Ward Learns the Truth[1]

by Phillip W. Weiss

Ward Cleaver was the husband of June Cleaver, nee Bronson, and the father of Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver and Wallace "Wally" Cleaver. He was a loving father, a loyal husband, lived a responsible life, and had a well-earned reputation as a caring, kind and sensible man. One day, something began bothering Ward. He became conscious of the fact that Beaver and Wally were truly stupid boys. They kept doing things that defied even the most basic tenets of common sense. Beaver had a streak of impulsivity and Wally a gullibility that kept getting both in trouble and blocked them from learning from their mistakes. No matter how often Beaver and Wally screwed up, no matter how often Ward had to bail them out, his children seemed to have brains that were as hard as granite. This caused Ward much distress as he was known for his intelligence. He asked himself, "How could an intelligent man like me have produced such stupid children?" He asked the same question to June, who laughed and said, "Ward, they're just children, they'll grow out of it." Ward would have accepted that answer if Beaver and Wally were still young children, but Beaver was almost thirteen and Wally seventeen and thus almost already fully grown. Yet both of then still were as stupid now as they were when they were small. Often Ward

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[1] **The characters in this story are based on the characters featured in the sitcom *Leave It to Beaver.***

would look down at the area of his crotch and wonder what was contained in his genitals that could have produced two children who were so intellectually dense. Ward considered going to a geneticist for a thorough examination to discover whether he carried a defective gene for rational thinking and which could account for his children's low IQ. One day, Ward saw an advertisement for a product called DNA Plus. This was a product that could be used at home to trace one's ancestry going back four generations. Ward ordered a box of DNA Plus which he had delivered to a post office box. He stored the DNA Plus in his office at work. Then Ward obtained samples of Beaver and Wally's saliva from the plates they used to eat breakfast and along with a sample of his own saliva ran them through the DNA Plus analyzer. Fifteen minutes later the results came back. Beaver and Wally's DNA were different from Ward's Ward was not their daddy. This news did not shock Ward. Rather he felt relief. The question that had been causing Ward so much consternation was finally answered. Ward was not at fault for producing two dumb children. Soon, however, the feeling of relief changed to resentment and anger as he came to realize that through all these years he had been playing the role chump and patsy for a wife who would have a lot of explaining to do. Later that night, in their bedroom, Ward showed June the results of the DNA Plus test, and asked, "Well, June? What gives?" June's facial expression hardened, she sat up in bed, and told Ward, "Okay, Ward, I guess it's time for the truth. It's like this. Before I met you, I served in the Marines." Ward was shocked. "You served in the Marines? You never told me that." "I know that. I didn't tell you a lot

of things," June said. "I didn't think you needed to know. Anyway, I was assigned to a unit in which I was the only female member." Ward's shoulders slumped. "Do you still want me to continue?" June asked. "Go on, June. I want to hear the whole story," Ward said, his anger starting to build. "So. In the unit I acquired a nickname." "Ward asked, "What was you nicknamed?" Ward asked, in a whisper. "General Easy," June said. "Why were you nicknamed General Easy?" Ward asked. "Do I really have to explain that?" June asked, startled. "So, how many men were in your unit?" Ward pressed. "About fifty," June said. "And you did them all?" Ward asked. "Not all, just the sergeants and officers," June explained. "So, you were the unit slut." Ward said." I wish I had known this earlier. I could have saved myself years of aggravation and money raising two congenital idiots who aren't mine and living with a wife who I now know was a whore for the United States Marines. Thanks for nothing, June, if that's your real name. By the way, is June Bronson your real name?" "No," June replied, "My real name is Agnes Fenstermeyer. I took the name June Bronson when I met you. I thought it sounded classier'" "Boy oh boy, the surprises just keep on coming," Ward said, feeling the grip of bitterness producing a knot in his stomach. "You really played me for a chump. But what does your being in the Marines have to do with Beaver and Wally?" Well," the newly revealed Agnes Fenstermeyer said, "one of the Marines in my unit was Fred Rutherford." Ward was dumbfounded. "That sniveling spineless suck up Fred Rutherford was in the Marines? Are you serious?" Ward asked. "I'm serious. Fred was the sergeant in charge of the latrine

detail." Agnes said. "Please tell me that you did not had sex with Fred," Ward pleaded. "I'm afraid I can't do that." Agnes added. "No wonder Beaver and Wally are so stupid. Fred must be the father," Ward said. "No, I stopped seeing Fred after I was discharged from the Marines." Agnes said. "So, who's the daddy?" Ward asked, genuinely perplexed. Agnes said. "I really don't know, it could be the Sam the grocer, Pete our gardener, Al the sanitation man, Robert the haberdasher, Vernon the ex-baseball player, Manny the hair stylist, Saul the rabbinical scholar, or Father Leary the defrocked priest. "So, why did you pick on me to be your patsy?" Ward asked. Agnes laughed. "I had just left the Marines and was feeling kind of lonely and saw you standing there at the corner newsstand and liked what I saw," Agnes said. "You mean you saw what you thought was an easy mark," Ward said, correcting Agnes. "No, it wasn't like that at all," Agnes said. "You were a good-looking guy. Don't put yourself down." "You play me for a sucker, milk me of my money, lie straight to my face, string me along like I'm a clown, play the charade of a loving wife, make a mockery of our marriage, put out for half the town while I was supporting you and your brood, laughed at me behind my back, and now you tell me not to put myself down. Well, I won't. You've done that for me, Agnes or whoever you are." The following morning, at breakfast, Ward made an announcement. "Boys," Ward said, "I have something to tell you." "What is it, dad?" Beaver asked. "Well, I don't know if there's a good way of saying this, so I'll just say it. Boys, I'm not your father and from this moment on you are to refer to me as Mister Pushover because that's exactly what I've been for at least the

past seventeen years." Wally stopped eating his scrambled eggs and asked, "Well, dad, I mean Mister Pushover, does this mean I can't ask you for any more allowance money?" "That's exactly what it means, Wally," Ward said. "And the same goes for you too, Beaver. No more allowance money from me." "Then if you're not my father, then who's my father?" Beaver asked. "You'll have to ask your mother because frankly I don't know," Ward said. Now alarmed, Beaver asked Agnes, "Mom, who's my father?" Agnes replied, "I'm not sure. It could be Harry, you know, the man who sells shoes in Jack's Department Store downtown." Ward said, "You're probably right, Agnes. Harry is one of the dullest lightbulbs in town. A real Elmer Fudd. He could easily the father." "Who's Agnes?" Wally asked, now confused. Ward replied, "Oh, I forgot to tell you boys that your mother's name is not June Bronson but Agnes Fenstermeyer." "Is that true, Mom?" Beaver asked, shocked. "Yes, it is, Beaver. My real name is Agnes Fenstermeyer." "What kind of name is that?" Wally asked, his confusion growing. "It's German, Wally." Agnes said. "Do you speak German?" Wally persisted. "Yes, I do," Agnes admitted. "I grew up in Germany." "Gee whiz, Mom, does that mean we have to learn German? I have enough problems speaking English," Beaver whined. Now on the verge of panicking, Beaver turned to Ward and pleaded, "Dad, don't make me learn German." Ward laughed and replied, "I'm sorry Beaver, there is nothing I can do. Remember, I'm not your father anymore and let me remind you not to address me as dad. I am Mister Pushover." Wally chimed in saying, "Well if you think I'm learning German, you have another thing coming

to you. I'll quit school before I learn German." "See what you started, Ward?" Agnes said. "Me? I didn't start anything and besides I'm no longer their daddy," Ward said. Ward then said he was going to be back late because he had some matters to attend to. Ward left the house, got into his car and drove to Fred Rutherford's house. He arrived at Fred's house, exited the car, walked up to the front door, and knocked on the door. Fred Rutherford opened the door, smiled, and said, "Ward, old boy, what a surprise to see you. What brings you to my abode?" Ward reached into the pocket of his jacket and pulled out a fully loaded .357 caliber handgun. He pointed the weapon directly at Fred and was about to pull the trigger. Then Ward wakes up with a start. He is in bed with June. It is the middle of the night. He is drenched in sweat. June asks, "What is it, Ward?" "I had awful dream. Your name was Agnes, you were in the Marines, you knew different men, you were German, you had an affair with Fred Rutherford, and I was not Wally and Beaver's father." "Oh, you poor darling," June says and she cradles Ward in her arms, rocking him back and forth like a baby. "You know I would never cheat on you," June says reassuringly. "I know," Ward says and then he begins kissing June and with their passion rekindled, soon they are making love for the first time in years. While in the thralls of passion, Ward whispers to June how much he loves her and that he will never leave her. June holds Ward tightly as they renew their special bond that they had formed when they first got married. It was a special night, a second honeymoon, except much more intense. In Beaver and Wally's room, Beaver wakes up and asks Wally,

“Do you hear that noise? It sounds like it’s coming from mom and dad’s bedroom.” “Oh, you’re hearing things, Beaver. Go back to sleep. Mom and dad are too old and tired to be up at this hour.” “Yeah, you’re right, Wally. It’s probably coming from down the street. Good night.” Assured that the noise is nothing to be concerned about, Beaver lays back on his bed while the noise continues to steadily reverberate in the dark, its rhythmic melody lulling Beaver back to sleep.

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