

## The Bird in Your Hand:

You may remember that our favorite pint-sized players, lately of the circus, were about to embark on an enterprise, through which their financial goals would be met, maybe even surpassed. The vote recount scheme was a brilliant one, even for Louise. The ladies did indeed get themselves temporary jobs as ballot counters for the amazing tally that continues in the Coleman-Franken race. Funny to call it a race isn't it? They campaigned for over a year, the election was in November of 08 and the recount wrangling is now in its fifth month. It seems like more of a limp to me, a crawl. From now on let's call it the Coleman-Franken Crawl. But regardless of the pace of the crawl, the idea that stuffing a few ballots in their handbags would be their ticket to easy street, was pure genius. You'll remember that Thelma told Louise exactly that as they were dozing off to sleep, each of them cozy in her own dresser drawer, holed up in their tiny efficiency somewhere in Dinkytown.

Just to catch you up to date, the current difference in the interminable Minnesota senatorial fracas is 312 votes. Those of you who have followed the saga of our runty racketeers know exactly where a hundred and seven of those votes came from. Now I'm not saying who paid whom and for what. Nor am I saying that our system of punch card, hanging chad, pull tab ballots isn't working. All I'm saying is that the ladies, even as we speak, are closing on a double wide which they plan to haul west, way west. I can't say where exactly. One has to protect one's sources you know. Otherwise there's no journalism, is there?

Someone ought to do a book someday. The ladies have had more shady dealings and narrow escapes than a whole gang of two bit tough guys from the Bronx. On the road and off, in the circus and out, they keep finding new ways to hatch their nest egg. Never mind that the results have been spotty at best. The important thing in life is to make the effort, right?

Like the time they were trying to get away from a circus outfit in freezing Fargo in order to join a big top on the Florida circuit. Louise had hatched the brilliant idea of impersonating one of the troupe's stars, a high wire artist, a fellow named Papadopoulos. Her idea was to go to the show's big boss, dressed as Papadopoulos, and demand that

the two midgets be traded to a new show in the Sunshine State. Either the boss met his demand or the wire-walking star would quit. The fact that Papadopoulos was nearly six feet tall did not deter the little ladies for a minute.

With Louise standing on Thelma's broad shoulders and both of them draped in the star's 'big parade' cape they marched into the boss's office. "It's either them or me, Max." Louise said in her best deep voice. "They go or I go and I need your answer, pronto."

What choice did he have? He couldn't afford to lose his biggest attraction. The next morning Max called the little connivers into his office and informed them that, due to circumstances beyond his control, they would henceforth be working the citrus circuit. He handed them their bus tickets, twenty bucks each and two cans of Spam. It was brilliant. They were on their way to the Sunshine State! Farewell Fargo! Halleluiah Hialeah! Louise had done it again. She had hatched and pulled off another boffo scheme.

As it turns out, the Florida play never materialized for our diminutive deceivers. It seems like the con is more important than the payoff for some folks. Some folks are just not happy unless they're in the middle of something risky. They just don't feel alive unless their pastimes tempt incarceration. At the very first rest stop on the bus ride south Thelma, who is by far the more impulsive of the two, spotted a big red handbag left in seat 17 by a lady who was in a huge hurry to use the facilities. Thelma couldn't help herself. As they exited the bus she snatched the bag and told Louise to follow her. And follow her she did, off the bus, through the Kwik Trip, out the back door, across the alley and into the darkening night.

Imagine throwing away the bird in your hand for two in the proverbial bush. Imagine tossing their new job, beautiful sunny weather and a chance at respectability right out the window on the off chance that a shiny faux-leather, faux-Prada bag would contain something sweeter. How much sweeter could it possibly be, you might ask.

I'll let you know next time how it all turned out.