

NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions

By Ned Hémard

Just So Story

Born in Bombay, India, Rudyard Kipling was world famous as an English author and poet (although he spent the bulk of his life away from England). In the first decade of the Twentieth Century (with works such as "The Jungle Book", "Kim" and "Just So Stories"), Kipling was at the height of his popularity. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907 for what the committee cited as his "power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for narration". He was the first English language recipient, and its youngest prizewinner ever.

Louisiana's current top executive is the youngest governor in the nation. Born in Baton Rouge, Bobby Jindal's parents came to Louisiana from India just before his birth in 1971. As a guest on Jay Leno, the governor was bullish on New Orleans and Louisiana and explained how he adopted the name "Bobby" after watching "The Brady Bunch" as a child.

If Kipling were around today, he would spin the tale thusly:

The Elephant's Child

In the High and Far-Off Times in the land of the Bayou Bengals, the Elephant, O Best Beloved, was no contender. He barely had a candidate he could parade about from side to side; and he couldn't pick up votes with him. The charismatic, but later incarcerated, Rajah of Crowley held sway for the other party a good many years ... even defeating a Duke. It was important! There was even a Maharani, but her name draws a blank. And still there was only occasionally an Elephant. But soon there was one Elephant—a new Elephant — an Elephant's Child — who was full of 'satiabile curtiosity, and that means he asked ever so many questions ...

One fine morning in the middle of the Gubernatorial Precession this 'satiabile Elephant's Child asked a new fine question that he had never asked before. He asked, "What does the State have for ethics?" At first all the nabobs nestled by the Red Stick roared, "Hush!" in a loud and dreadful tone, and they shouted at him immediately and directly, without stopping, for a long time. But the people liked the question and, by and by, chose this new young Indian prince.

By and by, when that was finished, he thought about the Murphy Bird named Mike, who had discovered him. In fact, the Murphy Birds and Bengal Tigers in Louisiana are all named Mike. He mused upon Mike, fostering a wait-a-bit demeanor, and said to himself, "The people have thanked me, and the media has thanked me; all my family has thanked me for my 'satiabile curtiosity; and now I want the rest of the country to know that this State has ethics!"

The Murphy Bird sang, with a wistful cry, "Go to the banks of the great moving

muddy Mississippi River, all set about with Jindal fever-trees, and find out the results of your efforts."

That very next morning, the land proclaimed the Elephant's child a mighty success, even mentioning him as a vice-presidential candidate.

And that's how the Elephant got his spunk.

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