's crazy?"

They smile genuine, but confused, and laugh loudly, nervously, while those who have had sex tell the tales. Hearing the conversation lets them feel like they are a part of sex.

When the talking turns toward them what are they to say?

Pass the question on, say they don't tell. Then the comment: "Because you haven't been with a ..." and they shake their heads and say, "It won't be known."

Do they make up a story of someone's, somewhere else? Knowing what they know from magazines and movies, the lines are not so hard to script.

Or do they tell forbidden truth? Do they say they haven't found the right one? Do they say they've had chances, but ...? Do they say they are waiting until marriage? Can they say this?

What if they aren't waiting for marriage? What if the only reason they haven't found anyone is because nobody has found them, and the chances they say they have had, haven't happened.

Then, are they human or half-human? Can 21-year-old virgins be humans? Everyone is having sex. Without having sex, what do they know?

As they see sex in billboards and magazines do they know what is? Do they know what people are saying? Do they know what the movies are about?

Surely they must want to know. Sex is the world. Right? Don't the virgins wonder about this sexual

world and the images they can only see? Whirlwind lust all around them, they must wonder about it; wanting to know what it's like when the title is gone.

Such a shame, but more than that, an enigma, an embarrassment, they have not had someone to hold. Isn't it?

Don't they think the things that society thinks they should think?

Do they ask themselves if anything is wrong with them?

Alone at night, again, do they lie awake asking: Why doesn't anyone want me? Will I always be a virgin? Am I really so dif-

ferent? Will I be able to admit it the first time it happens to me?

How do they feel in a crowd, looking around wondering, "Am I the only one?"

If they have Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous shouldn't they have 21-Year-Old-Virgins Anonymous? Don't they need a support group?

Are they so different? Surely the answer is no: surrounded by sex in a sexual world that is for them sexless, they seem to survive. How do they survive when it's about sex?

As conversations continue on, they look around the room with questions, wonder when the promises of Calvin Klein advertisements will come true. Some hold out for marriage, some hold out for the right one, some hold out until it happens.

But perhaps for some it's not a sexual world. The 21-year-old virgins have gotten this far, they can go farther, until they answer the promises themselves.



SHAWN DRAPAL/DN

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