

No 'roomie,' more housework

Since he gave her THE RING she's been happy, sad, sometimes miserable, in the throes of ecstasy, in a web of frustration, and mostly tired.

Since they got THE RING they've learned one thing.

Weddings belong to everyone but the bride and the groom.

They've set the date — June 21. They've arranged the church — in Baltimore, Maryland.

It's a long distance wedding. Mostly, she's learned weddings are for mothers.

Since she got THE RING she's on the phone to Maryland constantly.

They talk about gowns, receptions, rehearsal dinners, invitations, and flowers.

The voices strain in frustration over the long-distance line as they argue about where to buy gowns,



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Karen Cubie

honeymoon plans, and the price of fried chicken at Roy Rogers.

Her mother is nervous about "losing" an already far-away daughter so she busies herself with other worries.

She hurls herself into reception plans. She worries over bridesmaids' fittings. She demands to know every new detail as it comes along.

He sits silently by and wishes it were all over.

He's sick of gowns and frills and songs and friends.

He's shy, you see, and he doesn't like to be stared at.

She's pretty and she's always been stared at. That makes it easier.

"Let's just elope," he moans repeatedly.

"You don't mean that," she laughs.

But sometimes he does.

Like when she talks about singing to each other during the ceremony.

"We can practice," she says. "Why don't we tape it ahead of time and play it while we light the candles?"

Or when she gets off the phone after talking with her mother.

"Relax, Bren," he says. "You have plenty of time. I hate when you get so nervous."

"He makes it harder sometimes," she confides. "My mother is so uptight, and she's pressuring me to get everything done yesterday. I just want to relieve the pressure, and he tells me to relax and forget about it."

If he had his way, the ceremony would be held in a little Canadian chapel. It would be short, to the point, and they'd soon be on their way to someplace secluded — alone.

To me, her friend and her roommate, THE RING means a loss.

I'll lose the Tupperware collection, the stoneware, the dining room table.

There'll be no light in the living room, no television, and no sewing machine.

I'll never remember to take out the garbage Monday mornings and the floor will never be scrubbed.

I'll have to move — or find another roommate — but how can I do that?

This apartment was ours.

It was the first place for both of us.

Together we scrubbed from baseboard to sticky baseboard.

She discovered the mouse trap behind the refrigerator. I scrubbed the bathroom for eight hours straight.

THE RING means dishing out money for a pretty new dress that will wait futilely for those many dates to the Top of the Hub, or to Anthony's Pier 4.

It means a plane ticket to Baltimore, or a day off from work and a 12-hour drive.

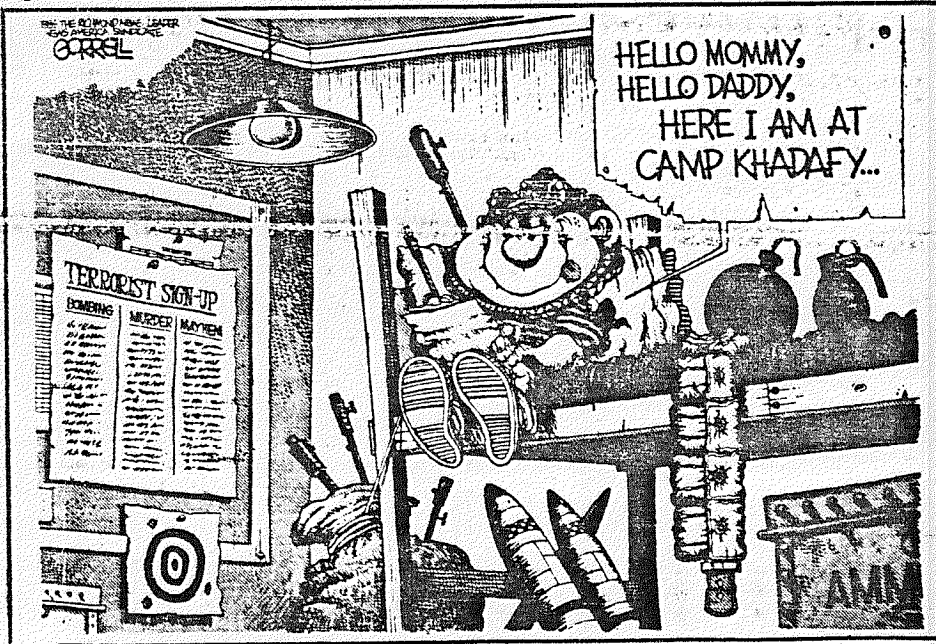
She's the first of my friends to take this big step. I used to think marriage was only for older folks.

THE RING brings adulthood closer to home.

She's grown up.

I'm grown up?

And we're all living with THE RING.



Reagan talk theme tentative